

**Everyday Entrepreneur Program**

**Pre-conference sessions June 4th**

**Session 1:** *Empowering Student Entrepreneurs: Structuring Pitch Competitions for Maximum Impact*

**Time:** 9:00–10:00 AM EST
**Description:**Colleges play a crucial role in fostering student entrepreneurship. This session will explore how faculty and staff can design and facilitate Everyday Entrepreneur pitch competitions that provide hands-on learning experiences, boost student confidence, and attract funding. Attendees will learn best practices for coaching students in pitch preparation, refining business models, and leveraging competitions to strengthen their entrepreneurial programs. These all-star Everyday Entrepreneur directors will share strategies for success.

**About the Speakers:**

* **Dr. Lily Davido (Rio Salado – Remote insights, pre-recorded video)**
* **Dr. Candi Karsjens (NIACC – Live Presentation)**



Dr. Candi Karsjens is a leader in entrepreneurship, serving as Director of the John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center at North Iowa Area Community College (NIACC). She leads a dedicated team that provides entrepreneurship education from fifth grade through advanced deal structuring, supporting entrepreneurs at every stage. Committed to fostering innovation and business growth, her team helps individuals of all experience levels start and scale their ventures. Dr. Karsjens serves as an adjunct faculty member at NIACC and the American Public University System and leads the marketing section of the Iowa Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses program. With over 25 years of business experience, she has built and exited three successful ventures. A dedicated mentor, she guides students, startups, and business owners. Her academic background includes a BA in Accounting, a Certificate of Advanced Graduate Studies in Marketing, and a Doctorate in Business Administration focused on Strategy and Innovation.

Based in North Iowa, Candi enjoys spending time with her husband, six grown children, and four grandchildren. Outside of work, she loves golfing, gardening, and escaping to the beach in winter.

* **Christine Cavens (TBD)**

**Format:**

* Introduction (10 minutes)
* Lily’s Video Presentation (12 minutes)
* Candi’s Presentation (12 minutes)
* Christine’s Presentation (12 minutes)
* Q&A discussion, transition to next session (14 minutes)

**Session 2:** *Expanding Your College’s Reach: Building a Supportive Entrepreneurial Ecosystem*

**Time:** 10:00–11:00 AM EST **Description:**Colleges thrive when they connect students with experienced mentors and industry leaders. This session will help faculty and administrators establish mentorship programs, engage community partners, and facilitate networking opportunities that strengthen student learning and business development. This session will empower colleges to build a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem within their communities, serving as a valuable cornerstone of the program. Speakers will share their expert insights, tips, and strategies for success.

**Speakers:**

* Jack (Beaufort Community College – Video Presentation)
* Trenton Hightower (Live Presentation)
* TBD – Trenton’s Gainesville Contact

**Format:**

* Introduction
* Speaker presentations
* Interactive discussion

**Session 3:** *Scaling Success: Lessons from Level 2 Champions*

**Time:** 11:00 AM–12:00 PM EST

 **Description:**
This panel discussion will feature Everyday Entrepreneur Level 2 champions sharing their experiences, challenges, and best practices for structuring a successful program. Panelists will provide insights on student engagement, mentorship, funding strategies, and curriculum integration. Attendees will gain practical strategies for implementing Level 2 at their own institutions and can ask questions about maximizing the toolkit’s impact.

**Panelists:**

* Sueann Graham (Ivy Tech Bloomington)
* Candi Karsjens (NIACC)
* Chip Weismiller
* Stuart Weismiller
* Trenton Hightower
* Christine Cavens (TBD)

**Format:**

* Panel discussion with Lydia Perez-Kavanagh as moderator
* Open Q&A with attendees

Call to Action: Attendees are encouraged to bring questions about Level 2 implementation and share their own challenges to receive expert feedback.

**Below is the timeframe/schedule more in depth for each session**

**Session 1-** "Empowering Student Entrepreneurs: Structuring Pitch Competitions for Maximum Impact"

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Time** | **Topic** | **Speaker** |
| 9-9:10AM | Introduction  | Trenton and Lydia |
| 9:10-9:50AM | Presentation on Funding & Pitch Competitions | 12 minutes- Dr. Lily Davido (Rio Salado – Remote insights, pre-recorded video) 12 minutes-Dr. Candi Karsjens-NIACC in-person presentation12 minutes-Christine Cavens |
| 9:50-10AM | Q&A | Audience and EE champion |
| 10AM | Break into next session |  |

**Session 2-** " Expanding Your College’s Reach: Building a Supportive Entrepreneurial Ecosystem”

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Time** | **Topic** | **Speaker** |
| 10AM-10:15 AM | Introduction  | Trenton, Jack Beaufort, Trenton’s contact |
| 10:15-10:50AM | Presentation on Mentoring & Community Engagement | Trenton, Jack Beaufort, Trenton’s contact |
| 10:50-11AM | Q&A | Audience and EE champion |
| 11AM-11:15AM | Break into next session |  |

**Session 3-** *Scaling Success: Lessons from Level 2 Champions*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Time** | **Topic** | **Speaker** |
| 11:15AM-11:20AM | Introduction  | Lydia Perez-Kavanagh introduces panel |
| 11:20-11:50AM | Level 2 Panel | Sueann Ivy Tech Bloomington |
| 11:50AM-12PM | Q&A |  |