

November 01, 2006

STE Update : 11/2006

Northeastern University

Recommended Citation

Northeastern University, "STE Update : 11/2006" (2006). *STE Update*. Paper 1. <http://hdl.handle.net/2047/d20000190>

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Northeastern

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Higher Learning. Richer Experience.

School of **TECHNOLOGICAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

STE Update

November 2006

moving **technology** from **idea** to **reality**

Letter from the Dean

Dear Alumni and Friends,

I am happy to report that things are moving forward at a rate that makes me very proud.

In the previous update, I wrote about my three major goals for the school: the establishment of I-Cubators; launching the graduate programs; and communicating our efforts through publicity.

These goals are our response to two problems facing our nation: the need to enhance entrepreneurial education and the need to move technology from universities into the economy. I believe Northeastern has the pedigree to create and foster a very aggressive and unique solution.

I-Cubators. We hired Dan Gregory as the Director of the Digital Media I-cubator and he is planning the first I-cubator projects for the Spring. I-Cubators (referred to as TechStarts in that report) are company-like structures formulated to help students experience a simulated pre-business start-up environment when there is a need to perform in-depth analysis, to vet technologies, and build prototypes prior to assuming the cost and risk of forming a new business.

Graduate Program. The second objective was to launch the graduate program. And launch we did, with 14 full and part-time students and a sprinkling of students from other majors (one class has 19 students enrolled). This is a great success for the school. Our efforts are now focused on fielding excellent courses taught by some of Northeastern's best faculty and keeping our eyes focused on satisfying our students.

Marketing and PR. The third objective was to orchestrate a marketing and PR campaign for STE leading up to a launch event during the alumni weekend. Thanks to the team from Peppercom and our own marketing team, the entire program was a great success. I believe that this effort raised the profile of STE and will assist in attracting company partnerships, recruit faculty, and enroll students.

After one year on the job and discussions with many leaders of Entrepreneurship programs, I am happy to report that Northeastern is well positioned with a unique independent School of Technological Entrepreneurship.

Paul M. Lavracky

I want to personally acknowledge the support I have received from the Provost and the Deans, contributions and support from alumni, and an outstanding group of Northeastern faculty. Plenty of work remains, but I believe we are well positioned.

Progress during Summer/Fall of '06

Undergraduate Program

This will be the first year that undergraduate students will be ready to complete the minor by evaluating a technological idea, using what they learned in previous courses to look at markets and customer needs, and writing a business plan. Teams have several opportunities for projects, including working with engineering capstone project teams and working with the first I-cubator teams.

Graduate Program

The first class of graduate students arrived this fall and is currently enrolled in the first four courses offered as part of the school's Master's in Technological Entrepreneurship. We welcomed the students with a 'Meet and Greet' comprising STE faculty, the Dean, Susan Lawless and a good showing of the new graduate class. The Dean introduced the program and the participating faculty members. Then each faculty member provided a brief background and if teaching this semester, a description of what they intend to accomplish. Subsequently, everyone attending had the opportunity to mingle.



Figure 1. STE 'meet and greet' with the first MSTE class.

Initial feedback from the students has been generally positive. We are doing everything we can to make sure student needs are addressed. One concern we are addressing is the need to create extra-curricular activities, John Friar is addressing this concern with the establishment of a dinner/seminar series.

I-Cubators and E-Labs

We reported last issue on the progress made during the summer in defining the experiential component of our education program which we are now calling I-Cubators. The term is meant to invoke the concept of ideas being incubated, but unlike “Incubators” in which already formed companies are nurtured, the I-cubator teams are not companies but teams of students, both undergraduate and graduate, assisted by faculty and Alumni mentors. The I-cubator is an organizational structure with a Chief Technology Officer (CTO) [typically a faculty member], a professional full-time manager, and a board of directors. Please refer to the July Update for more details. The NSF proposal was submitted as planned and is pending review.

We’ve launched our first I-cubator with a focus on Digital Media. The CTO is Tony De Ritis who is the director of the Center for Creative Industries. With the support of Jim Stellar (Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences), we have together funded the first I-cubator manager, Dan Gregory. Dan’s impressive background in Creative Industries, experience with start-up operations, and knowledge of financing start-ups makes him an idea candidate for this role. Dan hit the ground running and is supervising the activities of the first Digital Media I-cubator teams composed completely of graduate students.

Our second planned I-cubator will focus on the BioTech area. The Dean is collaborating with Barry Karger (Director of the Barnett Institute) and Graham Jones (Chairman of the Chemistry Department). Barry is an exceptionally successful faculty member at Northeastern, whose work in the Barnett Institute has resulted in several high yielding patents for the University and a number of spin-out companies. Barry and the Dean of STE were collaborators when the Dean was a professor of Electrical Engineering. Graham has been a very capable department

chairman, elevating the status of the Chemistry Department during his tenure.

The I-Cubators will be housed in the E-Lab. We achieved a major step forward with the establishment of the E-Lab. The E-Lab is a room in which undergraduate and graduate student teams meet to discuss their projects. The university had allocated space in Hayden Hall for the E-Lab and is currently renovating the area.

The effectiveness of the E-Lab was enhanced by a generous gift from George (E’44) and Ellen Kariotis. George and Ellen established an endowed scholarship fund which supports the projects of both undergraduate and graduate student.

The E-Lab will consist of three office areas in which teams can store records of their projects, conduct project related activities, and meet to share ideas and coordinate effort. The room will also provide a conference area where teams presentations will take place, board members of the I-Cubators will meet and Alumni and guest seminars will take place.

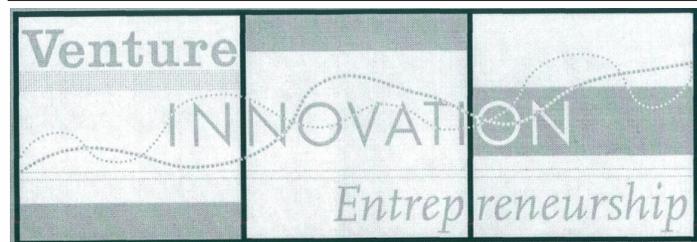
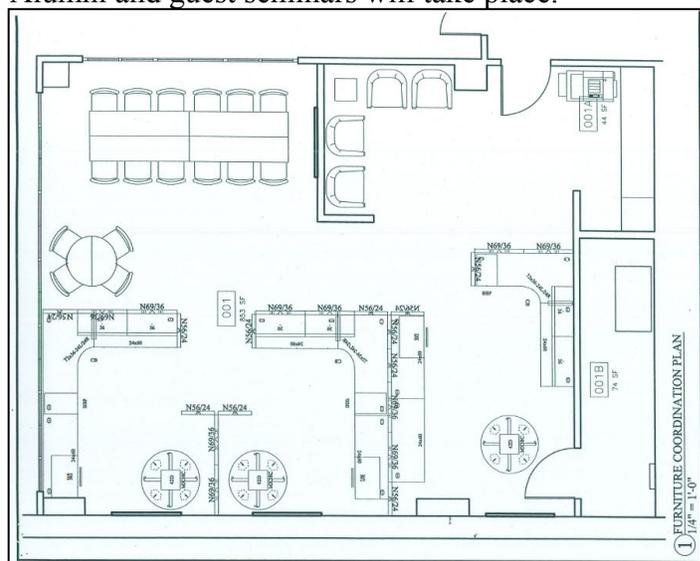


Figure 2. Window treatment for the E-Lab which will face the hallway in Hayden.



Staffing

In the last update, we reported opening two faculty positions; one for the Shillman Chair and the other for a junior faculty member. Since then, we've added a second junior position. We are looking for faculty members with experience in entrepreneurship who have been involved in high-tech high-growth start-ups. The ideal candidate will have an advanced academic degree, preferably a PhD and a real desire to perform research in entrepreneurship and teach our undergraduate and graduate students. This individual may come from a recent startup experience and be ready to help give back to the university. The successful candidate will be expected to engage in the tenure process with enthusiasm. Both positions are planned for the next academic year. If you know anyone who may fit this description, please have them contact us.

The Robert J. Shillman Trustee Professor of Entrepreneurship, made possible by a generous donation from Robert Shillman, (BSEE '68, Founder and CEO of Cognex Corporation) has been advertised in *The Chronicles of Higher Education* and other academic journals. The committee is formed under the leadership of Kim Lewis (Biology). The Dean has been actively promoting positions to high profile individuals at other institutions. We are beginning to assemble an impressive array of candidates. The opportunity for the university is to attract a faculty member with a proven track record and who may be able to bring his/her own funding. Again, help identifying candidates would be greatly appreciated.

As noted, Dan Gregory was hired to help STE implement the I-cubator strategy and to manage the Digital Media I-cubator. His hire was split between STE and CAS, where he works with Tony De Ritis (MBA '02) and Jim Stellar to launch the Center for Creative Industry. Dan has extensive consulting experience working with early-stage companies and product launches. He was founder and CEO of an innovative digital publishing company and has been a member of management teams at several start-up technology firms.

External Activities

Marketing and Public Relations

Our PR campaign raising the age old question of "nature or nurture" with respect to entrepreneurship was a great success as measured against the best measure we have; the number of web hits. The graph below shows a dramatic increase in the months leading up to the launch held during Alumni Week.

Leading up to the launch, the school conducted several podcasts with alumni. These are accessible on our website. Click on the  logo to get to the podcasts.

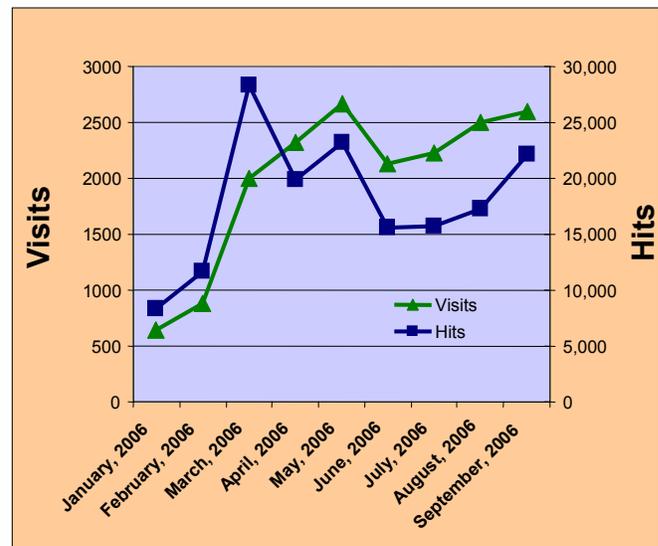


Figure 3. Increasing in web hits starting in January 2006.

We also conducted a survey of entrepreneurs. The results were interesting and somewhat unexpected. Most entrepreneurs surveyed (62% of the 202 respondents) believe that innate drive was responsible for their becoming entrepreneurs. And further, only 1% attributes their interest in entrepreneurship to higher education. The latter statement may be a result of the lack of course offerings in entrepreneurship to engineers and scientists. It's only been in the last 10 years that there has really been a surge in university interest in technological entrepreneurship. So since 1% attribute education to their success to education could be instead viewed in a positive manner. It shows that education can be a factor in one's choice to become an entrepreneur. And it suggests an opportunity for universities to play a bigger role in encouraging technological entrepreneurship.



The panel discussion was a breakfast event held on Friday, October 20th and well attended. Panelists included Dean Zavracky (LA'71, MS'75), John Fan, Abbot Gilman (BA'76), Len Perham (E'68) and Richard Corley (E'83). Steve Cody (LA'77) moderated the discussion which started with an overview of the results of the survey followed by remarks from the panelists and a conversation about success factors in creating and growing companies.

TiE Boston Outsourcing Workshop

Northeastern hosted an outsourcing workshop sponsored by the TiE Boston Organization on November 18th. Mr. James Champy, Chairman of Perot System's Consulting unit was the keynote speaker. Mr. Champy is a world-renowned author and authority on business reengineering having written the seminal book 'Reengineering the Corporation'.

"In a 'flat world', work must move freely across both corporate and country borders; highly talented workforces must be released to compete and profit," said Mr. Champy. "This new environment, facilitated by information technology, will enable innovative business models and opportunities for venture and investment."

Provost Ahmed Abdelal opened the workshop and Mike Webb, Chairman of the Board; Mass Biotech Council gave the closing keynote speech.

To assist local entrepreneurs to make the right choices, TiE Boston organized the Third Annual Global Sourcing Workshop where attendees can interact with panels of experts and benefit from their experiences. TiE Boston was one of the first local organizations to highlight Outsourcing's impact on entrepreneurs. Attendees were able to draw on perspectives ranging from Software Development to Pharmaceutical Clinical Trials and R&D.

Upcoming Events

EntrepreneurshipWeek USA

Northeastern is taking a leadership role in the region for the Kauffman sponsored EntrepreneurshipWeek USA event to take place between February 24th and March 3rd. Events will be sponsored on the Northeastern campus

Alumni/ae Opportunities

We depend on the support of Northeastern's alumni/ae. Please give some thought to the following areas of interest and need:

- 1) Help identify and direct students to the Master's program. We need top quality students with ideas for businesses. Our program is designed to help these students launch successful companies. The ideal candidate would have six or more years of industrial experience. As mentioned earlier, the program can be taken on a part time basis.
- 2) A list of speaking opportunities will be available soon. I hope you will consider addressing students in the classroom.
- 3) We are looking for industrial partnerships for our I-Cubators in the areas of Digital Media and BioTech. Connections to firms that might have an interest in seeing ideas vetted by student teams will be very important to the success of the program.

Things of Note

To get more information about the STE, visit www.ste.neu.edu.