

Nomination of the
Millikin University Tabor School of Business
Arts & Entrepreneurship Program

For the USASBE Excellence in Entrepreneurship Education Award
Outstanding Specialty Entrepreneurship Program

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

USASBE Award Nominee: **Millikin University Arts & Entrepreneurship Program**
Outstanding Specialty Entrepreneurship Program

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MILLIKIN UNIVERSITY

Millikin University delivers innovative pedagogy and programs to prepare approximately 2,300 undergraduate students in the Tabor School of Business, College of Fine Arts, College of Professional Studies, and College of Arts & Sciences for professional careers. The entrepreneurship program at Millikin is multidisciplinary, serving 35% of the student body. Students enroll in entrepreneurship courses both inside and outside of their discipline, working individually with advisors from the Center for Entrepreneurship to develop customized educational experiences. Fine arts students and business students take ownership of their careers through the Arts & Entrepreneurship (A&E) Program.

A&E PROGRAM

Launched in 2003, Millikin University's Arts & Entrepreneurship (A&E) Program is a six-credit course sequence providing performance-based learning opportunities for students to practice self employment. A&E integrates disciplines from the Tabor School of Business (Entrepreneurship, Accounting, Finance, Management, and Marketing) and the College of Fine Arts (School of Music, Art, and Theatre & Dance). Students develop, launch, and grow a business. Rather than learn before doing, students are required to learn *while* doing by first starting a micro-venture in the A&E Program's introductory course. Then, students design and execute growth strategies for one of five student-run ventures.

Vision: Be the leader in *multidisciplinary* arts entrepreneurship education.

Mission: Prepare students for a career as a self employed artist or business owner.

Goals:

- Provide students with the tools and experiences necessary to become self employed
- Provide students with a framework to develop, expand, and apply their creativity to the problems of a business
- Establish an ethos of collaboration between fine arts and business students where innovation and creativity is privileged

Student Learning Outcomes:

- Identify passion, skills, and potential for success as an owner or free agent
- Integrate the entrepreneurship process of opportunity recognition, marshaling of resources, and risk assessment to create a business or artistic career
- Identify and leverage the financial, human, material, and intellectual resources necessary to start and grow a venture

STUDENTS

The A&E Program serves students from across campus, mainly those in the College of Fine Arts (the largest academic presence on campus) and the Tabor School of Business. Nearly 20% of fine arts students and 37% of business students enroll in entrepreneurship courses each year. All students majoring in entrepreneurship, art, theatre administration, and music business as well as entrepreneurship minors are required to take A&E courses. Students in other majors such as commercial music, acting, musical theatre, stage management, studio art, and graphic design enroll in the A&E Program through elective credits.

STRUCTURE

The A&E Program is a six-credit sequence of two distinct complementary courses offered every semester. There are no pre-requisites for enrolling in course I, The Art of Entrepreneurship. In course I, all students develop and launch a micro-venture. In course II, the student-run venture experience, students use their ownership skills to create value and grow a venture.

Course I: ET380 The Art of Entrepreneurship (3 credits)

As part of their coursework, students develop a business model utilizing the text *Business Model Generation* and compete for funding and space in BC Studios. BC Studios is an arts and business incubator located in the lower level of Blue Connection, Millikin's student-run retail art gallery. Through a pitch to a funding group, students receive loans (up to \$50 per person) to launch their own micro-venture. Tenants of BC Studios are charged a percentage of sales as rent, but may seek out additional sales venues as long as they are not located on Millikin's campus. In order to pass the class, students must repay their loan through their individual venture's earnings. Typical revenue generated over the two month period for each of the micro-ventures is between \$500 and \$1,500.

Successful micro-ventures often continue once they complete the course. Students can apply for an office in The Hub, a business incubator located on Millikin's campus with space for up to 10 businesses. Examples of businesses (and the student owner(s) majors) that have continued after the class concludes are: Stencil-vania, t-shirt design/printing (graphic design & entrepreneurship); ewe-sed, upcycled bags (studio art); Strings Attached, live string music (music business); and Little Blessings Bowtique, hair accessories (communication).

Course II: ET390 Student-venture Experience (3 credits)

Following successful completion of course I, The Art of Entrepreneurship, students enroll in course II, Millikin's student-run ventures. Millikin's five student-run ventures are laboratories for entrepreneurship. As owners, students are accountable for meeting the financial outcomes and business goals they establish in addition to covering all direct expenses associated with the venture; students' grades are determined by their results. Since 2003, students have generated venture revenues in excess of US\$300,000 with artist payments totaling more than \$100,000.

Millikin's definition of a student-run venture is:

- A laboratory of practice delivered *as a course* grounded in an academic discipline
- Student centered with faculty, alumni, and practitioner coaching and mentoring
- Profit and mission driven focus
- A business operating in the community where students design, produce, promote, and sell products
- Adaptive, offering ample opportunities for student experimentation as each new class enrolls
- An environment to experience risk with real opportunity for failure or gain

Faculty outside the venture's discipline use the student-run ventures for projects such as:

- Management: Developing performance evaluation systems, presenting training modules
- Marketing: Creating advertising campaigns
- Accounting: Auditing venture financials, preparing venture financial statements
- Information Systems: Building inventory databases
- Public Relations: Drafting press releases, developing public relations campaigns/events

Millikin's student-run ventures include:

Blue Connection, retail art gallery (ET390)

- Examples of student responsibilities include: developing product lines, forecasting, contracts, sales, event planning, and inventory management. Venture located off-campus.

First Step Records, record label and music publishing company (MC390)

- Examples of student responsibilities include: production, manufacturing, publishing, promotions, artist representation, and e-commerce sales. Venture located on-campus.

Pipe Dreams Studio Theatre, theatre company (TH390)

- Examples of student responsibilities include: programming, promotions, production management, ticket sales, patron relations, and budgeting. Venture located off-campus.

Carriage House Press, fine art press specializing in etchings and relief prints (AR380)

- Examples of student responsibilities include: project management, design, promotions, consignment, event planning, studio rentals, and printing. Venture located off-campus.

Blue Satellite Press, letterpress specializing in poetry broadsides (EN382)

- Examples of student responsibilities include: poetry solicitation, design, setting lead type, printing, sales, and promotions. Venture located on-campus.

STUDENT BENEFITS

Students benefit from **professional performance experiences** by collaborating, performing, and competing with artists in the students' area of study.

- **After 5 Live:** In collaboration with the Decatur Area Arts Council, Blue Connection hosts a gallery opening the first Friday of every month in Downtown Decatur for 300-600 community members. Ten exceptional student artists receive a month-long professional exhibition in a retail space each year. Student artists are involved in pricing, sales, and event management.
- **Summer Student Artist Residency:** Blue Connection awards an exceptional student artist a six week residency through a competitive application process each summer. The student resident artist receives onsite studio space with direct public interaction to market, promote, and sell their work.
- **Production of New Work:** Pipe Dreams Studio Theatre develops new work written by students and aspiring writers from across the country. Nearly 100 student directors, performers, and technicians interact with writers and mount productions each year. The company also hosts Ink Support, a weekly playwriting workshop and forum to develop student scripts.
- **Multidisciplinary International Summer Program:** An international experience combining language and cultural excursions in Italy with courses from the fine arts and business.

- **On the Road:** Blue Connection, Blue Satellite Press, and Carriage House Press all take their work “on the road” to events, fairs, and conferences across Illinois to expose students to multiple sales venues. Past locations have included Art on the Bluffs in Columbia, a private gallery in Edwardsville, the Self Employment in the Arts as well as the Associated Writing Programs Conferences in Chicago, and Arts in Central Park in Decatur, among others.
- **Artist as Entrepreneur Residency:** The Center for Entrepreneurship funds up to fifteen, week-long residencies annually with professional artists who have made a career from their craft. Students immerse themselves in the world of the artist’s business by attending presentations, creating products, and selling finished goods through the student-run ventures.

FUNDING AND SUPPORT

The A&E Program is supported by the President, Vice-President for Academic Affairs, and all four Deans with 75% of Program funding coming from Millikin’s annual operating budget. Faculty and administrative salaries as well as salaries for student staff are provided through this budget. Maintenance and rental of student-run venture facilities on and off campus is funded by Millikin. The University also provides a dedicated office suite, marketing support, and conference and travel funds. To support further exploration of the University’s brand of “performance learning,” Millikin created Performance Learning Enhancement Grants using the A&E Program’s faculty development model.

The A&E Program was the first to offer an off-campus University venue for student practice and has expanded from one to five student-run ventures over eight years. Student-run ventures generate over \$30,000 annually that is reinvested in the ventures to support activities of those businesses. An additional 12% of A&E’s funding comes from The Coleman Foundation to cover expenses for Program activities such as resident artists. The Center for Entrepreneurship endowments makeup 8% of funding to cover student and faculty conference attendance, professional development for students and faculty, startup seed funding, and incubator support. The remaining 5% comes from external grants such as the Illinois Board of Higher Education.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

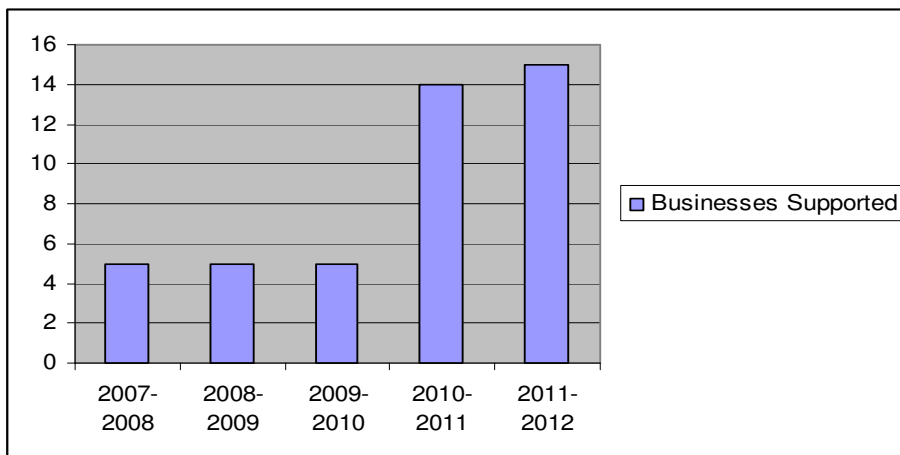
Curricular-based student-run ventures have become synonymous with Millikin’s delivery of entrepreneurship education. Institutions such as Hiram College, UNC Greensboro, and Santa Fe Community College have adapted the model for their own student ventures. Due to an increasing number of inquiries about the ventures, the Center developed an Entrepreneurship Across the Campus Symposium. The two day workshop includes guest speakers and meetings with students from each of Millikin’s student-run ventures, concluding with time for faculty to develop their own courses and practice laboratories with guidance from Center for Entrepreneurship faculty.

Following a visit to campus, artist, Director of Music Entrepreneurship at University of South Carolina, and author of *The Savvy Musician*, Dr. David Cutler wrote on his blog “I had the opportunity to visit Millikin University... I was delighted to learn about their unique and (as far as I know) unprecedented approach to arts entrepreneurship.” This comment has been reiterated by individuals such as Fred Thompson of *Inside Business* who filmed and aired a news story on Blue Connection and John Eger of the *Huffington Post* who included Millikin’s A&E Program in a listing of just four schools offering truly integrated arts degrees.

The A&E Program was the first cross-campus initiative at the University, bringing together the disciplines of entrepreneurship and visual arts with a focus on self employment in 2003. The six-credit Program paved the way for the launch of a major in entrepreneurship in 2005 and an entrepreneurship minor in 2009. The growth in the A&E Program institutionalized entrepreneurship across campus leading to the design of permanent courses incorporating entrepreneurship in:

- College of Fine Arts: Theatre Administration, Musical Theatre, Printmaking, Graphic Design, Ceramics, Painting, Photography, Music Business, and Commercial Music
- College of Arts & Sciences: English, Public Relations, Biology, and Human Services
- College of Professional Studies: Nursing (Master's level)
- Tabor School of Business: Management, International Business, Marketing, Finance, Economics, and Accounting

Student confidence to launch their own enterprises has been positively impacted with the ability to manage risk, recognize opportunities, and marshal resources. A few examples of ventures launched by A&E students following graduation include Neon Kitchen, a fine art letterpress; zeroeightconsulting, a design and brand consulting firm; Art on the Bluffs, an annual art festival and arts organization; Peter Rubi, an organic produce grocer; and European Sports, a family owned sports apparel retailer; among others. In addition, over \$20,000 in seed funding has been provided to nearly 44 businesses launched through the A&E Program's courses and activities while students are still in school.



Beyond student engagement, the A&E Program has served as a catalyst for faculty innovation in teaching by designing intentional entrepreneurship experiences. Faculty offer students the opportunity to take risks and launch self employed careers in their discipline. Arts faculty who struggle to answer the parent question of "will they have a job?" can now share the value of the tools and professional performance experiences at Millikin.