

INCREASING FACULTY ENGAGEMENT IN ENTREPRENEURIAL BEHAVIOR TO ADVANCE REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

AN INNOVATION STUDY

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PROBLEM OF PRACTICE

The purpose of this study was to understand which influences could help increase the percentage of faculty who engage in entrepreneurial, risk-taking behavior, thereby catalyzing regional development.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What are the knowledge, motivation, and organizational influences dimensions that have allowed some faculty to engage in entrepreneurial risk-taking behavior?
- How can the knowledge, motivation, and organizational influences that support faculty engagement in entrepreneurial, risk-taking behavior be fostered to increase this UNL faculty behavior by 10%?

METHODOLOGY

Clark & Estes (2008) gap analysis approach, using knowledge, motivation, and organization (KMO) influences

Data collection at a state university:

- Survey sent to all faculty
- Interviews with 12 entrepreneurial faculty

BACKGROUND

- Third phase of evolution:
 - 1) Teaching
 - 2) Research
 - 3) Service to society
- Entrepreneurship connects universities' key asset – knowledge – to solutions and spurs development
- Beneficial for the university, through increased relevance in society and potential financial gain

KEY FINDINGS

- There is a subset of faculty inherently interested in entrepreneurial behavior who would likely engage in such activity if it were better supported by the university
- Those faculty who do engage are more likely to be internally motivated by benefits such as finding solutions, advancing their field, helping people, or personal interest, rather than financial benefits
- The majority of faculty conceptually understand the benefits, but lack the procedural knowledge to execute
- Organizational influences will likely be the key drivers to change behavior, including:
 - Tenure and promotion guidelines
 - Resources to help faculty connect to funding sources, external partners, and required expertise
 - Tech Transfer office as a resource, rather than a barrier
 - Hiring practices

RECOMMENDED SOLUTIONS

1. Define and communicate the desired behavior
2. Build a new university-wide unit to identify and support faculty who want to engage
3. Revamp the Tech Transfer Office
4. Adapt faculty incentive and reward structures

EVALUATION

The evaluation plan utilizes Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick's (2006) four-level framework and links directly to the university's strategic plan and long-term vision