

**REPORTING ON INTERNATIONALIZATION
AT COMMUNITY COLLEGES**

ISSUE FOUR

*At the Intersection of Entrepreneurship
and Globalization*

MICHIGAN STATE
U N I V E R S I T Y



**Community Colleges for
International Development, Inc.**
Local Access * Global Opportunities

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At the Intersection of Entrepreneurship and Globalization

The United States rests somewhat comfortably at or near the top of most rankings with respect to entrepreneurship ecosystems. This should not be a surprise; the U.S. emerged from fearless pioneers, inventors, self-made men and women, and a firm belief in second chances. By extension, it's only natural that U.S. institutions of higher education address the training and preparation needs of existing and aspiring entrepreneurs. Providing a safe and supportive laboratory for minds to collaborate and create is a luxury that reflects the nation's values and drives the nation's economy. Countries concerned with expanding economic opportunities and prosperity at both per capita and national levels recognize the value of a supportive entrepreneurship ecosystem.

Entrepreneurship education at the community college level addresses the needs of a range of stakeholders, most of whom seek assistance in launching or expanding locally based businesses. Students don't traditionally major in entrepreneurship but rather gain exposure to relevant skills in a course or a part of courses in their majors. Even more common at community colleges is that entrepreneurship is housed within the non-credit side of the house with the Small Business Development Center, catering to the needs of community members seeking to incubate a business plan and benefit from the cost effective support services and technical expertise of the Center.

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The National Association of Community College Entrepreneurship (NACCE) supports its approximately 300 members in their efforts to promote entrepreneurial thinking on campuses and to help colleges support the entrepreneurship ecosystem in their communities. Even as a national association, NACCE does attract some interest from Canada and a few other countries, but the majority are U.S. based and interested in how to best serve their local constituents.

But how does one define "local" today? Charged with preparing students for success in the 21st century economy, is it possible to not consider the global context in any curriculum? Based on a review of the typical entrepreneurship courses and certificates offered through community colleges, and on the many quality resources offered by NACCE, there is surprisingly little overlap

between entrepreneurship and global education at U.S. community colleges. In light of globalization's impact on the economy, should this be acceptable? Can we grow resilient entrepreneurs in a vacuum?

The following are examples from colleges that embrace this overlap.

International Competition in Study Abroad

Based on the importance of understanding markets, consumer behavior, and investors, as well as the need for creative and innovative thinking, it's surprising that entrepreneurship and study abroad do not go hand in hand at most colleges. Exposure to new cultures and the ability to gain a fresh perspective would seem to

make study abroad a very attractive option for anyone seeking to carve out a niche in today's market.

Heidi Hutchins at Maricopa's GateWay College in Arizona is a strong advocate for this approach. As business faculty, Business Programs Director, and Study Abroad Program Director, she leads international programs that provide her students valuable experience working with their peers in other parts of the world that rival or surpass the U.S. in a number of the world rankings for entrepreneur-friendly environments, such as Japan and South Korea.

While in Japan, students meet Fukuoka City government officials, who provide an overview of entrepreneurship support and efforts, which includes a special entrepreneurship zone that provides tax incentives for new businesses. Students visit the Startup Café, which provides information, consultation, classes, and seminars for those interested in starting a business. They then visit the City of Fukuoka Incubator and meet with entrepreneurs in the early stages of business development. From

there, students have the opportunity to mingle with business leaders who have "graduated" from the incubator and are now successfully operating.

Students also have the opportunity to participate in a business Startup Weekend (<https://startupweekend.org>), an event held in cities across the globe that bring together highly motivated developers, business managers, startup enthusiasts, marketing gurus, graphic artists, and more for a three-day event to build communities, companies, and projects. According to Hutchins, it is an amazing opportunity to connect with other passionate and skilled individuals, and perhaps even find a co-founder or two to transform an idea into reality. Recently, at this particular event in Fukuoka, two GateWay students, one an automotive technology student and the other a business transfer student, were on the winning team. Their team's plan was for a mobile phone App called, "DoctorBookings.com" aimed at foreigners in Fukuoka, Japan who want to see a physician who speaks their native language. Students developed a business model, conducted market research,



Students from GateWay Community College and SeoulTech with Heidi Hutchins, Faculty and Business Programs (in blue) pose for a group photo at the Creative Economy Leader Venture Complex in Seoul, South Korea

interviewed potential customers, and created a prototype of the app during the Friday–Sunday event with students from Vietnam, Malaysia, and Japan. As students worked together, they learned about the culture, society, educational and employment systems, and roles of women in society and in the workplaces of each other’s countries. They also made new friends.

While in South Korea, students had an opportunity to learn about Rapid Prototyping Technology at the Seoul National University of Science and Technology (SeoulTech). Students first learned how to use AutoDesk 1-2-3 Design 3-D modeling software, finding it a much more flexible and less expensive way to create product prototypes. This technology is being used for a wide range of products from children’s toys to full-size cars, and is even used to design and build houses in China.

Another part of the experience in South Korea included tours of a “Maker Space,” and had a chance to see and work with innovative new products that are part of Korea’s President’s Creative Economy initiative to encourage innovation and entrepreneurship. “South Korea is an excellent place to study entrepreneurship,” noted Hutchins. “Since 2013, the Korean government has invested \$2 billion into its start-up ecosystem to support entrepreneurship.” South Korea held a world-wide Start-Up challenge and the winning teams have the opportunity to gain support in the newly created which includes computers, a kitchen area, and even bunk beds and showers so entrepreneurs can continue working without needing to leave the complex.

Students and faculty alike benefited from not only seeing but also participating in this entrepreneurship ecosystem. The experience has prompted GateWay to develop its own Maker Space in central Phoenix.

However, not all world regions provide fertile ground for entrepreneurship growth. The Middle East, for example, provides a stark contrast yet an equally valuable learning experience for U.S. community colleges, as occurred in partnerships supported by USAID’s Higher Education for Development organization.



“Funky Monkeys” team members interview students in Seoul about product design for their multiple lipstick case concept before creating a 3-D prototype

Entrepreneurship and International Development

Higher Education for Development (HED), a now defunct arm of USAID, provided funding to support entrepreneurship partnerships opportunities between higher education institutions in the U.S., Middle East, and North Africa. The size, scope, and funding level of the grants were very much in line with the capacity of community colleges, generally in the \$250,000 range.

Eastern Iowa Community College District

One of the winning grant recipient teams included Al Quds College (AQC) in Jordan and Eastern Iowa Community College District (EICCD). The initial goal of the grant was to develop a dual degree in entrepreneurship, but this plan morphed into one that resulted in the creation of a three-class entrepreneurship credential for both colleges. There had not been a big demand for entrepreneurship programming at EICCD, yet a number of students in career and technical education (CTE) programs follow a natural path toward opening their own businesses sometime in the future.

Since this project was completed in 2013, both colleges have made some adjustments to their courses. Al Quds reduced the three course certificate into one single course that is required by all students. EICCD still has the certificate available, but sees very few students enroll in it. Dr. Jeremy Pickard, currently a campus Dean for one of EICCD’s campuses, was the senior international officer at the time of this project. EICCD had previous experience in international partnerships and was interested in expanding its entrepreneurship offering to students, so it developed a series of workshops with faculty and administrators at Al Quds to build these entrepreneurship courses.

The process of establishing the certificate in Jordan revealed some of the challenges to entrepreneurship that exist in the Middle East and in risk averse countries in general. In these economies, success is usually defined as an engineering or medical degree from an elite university followed by a job with the government. Often such jobs are the only ones that offer any sense of stability and decent pay. Therefore, any deviation from this educational and career pathway is not acceptable to most parents of “able” students. Within the grant project, EICCD worked with AQC to run a series of entrepreneurship competitions that included bringing in very high profile business leaders and investors to help with the perception of entrepreneurship as a career pathway. Despite this, and despite one student winning approximately \$10,000 in a highly publicized business plan competition, one that was even supported by Queen of Jordan, his parents did not support his plan to leave school and create his own business. In such cultures parents have more control in the life choices of their adult children and it is highly unlikely a child would go against his or her parents’ wishes, particularly due to the high failure rate of new businesses. The social and economic risks are just too great.

So while the direct positive outcomes from this project included a new set of courses in entrepreneurship at both institutions, a greater understanding of each other’s cultures, new cross cultural relationships, and the experience of working in this global

environment has helped build EICCD’s capacity in other areas. The act of working with AQC to establish an entrepreneurial mindset was valuable to the EICCD participants as well. Unfortunately, numerous leadership changes throughout the project continually challenged progress, and momentum is heavily tied to the support from leadership. For this reason, it is vital that there be multiple champions on all sides and an effort to institutionalize whatever improvements are developed. Dr. Pickard has seen that this experience positions EICCD well for other projects and gives them a competitive edge for other grants that require international experience. In fact, EICCD was contacted recently to host twenty university participants from Indonesia who will go through the entrepreneurship workshops EICCD created with AQC. These activities usually result in additional opportunities and partnerships, not to mention compensation for the training the college will provide.

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Washtenaw Community College (WCC)

WCC in Ann Arbor, Michigan received a grant from HED to expand on the work the EICCD began with AQC. The focus of the grant was to establish a student incubator at ACQ. WCC’s interest in participating in this project was to engage more faculty from disciplines outside of business and entrepreneurship in international and entrepreneurship activities. Rosemary Wilson, Dean of Business at the time, reiterates how important it was to have early and extensive conversations with their Jordanian partners to establish mutual and benefits that are feasible with the allotted funding. To this end, the shared goal included developing toolkits for faculty to use to integrate entrepreneurial thinking into their curriculum. With a team of faculty from primarily CTE areas, Wilson led the team through a series of workshops and meetings to develop these toolkits. While the cultural context for the WCC and AQC was quite different, they found common

challenges in overcoming the stigma associated with being part of the community college sector. Entrepreneurs depend on networking and access to funding, and finding ways to provide this to students who are not necessarily well connected or wealthy required a lot of work on both ends.

The toolkits were completed, but Wilson says the most powerful outcome of the experience was the level of faculty engagement back home. The team that participated in the program was not necessarily entrepreneurship experts, yet they worked as a group to be innovative and enterprising. As they helped the AQC faculty with their curriculum, they discovered ways to improve their own. As a result, some completely revised their curriculum while others found ways to incorporate entrepreneurship activities within an existing curriculum. Perhaps the greatest evidence of a mind shift came when the college began its strategic planning process and, as usual, asked for faculty participation. Each faculty member that participated in the Jordan project volunteered to be part of this process, as they felt so strongly that entrepreneurship should be integrated in every area of the college. They also wanted to establish an entrepreneurship center on campus. According to Wilson, this would have never happened without the HED funded project.

Wilson adds that there was a definite human element that impacted the participants as a result of working on this project. Most of them had never been to the middle east or even out of the U.S., and the fact that they have been there and made lasting relationships with people in Jordan has changed the way they feel about people who are often misunderstood and lumped into the category of “terrorists.” The Muslim and Arab population in Michigan is large and growing, so such experiences can only help in improving relations at home as well. Wilson was also pleased to see that the excitement and energy from the participating faculty infected others in their departments, sparking more interest in future projects of this nature.



At the 2013 launch of the USAID/HED funded “Quds Business Incubator (QBI) for Entrepreneurs,” executed in cooperation with Washtenaw Community College in Michigan

Social Entrepreneurship

Young people in particular are seeking to correct an imbalance in the world by promoting social good while being fiscally sound. This generation is more likely to become loyal to companies and products that not only refrain from harming the earth but that channel funds toward eradicating poverty, disease, corruption, and other global challenges. Community colleges could capitalize on this desire to make a difference and guide students through appropriate skills training and global exposure to equip them to succeed. Global service learning and volunteer abroad programs are becoming more prevalent on the higher education landscape, with a host of solid organizations available to match able bodies, minds, and hearts with projects that improve livelihoods and do no harm. Social entrepreneurs typically tackle wide scale problems that require an understanding of global issues.

By partnering with Michigan-based Utopia Foundation, Northwestern Michigan College accounting faculty Jane Zlojutro led a group of students in May 2016 to Ecuador to work with a small village in putting their various business start-up and



Northwestern Michigan College Business Faculty Jane Zlojutro with students in Yunguilla, Ecuador



Northwestern Michigan College students getting acquainted with llamas in Ecuador

construction skills to work for a restaurant in the village of Yunguilla. An unanticipated outcome of the program was that the students raised enough money to bring the internet to this village, a need discovered by students only upon arrival. Establishing connectivity was a game changer for this village that depends deeply on tourism. Zlojutro, who was on her first study abroad experience, says the experience moved them all so greatly that the students have committed to return visits and a continued commitment to working with the local people there, and they continue to communicate virtually. Students were most impacted by the fact that they could use the skills they honed

in college toward something so meaningful in another country, thus building confidence in their own abilities. They also formed lasting bonds with their homestay families who provided an unforgettable cultural immersion and an opportunity to learn or improve their Spanish language skills. The opportunity to participate in an entrepreneurial endeavor in another culture has had an impact on each of the students, and has energized the faculty to start planning for the next year.



Tuned In or Left Out

As businesses and services become more globalized, more natural connections and opportunities may present themselves to faculty and students. For example, while most colleges engage with local Chambers of Commerce, the Global Chamber is a relatively new organization establishing its presence in over 500 metro areas. Membership in the Global Chamber provides access to all 500 chapters and a “warm welcome” to any members seeking to expand operations into other countries. According to the Global Chamber’s executive director in Miami, an international entrepreneur himself: “Strong nations depend on global markets to develop their competitive advantage and to grow through economies of scale. Therefore, developing global mindset and entrepreneurial skills with innovation and leadership will boost the world’s economy. Understanding the interconnectedness in today’s world is essential for our future generations, and it’s up to our educational system to impart this knowledge.”

In establishing or expanding entrepreneurship programs, colleges should ensure they equip students with the level of global awareness necessary to thrive in the local entrepreneurship ecosystem.

SERIES EDITORS

Carol Stax Brown, Ed.D.

Sarah Singer, Ph.D.



MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY

International Business Center

Broad College of Business
645 N. Shaw Ln., Room 7
East Lansing, MI 48824-1121
U S A

PHONE **517.353.4336**
WEB **ibc.msu.edu**
EMAIL **ibc@msu.edu**