



WHERE TO BEGIN

How social innovation is emerging
across Canadian campuses



Institute for
Community Prosperity



A NOTE FROM MOUNT ROYAL UNIVERSITY

In 2015 Mount Royal University (MRU) was one of many universities across Canada that participated in the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation's RECODE initiative to "disrupt business as usual; to found and grow new social enterprises; to create partnerships across institutional and sectoral boundaries — in short, to 'RECODE' our culture's operating systems in order to achieve a more just, sustainable, and beautiful world."

At MRU's Institute for Community Prosperity, we are helping to create a campus-wide culture of changemaking; one that inspires and empowers students, faculty, staff and alumni to create meaningful change in partnership with communities. This marriage of active citizenship and entrepreneurship - along with a visceral sense that the world can and should be better - must be met with tools to start making a difference. This includes a physical space - a hub - where emerging and seasoned changemakers can connect, learn, dream, plan and engage in high impact initiatives.

This report, prepared by Scaled Purpose, provides an overview of other post-secondaries that have also sought to create a support system for students and community groups involved in changemaking, social entrepreneurship and community innovation. This national and regional context has helped to inform our own direction and we hope there are insights and lessons herein that will help you as you continue to shape and adapt your own co-working spaces, social venture incubators, community R&D labs and other collaborative spaces, whether on or off campus.

Thank you for taking the time to read and reflect on the lessons learned from this Canada and US-wide scan.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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INTRODUCTION AND APPROACH

Across Canada and the USA, universities, colleges, and community hubs are developing programming and services directed towards enabling a culture of social entrepreneurship and catalyzing social innovation. Commissioned by Mount Royal University's (MRU) Institute for Community Prosperity, which is developing social innovation programming in collaboration with the Bissett School of Business and the Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, this report offers a deep dive into models of social innovation hubs across North America that can help inform a comprehensive strategy for MRU and for comparable programs in communities across Canada. With the recent awarding of RECODE funding from the J.W. McConnell Foundation, which funded 18 Canadian universities and colleges, MRU solicited the services of Scaled Purpose to identify foundational stories, key success factors, revenue models, philosophies and approaches, and opportunities for replication at MRU. The findings are widely applicable, particularly for those universities and colleges who have recently received RECODE funding to adapt their programming or launch a whole new program geared towards social entrepreneurship and innovation in their community.

Scaled Purpose Inc. is an agency focused on scaling the impact of social purpose organizations. Scaled Purpose's two partners, Miles DePaul and Sean Campbell, have over 14 years of combined experience in launching social enterprises ([Sustainable Waterloo Region](#), [Sustainability CoLab](#)), leading programming at social innovation incubators in Ontario ([University of Waterloo's Greenhouse](#), [School for Social Entrepreneurs Ontario](#)), and consulting nonprofits and universities on strategic planning, research, and incubation ([Ontario Natural Food Co-op](#), [WLU's Centre for Business Sustainability](#), [REEP Green Solutions](#)).

Scaled Purpose approached the development of this report in two phases:

1. Market Scan: Identification, high-level analysis, and aggregation of social entrepreneurship and innovation hubs across all English-speaking Canadian universities, and select American and European universities. The scan looked at services offered, funding offered to students, revenue models, and participation in programs like RECODE and AshokaU.

2. Case Studies: Seven case studies were prepared of social entrepreneurship hubs, including two from the United States. These case studies are intended to provide further context and insights on the development of an incubator. Scaled Purpose developed these case studies through a review of content available on the websites of the hubs and supported these learnings with a semi-structured interview of a director-level individual at the selected hub.

This report begins with a summary of the findings from the *market scan*, and an overview of different *focus areas*, *programming* approaches, and *revenue models*. From there we conclude with *recommendations* for universities, colleges, and community programs based on these findings.

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MARKET SCAN FINDINGS

In a review of 114 universities across the USA and Canada (92 in Canada), developed using *Universities Canada's* [list of Canadian universities](#), we removed those with websites communicating exclusively in French. From here we analyzed those schools which offered programming for entrepreneurs, those that offered programming for social entrepreneurs and social innovators specifically, and finally the type of programming, funding, revenue models, and curriculum these universities offered to their undergraduate student body. The sample of 114 universities was American universities were added selectively through a review of AshokaU's roster of universities. In our scan, we found 44 schools across North America, 20 of which were in Canada, with programs aimed at entrepreneurs and innovators of all kinds. Of these, 36 in North America, 15 in Canada, have programming exclusively focused on social entrepreneurship and innovation, representing 16% of all Canadian schools. Data on the reason behind growth in adoption of these programs is not available, however anecdotally it appears that the rate of growth is increasing as funding sources such as RECODE and the Ontario Centres of Excellence' Campus-Linked Accelerator program actively encourage and fund academic institutions.

Perhaps the most interesting findings are the low level of program-curriculum integration and corporate funding. As will be described later in this report, it is believed that the lack of integration and corporate funding are more an expression of the young age of these programs as opposed to pedagogy or ideology.

OVERVIEW OF SCAN

	CANADA	USA	NORTH AMERICA
TOTAL REVIEWED	92	24	114
ENTREPRENEURSHIP & INNOVATION PROGRAMMING (INCLUDING. SOCIAL)	20	24	44
SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP & INNOVATION PROGRAMMING	15	21	36

We conducted a deeper scan into each of the 44 programs in North America with an entrepreneurship and innovation focus, with particular emphasis on the 36 with a social entrepreneurship and innovation focus. In our scan we were looking at the core elements and the focus of the program, the service offering to its students and the broader community, what types of funding is offered to student ventures and innovators, how extracurricular activities are integrated with curriculum and course work, and finally how the centre and program hub itself was funded and sustained. Below, we outline the findings of this scan.



FOCUS AREAS

Social entrepreneurship and social innovation are nebulous concepts that are understood and advanced in various ways across post-secondary institutions. Reviewing the sample, we first grouped universities into 4 broad categories or philosophies of campus-based social entrepreneurship. These groupings help understand the different models that exist in the market today, however we also propose that they could serve as a foundation for understanding how universities can situate themselves compared to other universities across North America, as well as other entrepreneurship and innovation support services within their own city:

1 STUDENT LEARNING

Perhaps the most common approach, the Student Learning philosophy is more traditional in its reliance on course-based learning and the primacy of student education over applied outcomes such as venture creation success or system change. The advantage of the Student Learning philosophy is that it leverages the existing skillsets and core purpose of the institution while letting the student focus on self-development and academic study rather than venture creation. Conversely, such an approach may miss experiential learning and definable social impact benefits. An example of Student Learning philosophy is McGill's Social Economy Initiative which "integrates social entrepreneurship and social innovation more formally into its teaching, research and outreach activities" ([McGill, 2015](#)).

2 VENTURE CREATION

A more recent model, which is quickly gaining traction, is the campus linked accelerator which accepts individuals or groups into a program specifically designed to generate functioning organizations by the program's end. The Venture Creation philosophy is grounded in the high-tech incubator model wherein the product or service is the primary deliverable. The advantages of this approach is that it follows already established for-profit models wherein existing resources and mentors can be re-purposed. The Venture Creation approach is also relatively simple to conceptualize and relate to, in comparison to emerging social innovation models. The disadvantages of the venture creation strategy is that it can lack sufficient differentiation from its for-profit peers, focuses too narrowly on revenue generating entities to the exclusion of other models or approaches, and

a significant majority of all startups will not succeed. Specific attention must be given to the academic and emotional health of student social entrepreneurs in Venture Creation models, as both the interview learnings and the professional experiences of the researchers have identified the added stresses placed on a student at the helm of a start-up. An example of Venture Creation philosophy is the University of Waterloo's GreenHouse which is "the first and only live-in campus-linked accelerator in Canada focused on social innovation and entrepreneurship" (GreenHouse, 2015).

3 IMPACT AREA OR METHODOLOGY

Less widely adopted, the Impact Area or Methodology philosophy tends to be employed by institutions that themselves have a narrow impact area or methodological focus. Students are directed to either address one specific type of problem (e.g. environmental sustainability) or to use a specific methodological approach (e.g. design thinking). Advantages of this approach include the ability to dive deeper with learning modules and recruit more targeted mentors, the ability of students to leverage their own experiences and networks to support each other, and a greater ease in recording social impacts. An example of the Impact Area philosophy is the College of the Atlantic which describes itself as a Sustainable Enterprise Incubator. An example of the Methodological philosophy is the Ontario College of Art and Design which focuses heavily on human-centred design thinking.

4 SYSTEMIC CHANGE

Rarer still is a focus on creating systemic change. This approach is beginning to gain traction as social innovation labs become more widely

embraced. In the Systemic Change philosophy students are directed, often in teams, towards an entrenched structural challenge. The advantage of this approach is that it moves beyond small-scale entrepreneurial fixes and attempts to address the root of a problem. If a team approach is used it allows for specialization and does not require every student to be an entrepreneur, and it provides the potential for deeper NGO, industry, government, Indigenous and other partnerships. The disadvantage is that these projects can be much more difficult for a young person to learn and requires greater faculty involvement, the timelines are often protracted, and success is less clear. An example of the Systemic Change philosophy is Simon Fraser University's RADIUS Labs which, while also housing a venture incubator, has launched a social innovation lab in partnership with EcoTrust and the City of Vancouver (SFU, 2015).

While these philosophies are certainly not mutually exclusive, certain combinations are unlikely. For example, it is difficult to have a wide-tent approach such as the University of Waterloo's GreenHouse while also having an impact area focus. With a few notable exceptions, we are generally seeing a trend towards a focus on student learning and venture creation with few institutions targeting a specific impact area or working on systemic change, though this seems to be the natural evolution of more mature programs.

Interviews suggest that at the early stages of developing social entrepreneurship programming, especially if funding is limited, it is best to focus on core strengths and attract as broad a range of interests as possible. Social entrepreneurship is a less messy concept than systemic change, and the process of exploring an idea and working towards starting a business is relatively more straight-forward.

PROGRAMMING

A clear trend emerged out of each university's entrepreneurship and innovation programming, with many schools offering foundational services such as mentorship, grant funding, a shared space, and advisor services. Many of the interviewees also later affirmed the importance of getting these initial services in place and getting them right. While they may not seem like the most transformational or exciting offerings to students, they are crucial in building awareness

of opportunities, a culture and community, and in-depth learning and educational opportunities for students. With these foundations, the more experimental and creative support services can be explored. The chart below outlines these course service offerings, and the number of Canadian schools that offer such programming out of a possible 20 studied Canadian programs.

PROGRAMMING ACROSS CANADIAN UNIVERSITIES

Types of Programming	Program Count
Courses	17
Funding	12
Mentorship	11
Pitch Competition	11
Coaching/Advice	9
Shared Space	8
Internships	4

Across the institutions reviewed, these foundational programming components share many standard definitions, success factors, and models.

1 MENTORSHIP

11 schools (or 55%) offer a mentorship program of some kind, with varying success in each. Many have identified mentorship as a key element of any entrepreneurial training, with some interviewees commenting that what students seem to ask for most is “human capital” vs. “financial capital” in the early stages of their growth. That said, effective mentorship is consistently a challenging support tool to offer, given the need for strong relationships with community leaders and mentors, and those who can connect with students with traits like empathy, patience, and listening, and not necessarily content expertise. A model to look to and build off of is the **University of New Brunswick’s Pond-Despande Centre** which is launching *The Mentra Collective* with support from RECODE funding. The Mentra Collective is a new and innovative New Brunswick initiative, of which UNB is a co-owner, which will “deepen the pool of available mentors, increase the quality of mentors, and create a platform to facilitate the match-making of mentors and mentees.” One key lesson from the scan and interviews suggests university-level entrepreneurs, those in their early 20s, are

in need of support not only to work through technical expertise (e.g. equity divide), but a need exists for supervision, discipline, and advice on the human side of entrepreneurship (hiring, management, building relationships, etc).

2 SHARED SPACES

8 schools (or 40%) provide a shared space, co-working space, or office space to students in their entrepreneur or incubator program. In the scan, many of these schools mention shared office space as the most recent addition to their program, and often connected to a term-limited accelerator or incubator program that engages students to work on their ventures over the course of 10 weeks, 4 months, and sometimes a full year. **Ryerson University’s Digital Media Zone (DMZ)** is a leading example of a successful incubator and shared space. The DMZ offers space and a maker lab to startups of all kinds (including those not affiliated with Ryerson University), with 25% self-identifying as a social enterprise. With success of the DMZ, Ryerson University has launched 8 more labs, including the Social Venture Lab to serve a specific focus on social ventures. The keys to a successful co-working space vary depending on the

goals of the program (incubating ventures, connecting new ventures with established ventures, providing cheap or free office space, etc.), and depends on the needs of the student enterprises. A key lesson from the scan is that, where possible, open the doors of the shared space to non-university affiliated ventures, create a community around the office space moving beyond just a place to plug and play, and be intentional about what each new venture can bring to the community.

3 COACHING AND ADVICE

9 schools (or 45%) provide coaching and advisory services to its students by connecting content and technical experts with students to support questions related to legal, financial, technical operations, business planning, and regulation/policy of new ventures. Many schools build on their own internal expertise, while many also pull on the community they operate in to engage technical experts as coaches and advisors.

4 COURSES

17 schools (or 85%) provide entrepreneurship, innovation, business planning, or design thinking courses with a changemaker focus.

Few schools, including those interviewed, claim to be pleased with their course and extracurricular integration. In many cases, the curriculum and experiential programs are seen to be operating almost in isolation from one another. To remove these silos, some schools are beginning to offer credits for launching ventures, allowing students to apply an independent study to venture creation, and in some case tying in extracurricular experiences to specific courses. Simon Fraser, Ryerson, Waterloo, and University of New Brunswick offer Fellowship programs which engages students (and in some case non-students) in in-class training tied to the students' specific ventures, however these have been difficult to continue. UNB suggests that "penetration to curriculum has been extremely difficult" despite students asking continuously where they can study these ideas.

5 INTERNSHIPS

Internships (4 schools, 20%) are emerging as a new focus within campus programming in recognition of the need for students to receive financial compensation for their efforts in order to allow them to focus on social entrepreneurship, and deepen their understanding of both the space and intended impact area. Brown University identified that in-course training, and even hands-on venture creation can only take students so far when it comes to immersion in entrepreneurship education. As a result, they have prioritized subsidizing internships (\$4K per student for a summer term) to create opportunities for students to either (1) work on their ventures full-time, or (2) join a local social enterprise, to avoid their "parents being critical of not taking a real job." This service was also valuable as a means of keeping students engaged in their community, providing opportunities for students to connect with local nonprofits, maintaining connections to the university during the summer term, and bringing back lessons to peer learning sessions on campus. Similarly, these opportunities provided an opportunity to bring university knowledge into the community and into industry.

6 PITCH COMPETITIONS

Pitch competitions were controversial among interviewees, however 11 schools (55%) explicitly offer pitch competitions, while many more do so in a lightweight manner. Staff and faculty, and often students, don't like pitch competitions since they are: (1) too short to have any impact, (2) are more for marketing and gimmick than impact, and (3) can be highly time consuming. However, many also noted that pitch competitions are one of those things that all programs should have since they (1) attract new students and faculty given their exciting external focus, (2) they are a lightweight way to teach students the art of the pitch and refining business models, and (3) they can be an opportunity to somewhat objectively

RELEVANT COURSE OFFERINGS

Simon Fraser University: Graduate Diploma in Business Administration, Entrepreneurship & Social Innovation

Carleton University: Business & Environmental Sustainability, Marketing for Nonprofits, Introduction to Microfinance, Managing the Arts, Social Entrepreneurship.

OCADU: Guerilla Entrepreneurship, Business Ethics, Sustainability, and Corporate Responsibility, Design Thinking for Social Innovation.

Ryerson University: Applied Social and Business Innovation, Entrepreneurship in Creative Industries, Innovation & Nonprofit sector.

Wilfrid Laurier University: How to Change the World: Intro to Social Entrepreneurship, Startup Fund Practicum, Capstone Course on Social Entrepreneurship.

George Mason University: Life Cycle of a Nonprofit and Social (distance ed) Environmental Enterprises (distance ed).

Middlebury College: To participate in the program (incubation), students are required to enroll in a winter-term course focused on Social Entrepreneurship & Innovation.

University of Waterloo: Students participating in the GreenHouse incubator are allowed to enroll in a reading course-style session where a grade is provided for completing a business plan for their venture.

Mount Royal University: MRU offers a Minor in Social Innovation, as well as courses in Facilitating Social Innovation, being Agents of Social Change, Human-Centered Design, Stories and Systems, Venture Launchpad, Art of the Pitch, as well as Certificates in Community Investment and Nonprofit Management.

disperse funding and grants since external judges can take on this authority. University of Waterloo's GreenHouse evolved from the pitch competition model (since it was becoming too frustrating) to a Dragons-Den boardroom style pitch event where students present their ideas to a boardroom of local investors, advisors, and funders with a 12-min pitch (compared to 3-min previously). They have seen a huge uptick in quality of pitches, engagement with the community afterwards, and student interest in delivering an excellent pitch.

7 FUNDING

12 schools (60%) offered some form of funding to students ventures, be it through grants to devote a term to business planning, competition awards, or small project-specific grants. None of the programs studied have a loan or equity investment model in place for social ventures, however this model does exist for for-profit ventures, and some schools (e.g. OCADU) have partnered with community organizations (e.g. Centre for Social Innovation [CSI]) to offer loans. CSI's Catalyst Loan Program offers up to \$25K in loans to social enterprises. Generally speaking though, the studied programs offered funding in one of the following structures:

A. SEED FUNDING

designed to provide very early stage financial support to high potential ventures (for-profit or non-profit) to finance key stages such as initial business planning, product/service prototype, surveys, travel to access customers or suppliers, events and trade shows, market research, or founder time. In our scan, this typically ranged from \$1,000 to \$10,000. Example programs include University of British Columbia's Impact Investing Seed Fund, and the University of New Brunswick's Catalyst & Ignition Funds.

B. COMPETITION AWARD

Financial rewards are offered to winners of pitch competitions, hacker weekends, or similar competitions and are seldom tied to expectations or any restrictions on how the money is spent. Few program offers more than \$5K, and most offer between \$500 and \$1,500. Queen's University's Social Impact Centre provides such competition funding, most recently awarding \$1,250 to Heads Up, a startup building an app to improve the mental health of students. McGill University's Dobson Centre for Entrepreneurship offers up to \$100K in cash prizes and other services, including \$25K for a winning team.

C. GRANTS

Few schools currently are able to offer significant grants or award funding, however a few are starting to partner with local foundations, philanthropists, or even investors to provide non-re- turnable grants to students for the mid-stage of their startup (i.e. market testing, product development, scaling). The University of New Brunswick's Social Innovation Fund offers \$5-25K in grant funding for such programs, and looks to disperse \$100K per year. UNB is a strong case study to look to when developing a funding model.

Beyond these core foundational services, many leading schools are also offering additional programming that provides unique tailored support to student entrepreneurs, ventures, and the learning experience.


Queen's University — Centre for Social Impact — offers a Certificate in Responsible Business which involves students committing to community outreach, consulting, event attendance, and specific course to provide students with in-depth knowledge about ethics, social innovation, and business models. This certificate option is available only to students enrolled in Queen's Bachelor of Commerce, Accelerated MBA, Executive MBA, Master of International Business and Full-time MBA programs. Each of the Certificate students provide over 3,000 hours of community service annually and the MBA students engage in pro-bono consulting projects with non-profit community organizations.

Simon Fraser University — RADIUS — runs Failure Week each year as a celebration of bold attempts and the brave entrepreneurs behind them, as well as a cathartic opportunity to put a failed venture behind them once and for all. Using an Irish Wake theme, and raw stories from multiple entrepreneurs, the event provides an opportunity to put a positive spin both on the

often challenging moments in an entrepreneur's journey, and on the concept of failure itself hopefully inspiring students with emerging ideas to push through the challenging times and to not fear failure as the end of the world.

University of New Brunswick — Pond-Despande Centre — runs a Student Ambassador Program for 20 students across New Brunswick who self-identify as changemakers. Through experiential learning opportunities the program inspires the students to consider entrepreneurship as a viable career opportunity. Students visit entrepreneurship hubs (Fredericton, Boston, Montreal, India) for 1-year. Through RECODE, the PDC hopes to scale this program pilot to a world class youth engagement platform.

OCADU — Imagination Catalyst. OCADU is an art and design university with maker-based start-up expertise. In the Imagination Catalyst incubator, contemporary maker entrepreneurs leverage emerging technologies to create, build, design, tinker, modify, hack, invent, or simply make innovative objects which address a market need or opportunity. The "Take it to Market" program in particular is a unique approach among universities, which opens its doors to current students, faculty, alumni, and select community members that have a focus on an arts, design, or media start-up. Imagination Catalyst has partnered with local community incubator and coworking space, Centre for Social Innovation, to create a social innovation stream within their programming, providing students with access to off-campus supports such as funding (up to \$5000, and a \$25,000 micro-loan), mentorship and coaching, office space and community membership, and legal support services for IP and patents.



PROGRAM AND COURSE EVOLUTION

An important lesson that emerged from the scan and the interviews was the evolution of programs and where each of these programs got their start. How a program currently operates depends on two things: (1) how and where it was born, and (2) how and where it evolves. Some programs were launched in business schools and now work towards expanding across campus by opening up offerings to all students. Others were launched as a research institute that slowly added programming and support services for students. A smaller subset were launched with a wide focus from the beginning and moved towards defining a target audience. How the program offering evolved can help inform a strategy on how to build a new program, leveraging existing capacities, competencies, and networks.

Here are two brief examples of approaches that universities can adopt:

1. College of the Atlantic: The Hatchery began as a course-based program designed by the Sustainable Business department. This allowed for use of the College's resources in-line with any other offered course. The Hatchery has since successfully secured funding to expand the program to include an applied incubator.

2. University of Waterloo: GreenHouse was started as an initiative of St. Paul's University College, an affiliated college of the University of Waterloo. The program was offered exclusively as an extracurricular opportunity and earned revenue through students living in the college's residences. After 3 years of operating the program, GreenHouse was able to work through the process of creating supporting academic courses which will be offered starting in Fall 2015.

The lesson that can be learned from these illustrations are that a new incubator is itself a start-up, and it is best to focus on core strengths and leveraging of available resources (e.g. staff, physical space, existing courses or programming) while the foundation of the program is put in place and early champions are secured. What we have heard repeatedly during the interviews is that the program will not be and does not need to be perfect at first, and it will evolve with the student body. By focusing on the foundations that best align with your existing competencies you will build a strong base and allow for early success.

From this starting point, other programming can be layered on top. It does appear that leading institutions are moving towards offering both academic and applied incubator programming, with a few continuing this evolution into an area of specialization such as RADIUS' innovation lab or Ryerson's digital focus.

The programs studied have a variety of channels of revenue, many funded through core university funding (i.e. tuition), corporate sponsorships, private and public foundations, government resources, and the rare profit generating program (e.g. events, workshops, certificate programs, and lease agreements for office space). Generally, from the market scan and interviews, most programs operate using core funding with various government and foundation funding providing ongoing sustenance. University of New Brunswick (UNB), Brown University, and Ryerson University each stated that revenue generation and alternative fundraising have not been priorities and likely will not be in the long-term. For these organizations, core university funding and endowments (in the case of UNB) provide the necessary safety net and sustainability.

Some notable revenue generation activities, beyond core university funding and government grants, are detailed below:

UNIVERSITY & PROGRAM	REVENUE SOURCES & FUNDING
SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY <i>RADIUS</i>	<p>Corporate Funding: RBC provided a gift of \$1.3M to prepare the next generation of Aboriginal Leaders in entrepreneurship & innovation (The RBC Foundation will provide \$100,000 a year to establish the RBC First Peoples Enterprise Accelerator at SFU, a catalyst and resource for sustainable economic growth and diversification in Aboriginal communities.)</p> <p>RECODE via McConnell Foundation: \$100,000 grant to fund a Social Impact Fellows program (student internships) and the City Incentive Challenge program to inspire entrepreneurs to address social issues in Vancouver</p>
UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA <i>COAST CAPITAL SAVINGS INNOVATION HUB</i>	<p>Corporate Funding: In September 2012, UBC Sauder School of Business received \$1-million over 5 years (2012-2016) to launch the Coast Capital Savings Innovation Hub, a program supporting early stage ventures devoted to solving social and environmental problems using for-profit business models.</p>
UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO <i>GREENHOUSE</i>	<p>Residence Revenue: GreenHouse is funded primarily through revenues from residence fees of students in the GreenHouse program. Modelled initially off of the highly successful tech incubator at University of Waterloo, Velocity, GreenHouse is a live-in space for social entrepreneurs to develop their ideas while living on campus amongst peers and other entrepreneurs. While first Velocity was a program developed by the residence and living department, it has grown into a staple of entrepreneurship programming at the University of Waterloo.</p>



LESSONS LEARNED

UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO, GREENHOUSE

PRIMARY SERVICE OFFERING

Provides a live-in residence opportunity for students to develop their ideas among peers, connect to training at the school, mentors, and local community connections.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Fairly agnostic to the type of venture, the initial faculty, and whether they are working towards a non-profit or for-profit model. GreenHouse is focused not only on developing entrepreneurial thinkers, but is also measuring success based on the success of the venture, so the student ideas need to pass certain viability and feasibility tests.

STRATEGIC GOALS

Currently ramping up its services and programs alongside the launch of a new building with capacity up to 70 students per term. With growth of the number of ventures, GreenHouse would like to focus on (1) financial contributions and investment into ventures, and (2) connecting students with incubation services province-wide

PROGRAM PARTNERS & REVENUE MODEL

GreenHouse is currently funded from a variety of sources, primarily revenue from student residence fees and tuition. 1/3 of funding comes from provincial "campus-linked accelerator funding".

LESSONS LEARNED

- » Build a program based on your assets, not your ideal version of how to support students.
- » Listen to the students who are most engaged and tailor services to them, you are providing a very niche product, so listen to your niche customer.

UNIVERSITY OF NEW BRUNSWICK

PRIMARY SERVICE OFFERING

Student Ambassador program open to province-wide applicants. Ambassadors tasked with delivering programs back at their own universities, attending tours and learning of social innovation across North America.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Students from all departments (engineering, arts, business, etc.), across 6 post-secondary schools (4 universities) in New Brunswick. Those that identify as “Changemakers”

STRATEGIC GOALS

- » Integration with curriculum has been difficult to date. This is imperative, students are demanding it
- » Develop a Social Innovation Lab, current focus is affordable housing

PROGRAM PARTNERS & REVENUE MODEL

Funded through an endowment from entrepreneurs Gururaj and Jaishree Deshpande and Gerry Pond (\$5M for 5-years)

LESSONS LEARNED

- » Be open broadly to all entrepreneurs & changemakers and embed social impact into their thinking
- » “If you start shoving measurement in from the start, you’ll miss the point”

BROWN UNIVERSITY

PRIMARY SERVICE OFFERING

Social Entrepreneur Fellowship which includes funding for student ventures, advisors and mentors which are of greatest value to students, and connection to alumni and community network. Provide funding of \$4K for summer term to focus on ventures (comparable to interns).

TARGET AUDIENCE

Entire undergraduate student body, they do not have a business school. Brown disproportionately graduates students to public service (gov’t, NGO, etc.) by nearly twice as much as comparable schools in USA.

STRATEGIC GOALS

- » Still ample support services for entrepreneurs needed (better mentorship program, financing, education). Integrate social innovation into campus-wide curriculum
- » Work on transformative ideas, solving complex problems, via TRI-Lab

PROGRAM PARTNERS & REVENUE MODEL

Funded primarily through the university with some foundations and donors contributing, however it is not a strategic priority to find new funding sources. Have considered licensing their Fellowship model to other schools, but this would be modest revenue.

LESSONS LEARNED

- » What students need most is human capital (mentors, advisors) not financial capital
- » Measure students by Entrepreneurial Grit, Creativity, and Empathy.

RYERSON UNIVERSITY

PRIMARY SERVICE OFFERING

The good students are going to do it regardless, better to support where they need it rather than running an "A to Z" program, maybe they just need "B to D". Support includes space, mentors, education most importantly.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Campus-wide, looking for those pushing ahead venture ideas already and simply "build a tent" around their ideas. Calling them "changemakers" was hugely advantageous to engage all types of people.

STRATEGIC GOALS

- » Grow and intensify the support programs, pushing for more social ventures in the DMZ.
- » Work on systems changing ideas, and push Social Innovation beyond theoretical and anecdotal, need rigour.

PROGRAM PARTNERS & REVENUE MODEL

DMZ receives funding from the Ontario Accelerator Program, Federal Gov't supports, boot strapped in the early days, MITACS funding for research.

LESSONS LEARNED

- » Social innovation is a bit narrowly focused. Looks at Millenium Development Goals to guide measurement of impact
- » Local is important, Calgary has the conditions and the size to do something really transformative

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

PRIMARY SERVICE OFFERING

Summer accelerator program, 8 weeks, focused on "building entrepreneurs and innovators vs. ventures". Program provides credit to students

TARGET AUDIENCE

Engage students from all faculty, trying to get those that want to create change but may have never used the term Social Entrepreneur. Goal is to embed Social Entrepreneurship concepts into many courses, and then provide programming for the "go-getters".

STRATEGIC GOALS

- » Need to focus heavily on financing, both for students and for the sector at large. How are we funding and scaling great ventures.
- » Build out the RADIUS Labs, where they are the weakest, focused on moving the needle on complex issues (this year on inclusive economic development)

PROGRAM PARTNERS & REVENUE MODEL

\$1.3M from RBC to prepare "next generation of Aboriginal leaders in entrepreneurship and innovation". University funding is core, funded with \$292K to build social entrepreneurship program in 2010. Received funding from McConnell Foundation, VanCity, and others.

LESSONS LEARNED

- » Important to integrate SocEnt into curriculum across disciplines rather than creating a SocEnt stream. Engage the "go-getters" from here.
- » Local is important, Calgary has the conditions and the size to do something really transformative.

COLLEGE OF ATLANTIC (SUSTAINABLE ENTERPRISE HATCHERY)

PRIMARY SERVICE OFFERING

The Hatchery provides startup training towards social enterprises and course credit as they develop and market their pre-revenue venture ideas. The course is a 10-week intensive course, where mentorship, business planning, and office space is provided. Students are eligible to remain in the program for 9 months beyond graduation.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Open to students of all disciplines (“arts to engineering”) and are particularly interested in working with students who don’t have any business background whatsoever. They are agnostic to whether the venture is non-profit or for-profit, and the impact area they are serving. All students at the college major in Human Ecology with the freedom to select from courses across disciplines.

STRATEGIC GOALS

A recent endowment of \$1.5M has allowed The Hatchery to (1) hire a full-time staff person to direct the program, and (2) to provide capital to student enterprises. This will ramp up existing programming, while also working towards a medium-term strategy of offering post-grad fellowships which will offer a longer runway for venture development.

PROGRAM PARTNERS & REVENUE MODEL

The Hatchery is modestly funded with limited staff time. Funding is received from the university, and occasional donations and especially their recent \$1.5M endowment. No additional revenue strategy is in place.

LESSONS LEARNED

- » Building programming into the curriculum was advantageous for building student capacity and for providing revenue to The Hatchery.
- » Cross-university faculty buy-in is essential to engaging a wider array of students, and building social enterprise into the wider student experience.

UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH, CBaSE

PRIMARY SERVICE OFFERING

The Hub Incubator program provides students and alumni with funding, dedicated office space, and access to experienced entrepreneurs. The program is for all types of ventures, with a lean towards for-profit, however many nonprofits and social enterprises participate, especially those oriented towards the business of food given alignment to the University of Guelph student body interest.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Students, alumni, and faculty are all welcome into the program, and are put through an online application process of which only 15 get to pitch to judges, and less than 10 are selected. This focuses the participants on those with a well-developed idea already, and those whose ideas have potential to grow within the incubator. The focus has organically been on food, though this is becoming more intentional through funding from RECODE.

STRATEGIC GOALS

CBaSE wants to grow its impact across campus, outside of the business school and start offering programs to departments such as veterinary studies where students will be needing to think of the business of medicine upon graduation. Beyond this, CBaSE would like to affect systemic change by working with student projects, and facilitating projects, that are more systemic in nature.

PROGRAM PARTNERS & REVENUE MODEL

CBaSE is funded by the business school and they offer an in-house consulting service where small businesses in the community and abroad can access consulting support from student groups and led by faculty and staff.

LESSONS LEARNED

- » CBaSE is pivoting its strategy and focusing in response to the demands of the students and the culture of the University, resulting in a more strategic focus on the business of food.
- » Learn how to benefit from “competition”, such as prominent tech incubator nearby (Communitech) by (1) leveraging their resources and expertise, and (2) using their focus to help define your own niche (i.e. what won’t we do)



RECOMMENDATIONS

In our market scan and interviews, we focused our questions on identifying what lessons can be learned from other programs, particularly their advice on how organizations launching a new program can ensure success in an ever-changing, and growing field. Below we have included these lessons and potential applications for Canadian universities, colleges, and community programs:

IMPORTANT FIRST STEPS

The two most important first steps, as identified by those interviewed, is to: (1) take a look at both your internal and external assets to determine how to develop your own social innovation and entrepreneurship programming, and (2) clearly identify the problem you are uniquely interested in, and capable of, solving. At Ryerson University, their campus-wide programming grew organically out of faculty that were already teaching courses in entrepreneurship and social innovation, which was the fertile ground to supplement education with extracurriculars. Similarly, the University of Waterloo had ample physical assets in the form of office space, shared spaces, and residences which led to their live-in incubator program. In order to build a program of value, it also requires looking at the problem you are uniquely dealing with. At the University of New Brunswick, the problem the province, the University, and the private donors are interested in solving is: why are students and youth were leaving the province en masse? One hypothesis was a lack of employment with meaning and purpose, and so their on-campus programming is geared towards creating sustainable employment opportunities with meaning and purpose.

LOOK TO STUDENTS FOR CAMPUS-WIDE PROGRAMMING

Ultimately all interviewees wasted no time highlighting the importance of listening to the students to determine the best programming options. Your beneficiaries know best. However, another source of value from the students is their unique ability to break down silos, departmental lines, and interest barriers in a way that university faculty and staff never can. Ryerson University suggests supporting and leveraging student groups, clubs, and committees as a way to pull in students and ideas from across faculties. For Ryerson, this started with groups like Enactus and alternative spring break. The success students had in breaking silos inspired similar approaches from faculty and staff. Similarly, Brown University focuses on first engaging the students through clubs and then building out venture supports customized for those students interested in taking the next step and have a venture idea in mind.

SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR VS. CHANGEMAKER

Each program approaches the question of what to call their students in different ways. *Social entrepreneur* self-selects out students who don't identify with being the "next Mark Zuckerberg" as discussed by the University of New Brunswick; *changemaker* is used widely and was said to be "hugely advantageous" at attracting students from all faculties by Ryerson University; however some schools choose to avoid specific terminology and focus more on what the students self-identify as in their own marketing, such as entrepreneur, activist, or change agent according to Simon Fraser University. Ultimately this is a matter of internal culture, and we recommend individual programs determine which terms resonate with faculty and students, and whether specific terms self-select students out for any number of reasons. Boiling down a student's mission and identity to one word should not get in the way of their potential for impact.

ALIGN PURPOSE TO LARGER GOALS

Many programs recognize the challenge of creating meaningful and measurable goals around messy terms like “social innovation” and instead have defined goals around larger systemic goals like an index of well-being. Specifically, the University of Waterloo’s GreenHouse now looks at assessing internal success and the success of their ventures against the criteria outlined in the [Canadian Index of Wellbeing](#) (an index developed out of a neighbouring faculty at the University of Waterloo). Similarly, Ryerson University utilizes the [Millennium Development Goals](#) to determine whether they are working towards the benefit of society, the environment, and in a globally-minded way. This, as Ryerson University says, begins to help solve the problem of the blind men and the elephant.¹ That is, start thinking systemically about the problems you are trying to solve and connecting them to what others are trying to accomplish.

IDENTIFY A NICHE, BE THE “BEST IN YOUR WORLD AT X”

With an increase in the number of incubation services for social innovators (within universities, in the community, national programs, fellowships, online programming, etc.) there is an increasing need to provide a unique value proposition. One interviewee commented that each innovation and entrepreneurship hub should be seeking to become the “best in your world” at something specific. This doesn’t mean the best in the world at mentorship, or research, or education, but instead the place your target audience goes to when they need specific support. At the University of Guelph, their social innovation focus is on food security and they have become the best in the food system world within Ontario at incubating student venture ideas. Similarly, Simon Fraser University has adopted a slight focus on social finance and impact investing, seeing this as an opportunity for systemic change, as a way to engage sponsor funding, and service specific student desires for finance and impact.

RECONSIDER THE ROLE OF UNIVERSITIES

Simon Fraser University especially spoke of the opportunity for universities to reconsider their role within a community, and how they can best leverage their assets for community-wide and larger systemic change. SFU’s RADIUS is in the early stages of setting up the RADIUS Lab to focus on city-wide issues, and systemic solutions that can leverage the facilitation skills of faculty, the convening capacity of the university, the research capacity of students, and a university’s ability to look at long-term thinking to address systemic challenges like poverty, and alternative energy procurement. In this way, SFU seeks to create systemic change while educating and inspiring students.

¹The Blind Men and the Elephant is a famous Indian fable that tells the story of six blind sojourners that come across different parts of an elephant in their life journeys. In turn, each blind man creates his own version of reality from that limited experience and perspective of their isolated part of the elephant.

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