Session: Compare and Contrast Different Entrepreneurship Program Mission Statements

Date: Friday, October 26th 2001
9:15—10:30 am

Session Leaders: Drew Isaacs, U.C. Berkeley

Notes:

What's your Mission?!?!?!?

Drew mentioned how difficult it is to follow Tom Byers, and his chagrin at being given the driest subject to talk about. He then proceeded to give a bit of background on the Environment at UC Berkeley. US Berkeley is built on system of verticals. School of Eng. Business School, IS School

10-15 years ago Berkeley realized gaps existed in student education. Mid-late 80's created cross-discipline program. The resulting program is the Management of Technology program. Students love it. Program grew like gang-busters. Today one of the largest on campus. 30 courses, 1000 students.

About the same time in the B School there was dedicated center for Entrepreneurship bridging to other units.

Drew send out emails to the REEE participants asking for their mission statements as well as soliciting other information regarding their programs and focus. He thanked the few participants for responding to email about mission statement. He then launched into a series of slides describing what the purpose of a mission statement is as well as several strategies for the creation and evaluation of mission statements.

Point of mission statement.
Describe what you are doing now...
Project where you want to go....
Promote your program...
Not a stream of nouns and adjectives.. Must be a mission....
Mission statement helps fundraising, consensus building, traction for program.
Easy to be jaded by missions....
"Our mission is to globally..."
What does this mean? From Dilbert.com.
Randomly combines 17 adverbs, 25 verbs, 39 adjectives, 20 nouns.

How to create effective mission...
Some Mission engines...
(ways we come up with mission of programs)

- Empirical
  - Things we've accomplished
  - Stuff we're doing now
  - What we plan to do
  - Not really promotional or inspiring
• Predictive model
  o We’re Entrepreneurs! There is no prolog. What's important is what we do going forward. (Hides pass skeletons…) Result in Impossibly huge jobs, not grounded in resources available.

• Like a trip to the beach...
  o Thank goodness you are not working alone.. n^4 inputs to process.
  o Where to go
  o How to get there
  o What speed
  o What to get along the way
  o Which…..

• Trip-> meat grinder from living too well or Not listening = marital bliss
• Meat Grinder AtoZ.com statement covered everything and nothing.
• Marital Bliss - the challenge is deciding what to leave out
  o Many stakeholders in program success. Are all inputs critical?
  o If your program is successful, then all stakeholders support efforts.

Resources for the creation of Mission Statements. www.Nonprofits.org
What should our mission statement say?
Purpose, Business, Values, Beneficiaries.

After this overview of the nature of mission statements, Drew reviewed the email responses he received from various REEE attendees.

Miami of Ohio

Alignment with outsiders Board of advisors are 100% commitment. -School doesn't endorse program.

Mark Rice from Babson

Babson has long tradition of excellence. Hard to remain on top. Spinelli says how wants to be in charge when Blank falls from top. Leveraging Olin to keep Babson on top. Superb engineering, Creativity in the Arts, Entrepreneurship are focuses of Olin. Advice on building missions: Start with small group of high passion and commitment to put heart and soul behind. Keep It Simple Stupid. Strongest capture in small words, powerful.

Reverse Engineering of other programs

Kathy Simon - Create a connected learning environment. Make something right for you. CU Boulder is student focused at end of day. Our mission is to graduate entrepreneurial thinkers. Just finished survey. Above all, teach us how to be Ent but also teach us to think like Ent and connect to ENT in larger Colorado Community. Do well by students. Focused on constituents. Hard to keep clear focus. Simple missions ensure alignment of daily actions with overall goals. Survey tells them they are focused in right areas and will
continue to support as long as focus continues. Tried to survey other center directors and tremendous lack of response.

**Peter Reid**

Others judge by the activities they interact with us. Great group of managers and scientists able to run companies of the future. Students see hills while center has to focus on mountains. Must do more than just graduate students. Research schools also needs academic pursuits to motivate as well.

**Jay Fisher - IIT**

Some activities are only tangentially aligned with mission. Stakeholders observe activities and see that as whole mission. Conflicts between admin and education? Important to give language to stakeholders that they understand what they are trying to do.

**Deb Streeter - Cornell.** Likes idea of selective listening. Hard process but very valuable.

**Cal Tech**

Cal Tech this would be counter productive. Faculty would balk at mission statements. Cal tech, must work in stealth mode to spring Entrepreneurship on them. Incubator is bad word in Cal Tech. If you move too close to industry, faculty balks. Resources are not only consideration. Alignment of stakeholders is critical

**Tim Schwartz - UCSB**

Recognize bulk of students will not start companies. Skills make students more effective regardless.

Drew Issacs received a call from LA Times:

"Now that Tech is dead, what are your students going to do?"

This is the 5th death of dead Drew has seen in his time in the Valley. Entrepreneurship is needed more in downturn. Sunday's NYT article on Venture Capital. % of employees started as startups is 20%. Goes beyond small start-ups in Silicon Valley.

**Tina Seelig - STVP**

All about coffee cups.
Big mission allows to assess all new opportunities and do great things. Context changes mission. 50% in Eng. 50% Bus. 3 from other... Service different populations. Base assumption that everyone is like us but reality is vast differences in context that shape mission and focus. Schools in Midwest and small towns thrive on resources that are there. Don't have to be in Silicon X to be effective. Consider brand. Mission statement is marketing activity. Posters have to deal with brand more than mission. Have to deal with brand of program and university it lives. Aligned in brand is harder than words. What are you exposing as values and how that relates to brands. Brand management is maybe a key consideration going forward.

Harry Cook - Looking at new discipline. ENT Engineering. Eng Econ. OR, etc.

Angus Klingon - NC State: Creating business from technology. Very strong focus for sustainability. Recognize that using focus generates intrapreneurial education as well that is very effective even though outside focus. Worried about being all things to all people as it dilutes brand. Entrepreneurship in Engineer is license to kill. Not everyone is thrilled. Be careful of impossibly huge goals.

MSU - typically teach students Mission Statement as being first. Don't write abstract first, why mission statement first? Mission statement has to reflect where enterprise is going and has gone.

How would mission statement in Business school differ from Engineering School? Is here also an Engineering school, then web them together?

Jean Miccol - focus vs. broad mission. Must consider balance in mission and goals.

Hopkins - brand name is strong in research. Struggling in branding. ENT education opposes research branding. Tremendous lack of support.

Encourage PhD's to add chapter on Commercialization.

The discussion was lively and involved. The main take away seems to be that every program is unique. Looking at programs in similar situations will provide insight into what works and does not.

Notes taken by John Feland, Stanford University.