INNOVATE UA’S STUDENT INNOVATION, ENTREPRENEURSHIP
AND CAREER SKILLS PROGRAMS

OVERVIEW

The spirit of Innovation and Entrepreneurship are at the heart of the mission of the University of Arizona. And student engagement is a central value the University seeks to deliver to the campus community. Innovate UA sits squarely at the intersection of these two dynamics, and the newly launched organization Innovate UA, currently in the first year of operations, holds as its mission to deliver on these values by “grow(ing) a student lead culture of innovation and entrepreneurship across the entire campus at the University of Arizona.”

Trends in the American economy suggest that the future our current students face will look increasingly different than in past generations. The American economy has long been believed to be driven by “small business”. However, new research by the Kauffman foundation shows that “new business” creation is the key driver of new jobs in the next economy. Kauffman’s research also showed that in the last 30 years, 100% of net job creation in the US came from high growth startups.

As our economy makes this shift from a long history of being “efficiency driven” to a long future of being “innovation driven”, students from all areas of campus will need new skills and experiences to successfully contribute. Innovate UA is delivering on UA’s mission and its commitment to students to prepare them for future success as leaders in the new economy.

OBJECTIVES

The Innovate UA program is designed to develop students who graduate with the key experiences required to demonstrate to employers that they are prepared to help their firms compete in an innovation driven economy. The National Association of Colleges and Employers included the following as key skills employers look for: the ability to work in teams, student leadership, strong communication skills, initiative to solve problems, technical skills, strategic thinking, creativity, and an entrepreneurial mindset.

Annual student Service Fee surveys across all recent years rank “Expanded Career Opportunities” among the top two funding initiatives including 87% in 2014 (74% among grad students). Similarly, “Career based experiential learning and internships” are also among the top 5 at 86% (75% among grad students).

PROGRAMS AND IMPACT

Student services fees will be used to support Innovate UA’s 2015 program of work continuing to deliver and expand innovation and entrepreneurship programming and student engagement. The following the and events to grow a culture of student innovation and entrepreneurship in all corners of campus. Key programs created and run by the Innovate UA team will include 1000 Pitches, UA Hackathon, Startup Weekend and a Student Incubator.

Student services fees will be used to continue, refine and expand Innovate UA’s 2015 student lead program of work, including:

- **Student Leadership Team**: Innovate UA’s “student leadership” model is key to the growth of an authentic and lasting campus-wide culture of innovation and entrepreneurship. The Innovate UA leadership team of directors, organizers and volunteers is made up of students drawn from all corners of campus and ensures that the work of Innovate UA remains relevant to the student body.

- **1000 Pitches Innovation Challenge**: The 1000 Pitches Innovation Challenge is one of Innovate UA’s major programs during the fall semester where students submit short video pitches for innovative solutions or
business ideas and complete for up to $1000 in cash prizes in each in any of nine categories including: Environment, Health, Consumer Products & Small Businesses, University Improvements, Education, Web & Software, Tech & Hardware, Mobile Apps, and Research.

- **Startup Weekend at UA:** The Startup Weekend team operates this weekend-long, hands-on entrepreneurship experience where students work with industry professionals and mentors to find out if a startup ideas are viable.
- **Hack Arizona:** The Hackathon team hosts the UA’s campus-wide hackathon brings together the most talented students for a weekend of experiential innovation learning. Teams build software, hardware and other tech solutions to challenges in key areas including: health, software, hardware, sustainability, and giving back.
- **Innovation & Maker Space:** The iSpace team is working in partnership with UA Libraries and the Digital Humanities program to develop a new Innovation Lab and Maker Space inside the Science and Engineering Library. This space offers an expanding array of programs designed to support student innovation efforts from all across campus.
- **Student Venture Incubator:** The student venture incubator program provides selected student teams with extensive business development and support through idea validation, product development and growth. We partner with the Arizona Center for Innovation to provide participating teams the opportunity to compete for $10,000 in prizes.

Through our first semester, the support provided to Innovate UA by the Student Services Fees have had a significant impact and the funds are being highly leveraged to expand career experiential learning, skills and other opportunities for hundreds of students from all across campus. The 1000 Pitches Challenge completed in October and the University of Arizona finished in the top-five of schools new competing nationally and received more than 350 innovation submissions from hundreds of students. Nine submissions were named as award winners for 2014 and each winner was awarded one of nine $1000 prizes. The Innovation Space is opening in the Science and Engineering Library and will provide resources to hundreds of students including digital media technology, 3D prototyping hardware, and a wide array of training workshops are all being developed and hosted through the space. Up to 100 students will participate in Startup Weekend and hundreds more students will participate in Hack Arizona, UA’s student hackathon. Through the spring, 10-15 student teams will be selected to participate in the Student Venture Incubator and compete to win prizes totaling $10,000 in May.

**FUNDING REQUEST AND SUSTAINABILITY**

We are requesting two years of funding at $48,000 (year 1) and $51,000 (year 2) to fund stipends for the student leadership team, innovation challenge awards, and other program delivery costs. Innovate UA is only partly funded by Student Services Fees. UITS and UA Libraries both provide similar commitments to our programs in the form of matching funding and other resources commitments. Additionally, we are aggressively pursuing outside corporate sponsors for events and programming with anticipated totals of over $25,000 so far.

**ASSESSMENT**

- Students participating in Innovation Challenge including number of innovations pitched, prototyped, developed and launched
- Students participating in entrepreneurship support programs like Startup Weekend and Student Venture Incubator including number of student ventures launched
- Programs offered through (and students participating in) the Innovation & Maker Space
- Number of sponsors, mentors, volunteers