

Michigan State University

Undergraduate Entrepreneurship Strategic Plan

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Prepared by Neil Kane, Director of Undergraduate Entrepreneurship

Introduction

The pursuit of a culture of entrepreneurship at MSU was initiated by Provost June Youatt in late spring 2014. Dr. Youatt envisioned an expansion of entrepreneurship education for undergraduates into one that would eventually include all MSU colleges and involve the undergraduate curriculum, co-curricular activities and experiential opportunities.

Timeline

- May 2014: Undergraduate Entrepreneurship Roundup convened by Provost Youatt and Associate Provost Doug Estry.
- September 2014: Faculty committee publishes a white paper called *Creating a Culture of Entrepreneurship* which proposes that MSU create an integrative culture of entrepreneurship—a “multidimensional and multidisciplinary entrepreneurship ecosystem where success and inquiry become contagious...”
- July 2015: Neil Kane hired as MSU’s first Director of Undergraduate Entrepreneurship.
- January 2016: Launch of undergraduate Minor in Entrepreneurship and Innovation (E&I).
- April 2016: Launch of <http://eship.msu.edu> web portal.
- September 2016: Launch of undergraduate Entrepreneurship and Innovation Experiences Option program.
- January 2017: Undergraduate Entrepreneurship Roundup II convened by Provost Youatt and Neil Kane.
- August 2017: Launch of Social Innovation Track in the Minor in Entrepreneurship and Innovation.
- August 2017: [Land Grant Goods](#)—MSU’s first student-run company—launched.
- August 2017: Undergraduate Seminar Course in entrepreneurship offered.
- December 2017: Over 500 undergraduate students from thirteen colleges representing 89 unique majors are enrolled in the E&I Minor. Over 1,000 unique students enrolled in E&I core courses (not counting electives). Including electives the total was about 2,000.
- February 2018: Education abroad offerings in entrepreneurship made available to MSU students.
- August 2018: Visiting scholar from Israel coming to MSU to teach entrepreneurship courses with an emphasis on Israel as the “Startup Nation”.

Narrative

The traditional career path is an anachronism. 40%-50% of students entering college in 2018 will be self-employed or will freelance at some point in their careers.^{1,2} Developing an entrepreneurial mindset (see next) is a critically valuable 21st century skill for our graduates to have. Those that learn it well will have outsized success in their careers—no matter what they choose to do.

The term entrepreneurial mindset embodies a set of cross-functional life and professional skills that describe someone who is innovative, resourceful and creates value.³ The entrepreneurial mindset can be applied in many contexts. It applies to employees in large, hierarchical entities, and it applies to community organizers, academics, inventors, doctors, politicians, musicians and public servants. In no way is it unique to startup companies, and it is equally relevant to those who see themselves as intrapreneurs in established organizations or who self-identify as social change agents.

Entrepreneurism is experiential. It must be practiced to be learned. Traditional instruction can teach the basics, but just as you can't learn to swim at the library, you can't learn entrepreneurship unless you have experienced it. Accordingly, experiential opportunities will play an increasing role in MSU's entrepreneurship curriculum over the coming years.

As MSU's signature entrepreneurship program, the Minor in Entrepreneurship and Innovation, is entering its fifth full academic semester, we have a set aside a good amount of time in 2018 to fine tune our offerings. As of this writing we are undertaking a comprehensive curriculum review accompanied by an assessment plan. We plan to augment this with a scalable mentoring program that bonds our alumni to the success of student entrepreneurship projects.

Mission of MSU Undergraduate Entrepreneurship

An integrative culture of entrepreneurial thinking and pursuits that are university-wide and student-centered and which engage a broad spectrum of faculty and staff.

Vision

The quality and reputation of the Spartan entrepreneurial ecosystem attracts students to MSU. Here, success and inquiry are contagious and ideas, products and ventures are realized.

Goals

- MSU's undergraduate entrepreneurship programs ranked in the top 25 nationally by an independent ranking organization like *The Princeton Review*.
- Students begin to choose to come to MSU **because** of the entrepreneurship programs.
- 2,000 "engaged" students per year. "Engaged" here means students that are on the entrepreneurial path at MSU and are participating in a non-passive way whether by taking courses, working on a business, attending a Startup Weekend or enrolling in the Minor in Entrepreneurship and Innovation.

¹ *Intuit 2020 Report: Twenty Trends That Will Shape The Next Decade*, October 2010.

² http://www.huffingtonpost.com/evin-joseph/the-new-age-of-freelancin_b_8849482.html

³ <https://entrepreneurship.msu.edu/the-entrepreneurial-mindset/>

Strategy

- Position entrepreneurship coursework and education as a way to develop a broad set of life and professional skills that will benefit students regardless of their chosen endeavor. It is relevant to almost all students, not just those who intend to start their own company. In short, focus on skills, not startups.
- Strongly promote and encourage networking among the cohort of undergraduate entrepreneurship students. We want students to work together and to stay engaged once they graduate. And then to give back to students a few years behind them.
- Communicate the importance of developing the entrepreneurial mindset through stories from successful entrepreneurs—especially young alumni.
- Democratize entrepreneurship by promoting and encouraging participation from all colleges at MSU. Each college/department is welcome, and encouraged, to customize or tweak our programs to suit their needs and the needs of their students. Colleges should think of our centralized programs as “white label” offerings that should be tailored.
- Promote social entrepreneurship for those students who are passionate about solving problems and helping people but don’t identify with the goal of starting a business.
- For those students who aspire to start a business, show them that doing so while still a full-time student is a superior way to have the experience. It preserves all the gain while greatly reducing the downside risk as compared to launching a business after graduating.

Foundations

The successful execution of the strategy and realization of the mission depends on putting several foundational elements in place. Namely:

- Adherence to our [Declaration of Principles](#).
- Coordination and centralized management among the entrepreneurship assets at MSU.
- Consistent messaging and branding across the different MSU assets that touch entrepreneurship.
- Provide outstanding service levels to students in the program.
- Academic programs
 - [Minor in Entrepreneurship and Innovation](#) (E&I)
 - General Entrepreneurship Track
 - Social Innovation Track
 - [E&I Experiences Options](#) program
- Superior outreach
 - Audiences
 - Primary Audience: Students
 - Secondary Audience: Faculty
 - Tertiary Audience: Advisors
 - Quaternary Audiences: Alumni, Mentors, Parents
- Create a footprint for MSU Entrepreneurship in downtown Detroit.
- E-advisors (at least one faculty or staff member in each department)

- Engagement of alumni in student projects and activities
- Accurate measurement of participation and attendance at events and in programs.

Resources

The development of the entrepreneurship and innovation programs depend on a broad array of resources, most of which already exist.

- [Spartan Innovations](#): Helps create sustainable startup ventures from MSU inventions and creative works.
- [The Hatch](#): Campus incubator
- Gaynor Entrepreneurship Lab (to completed in the new Business Pavilion in 2019)
- [MSU Startup Bus](#)
- [Red Cedar Ventures](#): Venture capital fund
- Entrepreneurship Roadmap: A graphical portrayal of the assortment of opportunities available to students on a continuum ranging from “light participation” all the way to starting a business (see below).
- Faculty advisory committee
 - Selected faculty and associate deans (in place)
- Mentoring Program and Accountability Circles (to be completed)
- Entrepreneurship Info Tables: Placed throughout the school year at various campus buildings.
- Student associations
 - [MSU Entrepreneur’s Association](#)
 - [Women in Entrepreneurship](#)
 - China Entrepreneur Network
 - [OptimizeMSU](#) (Social Entrepreneurs)
 - MSU MBA Entrepreneurship Association

Programs

- [Broad Business Model Competition](#)
- [Conquer Accelerator](#)
- [Greenlight Business Model Competition](#)
- [Innovate State speaker series](#)
- [SpartaHack Hackathon](#)
- [Startup Weekend](#) (2x/year)
- Entrepreneur’s Pocket Guide Workshops
- Entrepreneurial Boot Camp
- Staff Office Hours
- Spartans for Startups: Small consultancy projects with small businesses in Michigan.

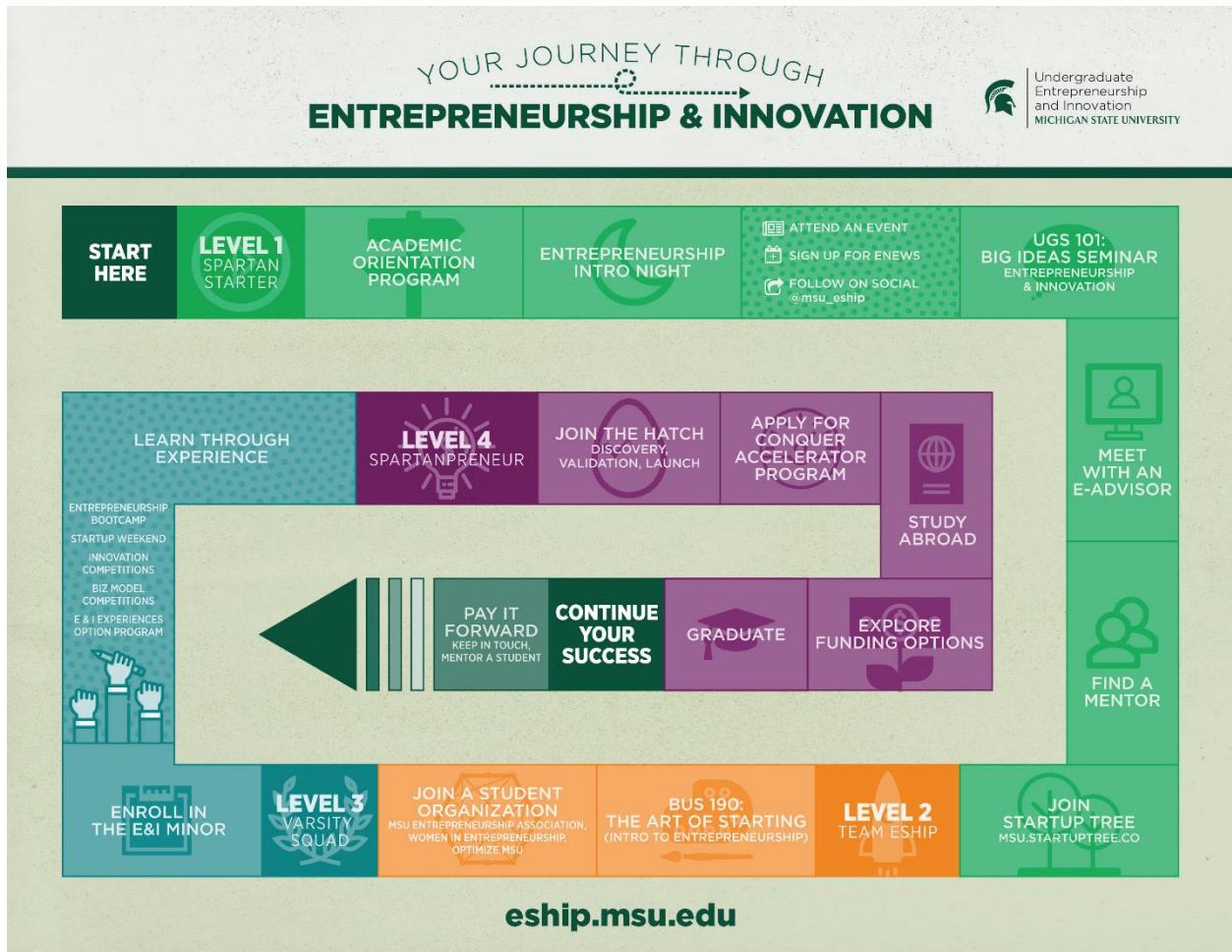


Figure 1 Entrepreneurship Roadmap

Initiatives

Our immediate focus is to fine tune and calibrate the programs we already have in place. The following are focus areas for the E&I team in 2018.

- Increase enrollment/participation in the E&I Minor. Goal: 750 students in 2018.
- Increase enrollment/participation in our social entrepreneurship programs. Goal: 150 students in 2018.
- Develop a scalable and effective mentoring program. Goal: Launch a pilot program with 25 mentors in the Fall 2018 semester.
- Undertake a comprehensive review of the MSU entrepreneurship curriculum. In addition, create an assessment vehicle.
- Continue to refine the student run business Land Grant Goods into something that is financially sustainable.
- Create “roadmaps” for students based on their career interests to help them navigate the myriad choices that are available to them.
- Integrate the operations of the various campus units working on entrepreneurship (*i.e.*, MSU Undergraduate Entrepreneurship, Spartan Innovations and the Burgess Institute for

Entrepreneurship and Innovation) into one cohesive unit with common management, common budget and a single brand.

- Develop an affordable way to have a footprint and presence in Detroit (most likely through a co-working space).
- Devote more resources to the success of startup companies that are launched by students. Help to create more going concerns and viable businesses as opposed to just ideas.
- Develop comprehensive information, in a database, about startup companies formed by alumni.
- Create a diversity plan for increasing the gender and ethnic diversity of students who participate in the MSU entrepreneurship ecosystem.

Future initiatives

There is no shortage of ideas about where the program can go once the foundations are in place.

- New E&I courses going deeper into the subject matter
- Themed E&I coursework:
 - Social venturing
 - Technology entrepreneurship
 - Venture capital and startup financing
 - Digital entrepreneurship
 - Food entrepreneurship
 - Sustainability
 - Innovation processes
- All campus social venture project
- MSU-hosted conference on social entrepreneurship
- Social Entrepreneur in Residence
- Entrepreneur in Residence in each college
- Student-run venture fund
- International student internships
- Student athlete entrepreneurship programming
- A program on intrapreneurship
- Field trips to entrepreneurship centers of excellence like Silicon Valley.
- A faculty development program that teaches MSU faculty the principles of Lean Startup and how to teach entrepreneurship...in a one- or two-day bootcamp at MSU.

Issues

Success in developing the E&I programs at MSU will cause some stresses. Namely:

- Course capacity
- Sufficient faculty depth
- Scaling the E&I Experiences Option program

To successfully execute on all fronts, a gift or donation that underwrites MSU undergraduate entrepreneurship is eagerly sought.

Contributors

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