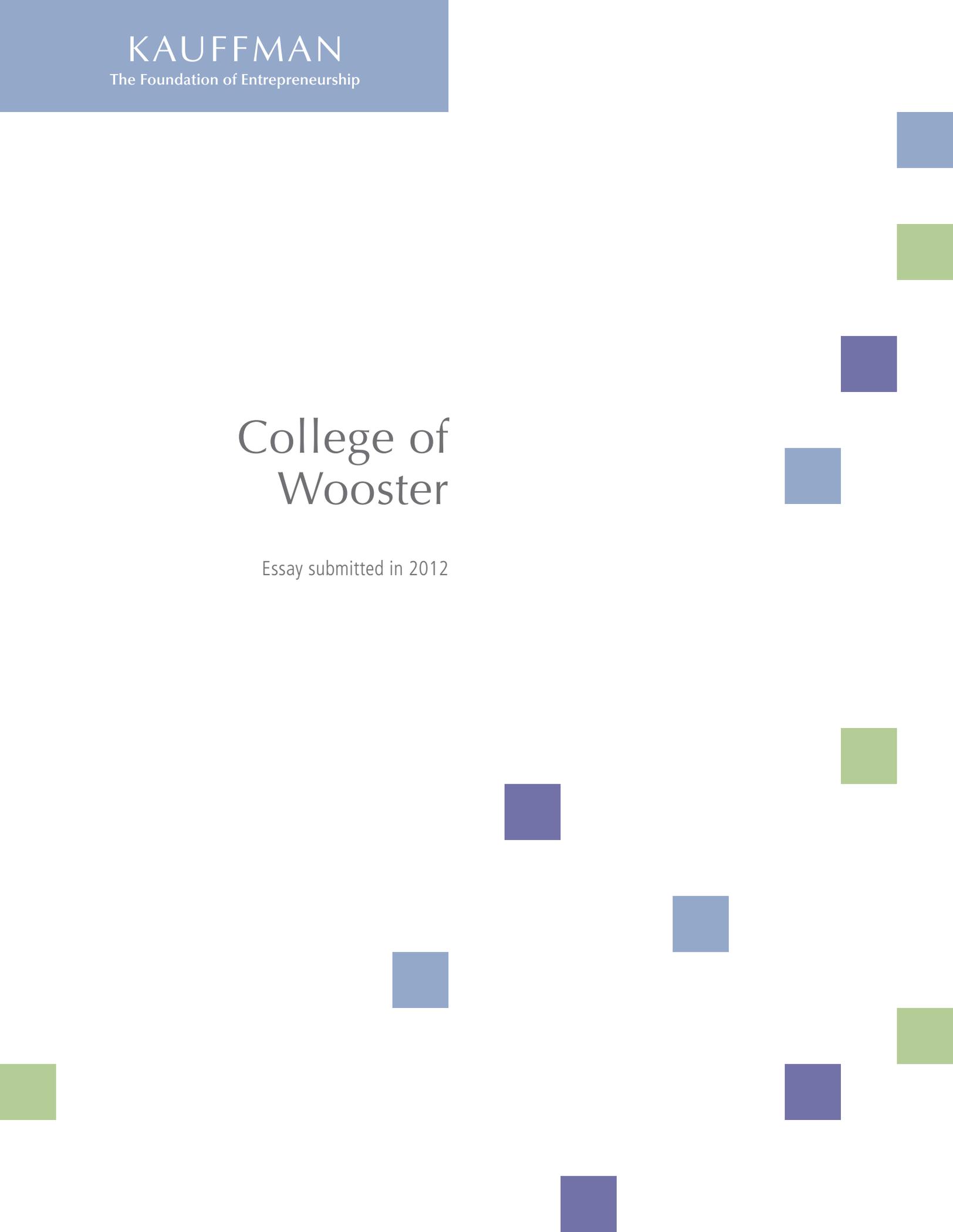


College of Wooster

Essay submitted in 2012



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Entrepreneurship at the College of Wooster: The Impact of the Kauffman Campus Initiative March 26, 2012

The College of Wooster's venture into entrepreneurship has had a major positive impact on our campus, albeit our path has been neither straight nor uncomplicated. We have discovered that in order to capitalize fully on the benefits of our entrepreneurship program, it is essential to connect entrepreneurship to our strategic plan. The initiative has pushed us to increase the relevance of the liberal arts in a contemporary environment, and has provided us with the capacity to respond more adeptly to keenly felt challenges to our institution. The program arrived on campus to an environment initially hostile to the general idea of entrepreneurship and skeptical of its value in a liberal arts environment. Through a number of fits and starts, we have come to define entrepreneurship in a manner that fits with our mission and history, and in so doing we have greatly strengthened our institution. We are now in a position to focus our previous scattershot efforts to form a coherent program that aligns more fully with our mission and culture.

An Overview of the College of Wooster Entrepreneurship Program

Our entree into entrepreneurship began in 2007, thanks to the generous contributions from the Burton D. Morgan Foundation and the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation. Housed in the Burton D. Morgan Building on campus, the Center is one of five pilot programs of the Northeast Ohio Collegiate Entrepreneurship Program established by the partnering foundations.

In the first few years of the Kauffman Campus Initiative (KCI) we developed a number of ventures to introduce entrepreneurship to the campus. Our approach was to define entrepreneurship as broadly as possible, with the expectation that we would be more successful if individuals and constituencies were able to explore their own understandings of entrepreneurship, and find the best niche for their expression of an entrepreneurial spirit. These early efforts focused on the development of curriculum, mostly surrounding creativity and innovation; igniting a passion for entrepreneurship among students; the development of programs in social entrepreneurship; and the creation of a venture capital program.

Curricular Development

We began our efforts in entrepreneurship with the creation of the Center for Innovation and Creativity, now simply named the Center for Entrepreneurship (C4E). Following several seminars and workshops, we began to see that for our campus the clearest fit between the liberal arts and entrepreneurship was the exploration of the theme of creativity and innovation. Indeed, this was a theme that initially resonated most fully with a number of faculty members. While many were not convinced that their efforts should be focused on profit-seeking, they were able and willing to embrace the concept that entrepreneurship is about innovation and creativity, approaches that have a clear home in our classrooms. Focusing therefore primarily on faculty and the curriculum, we held various workshops centered on expanding the entrepreneurial content in classes, we hired three faculty members who would develop entrepreneurship classes across the curriculum, we provided grants for curricular innovation, and we supported faculty-based business development.

As Mark Roche states in his recent book, *Why Choose the Liberal Arts?*, the liberal arts is about engaging students in active questioning, in an environment when they are "existentially engaged and active in the learning process, when they themselves generate their own questions" (2011, p. 8). The generation of relevant questions and the identification of solutions based on active engagement are at the heart of an entrepreneurial spirit. Strongly wedded to traditional definitions of liberal arts, for the most part our faculty had been historically reticent to embrace the practical application of learning via ventures such as service learning or vocational exploration. Through the recognition that active problem solving is an essential element of the liberal arts, entrepreneurship helps us bridge this gap between theory and practice.

First Year Seminar

With the goal of infusing entrepreneurship into one of the building blocks of our curriculum, our early efforts were aimed at including components of entrepreneurship in our First Year Seminar courses. These are small seminars of fifteen first-year students taught on a topic of the faculty member's choosing. These seminars are writing intensive, and are designed to develop critical thinking skills.

In 2007, thanks in part to the availability of a number of *Entrepreneurship in the Curriculum* grants (a part of the KCI program), at least twenty percent of First Year Seminars (FYS) had some sort of module connected to entrepreneurship. Examples of modules included service-learning activities with local non-profit agencies, the history of entrepreneurship, and the meaning of creativity. These grants facilitated an important need on campus at the time. While some vocal faculty members were not supportive of activities that resembled "service-learning", others were eager to find ways to connect students with the community and to provide a venue for them to engage in experiential learning. These grants allowed these faculty members to experiment with new ways of teaching and new models for engaging students.

Other seminars were entirely focused on an entrepreneurial project. For example, in 2007 Shirley Huston-Findley of the Theater and Dance department dedicated her FYS class to the establishment of an inter-generational theater company. The aim of the course was to involve the students from the beginning in imagining the development of a company and begin the process of thinking through how they might begin to make that happen. The student teaching assistant for that class developed the venture further as the focus of her Senior Independent Study, ultimately creating a fledgling company.

The following summer Huston-Findley and our first director of the entrepreneurship program, Reuben Domike, taught the course *The Artist as Entrepreneur*, which developed a business model for the company. Finally, in 2009 the Boomerang Theater Company was formed and presented the play *Letting Go*, a cooperative effort of students, faculty, staff, and community members.

Interdisciplinary Teaching and Research

A key value of entrepreneurship to the liberal arts is that it encourages interdisciplinary thinking through its focus on the problem rather than on the discipline. Rather than beginning with the cannon of the discipline, entrepreneurially thinking pushes students to ask, "what do I need to know to solve this problem"? They might find their answers in a number of disciplines and divisions, or via a variety of methodologies or approaches. It is not surprising then that there has been a strong synergy between our work in entrepreneurship and our interdisciplinary programs.

Influenced in part by the workshops and courses described above, several of our faculty members have collaborated on research on the nature of creativity. For example, three faculty members in theater, music, and art published an article with the Council on Undergraduate Research on how to encourage creativity in undergraduate research in the arts

(Crawford, Zurko, Mowrey, and Huston-Findley, 2011). Additionally, two faculty members, one in Theater and one in English, are collaborating on research into how we might assess the development of creative thinking in our students. This latter project has been supported in part from a grant from the Teagle Foundation.

A great strength of our entrepreneurship program has been the fact that the core activity has been centered in disciplines not generally associated with entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship programs are typically dominated by faculty in fields such as Economics, Business, or Engineering. To broaden the focus of the program and begin to introduce entrepreneurship to the curriculum, we hired three visiting faculty members in Psychology, Theater, and Environmental Studies. The courses offered through C4E include:

- *The Artist as Entrepreneur*
- *Food Systems: Alternative/Innovation*
- *Entrepreneurship and the Environment*
- *The Philosophy of Entrepreneurship*
- *The Psychology of Creativity and Innovation*
- *Human Factors: Design & Innovation*
- *Impulse to Create*
- *Marketing Culture & The Arts.*

Our entrepreneurship program has additionally found great success in the courses associated with the Environmental Studies program. This in part due to the infectious energy of a key young faculty member, but also the synergistic relationship between issues of sustainability, the environment, and the interests of students. Issues of sustainability are by nature entrepreneurial, as they ask us to link innovation and pragmatism in a manner that leads to the greatest social value possible, while minimizing costs.

The Environmental Studies courses offered through C4E spurred a number of entrepreneurial ventures, summer internships, and Senior Independent Study (IS) projects. Examples of student ventures include the "Bee House," a student collaborative developed to produce organic honey for consumption and sale. Another student venture sought to develop a composting program for the dining service, and a third student received start-up monies to stabilize an invasive aquatic plant and transform the plant matter into green energy.

Through our internship program (discussed below), a number of students worked with the Cleveland Botanical gardens developing urban gardening programs. For example, Erika Takeo ('12) combined her interest in community gardening with her work in global social entrepreneurship. Her visit to Bangalore's Centre on Urban Agriculture and Food Security as part of the Global Social Entrepreneurship program prompted her to look for common connections between sustainable agriculture in India, and community gardening in

Cleveland (<http://global-sc.scotblogs.wooster.edu/2011/07/13/peri-urban-fanning-a-visit-to-magadi/>). Erica is now exploring this question for her Senior Independent Study thesis.

Several other internships and student ventures also resulted in Senior Independent Study (J.S.) theses. For example, a Sociology student graduating last year wrote a thesis entitled: "Finding Common Ground: A Qualitative Analysis of Sustainable Agriculture in Cuyahoga Valley National Park and the Evolving American Conservation Model" and another thesis was entitled "Volunteerism, Food Access, and Community Resilience: A Case Study of a Non-Profit Urban Farming Organization." Developing a connection with J.S. is especially important as this signature program involves every student in a yearlong senior research project.

Our courses in entrepreneurship have been well received by students. In a recent assessment of the program, 76% of students involved in courses or activities stated that their entrepreneurial skills had increased as a result of their experience. The most common traits they expressed confidence in were the abilities to work with people from diverse backgrounds, to establish and achieve goals and objectives, to take responsibility for ideas and actions, to be a leader, and finally to manage time by setting goals.

Inspiring Entrepreneurship Among the Students

Although our earlier efforts were focused on winning the hearts and minds of the faculty, the greatest energy in the program has been evident in the work with the students. The third floor of the Burton D. Morgan building has served as an exciting hub for student activity. KCI has provided an environment in which our students develop the ability to think creatively and imagine possibilities without the traditional limits of academic models. In particular, KCI has given students a venue for taking the theoretical knowledge they are developing in their coursework and thinking about how this might be translated into action.

Popcorn Sessions

C4E brings members of the student-run Club together every Thursday evening to listen to guest speakers, brainstorm ideas, and analyze marketing techniques. These sessions provide a clear energy to the center, making the name "popcorn session" applicable beyond simply the food served. In the words of our students, this is a place where "ideas fly like popcorn." These sessions also serve as a visible presence of the program on campus. Examples of recent guest speakers included a presentation on Women in Entrepreneurship, a presentation by Vishal Talreja, Executive Director of Dream a Dream in India, and one on the Art of Brewmaking, featuring the activities of Andy Tveekrem, a 1985 College of Wooster graduate and owner of Market Garden Brewery, John Patrick Najeway of the Thirsty Dog Brewing Co., and Ken Bogucki of the Wooster Inn.

Idea Competition

Perhaps the most prominent and popular aspect of C4E has been the annual idea competition. Attracting up to 100 entries per year, this contest ends in a session where the best entries "pitch" their ideas to a standing-room-only crowd. Many of these student ventures have been very successful, including the work of Rakib Islam, a rising sophomore at The College of Wooster. Rakib has advanced to the final round of The Indus Entrepreneurs (TiE) Ohio International Entrepreneurial Award competition.

Islam's proposed enterprise, titled "Project Maverick," was born of personal experience. As an international student from Bangladesh, Islam managed to wade through the massive amounts of information required to attend a college in another country, but without the benefit of campus visits or personal conversations with college counselors he faced considerable challenges in the college-search process. "Some of us have made it here", said Islam, "while others dropped out from the lack of information and the intimidation of the tedious process of filling out a gazillion forms".

Project Maverick, through the sponsorship of colleges and universities, would be dedicated to making the information for studying abroad more readily accessible to students outside of the country, giving them a better chance of attending the college of their dreams while at the same time enabling colleges and universities to meet their international student targets.

Internships

In order to provide students with more hands-on experience, our more recent efforts in entrepreneurship have been focused on the creation of a robust internship program. This program offers opportunities for students to put their liberal arts skills of problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, and communication to work in a practical context involving entrepreneurship.

Thus far we have established a number of internship opportunities created to match the particular backgrounds and interests of students. These include the following:

- Match Me Entrepreneurial Internship

Specifically designed to aid students who are looking to work with business organizations within the spectrum of their field of interest, this internship contains a significant entrepreneurial component. Alexander Bass, for example, interned last summer with Community Greenhouse Partners: a local food initiative situated in East Cleveland.

- C4E Summer Internship

This type of internship allows students to apply for established C4E

internships with partner businesses, such as Ingenuity Cleveland and The Cleveland Botanical Gardens. Last summer several students worked with the Cleveland Botanical Garden's Green Corps Program, a program that hires high school teens to work in one of five "Learning Farms" that are located near Cleveland.



Figure 3: Students Participating in the "GreenCorps" Internship

- Create Your Own Internship

This internship program allows students to be the architects of their internship experience. This initiative requires the student to research and identify an internship with an entrepreneurial-focus and academic advisor based on the student's desire to pursue their professional, entrepreneurial passions.

Already an entrepreneur before coming to Wooster, Laura Grimanis was able to work this summer on The Alcaa Project as part of her self-designed internship. The Alcaa Project is a non-profit organization she co-founded 4 years ago that works with the rural, remote community of Akaa to create opportunity through education, healthcare and financial initiatives. While there, she focused on team and volunteer development and also reaching out into the Ghanaian community for support.

- Start Your Business Internship

Finally, this internship opportunity involves a partnership with C4E and College of Wooster's AMRE (Applied Mathematics Research Experience) Program that allows students to allocate time and energy combined with C4Es financial support to undertake the launching a business. The summer internship helps students ascertain the logistical and financial feasibility of their business idea.

Entrepreneurship in the Arts

Due in great part to the efforts of our director, an arts entrepreneur by training, much of our current focus has been on entrepreneurship with the arts. The students have been spearheading a number of entrepreneurial ventures in the arts, the most prominent of which is the *Jam Session*, now in its second year. Organized by the E-Club and supervised by the Center, The *Jam Session* is a performing arts extravaganza, where the College creates a common podium for the students and community members to exhibit their artistic skills.

Another venture organized by E-club is a Fall carnival. This events features live bands, exotic events such as fire throwers and face painters, pumpkin carving, and raffles. Students bring in local sponsors to finance these events. These activities are designed to train students to manage and promote large public events.

Assessment of C4E Programs

A 2011 internal assessment of participants in the C4E indicated that the internships have been very successful in developing a number of skills among our students. A survey conducted of participants indicated that:

100% of those surveyed indicated that during the internship they had

- o Engaged in effective intellectual collaboration
- o Achieved a greater level of intellectual self confidence
- o Acquired new skills and knowledge.

Over 90% stated that they had

- o Improved skills in oral communication
- o Improved critical thinking skills.

And over 80%

- o Enhanced their personal development.

One of the most gratifying aspects of the student efforts has been the extent to which they have drawn in a very diverse group of students. In particular, many of the leaders in the E-Club and the idea competition have been international students. Students come from a wide range of majors as well. The pie chart below indicates the academic divisions of the majors of students surveyed in an internal assessment of the program.

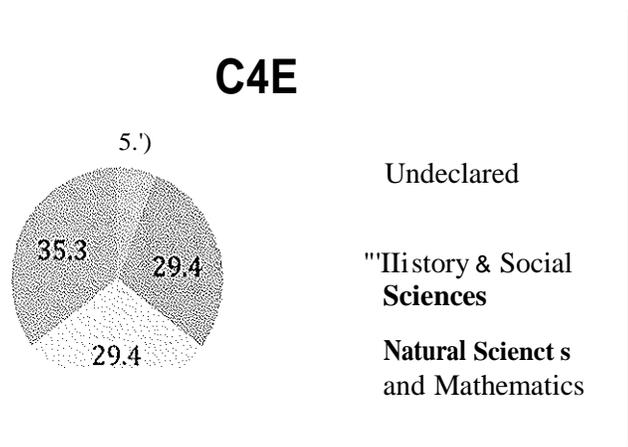


Figure 5: Distribution of Majors of C4E Students

Social Entrepreneurship

In her 2011 article on how great companies think, Rosabeth Moss Kanter argues that "(r)ather than viewing organizational processes as ways of extracting more economic value, great companies create frameworks that use societal value and human values as decision-making criteria" (2011, pg. 5). The College of Wooster has a long history of educating to make decisions based on societal and human values. As long as 60 years ago, College of Wooster President Howard Lowry stated that the college should be about preparing students for lives of "action and service to others." It made sense therefore that some of our earlier ventures would be focused on social entrepreneurship. We find in social entrepreneurship a model that both fits our institutional history and our mission to create civically engaged and socially responsible students.

Our Social Entrepreneurship program was established in 2006, followed shortly after by our Global Social Entrepreneurship program. Each program trains a group of students in the art of writing business plans and leading non-profit organizations to develop revenue-enhancing ventures. The goals of each program are to serve as consultants for organizations, assisting them in identifying key problems, and then engaging in problem-solving and goal setting.

These liaisons with non-profit organizations have been successful for a number of reasons. First, as an assessment in 2007 of the first two years of the program demonstrated, our students learned valuable lessons in communication, goal setting, and data analysis. As a result of the work of the social entrepreneurship teams, several organizations created revenue-generating enterprises. Two examples of ongoing successes include support for the Urban Cottage, a local consignment shop, and the development of a horseback riding program supporting a local children's home.

The Global Social Entrepreneurship program has focused its effort in Bangalore, India, and has connected teams of student workers with non-profit organizations to find solutions to local problems. One such organization is Dream A Dream, a social venture with the mission to empower children from vulnerable backgrounds by teaching them life skills through creative mediums such as sport, art, technology, and mentoring.

Our Global Social Entrepreneurship program attracted national attention in 2011 by winning the Andrew Heiskell Award for Innovation in International Education.

Venture Capital

In the first few years of the program, we established a venture capital fund (the E-Bank) that provided low-cost loans for entrepreneurial activity. These loans were primarily aimed at the non-profit organizations involved with the Social Entrepreneurship program, but were also available to faculty and students at the College of Wooster. One of our more successful ventures involved a faculty member, and eventually led to a very exciting scientific and commercial endeavor.

In 2008, Colleen Burckett, a student working in Dr. Paul Edmiston's Chemistry lab, called him in to the lab to observe the reaction of a material she was working with. That material was ground glass, and she was amazed when she placed drops of acetone (fingernail polish remover) on the material that it changed shape and absorbed the acetone. From this serendipitous discovery, Dr. Edmiston developed the product Osorb, a swellable glass that absorbs carbon-based pollutants in water, including petroleum-based products.

Dr. Edmiston worked with the Entrepreneurship program to develop a business plan for what was eventually to become ABS materials, a company now employing over 30 employees in Wooster, Ohio and in Texas. The company was born entirely from the undergraduate research. Guidance from the Entrepreneurship program was instrumental in the early stages of Dr. Edmiston's nascent for-profit venture, now a thriving enterprise.

Moving Forward: Incorporating Entrepreneurship into Wooster's Strategic Plan

We are now at a moment when we can move forward in our entrepreneurship efforts with an even greater intentionality, sense of mission, and focus. We are well into a strategic planning process at the College from which we have developed several strategic objectives. Within these objectives are three key initiatives that connect clearly with our new directions in entrepreneurship.

1) Wooster's Independent Study Program

For over 60 years, the College of Wooster has required all students to complete a year-long research project within their major. The guiding impulse behind this program is the hope that through independent research each student will find his or her passion and develop the skills to pursue that passion. When he created the program in the 1940's, then President Howard Lowry stated that: Independent Study is a "creative adventure in self-discipline and self discovery that ought to be the first of such creative adventures throughout life." Further, "the pursuit of a significant life—the enhancement of our capacity to confer a meaning of life, the power to seek the significance with clarity, with range, with patience, with commitment, and perhaps with some touch of significance, is the gift of education." Thus through I.S., we seek to prepare and produce future innovators.

Our current related strategic initiative is as follows:

Building on the strengths of our Independent Study program, we will develop a distinctive, integrated, and comprehensive approach to strengthening our students' skills, including oral and written communication skills, research sophistication, and the application of technologies.

As we move forward, we imagine an entrepreneurship program that complements our role as a leader in mentored undergraduate research.

Undergraduate research is one of the central high-impact practices that the AAC&U LEAP initiative defined as leading to engaged learning, as we have long witnessed on our campus. Through the process of engaging in mentored research, students learn valuable skills including communication, goal setting, problem solving and identification, and teamwork. In addition to these more specific skills, students develop greater self-confidence and the ability to overcome obstacles (Lopatto, 2009). These are all skills supportive of entrepreneurial efforts.

Our undergraduate research program involves students across the four years, both during the academic year and during the summer, in research mentored by faculty members. These research experiences happen across all majors and divisions (though are more often found in the sciences), and reach students of all class years. These experiences are by nature problem solving-they are a moment for students and faculty to work together and in collaboration with others on solving key problems.

Therefore one of the central ways we are looking to enhance our I.S. program is by pushing some students and faculty to move from the individual, isolated model of the researcher to a model embracing collaborative, innovative, and risk-taking research. This, too, is the essence of entrepreneurship. Our ultimate hope is that more students may incorporate entrepreneurship into IS, and that others may take their completed I.S. to the next level by creating and actualizing an entrepreneurship plan based on their I.S. work.

2) *Bringing Theory to Practice*

A related initiative is to help our students learn to translate the theoretical work within their disciplines to the practical applications within their lives. This initiative states that:

We will increase opportunities for students to connect theory and practice through campus life and "real world" projects and experiences that strengthen the quality of student learning.

This involves helping our students take their experiences at Wooster, in particular their Independent Study work, and apply them to the "real world." We recognize that early models of learning within the liberal arts that separate the theoretical from the "practical" do

not match the realities of the world now where students need to be able to innovate quickly, and where learning happens through "doing."

Some of the best learning our students do is through entrepreneurial thinking and activity. Entrepreneurial experiences, particularly in the form of internships, provide students with the opportunity to bring theory to practice and to learn through hands-on experience.

3) Student Educational Planning and Advising

Finally, we are developing a more robust advising system for students building on models of developmental advising:

We will build upon the strong student-faculty and student-staff relationships that occur at Wooster to develop a distinctive program, uniquely Wooster's, based on the principles of Developmental Advising, which will encourage students to develop a clear sense of purpose in their educational program.

Although we have generally done a good job in academic advising, we recognize that too many of our students are simply "going through the motions" when planning their educational careers. We hope to build upon Wooster's strong student-faculty and student-staff relationships and develop a robust, holistic educational planning and advising program. We hope to bring a sense of intentionality to students planning for their four college years and beyond. This program will be uniquely Wooster's but will be based on the principles of developmental advising, which encourage students to develop a clear sense of purpose in their educational programs. An integrated Educational Planning and Advising Center (EPAC) to house this new program is a high priority and construction of the space will be completed by Fall, 2012.

This Center will integrate, coordinate, and expand the activities of the College's existing advising resources. Unlike traditional advising centers that focus solely on assisting with students' course selections, our Center will bring together faculty advisors and Student Affairs and Academic Affairs staff who will provide a more holistic advising approach for our students. EPAC will encourage students at Wooster to become passionately engaged in their education and will empower them to make more informed and intentional academic, professional, and personal choices.

We see entrepreneurship as playing a key role in this process. Entrepreneurial ventures provide students with the ability to connect what they are learning in the classroom with potential careers. Through the process of advising we ask students to think carefully about how the pieces of their education, including summers, fit in with their goals and passions. Internships and other entrepreneurial experiences are an important part of this process. By locating this aspect of the entrepreneurship program in EPAC, we can take advantage of the synergistic relationships with several academic support offices including the career services. So, in addition to the space for entrepreneurship activities in the Burton

D. Morgan building, we will lift up the presence of entrepreneurship on our campus by having an office for the program in the heart of the campus in EPAC. Because the office is co-located with offices for advising, internships, and career services, and near the registrar's office, students will have the maximum opportunity to "bump into" the possibilities that our entrepreneurship program offers. Once students become aware of the program, they will be directed to further entrepreneurship activities in Morgan's think tank and project room.

Future Directions for Entrepreneurship

Using the lessons learned as a result of the Kauffman Campus Initiative, the College of Wooster has designed a sustainable entrepreneurship program that fits the College history and mission. The importance of faculty involvement, a supportive infrastructure, and integration of entrepreneurship into Wooster's culture were all given careful consideration in developing plans for the future. First, faculty were heavily involved in developing a strategic plan that included three initiatives related to entrepreneurship that faculty are currently involved in implementing. Secondly, a supporting infrastructure, the Educational Planning and Advising Center, has been created that includes entrepreneurship under its umbrella. And finally, assessment of the entrepreneurship program has guided college-wide discussions that have led to a better understanding of the role of entrepreneurship in Wooster's liberal arts environment.

As a result of this more careful integration with the College's mission and strategic planning, we see our entrepreneurship program moving in the following directions:

- Student selection of topics and collaborative, innovative approaches relevant to entrepreneurship for Wooster's signature Senior Independent Study (I.S.) program. Some students may wish to take their completed I.S. to the next level by creating and actualizing an entrepreneurship plan based on their I.S. work. For such students, a mentored experience as an Entrepreneurship Fellow would provide the appropriate next step. With external funding, post-graduate fellowships would provide modest funding to support students to implement I.S. projects in the year following graduation.
- Continuation of co-curricular activities that strengthen and expand the current student initiatives such as "popcorn sessions" and Idea Competitions that led to the development and implementation of student ideas.
- Continued development of a robust internship program that includes opportunities for students to put their liberal arts skills of problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, and communication to work in a practical context involving entrepreneurship.

- Creation of opportunities for those students who desire to become entrepreneurs to practice their skills for developing a business in a safe environment, where failure is part of learning, and to receive advice from entrepreneurs in the region. Access to such mentors may continue for young alumni who are beginning entrepreneurial careers.
- Referrals to the Entrepreneurship program from the Educational Planning and Advising Center for students who have or might develop an interest in entrepreneurship, as part of an intentional academic plan.

Conclusion

We have accomplished many of our original goals in that Entrepreneurship has truly flowered in unexpected ways at the College of Wooster. Those early efforts have given us an important sense of where our greatest energies are, and what kinds of ideas are possible on our campus. We are now at a moment where we can be far more intentional and directed in our efforts, and can move forward again to build an even more productive program. Through difficult and at times painful reflections and planning, we have a better sense now of how Entrepreneurship fits within our mission and culture, and where it can have the greatest impact for our students by providing opportunities to put their ideas to work in the world.

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