Starting up PA!

How are Pennsylvania’s private colleges and universities fostering entrepreneurship?

Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Pennsylvania
The recession has created within the media, political leaders and the general public understandable concerns about employment opportunities for college graduates. While the media often focuses on individuals who don’t have jobs, government census data continues to show that employment rates and salaries on average consistently rise with increased levels of education. And a recent Pew Center study actually revealed that the earnings gap since the recession has increased for young people with and without a college degree. While those with a college degree were earning roughly the same in inflation-adjusted dollars as their predecessors, those without a college degree were falling further behind. In other words, college may be expensive, but it is more costly not to have a degree.

However, colleges and universities are doing more than simply producing employees for the workforce; they are also producing entrepreneurs who are starting new businesses in Pennsylvania and creating new jobs for others! Whether small, mid-sized or large, private colleges and universities frequently break new ground and try new things since they must be more responsive to the marketplace. This has proven to be true in the area of entrepreneurship as dozens of Pennsylvania’s private colleges and universities have led the way in creating new courses and majors in entrepreneurship for their students.

The following pages provide 15 examples of Pennsylvania private colleges and universities working to create entrepreneurs and, through them, new jobs for Pennsylvania. Accompanying each institutional profile, we highlight one entrepreneur (or one team) from each institution. In order to keep this brochure a manageable size, we provide only a small sample of programs and personal success stories that are being replicated across the 94 private colleges and universities in the Commonwealth. Enjoy these stories.

“Colleges and universities are doing more than simply producing employees for the workforce; they are also producing entrepreneurs who are starting new businesses in Pennsylvania and creating new jobs for others.”

Don Francis
AICUP President
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Bucknell University
Lewisburg, Pennsylvania
Bucknell’s Small Business Development Center (SBDC)

EXAMPLE ACTIVITY

Bucknell’s Engineering and Innovation Affinity House is a residence and center of programming for aspiring entrepreneurs. The 40 second-year students who choose this residence cultivate their knowledge and aspirations under the guidance of faculty and visiting entrepreneurs. For example, successful entrepreneurs (chiefly alumni) serve as multi-day entrepreneurs-in-residence; students take field trips to business incubators (including Bucknell’s) and start-ups to learn how vision becomes reality; and Makers faire activities teach students practical fabrication skills, such as how to weld, as well as complicated design processes. As residents living together 24 hours a day, the students share what they are learning and instigate new entrepreneurial ideas together.

ONE SUCCESSFUL STARTUP

During his academic career, Nisan Trotter ('05) established himself as a leader in the Bucknell community. As the leading receiver on Bucknell’s football team, he was recognized with the C. Dale Wolfe Award as the team’s most inspirational player. His BSBA in Management with a minor in Economics prepared him to enter the business world. He attributes Professor Tammy Hiller and MGMT 101, an innovative, experiential, project-based course where students create and manage their own companies, as first kindling his entrepreneurial fire.

Later, while starting his own business, he received business planning assistance from Bucknell’s Small Business Development Center and connected with students in the Markets, Innovation, and Design program who helped him develop his marketing strategy.

Today, Nisan and his wife Yorelis are leaders in the local community as co-founders of TROTFITNESS, the Susquehanna Valley’s leading fitness “Boot Camp.” In its third year of operation, the business continues to grow and diversify, now offering nutritional and wellness counseling, as well as personal training and dance fitness classes.
University of Scranton
Scranton, Pennsylvania
The University of Scranton Entrepreneurship Program and
The University of Scranton Small Business Development Center (SBDC)

**EXAMPLE ACTIVITY**

The University of Scranton’s Small Business Development Center provides educational programs and no-cost, confidential consulting services to entrepreneurs looking to start or grow a small business. The University of Scranton has hosted the SBDC for more than 30 years, providing outstanding resources, support, and funding.

**ONE SUCCESSFUL STARTUP**

University of Scranton student Andrew Torba, who graduated in 2013 with a bachelor’s degree in philosophy and minors in both entrepreneurship and political science, co-founded Kuhcoon.com in October 2011 with Charles Szymanski, an electrical engineering major from Drexel University. Kuhcoon was the winner of the 10th Annual Great Valley Business Plan Competition in the spring of 2012. Kuhcoon is a data-driven social media management and education dashboard. The software features a data-driven assistant that helps small business owners manage and improve their social media strategy automatically over time. The dashboard also educates and guides users with tips based on real-time data from their social accounts, the latest social media news from top sources, and a full support system. Kuhcoon’s social media assistant teaches users when is the best time to post, what type of content should be posted, and how to improve their social strategy over time.

Kuhcoon began in the Scranton Enterprise Center, but has recently moved to offices in Philadelphia, while retaining an office in Moosic, Pennsylvania.

University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

**EXAMPLE ACTIVITY**

The University of Pennsylvania’s Venture Initiation Program is an educational incubator program managed by Wharton Entrepreneurship. Under the program’s guidance, undergraduate and graduate students develop their ventures through the real-world experience of executing the initial stages of their ventures. Once accepted into the program, students are eligible to remain for five continuous semesters with the opportunity to receive seed capital and additional funds as they progress. They also receive the following resources: monthly advising sessions, educational programming and workshops, networking opportunities and use of shared work space.

**ONE SUCCESSFUL STARTUP**

University of Pennsylvania’s Venture Initiation Program student Andrew Torba (left) and Aakash Mathur (C’09 W’09) (right) founded their social impact start-up Hydros Bottle as a result of their participation in Penn’s Dell Social Innovation Competition and a business plan developed in a Wharton course entitled “Societal Wealth Venturing.” In the spring of 2009, Mathur and Parekh decided to start a company and make their idea a reality—creating a convenient reusable water bottle with an easy to use and inexpensive carbon filter. The pair had considerable help from another Penn-produced company called Innova Dynamics, which develops nano materials, to make the bottle antimicrobial and prevent the bacteria prevalent in similar products from growing.

These recent Penn alumni have gone beyond the typical start-up model to include a social benefit element into their plan: for every Hydros Bottle sold, the company donates one dollar to a spring water distribution project in Africa with the help of Engineers Without Borders, Operation Hydros. Currently, Hydros Bottles are available on their website (www.hydrosbottle.com) and at select Whole Foods Markets.
St. Vincent offers its students extracurricular involvement with angel organizations to augment their entrepreneurial education. Over the last three years, business professors – many of whom have extensive practical experience as CEOs and CFOs in addition to their academic credentials – have invited five students to meetings with BlueTree Allied Angels. BlueTree is a leading Western Pennsylvania angel network, and St. Vincent students have embraced unique opportunities to conduct due diligence work for BlueTree, network with its associates, and learn firsthand about the inner-workings of entrepreneurial investment. Such opportunities are also available through the Pittsburgh chapter of the Keiretsu Forum, another leading angel organization.

Saint Vincent College
Latrobe, Pennsylvania
Saint Vincent College Small Business Development Center (SBDC)

EXAMPLE ACTIVITY

Alex Tufano, a May 2013 graduate of Saint Vincent College, is a successful entrepreneur and owner of Tufano Trucking Co., LLC, which provides transportation services for the Marcellus Shale industry and various construction firms. Seeing an opening in the market, Tufano started his business to address the needs of the emerging Marcellus Shale industry in the region. He borrowed money to purchase two tri-axle dump trucks and started working for stone quarries and road crews. He now primarily works with Marcellus companies and has expanded to a fleet of five trucks and four employees.

Tufano handles a broad spectrum of duties in his business, from routine maintenance on trucks, hiring drivers, bookkeeping, and networking with other businesses and individuals to help the company grow even more successful. Tufano credits the education he received in the Alex G. McKenna School of Business, Economics and Government at St. Vincent College with helping him to think critically and to develop a successful business model for his company.
Elizabethtown College
Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania
The S. Dale High Center for Family Business

Example Activity
Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) is an integral part of campus life at Elizabethtown College. Members develop entrepreneurial ideas and present results at regional and national competitions. Elizabethtown College students have been regional champions for 22 of the past 24 years. SIFE works with small businesses and start-ups developing and implementing business plans, providing consulting services and offering seminars.

One Successful Startup
Nuts About Granola® was created at Elizabethtown College by ’09 graduate Sarah Lanphier. The idea for the company came out of the need for a fundraising concept for the triathlon team. Sarah took her recipe for peanut butter granola, packaged it, sold it for the fundraiser and made enough to cover the team’s entire trip to nationals. For the remaining three years of Sarah’s time at Elizabethtown, she developed the business hand-in-hand with the college’s faculty and staff. In 2008, the company was officially incorporated. Sarah has now appeared on the Rachael Ray Show, been featured in 35 media publications, and has two retail locations. Sarah created the NAG Innovation Scholarship at Elizabethtown College. Nuts About Granola produces the granola for sale at the college, and a portion of the sales funds the scholarship.

Saint Francis University
Loretto, Pennsylvania
St. Francis University Small Business Development Center (SBDC)

Example Activity
The Jamaica International Microloan Initiative (JIMI) is one of the mission initiatives of Saint Francis University. Started in 2012, JIMI sends students accompanied by an advisor to Maggotty, Jamaica under the auspices of the local Catholic Church. During spring break week 2013, three students met with more than 100 people who were interested in various types of microenterprises. At the end of the week, microloans (largest $400 US) were awarded to four individuals. All are currently paying the loans back on time.

One Successful Startup
Dimples, LLC is the brainchild of Jonathan Miller, who holds both his undergraduate and master’s degrees from Saint Francis University. Jonathan is a serial entrepreneur and won the 2013 SBA Young Entrepreneur of the Year award for the Pittsburgh district of the Small Business Administration. Dimples is a product designed to save high-volume printers up to 40% on their ink and toner through fonts that use a patented process to reduce the amount of ink used without sacrificing print legibility. The company continues to expand through outreach to a variety of sources and potential users.
EXAMPLE ACTIVITY

Through the newly established Entrepreneur-in-Residence (EIR) program, Seton Hill students and alumni can collaborate with EIRs to develop a new business idea, build-out and validate a business model, write a business plan, secure funding, or help the start-up advance to the next stage of growth. During 2012, 29 students came to the Wukich Center with new business ideas, 16 developed business plans, and five launched businesses. Through the generosity of Daniel J. Wukich, Seton Hill has established an initial $50,000 Venture Fund (from a total $2 million contribution) to provide loans to promising student businesses.

ONE SUCCESSFUL STARTUP

Pleasant Lane Farms, owned by Carolyn Frey (MBA ’12) and her husband Todd, was launched as a new business in August of 2012. Pleasant Lane Farms is a small farm/specialty food retailer offering home grown produce as well as farm raised meat, honey products and a handmade item gift shop. Pleasant Lane Farms competes in the Specialty Food sector of eastern Westmoreland County and sells via local farmers’ markets, their own store front and through their special order website (to be launched in 2014). Pleasant Lane’s target market is baby boomers, young affluent adults and families in the $45,000 to $75,000 annual income range who cook meals from scratch at least three times a week. Pleasant Lane Farms has achieved cash flow self-sufficiency during its first year with its sales of honey, beef and vegetables.
Villanova University  
Villanova, Pennsylvania  
Center for Innovation, Creativity, and Entrepreneurship (ICE Center)

EXAMPLE ACTIVITY

Villanova in the Valley is designed to expose students from across the Villanova campus to the innovative, creative, and entrepreneurial ecosystem of Silicon Valley. Over five days of site visits and special events, Villanova in the Valley aims to teach students about the issues and obstacles the most innovative companies in the world face and how they solve them in a creative and collaborative manner. Throughout the week, students interact with executives, venture capitalists, and thought leaders from organizations ranging from single-person ventures to Facebook and Google.

ONE SUCCESSFUL STARTUP

While students at Villanova, Thomas Krueger (left) and Eric Adams (right) developed the concept of plannedUp—the calendar for the Facebook generation. Through its Web and mobile apps that seamlessly integrate with Facebook, plannedUp is the easiest way to plan, share your schedule, and browse others’ schedules—keeping you more connected with friends, family and colleagues, and in better control of your life. Villanova faculty mentored Krueger and Adams during the development of their business, including helping them locate startup venture capital. Still in the early stage of developing and marketing their product, Krueger and Adams have already hired two employees.

Messiah College  
Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania

EXAMPLE ACTIVITY

The Messiah College Collaboratory for Strategic Partnerships and Applied Research provides students with the opportunity to become involved in microeconomic development projects throughout the world. The Collaboratory’s Microeconomic Development (MED) Group partners with communities and individuals to develop, analyze, and expand business opportunities with the goal of supporting and growing local economies, as well as providing group members with practical opportunities to use and expand classroom knowledge. For the Zambia Paper Project, the MED Group worked with the Messiah College Art Department and Brethren in Christ Church Zambia to implement a hand-made paper business in Choma, Zambia.

ONE SUCCESSFUL STARTUP

Adam Brackbill, a 2012 Messiah College graduate, is involved with two startup businesses. Both business ventures stem from Brackbill’s principal desire to focus on community.

In July 2010, while still a student, Brackbill opened Render Innovations, a business solutions firm based in Midtown Harrisburg providing creative solutions in web development, graphic design, and innovative start-up services. Through Render Innovations, Brackbill has worked for a number of nonprofits throughout the Harrisburg Region.

In early 2013, Brackbill partnered with Adam Porter to launch Startup Harrisburg, the city’s first co-working space. This collaborative community provides independent workers with an affordable, innovative workplace, helping to start new businesses. Brackbill views Startup Harrisburg as a way to help improve the financial situation in the city.
The Chef’s Table Restaurant at Keystone College is an important part of the curriculum for Keystone culinary arts students and plays an important role in stimulating entrepreneurship in the restaurant and food service industry. Culinary arts students operate the restaurant in all phases, creating menus, taking reservations, waiting on tables, preparing dinner for their customers, etc. As a result, they are familiar with all aspects of the restaurant business when they graduate.

Keystone College
La Plume, Pennsylvania

Although he built his business from the ground up, Adam Diaz didn’t plan to be an entrepreneur. After being downsized from his first job, Adam decided to make his side business in stone and masonry work, a skill he acquired growing up on his family’s farm, into a full time job. Diaz Stone and Pallet opened in 1999 and now provides custom stone and masonry work and wood products for residential and commercial customers across the United States and Canada. Adam has further grown his business—now called Diaz Companies—by seizing opportunities in Pennsylvania’s natural gas industry and adding companies specializing in quarry operations, truck and heavy equipment services, forest products, waste disposal, and other services. He employs over 170 people.

According to Diaz, his Keystone fine arts degree helped him greatly in having the confidence to start and grow the business. “To solve problems in business, you have to be able to be creative and think outside the box. That’s what I learned by studying fine arts. Keystone was a really great place and my education helped me in ways I never anticipated.”
**ONE SUCCESSFUL STARTUP**

**Activity**

Lehigh University’s entrepreneurship immersion programs take students to innovation hubs around the country to experience firsthand the world of new-venture creation. Non-curricular trips to tech startup hubs in Boston and Austin give students real-world insights into the critical elements of companies from early-stage to public offering and investors from venture capital to angel. For-credit courses take students to the startup hubs of Silicon Valley and New York City. The programs complement each other, providing students with access to the entrepreneurial world’s movers, shakers, and up-and-comers who are involved in all stages of building new enterprises.

**Example**

Chris Hall (*13) founded his company, ChallTech, from his dorm room while a freshman at Lehigh. The company develops mobile applications, specializing in rowing (Chris was a rower in high school and at Lehigh). ChallTech has three apps available on Apple’s App Store, and Chris is working on a mobile app heart monitor for use in crew teams.

Chris continued to develop, refine and test his apps through his undergraduate participation in Lehigh’s Integrated Product Development (IPD) program. The bioengineering major gained first-hand insights from entrepreneurs and other investment and startup leaders through his involvement in the university’s entrepreneurship immersion programs in the innovation hubs of Silicon Valley, New York City, and Boston. ChallTech has won several entrepreneurship prizes and state and national funding through the Pennsylvania Assistive Technology Commercialization Initiative, Keystone Innovation Zone and the National Collegiate Inventors and Innovators Alliance.

**Juniata College**

Huntingdon, Pennsylvania
Juniata College Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership

**ONE SUCCESSFUL STARTUP**

**Activity**

JCEL provides students an opportunity to start and grow their own businesses through our Seed Capital program. JCEL invests up to $15,000 as equity or up to $5,000 as a loan into the students’ business once they have completed our start up programs. Our Fast Start program offers students business coaching, space from which to work, and access to resources to help them research their business ideas. Our Next Step program offers those benefits, plus up to a $1,300 stipend to perform market research and develop a business plan. Students are also matched with alumni mentors and local community resources.

**Example**

Doug Jackson (*11) started Greener Leasing in 2009. The company leased EnergyStar approved MicroFridge Units (combination refrigerator, freezer, microwave in one integrated unit) to college students for use in their dorm rooms. Doug started the business by purchasing 10 units with a $5,000 loan through our Seed Capital Fund. In 2010 Doug expanded the business by borrowing $5,000 through the Seed Capital Fund and purchasing an additional 40 units.

After Doug graduated in 2011, he continued to operate the business from his hometown in New Hampshire by coming back to campus several times a year for marketing, selling, delivery, and pickups, and he hired college students to assist as well. In 2013 Doug sold the units to Juniata College. The business is now managed by the College’s Young Entrepreneurs Society (YES), which can offer students internship opportunities to work for or manage the business.

**Lehigh University**

Bethlehem, Pennsylvania
Baker Institute for Entrepreneurship, Creativity and Innovation

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Understanding that many artists must also be entrepreneurs to thrive economically, University of the Arts’ leaders created the Corzo Center for the Creative Economy. The Corzo Center provides artists, performers and media makers the tools they need to control their economic lives and to provide leadership in their communities. It offers lectures, workshops and mentoring, all free and open to the public. Its Creative Incubator – supported by Wells Fargo – provides pre-seed funding to UArts students and alumni and has funded 16 projects with grants ranging from $5,000 to $10,000. Several of these projects have developed sufficiently to now seek investors.

Founded by UArts alumna Michele McKeone, Autism Expressed teaches marketable, digital life skills to promote independence for autistic students in a technology-driven society and economy. Its target audience consists of high school students identified as being on the autism spectrum. The program is online and takes advantage of a variety of new media tools. It has also been designed to allow both parents and teachers to use the program as a way to supplement the education they provide.

The potential of Autism Expressed has been recognized through the receipt of several grants. It has also received local and national press and is now being beta tested in several regional schools.
Drexel University
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
The Charles D. Close School of Entrepreneurship

EXAMPLE ACTIVITY

Created in 2013, the Charles D. Close School of Entrepreneurship is a free-standing academic unit outside of the business school – one of very few stand-alone colleges of entrepreneurship in the country. The school’s mission is to provide access to entrepreneurship education to all university students, regardless of major.

ONE SUCCESSFUL STARTUP

Zagster (formerly CityRyde) began when co-founders Jason Meinzer (top) and Tim Ericson (bottom) used the Paris-based bike-sharing program Vélib. Since 2007, Zagster implements bike-sharing systems and consults on the environmental impact of bike use. Zagster assists customers with every stage of their bike initiatives, from conception to implementation. Zagster is the only organization in the world that has created a carbon methodology that can accurately measure the carbon reductions associated with all types of bike use.

Zagster’s Mission: To enable and maximize the environmental, economic and social benefits of bicycle sharing and rental through consulting and best-in-class turnkey systems that ensure self-sustaining, successful and measurable program implementations.
The J. D. Brown Center for Entrepreneurship hosts an annual student Elevator Pitch Competition to give students from all academic majors an opportunity to formulate and pitch a business idea they would like to pursue. Students are given three minutes to present their pitches to a qualified panel of judges comprised of entrepreneurs, investors, and experienced business people. Students scoring in the top three are offered gratis support services, as well as cash prizes to help get their ventures off the ground.

In addition to graduating students equipped to start new businesses, York College has stimulated entrepreneurship in the York community through its J.D. Brown Center for Entrepreneurship. For instance, 3Delivered, Inc., a York-based company founded in 2011, was incubated in the JD Brown Center. 3Delivered provides customized 3D printing solutions focusing on 3D print-ready content, 3D printing services, and data handling tools. Access to student talent has been part and parcel of 3Delivered’s growth since partnering with the Entrepreneurship Center’s incubation program last year. The company has hired students from multiple academic disciplines with the main focus in recruiting engineering talent.

Kyle Williams, a senior majoring in Business Information Systems, has already become a project manager at 3Delivered while he attends college. Kyle became 3Delivered’s first student hire a year ago and has since become so entrenched in this business that he will become the company’s first full-time engineering co-op in the fall.