Increasing an Entrepreneurial mindset on the University of British Columbia campus through the Alma Mater Society’s Entrepreneurship Hub

For

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**Abstract**

**Introduction**

The University of British Columbia’s Alma Mater Society has recently launched a new startup company to be available to all students called: The Entrepreneurship Hub (EHub). The EHub was designed by former students in order to increase the entrepreneur mindset on campus and challenge well known universities across the globe. The University of British Columbia (UBC) currently has over 44,000 students; the idea is to increase the general entrepreneurial mindset at the UBC’s campus in order to use all of its human capital in order to create successful opportunities to students from within. Since 2010, UBC has had 62 successful spin-off companies created and successfully developed. Most of the companies were created due to a scientific research that sought an innovative method to deal with scientific problems. It is important to note that Harvard has been associated with the creations of companies like; Facebook, Airbnb, Fitbit, TripAdvisor, Staples and many more. With twice the number of students, UBC can definitely challenge the strongest universities in the world

With such a large population of students, UBC should nurture students to think bigger. EHub can impact these students in a positive way by developing ideas, generating engagement and overall helping students bring ideas to life. However, there needs to be a greater integration of these programs into the student life because there is a lack of communication between students and organizers of such events and specific clubs. Therefore, involving students directly and following up with their progress would be beneficial to the integration of faculties. In order to increase engagement, EHub needs to increase its marketing campaign. Being a new organization on campus there is a lack in terms of the visual and written communication to students.

To help solidify Ehub’s presence on campus, this report analyzes information gathered from students and EHub’s administrative team. The analysis examines numbers collected at EHub’s most powerful tool, the RBC Get Seeded program. Secondly it will draw an overview of what students think about the program, through a survey analysis. These will allow the report to evaluate how valuable students feel the EHub opportunity is to campus and their aspiring professional lives.

The report concludes by acknowledging current efforts made by EHub inside the UBC community and by recommending immediate and inexpensive ideas that will increase its overall reach on campus.

**At last, I will research on how other universities have used similar companies in order to enhance the entrepreneurial feel on campus. I want to be able to analyze how long it took for student engagement to increase and what potential ideas panned out.**

**Data Section**

**Survey Analysis:**

The following data section will lay out the results of the conducted survey*. Graph 1* shows the breakdown of students by faculties that participated in the analysis. As we can see Sauder and Engineering hold a higher number of students with interest in EHub, with Sciences and Arts following accordingly. The number of participants can also be related to faculties with a more analytical view as Engineering and Commerce over students with a social sciences and humanities view. Out of the 95 surveyed students 79 knew about EHub, while 93 responded that they have shown interest in brainstorming a business idea. This is important because it shows how diverse EHub’s population is, however the sample collected was too small to represent the entire UBC community.

**RBC Get Seeded; Faculty Involvement:**

On March 19th EHub held their first event in 2018, called, RBC Get Seeded. The event aimed to develop student’s potential business ideas and fund their projects moving forward. One hundred and seventy people signed up to participate. The breakdown of students shows a similar correlation to *Graph 1*. As seen on *Graph 2,* Sauder and Engineering led the number of participants again with 48 and 41, totaling 52% of the number of students who signed up to participate, including pitchers and audience.

However, on the day of the actual event only 130 people showed up to participate. Graph 3 shows the overall faculty involvement in relation to participation during the actual event. As we can see Sauder and Engineering lead the number of students involved once again, with 31% and 25% respectively.

**Marketing Campaign:**

Marketing is the basis for any organization that aims into attracting people. EHub nevertheless relies on marketing to fulfill its total campus outreach. However, EHub has not been efficient when marketing its own events. According to EHub’s president there was a lack of marketing, “apart from Facebook, we got a lot of people because the pitchers encouraged their friends to come since more friends.” This shows how little the event was marketed to the general UBC population. A more diversified campaign with flyers around campus, in class talks and booths around campus would have increased visibility and overall turnout. People attending the event were not necessarily there for their interest in entrepreneurship, some attended only to support friends that were pitching ideas to the bank. There are 8 ideas for a successful college marketing campaign and they involve targeting, highlighting the competitive advantage of the offered product, establishing an image and diversifying. Above all, for a successful marketing campaign, money needs to be spent.

**Conclusion**

**Summary of Findings:**

According to EHub’s president, “Apart from logistical errors, I think we could certainly do better in terms of getting more women to pitch as well as participate.” Therefore, not only was the faculty involvement uneven as was the gender difference. EHub, does not feel like an expansion in marketing to attract more attendees is needed, however they want to diversify overall gender attendance. According to the posted survey a lot more people are interested in EHub than it appears like in the organized events. The faculty trends also differ slightly, Engineering and Commerce students tend to have a slightly larger interest in Entrepreneurship than other faculties. Some faculties that responded the poll, however, did not show presence in EHub’s last event.

**Recommendations:**

As a newly formed Hub by the AMS, the Entrepreneurship Hub has a potential to reach out to students and change the general campus mindset. By having a larger approach to students, Ehub will be able to monitor ideas and help develop them into solid entrepreneur opportunities. By creating a bond between students from different faculties the Hub strives to put together students from different fields who share the same interest. The UBC campus has the human capital and the potential to be a great entrepreneur campus; however, it will only depend on how effective the Hub can be to these students.

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