



**University of Massachusetts Amherst
Berthiaume Center for Entrepreneurship**

**Outstanding Emerging Entrepreneurship Program
2016 Award Nomination**

Submitted by:

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Nominee

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Mission of the Nominated Program

"To inspire and connect student and faculty entrepreneurs with the skills and resources needed to transform creative ideas into realized business ventures."

Contact for Additional Materials

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Primary Objectives

As the Flagship Public State University and Research Facility of Massachusetts, the UMA recognizes that innovation and entrepreneurship are critical to the future success of students in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Our objectives are built upon these areas of focus:

- **Building cross-campus academic programs** featuring entrepreneurship, design thinking, and innovation.
- **Supporting student-run organizations** integral to the entrepreneurial ecosystem
- Enhancing campus wide entrepreneurship through extracurricular services and events to gain cross-campus support and awareness of entrepreneurship.
- **Guiding student and graduate ventures** toward key resources around campus and throughout Western Massachusetts to aid in the development of their ventures.
- **Enhancing the business climate** of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, particularly in areas of opportunity in and around Western Massachusetts.

Principle Students Served

The following students are the direct audience served by the BCE program:

- **Undergraduate and Graduate Students:** BCE serves all UMA students regardless of academic major, and offers curriculum to students outside of UMA through the 5 College Consortium.
- **Ph.D. and Postdocs:** Through many robust initiatives, these students have the ability to take their research out of the lab and into practice.

Additional Individuals Served

Although students are key beneficiaries of assistance, the BCE also aims to maximize its impact on the following non-student stakeholders:

- **Faculty and Administrators:** within the UMA through various fellowships, organizational partnerships, and opportunities to commercialize their research projects, as outlined later in this narrative.
- **Alumni of UMA:** BCE seeks to include all alumni, especially those affiliated with startups or entrepreneurship in a variety of capacities.
- **Western Massachusetts:** BCE also benefits the community as a whole through affiliations with various incubators and accelerators, as described later in this narrative.

Program Description

The Berthiaume Center for Entrepreneurship (BCE) at the University of Massachusetts Amherst (UMA) was made possible through a \$10M philanthropic gift from Doug and Diana Berthiaume, with the purpose of supporting the development of a campus-wide integrated curriculum in entrepreneurship, and a goal of making entrepreneurship training accessible across the entire campus. While BCE is currently housed within the Isenberg School of Management for administrative simplicity, it is truly a cross-campus facility committed to connecting all colleges, schools, and departments at UMA through innovative projects and curricular programs. The BCE strives to be the entrepreneurial hub for not only the UMA, but also across the Western Massachusetts region. Indeed, it hopes to

make available the resources of the largest public research university in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to all emerging entrepreneurs.

BCE began formal operations during 2015, when the UMA Faculty Senate approved its designation as a Center. Serving as merely the institutional support system of the entrepreneurial ecosystem, the students have clear ownership over the execution of initiatives. This is conducted by the Berthiaume Student Innovators (BSI), a multidisciplinary group of student leaders that are championing the development of innovation on campus. The overall student population has responded positively to this organic, bottom-up approach, as demonstrated by overwhelming attendance at BCE events. As the major stakeholders and beneficiaries of the program, students have been and remain the driving force behind the emergence of entrepreneurship at UMA.

With vast support from nationally acclaimed programs, local organizations, as well as the administration, alumni, and students of the UMA, the Berthiaume Center for Entrepreneurship is poised to make a sustained impact on developing the entrepreneurial ecosystem for students in the region, and benefitting the local economy. The BCE has achieved phenomenal outcomes in less than one year of operation, and it will continue to build upon this momentum until the UMA is recognized as a world-class institution for student innovation and the greater Western MA community is renowned for its entrepreneurial activities.

Leadership Team

- **William Wooldridge**, Executive Director
- **Birton J. Cowden**, Associate Director
- **Charles J. Johnson**, Associate Director
- **Meagan Riley**, Office Manager
- **Caitlin Kennedy**, Office Assistant

Advisory Board

- **Kumble R. Subbaswamy**, Chancellor of the University of Massachusetts Amherst
- **Michael F. Malone**, Vice Chancellor for Research and Engagement
- **Katherine S. Newman**, Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
- **Mark A. Fuller**, Dean of the Isenberg School of Management
- **Bruce Croft**, Dean of the College of Information and Computer Sciences
- **Timothy J. Anderson**, Dean of the College of Engineering
- **Steve Goodwin**, Dean of the College of Natural Sciences

Multidisciplinary Entrepreneurship Education

The Berthiaume Center for Entrepreneurship is advancing the development of a vibrant assortment of entrepreneurship courses that are available to all majors on campus (see Appendix). Although the formal Entrepreneurship Concentration is presently achievable within the Management major, the BCE is planning to unveil an Entrepreneurship Minor for all undergraduates who embark on this curriculum.

Extracurricular Activities

The Berthiaume Center for Entrepreneurship advises the following extracurricular services to enhance the overall entrepreneurial ecosystem created for the campus community:

- **Entrepreneurship Club (EC):** This group serves as the general interest group for students wishing to learn more about entrepreneurship concepts. Given the recent surge in entrepreneurial projects on campus, EC has largely transitioned into serving the community of existing ventures as UMA's student-run incubator program.
- **Hackers of UMass:** an interest group within the **Association for Computer Machinery (ACM)** chapter at UMA, Hackers of UMass offers students the forum to collaborate on current software projects as well as multiple workshops to learn new practical techniques and application development.

- **Design Club:** This group offers tutorials on graphic design and an opportunity to meet others passionate about visual media.
- **Buzz Builders:** This is a student run ad-agency dedicated to increasing awareness of entrepreneurial events on campus. In collaboration with the UMA Department of Journalism, this group will offer real world experience in growth marketing.

Support Systems for Students and Entrepreneurs

The BCE also offers many benefits for current entrepreneurs. The BCE hosts various events to expose current UMA students to successful alumni and other prominent members of the entrepreneurial realm.

- **Innovation Challenge (IC):** Operating throughout the academic year, IC awards over \$100,000 in prizes each academic year through competitive events that are designed to help and reward UMass students and recent alumni who want to pursue a novel business idea and develop it into a marketable product.
- **Student Incubator Program:** This program supports existing student ventures throughout the semester as project teams work through various stages of development. At the first event of the semester featuring five current student-run ventures, the meeting room was filled to capacity.
- **Innovators' Jumpstart:** This is a two-day workshop targeted at STEM faculty, post-doc, and graduate student teams who are ready to explore possible commercialization options. Teams begin development of their business model canvases and are encouraged to begin customer discovery interviews to test their assumptions.
- **Berthiaume Mentoring Service (BMS):** This program offers each student venture a dedicated mentor or a team of mentors. Beyond the mentoring, the BCE also offers legal, accounting, marketing and technology support for existing student ventures.
- **Senior Design Project:** All Engineering students successfully discover innovative applications of the engineering curriculum through technically advanced and commercially viable projects.
- **E-Talks:** Since March 2015, these events have offered advice regarding operating a startup venture from notable entrepreneurs such as Crashlytics founder Wayne Chang and DraftKings co-founder Jason Robins.
- **Women in Entrepreneurship Conference:** BCE plans to hold an event during the Spring 2016 semester, which will help engage and empower female students.
- **UMACorps:** While the BCE has submitted a proposal to the NSF to become an I-Corps site, the BCE is internally funding and running an I-Corps replicated program (See Appendix).
- **Shadow an Entrepreneur:** To get a real sense of what it means to be an entrepreneur, students are able to shadow local entrepreneurs working on their existing companies and new startups.

Unique Aspects

The central theme of the BCE is that students must drive the entrepreneurial movement in order to maximize the impact. To this end, the **Berthiaume Student Innovators** act as the central node in the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Multidisciplinary in all senses of the word, members connect nearly all departments on campus, including Computer Science, Engineering of all concentrations, Business Administration, and the Social. BSI is the clear champion of innovation on the UMA campus, and it is involved in running the following initiatives:

- **Idea Jam:** this regular program allows all students on campus to pitch their ideas while receiving feedback and valuable networking with the audience of students from diverse academic backgrounds. Groups often form during these events and projects are developed beyond mere idea stage. Interestingly, attendance at Idea Jams during one week in Fall 2015 has already doubled that observed over the entire Spring 2015 semester.
- **HackUMass:** During a weekend in April 2015, several hundred computer science and engineering students from roughly thirty colleges around the nation convened at the UMA campus to develop innovative software and hardware projects. Attendance at this event was more than double that of its predecessor event in 2014, showing the rapid growth of student interest in creative innovation.
- **Hult Prize:** Most recently, a member of BSI has been selected as a Campus Director for this social entrepreneurship accelerator, organizing the first-ever preliminary round at UMA. This program will complement well the existing Faculty Consortium for Social Entrepreneurship led by Betsy Schmitt, who was previously the Director of Social Entrepreneurship at George Mason University.

- **Startup Weekend:** this is a 54-hour long event where students from across the country gain the opportunity to jumpstart their entrepreneurial careers. Participants gather around an idea or problem, and expedite the process of ideation to launch of a viable business venture or movement. Teams will create their Minimal Viable Products to be judged by industry experts, and they will receive feedback as well as potential mentorship opportunities beyond the event.
- **Undergraduate Students Offering Leadership, Values, and Experiences (USOLVE):** several members of BSI have been involved in the launch of this program, which engages middle school students of the Hadley Public School District in building foundational skills necessary for a successful future.

Sources of Funding and Support

Given that the BCE has operated for less than one year, the primary source of funding is the founding contribution of \$10 million from Doug and Diana Berthiaume in 2014. Additionally, the BCE is generating significant interest from alumni and corporations, as well as the UMA as an institution, national organizations, and local programs:

Institutional Support

As part of a large research university, BCE has access to a significant amount of support from the institution itself.

- **Advisory Board Composition:** The UMA administration is fully behind the vision of BCE, as key administrators are present on its advisory board.
- **Accelerated Staffing Provided:** Given the rapid growth of the BCE, the administration recognized that new additions to the original BCE team of three individuals were necessary. As a result, the BCE now includes several full-time faculty and staff, in addition to four MBA Fellows, as well as seven undergraduate part-time assistants.
- **Integrated Learning Center:** UMA has provided this state-of-the-art facility for courses and extracurricular gatherings of student groups within the entrepreneurial ecosystem, including BSI, Entrepreneurship Club, Hackers of UMass, etc.
- **Technology Transfer Office:** this program assists undergraduate, graduate, and faculty teams with the commercialization of on-campus projects. As of November 2014, there were six technologies introduced during the last year.
- **MakerBot Innovation Center:** This facility holds fifty 3D printers for the use of students at a subsidized price point.

National Support

The BCE program has also received support and distinctions from a variety of nationally acclaimed organizations:

- **NSF I-Corps:** BCE is currently under consideration as an I-Corps site. Additionally, numerous UMA faculty members have received grants under this program in the past.
- **Coleman Fellows:** UMA is a member of this program, which has provided funding for innovative courses in the Departments of Journalism, Environmental Conservation, Chemistry, and Public Policy (see Appendix for Coleman Fellows and all affiliated faculty)
- **Global Consortium of Entrepreneurship Centers (GCEC):** The BCE is now in its Leadership Circle, demonstrating a commitment to improved entrepreneurial curricula, research, and collaborative projects.
- **VentureWell:** UMA is now a member of this program, which is a network of entrepreneurial education institutions with ties to the National Science Foundation and Stanford University. Through this program, many UMA faculty members have been certified in the Lean Launchpad.
- **University Innovation Fellows (UIF):** BCE is in the process of collaborating with BSI members to apply for this program of VentureWell. Through UIF, five emerging leaders from BSI will receive direct training on how to drive culture and engage the UMA campus more effectively in innovation activities.

Local Support

BCE also has forged relationships with many groups throughout Massachusetts, particularly in surrounding communities:

- **MassChallenge:** BCE is collaborating with this Boston based accelerator program on future projects.

- **Western Massachusetts Economic Development Council:** BCE is working with this group on developing mutually beneficial relationships and providing resources.
- **Amherst Area Chamber of Commerce:** BCE has had meetings with members of this group to establish a working relationship.
- **Five College Consortium:** As a member, UMA can draw upon resources, faculty expertise, and course registrations from Amherst College, Mount Holyoke College, Smith College and Hampshire College.
- **Draper Competition:** a business plan competition held at Smith College for female entrepreneurs.
- **Valley Venture Mentors (VVM):** Students at UMA have attended and participated in this accelerator located in Springfield, MA. This group has also held workshops on the UMA campus to inform entrepreneurially inclined students.
- **Harold Grinspoon Foundation:** this cultural organization has developed the Grinspoon Entrepreneurship Initiative to recognize students that demonstrate an entrepreneurial spirit. It also holds an Elevator Pitch Competition, during which UMA students have earned prize money.

Program Benefits for Students

The BCE program provides the following benefits for students in and around campus:

- **Entrepreneurial Internship Program:** Internships offer students an opportunity to experience life in a startup before graduation. The BCE is leveraging its alumni and industry network to expand such offerings.
- **High School Summer Program:** This program, Entrepreneurship Everywhere, has presented students with entrepreneurial frameworks to create solutions to problems they observe in the world, which they demonstrate to high school attendees of other programs.
- **Summer Accelerator Program:** From June to August 2016, student ventures will be provided with financial support, workshops, and mentors while advancing their projects.
- **New Students Orientation (NSO):** BCE is now a cornerstone program for all incoming undergraduate students of UMA. Due to an overwhelmingly positive response from incoming students, BCE will continue to increase awareness of entrepreneurship on campus through exposure to such first-year students.
- **Residential Academic Program (RAP):** Entrepreneurial Explorations features first-year students in the Commonwealth Honors College involved in the living-and-learning community. During the classroom component, students develop an entrepreneurial mindset through hands-on exercises.
- **Team Builder Application:** located on the BCE website, this form makes it incredibly easy for students to join an existing team or create their own.
- **Event Calendar:** located on the BCE website, this calendar highlights entrepreneurial events within a 50-mile radius of campus. This aligns with BCE's goal of becoming the hub of innovation and entrepreneurship in Western Massachusetts.

Program Outcomes

Although the BCE has been in operation for less than one-year, it has achieved many phenomenal outcomes. Many student ventures have formed, and over this short time frame they have collectively received nearly \$1 million in external funding from angel investors. Additionally, one of the teams formed at an Idea Jam from the Spring 2015 semester was admitted into the Mass Challenge accelerator program this past summer. Taken as a whole, this narrative has outlined countless other instances of successful outcomes achieved over such a short timeframe.

The Berthiaume Center for Entrepreneurship has secured its long-term success in that it is now a sustainable organization. From an institutional perspective, there is support and recognition from the highest levels of the University of Massachusetts administration, as seen in many key members' active participation in its advisory board. The community relationships that have been formed during the past year offer the opportunity for even more impact in the future. Overall, the growth of student attendance at entrepreneurial events and the fact that students are driving the initiative are harbingers of even more successful outcomes for the Berthiaume Center for Entrepreneurship far into the future.