

College: Haywood County Community College
Location: Clyde, North Carolina
Practice: Entrepreneurial Learning Initiative
 Bringing entrepreneurial skills training into every part of a community college curriculum

<i>Year Started</i>	1994
<i>Budget</i>	\$164,000
<i>Program Participants</i>	5 partner organizations; affects entire community
<i>College FTE</i>	1,500
<i>Target Sector</i>	Cross-curricular approach for entrepreneurial training. The college specializes in professional crafts and trades training.
<i>Staff Size</i>	11 on Entrepreneurial Learning Team
<i>Structure</i>	There is a 5-year plan for this program. The Entrepreneurial Learning Team meets quarterly to monitor progress and stay on track. Sub-groups meet more frequently.
<i>Key Outcomes</i>	Entrepreneurial skills included in every program Entrepreneurial Resource Center will provide further resources for the college and region

Introduction

Two major plant closings in the last five years have brought changes to Haywood County’s economy. Yet, in contrast to its neighboring counties in western North Carolina—considered among the state’s most economically distressed—Haywood has taken major steps to rebuild and provide a stable foundation for continuing economic stability.

A big part of that rebuilding is to help citizens develop entrepreneurial skills. And a big part of that has come from Haywood Community College’s Entrepreneurial Learning Initiative—a program that seeks to insert entrepreneurial skills development into every aspect of the college’s curriculum.

Community Background

Haywood County sits on the western border of North Carolina. Among its natural attractions are the Great Smoky Mountain Range, Mount Pisgah National Forest, and Shining Rock Wilderness Area. Its recreational and tourist activities include camping, backpacking, skiing, hunting, fishing, and golf. In addition, 24 miles of the Blue Ridge Parkway run through the county.

The county’s primary sources of income are manufacturing and tourism, followed by agriculture and the service industry. Consequently, declines in manufacturing and agriculture have hurt the county and present significant barriers to economic growth.

Program focus	Sector specific	Economic condition	Economic base			Target populations
			Mfg	Agr	Svc	
Entrepreneurship	No	Stable	26	2.4	29	Economically disadvantaged, entrepreneurial candidates, unemployed, underemployed youth/students

<i>Service Area</i>	<i>Haywood County</i>
<i>Total Population</i>	53,000
<i>Median Household Income</i>	\$34,000
<i>% Below Poverty Level</i>	13.8
<i>% Unemployment Rate</i>	2.8
<i>% Minority Population</i>	2.9
<i>% Rural Population</i>	71.0
<i>% High School Graduates</i>	68.0
<i>% College Graduates</i>	12.8

Program Description

Haywood Community College (HCC) was established in 1965 as Haywood Industrial Education Center. It had 15 students and offered one program of study. Today, HCC has over 1000 students and offers 34 programs ranging from business to technology, from health services to professional crafts. In addition to its programs, the college runs a small business center, a learning resources center, a technology center, an arboretum, and a teaching forest.

Started in 1990, the Entrepreneurial Learning Initiative (ELI) fosters the application of entrepreneurial ideas in all parts of the college's curriculum. That is, it seeks to create entrepreneurs out of all its students, regardless of their field of study. An example of this approach is the requirement for all craft and production students to take business courses, offering the Rural Entrepreneurship through Action Learning (REAL) program which guides students through the business development process, and imbedding entrepreneurial competencies into technical courses. Its objective: to help both graduates and the region succeed.

ELI is also responsible for:

- Developing the Entrepreneurial Resource Center (a planned facility that will aid the region's businesses)
- Organizing an annual entrepreneurial conference
- Establishing networks of entrepreneurs
- Publishing a quarterly entrepreneurial newsletter
- Creating craft studio incubators in the region
- Supporting the Small Business Center

Through all of these activities, the college hopes to become "the entrepreneurial community college." Full incorporation of the entrepreneurial program is expected in 2002.

Partners in the ELI include the Small Business Center, HandMade in America (a successful craft cooperative), REAL Enterprises, Haywood County Chamber of Commerce, and the Haywood Economic Development Center. Funding for the program (\$164,000 in 1998) comes from the state, county, and HCC, with additional support coming from the North Carolina Rural Center.

Outcomes

One sign of the program's success is the number of small businesses that have been started by its graduates. From 1992-1998, 64 percent of the 89 graduates started businesses. As of December 1999, 91 percent of those businesses were still in operation.

For example, one participant started a business that provides alternative transportation for people who cannot afford the high costs of taxi service. She credits HCC for providing support and research assistance. Another opened a branch of his family's pottery business after receiving an associate's degree in professional clay crafts. He credits his training in business and marketing, a grant from REAL Enterprises, his instructors, and the Small Business Center for his success. Finally, a third participant started a heating and air conditioning company after earning his degree in electrical installation and maintenance.

In short, the initiative has been instrumental in expanding the economic base of Haywood County, despite the loss of major manufacturers.

Strengths, Challenges, and Replicability

It seems as if HCC has hit upon a formula for success. As one local business member states: The straightforward hands-on curriculum teaches students to know themselves, to know their businesses, to be flexible, to continually monitor and revise their plans, and to recognize true opportunities from a field of ideas. Indeed, people think so highly of it that the ELI has been asked to participate as a model program in a study of entrepreneurial programs.

A challenge facing Haywood is to help staff, faculty and other stakeholders understand entrepreneurship more broadly than developing small business owners in the short-term. The idea is to develop individuals who will perform on the continuum of entrepreneurship such as on-the-job entrepreneurship (also called intra-preneurship) and latent entrepreneurship, preparing students for entrepreneurship at some point in the future, not immediately. These concepts are somewhat foreign to many people. Another challenge described by the college is to help staff and faculty see the entrepreneurship initiative as not “just another program.” The value is to help staff, faculty and students think and act as responsible, proactive, interdependent entrepreneurs. In this way, entrepreneurship is not a program but a mode of operation.

Institutions pursuing entrepreneurial integration should have leadership with a strong vision for what enhancing entrepreneurship would mean for the institution and its stakeholders.

For more information, contact:

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