

Public Abstract

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Title:EDUCATIONAL ENTREPRENEURISM IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY OF TWO ACADEMIC CENTERS WITHIN ONE LAND-GRANT UNIVERSITY

A small percentage of research has examined the impact of academic centers and institutes on either a traditional department or on the university administration's desire to pursue entrepreneurial ventures. Moreover, little research exists focusing on the organizational culture and evolution that creates and sustains these centers and institutes or on the external environmental forces contributing to these unique examples of educational entrepreneurship.

The purpose of this research is to explore the relationship of educational entrepreneurship and organizational culture in the creation and evolution of academic centers within one Midwestern land-grant university facing resource constraints.

This research utilized a qualitative, comparative, case-study to examine how entrepreneurship is pursued in postsecondary education and how organizational culture and evolution contribute to this process through the creation of academic centers.

The findings of this study indicate that these centers have utilized entrepreneurial processes within an academic and non-academic setting to serve a public interest. Primary factors supporting entrepreneurial processes in these academic centers include: (a) mission focus; (b) remaining objective to serve multiple constituents; (c) cultivating resources, both people and funding; (d) building leaders from within; (e) commitment and (f) champions. The relationship of organizational culture with these factors was found to be the key for continuous innovation. This study suggests that an awareness of center directors and university administrators of the cultural components and entrepreneurial processes most common to non-traditional academic units may prove useful in strategic planning and organizational growth and evolution.