Engagement: Center for the Advancement of Entrepreneurship Helps Turn Ideas into Business

Tiffany Roney
Kansas State University

Follow this and additional works at: http://newprairiepress.org/seek
Part of the Higher Education Commons

Recommended Citation
Roney, Tiffany (2017) "Engagement: Center for the Advancement of Entrepreneurship Helps Turn Ideas into Business," Seek: Vol. 7: Iss. 1.

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by New Prairie Press. It has been accepted for inclusion in Seek by an authorized administrator of New Prairie Press. For more information, please contact cads@k-state.edu.
New businesses are popping up across Kansas with the help of Kansas State University’s Center for the Advancement of Entrepreneurship. The center, housed in the College of Business Administration, provides entrepreneurship education and opportunities to prospective entrepreneurs across campus and the state. Annually, it provides:

- More than 800 hours of research support for businesses started by K-State students.
- 240 hours of mentoring by entrepreneurial alumni for students.
- Thousands of dollars in cash and in-kind prizes for Kansas high schools and Kansas Board of Regents institutions. Their business ideas are evaluated by a panel of judges. In 2016, more than $10,000 in cash prizes was awarded to six winning teams.
- 280 hours of research support for businesses started in Kansas.
- 480 hours of research support for businesses started by K-State alumni.
- 140 hours of research support for businesses started by K-State faculty.

The center’s statewide outreach programs include:

- The Kansas Entrepreneurship Challenge and the Launch a Business competition. New businesses are popping up across Kansas with the help of Kansas State University’s Center for the Advancement of Entrepreneurship.
- Launch a Business accepts the top applicants for a five-week intensive program in which entrepreneurs engage with students, faculty and alumni to refine and improve their ideas. Participants present their pitches at a public launch party at the end of the program. In 2015, 14 high-potential startups in Kansas competed for thousands of dollars in cash prizes.
- The Kansas Entrepreneurship Challenge is for future entrepreneurs from Kansas high schools and Kansas Board of Regents institutions. Their business ideas are evaluated by a panel of judges. In 2016, more than $10,000 in cash prizes was awarded to six winning teams.
- Entrepreneurship education and opportunities to prospective entrepreneurs across campus and the state. Annually, it provides:
- More than 800 hours of research support for businesses started by K-State students.
- 240 hours of mentoring by entrepreneurial alumni for students.
- Thousands of dollars in cash and in-kind prizes for Kansas high schools and Kansas Board of Regents institutions. Their business ideas are evaluated by a panel of judges. In 2016, more than $10,000 in cash prizes was awarded to six winning teams.
- 280 hours of mentoring by entrepreneurial alumni for students.
- Thousands of dollars in cash and in-kind prizes for Kansas high schools and Kansas Board of Regents institutions. Their business ideas are evaluated by a panel of judges. In 2016, more than $10,000 in cash prizes was awarded to six winning teams.
- 280 hours of research support for businesses started in Kansas.
- 480 hours of research support for businesses started by K-State alumni.
- 140 hours of research support for businesses started by K-State faculty.

The center’s outreach program, which is designed to engage rural communities in our state,” Jackson said. “We're continually looking for ways to engage rural communities by guiding students with business ideas to start new businesses and connect with growing ventures in rural areas,” Jackson said. “We are finding ways to bridge the gap because it's important to support rural communities in our state.”

The center’s statewide outreach program includes the Kansas Entrepreneurship Challenge and the Launch a Business competition. The Kansas Entrepreneurship Challenge is for future entrepreneurs from Kansas high schools and Kansas Board of Regents institutions. Their business ideas are evaluated by a panel of judges. In 2016, more than $10,000 in cash prizes was awarded to six winning teams.

Launch a Business accepts the top applicants for a five-week intensive program in which entrepreneurs engage with students, faculty and alumni to refine and improve their ideas. Participants present their pitches at a public launch party at the end of the program. In 2015, 14 high-potential startups in Kansas competed for thousands of dollars in cash prizes.

Jackson said the center hosts these events because it takes K-State’s land-grant mission seriously.

“We’re continually looking for ways to engage rural communities by guiding students with business ideas to start new businesses and connect with growing ventures in rural areas,” Jackson said. “We are finding ways to bridge the gap because it’s important to support rural communities in our state.”

During the Kansas Cheif's leadership program, the Kansas Board of Regents implemented a one-stop student services, which is now known as the K-State One Stop. The program has helped to streamline the admissions process and improve retention rates.

“By aligning our business and public sectors, this program is designed to attract and retain talented individuals who wish to make a positive impact on our state,” Jackson said. “Through collaboration between the center and the Kansas Board of Regents, we can ensure that our students have access to the resources they need to succeed.”

In the emerging industry of unmanned aircraft systems, or UAS, Andi Meyer is determined to make the Kansas State Polytechnic’s unmanned aircraft program a go-to hub for the technology’s advancement.

When the UAS program was established in 2007 on the Polytechnic Campus in Salina, Meyer was studying mechanical engineering at Wichita State University. But living and learning in a city dubbed the “Air Capital of the World” made aeroplane impossible to avoid, and it was aviation-curated experiences that brought Meyer where she is today as research program manager of the Applied Aviation Research Center at Kansas State Polytechnic.

Meyer worked part time at Spirit Aerosystems while earning her bachelor’s degree. The Wichita-based aerospace manufacturer chose her to compete in a national airplane design challenge. Meyer sought advice for the contest from an expert at the National Institute of Aviation Research and was offered a job on the spot. She worked on translational research at the institute, merging aerospace technologies with biomedical engineering. At one point, her assistance was needed on a collaboration between the facility and Kansas State Polytechnic’s UAS program.

Meyer’s responsibilities are many, but creating a hub for UAS exploration — design, integration, flight testing and data analysis — is her No. 1 goal. She believes the center can be a principal provider of new ideas and solutions for the unmanned frontier because of the program’s talent, experts on the Manhattan campus and K-State’s connection with other universities and companies.

“Without K-State State Polytechnic’s UAS research program to be known for pre-eminent problem solving,” Meyer said. “Commercial applications are still in the early stages, and the regulatory pathway is murky. Applications of this technology are yet to be discovered and tested. If we can bring together the skills and passions of our [staff with the bright minds of various departments in Manhattan and industry stakeholders], this program can be the center of all.”

Meyer’splan is working. The UAS research program has been awarded four grants from the Federal Aviation Administration in the last two years. Industry collaboration also is thriving. The program teamed up with Precisair Hawk, a drone data and safety company headquartered in Raleigh, North Carolina, to calculate an achievable level of safety for drone pilot response time and closure of action when confronted by a manned intruder. The program also is working with Westar Energy to demonstrate how unmanned aircraft can propel the electric utility industry forward through inspection and maintenance methodologies.

Meyer says the UAS research program is typically involved in multiple large projects at a time while balancing numerous small ones, each in collaboration with the aerospace department on the Manhattan campus to provide data collection over fields throughout the growing season. This wide variety of projects is all according to plan.

“We’re here to support entrepreneurs, whether we’re teaching students who want to start businesses, pairing students with community mentors or grouping K-State’s resources to encourage new entrepreneurs in Kansas,” Jackson said.

Leveraging K-State’s resources to encourage new entrepreneurs, Jackson said, is “all about leveraging K-State’s capital — intellectual, financial and relational — to benefit Kansas’ economy and citizens.”