Making Entrepreneurship Education Accessible to Undergraduate Students in all Majors

INITIATIVE

The Certificate in Entrepreneurship and Innovation Program was first offered to undergraduate students in the fall of 2005. Like Discovery Park, it was designed to involve all academic colleges/schools and be highly interdisciplinary and collaborative. The behind-the-scenes work done to implement the program has indeed established stronger relationships with the colleges, involved numerous faculty across the campus, and created stronger connections between students and Discovery Park.

More specifically, the Certificate in Entrepreneurship and Innovation Program is an academic credential in entrepreneurship earned through a series of five courses and experiential programs combining textbook theory with real-world practice, teaching students the fundamentals of market analysis, financial statements, funding sources, leadership and team building. By the time students earn their entrepreneurship certificate, they will have developed the confidence to succeed in business on their own terms.

IMPACT

The Certificate in Entrepreneurship and Innovation Program is transforming undergraduate education for many at Purdue by turbo charging student degrees. Interest and enrollment from across the colleges has surpassed expectations. To date, over 4500 students have completed ENTR 20000 Introduction to Entrepreneurship and Innovation and nearly 1300 students have received their Certificate in Entrepreneurship and Innovation.

- An annual Elevator Pitch Competition for students, faculty, staff and Purdue Research Park entrepreneurs was an outgrowth of certificate program courses
- Participating students have received national attention and awards
- Award winning faculty mentors
- A student organization called Purdue’ Entrepreneurship and Innovation Club was founded by Certificate Program students

Exit surveys given at program completion indicate that:

- 85% agreed or strongly agreed that the Certificate Program improved their analytical, communication, and presentation skills
- 94% agreed or strongly agreed that it improved their ability to evaluate ideas
- 90% agreed or strongly agreed that it increased their confidence that they could be an entrepreneur
- 23% reported they are currently involved in a venture of some kind
- 81% reported they are likely or very likely to become involved in an entrepreneurial venture in the future
- 96% reported they believe the skills and knowledge gained will be useful in their future careers

Qualitative responses to the question, “What did you like best about the program?”

- “The inspiration I received from my first ENTR class.”
- “Being able to gain knowledge outside of my major.”
- “I loved sitting in a multidisciplinary classroom with a diverse group of students.”
- “It made me think in new creative ways.”
- “I liked the positivity and support surrounding the process of becoming an entrepreneur.”
- “All of the extra resources and events.”
- “The atmosphere of a classroom containing all driven motivated individuals.”
- “The Capstone Course - Level of interaction with very successful entrepreneurs.”
- “The most beneficial fact to me is coming out of the program with a business plan in hand.”
- “The wide variety of outside speakers that shared different ideas.”
- “The confidence I have now knowing the tools I need to start a new business, more than just my passion to start a business.”