



# Outstanding Emerging Entrepreneurship Center Award Nomination

MILLER SCHOOL OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP  
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## **Goals and Objectives**

The Miller School's goals include inspiring an entrepreneurial mindset and skillset in ECU students and stakeholders, supporting the entrepreneurial community as a leader in rural entrepreneurship, and creating an entrepreneurial culture in the region. The Miller School has the goal of becoming the national leader in rural entrepreneurship.

As the only endowed school of entrepreneurship in North Carolina, the School hosts a unique, experiential curriculum, co-curricular programming that creates student entrepreneurs, supports community economic development through entrepreneurship and small business, and builds a regional culture of entrepreneurship. The school tracks student and community engagement, hours spent on community-based learning, more traditional metrics such as business starts and capital raised for students, and growth outcomes and metrics for community small business and entrepreneurs. There is a synergistic relationship between community engagement in the rural community, student learning, and regional entrepreneurial growth.

## **Stakeholder Engagement**

The Miller School of Entrepreneurship was made possible by a commitment of \$5 million over 20 years by J. Fielding Miller and Kim Grice Miller. By 2017 the school was operational. The Miller School was created as a hub to create entrepreneurial students and to strengthen the communities which it serves. East Carolina University was well-positioned to house a school of entrepreneurship because of the diversity of skills, majors, and stakeholders. ECU is one of a few universities that has a Medical School, Dental School, College of Engineering and Technology, College of Fine Art and Communication, and a College of Business. The Miller School draws on the diverse skills of the faculty and students to grow regional entrepreneurship. Multiple communities and economic developers count the Miller School as a strategic partner in entrepreneurial development (Appendix 1). The school engages a diverse community through advisory groups including an ECU cross-discipline steering committee from the Colleges, four entrepreneurship alumni regional advisory councils, and program boards specific to rural engagement goals including community economic development representation for internship programs and broad community engagement through the Crisp Small Business Resource Center.

Diverse stakeholder engagement, especially around underserved, rural businesses, has resulted in broad success with program funding through alumni, grants, and community financial support (Appendix 3) as well as concurrent educational outcomes for students; stakeholders advisory groups see their recommendations in action and can measure the success of activities which feeds additional engagement and support.

## **The Team**

The Miller School is built upon strong partnerships with economic development entities, a growing affiliate faculty model, entrepreneurial community support, and work with campus initiatives that align with the mission of the school. There has been a great deal of support from internal and external partners that have resulted in large grant awards (\$6,850,000 awarded or under review) and programming provided to the community that leverages the resources of the university. High profile entrepreneurs and professional service providers have volunteered to advise students on their ventures, and entrepreneurship research has also been enhanced through affiliate faculty, partnerships with other institutions, and the community. A group of four core

faculty members were in place by 2017 that teach, organize, build partnerships, research, and launch programs (see Appendix 1 for full org chart). The four core team members have launched nine businesses and published 73 entrepreneurial and small business research articles.

### **Early Success**

For the last two years the Miller School has been recognized by Princeton Review as a top 50 entrepreneurship program in the US due to the competitiveness of tracked metrics. The school has also been recognized as the top emerging program by USASBE in 2021, received the excellence in co-curricular programming award from USASBE in 2020 for its Rise-29 program, CEO Global Chapter President of the Year, and its Accelerate Rural program was the only university program recognized by a NC legislative task force as the model for rural business development in 2021.

In the school's third year accepting students, there are 234 B.S. E majors (see Appendix 2), with 1,025 students in classes in 2020/2021. Students are also supported with co-curricular programs including a \$150,000 pitch competition and development program, mentoring, field trips to regional advisory councils, an entrepreneur-in-residence program, expert technical assistance office hours, a Living Learning Community, access to accelerator programs, and a large and active entrepreneurial student organization (CEO).

Since 2017 Miller School Classes have generated 69,500 pro-bono small business and entrepreneurship consulting hours for community-based firms. The school also co-plans and sponsors a large pitch competition for the local startup community and a pitch competition to inspire entrepreneurial development with middle and high-school students. Each summer the school hosts a week-long innovation academy for high-school students where students learn about design thinking, innovation, and create their own business models.

### *The Pirate Entrepreneurship Challenge*

The Miller School's pitch competition and development program empowers students to become entrepreneurs through a mentorship program, funding, and professional services. The three-round competition helps student ventures develop at every stage and provides the most promising and mature ventures funding and services to launch.

The Pirate Challenge is in its fourth year with cumulative prizes totaling more than \$300,000 and participation of 315 teams from 50 majors. 7,000 community votes were cast in the 2020 competition. Every College and more than 50 majors have participated with ideas ranging from not-for-profits to physical products to medical technologies. Businesses that have participated have gone on to create thriving businesses in their communities including more than 50 jobs.

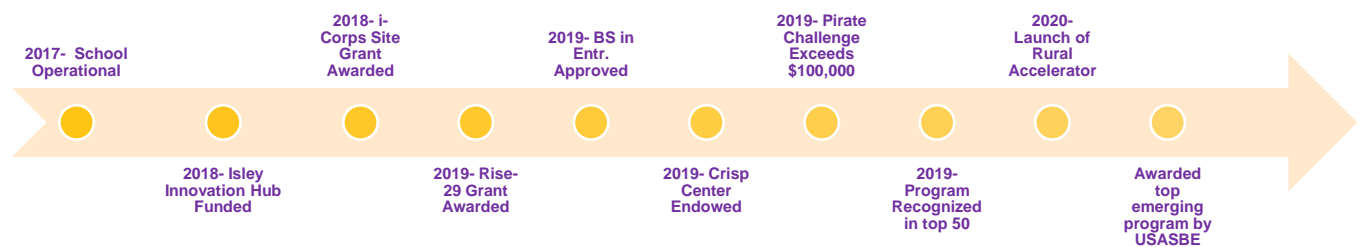
### *Crisp Small Business Resource Center*

The Crisp Center was endowed for \$1,000,000 to act as the community outreach arm of the Miller School; it facilitates the small business community's access to university resources, provides expert training, mentorship, and thought leadership for entrepreneurs and small businesses. It also acts as the access point from students to gain access to community based entrepreneurial learning. The Crisp Center operates a \$340,000 grant-funded rural accelerator program that teaches rural business and student ventures innovation and entrepreneurship

principles to accelerate growth. In its first six months 85 businesses have developed higher resiliency, growth, and nimbleness. Initial cohort surveys indicate a greater than 30% sales growth rate for participating companies. The center also supports small businesses with more than 15,000 hours of student consulting annually at no charge. The Crisp Center acts as a thought leader for entrepreneurship as an economic development strategy, training around 30 economic developers per year on how to develop their entrepreneurial ecosystems.

### *RISE 29*

The RISE 29 program is a business development program that uses entrepreneurial thinking to solve some of the most pressing issues in the 29 counties that comprise rural, eastern North Carolina. The program is made possible through a \$1,000,000 grant from the Golden Leaf Foundation; the program leverages student talent through internships to identify and address issues for rural counties. Students launch new microenterprises, strengthen existing businesses, and commercialize new technology that enhance the region. RISE 29 was recognized with USASBE's 2020 Excellence in co-curricular innovation award.



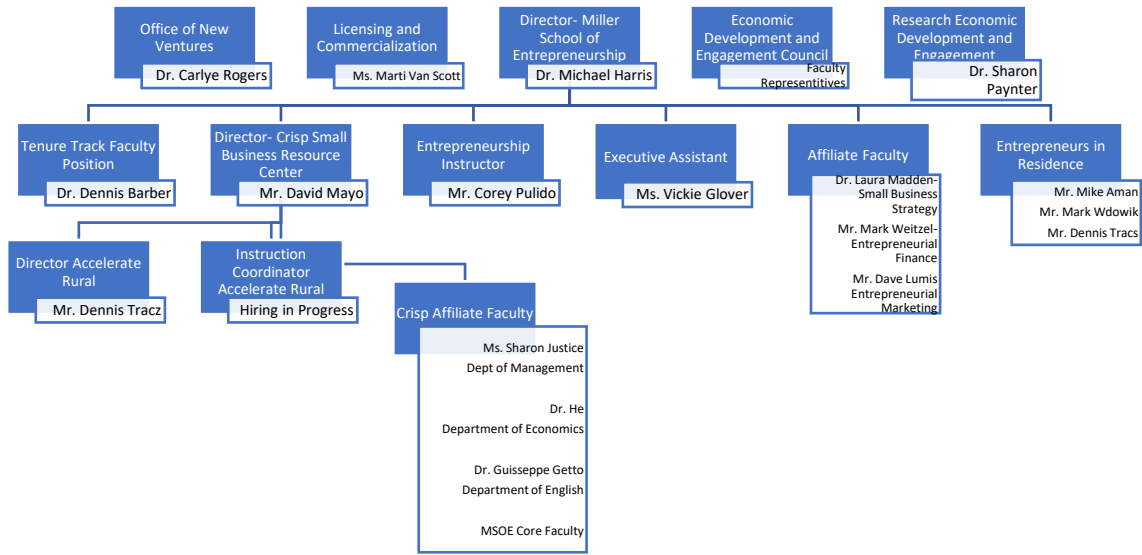
### **Sustainability**

The Miller School was seeded with a 20-year gift of operational dollars. The school has used the funding to create programs; fundraising has focused on endowments for the programs, fixed assets, professorships, and scholarships. Donors have generously given to make programs sustainable (see appendix 3). The school also uses a grant strategy to prove concept for high impact programs like Rise-29 and Accelerate Rural; continued funding for these programs is being raised through community partners' annual sponsorships. For fee services to generate revenue are planned to begin in Fall 21. Funding is quite diverse which contributes to lower long-term risk, and a 15,000sq ft innovation hub has been funded through a donor. This space is set to open in 2021.

### **Uniqueness**

Focus on entrepreneurship education globally is geared towards high-growth firms. The Miller School's approach uses strategies of high-growth entrepreneurship applied to rural firms. Small firms with a focus on growth in rural communities are a top economic driver for the community. Miller School students are learning how to become entrepreneurs through engagement in their communities; this strategy strengthens the community, and the learning objectives of the program. The Miller School is on its way to becoming the national leader in rural entrepreneurship.

# Appendix 1- Org Chart and Partners





NC IDEA is an independent private foundation committed to empowering North Carolinians to achieve their entrepreneurial potential. We believe entrepreneurs transform communities and view our work as a catalyst for positive change.



The NC Rural Center's mission is to develop, promote, and implement sound economic strategies to improve the quality of life of rural North Carolinians. We serve the state's 80 rural counties, with a special focus on individuals with low to moderate incomes and communities with limited resources.



For 20 years, Golden LEAF has worked to increase economic opportunity in North Carolina's rural and tobacco-dependent communities through leadership in grantmaking, collaboration, innovation, and stewardship as an independent and perpetual foundation.



Greenville and Pitt County make up one of the fastest growing areas in the state and the Greenville-Pitt County Chamber of Commerce has been a major player in bringing new business and development into the county. The Chamber plays a vital role as a uniting force between business and citizens to ensure continued progress.



East Carolina Angels (ECA) is an angel network focused on return on investment (ROI) for its Members through facilitation of the flow of capital and support from East Carolina University (ECU) alumni and supporters, as well as other angel investors with an interest in high growth startups in eastern North Carolina and the U.S. as a whole.



Downtown Goldsboro Vision Statement: Beautiful, historic, lively and full of economic opportunity and gusto. We honor our past while developing diversity and vibrancy to create a cultural arts, entertainment and urban lifestyle center.



Uptown Greenville is the voice of the downtown. We exist to promote quality cultural, residential, and economic development.



The North Carolina League of Municipalities is a member-driven organization representing the interests of cities and towns in the state.



The Chamber is organized to advance the general welfare and prosperity of Pamlico County so that its citizens and all areas of its business community shall prosper.



The SBC is committed to helping prospective and existing small business owners in our community succeed, leading to job creation and retention in Pitt County.



The Duke Law School Start-Up Ventures Clinic (SUVC) provides legal advice and assistance to entrepreneurs and seed and early stage entrepreneurial ventures that have not yet raised significant amounts of outside capital.



USASBE is an inclusive community advancing entrepreneurship education through bold teaching, scholarship, and practice.



Inspired by a hospital teaching model applied to entrepreneurship, the Clinic integrates research, teaching, and real-world experience to provide students with the opportunity to work alongside startups and corporations while earning credit. Students get real-life experience and companies get to work with top interdisciplinary talent at NC State.



The mission of the Small Business Institute® is to be the premier provider of professional development for those engaged in experiential student team consulting and related entrepreneurship education, research and activities. SBI is the link between business, education and community.



The NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center works in regions, counties, cities, towns, downtown districts and in designated North Carolina Main Street communities, to inspire placemaking through building asset-based economic development strategies that achieve measurable results such as investment, business growth and jobs.

## Appendix 2- Programs



### RISE29 ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAM

East Carolina University is creating a national model for emerging entrepreneurs with the goal of transforming eastern North Carolina through microenterprises, job development and existing business support. In fact, ECU has pledged to create the most student-led startups of any university in the state. We're accomplishing this goal through RISE29, our exciting new microenterprise program that connects small business ideas with regional community need. Fueled by big data analytics, our student teams develop and launch microenterprises, strengthen existing businesses with long-term continuity plans, and commercialize new technology that enhances our region.



Empowers rural prosperity across eastern North Carolina



Creates new business enterprises and develops sustaining succession plans



Fueled by big data analytics



ECU has committed to lead the state in university-backed student startups



#### CONNECT WITH US



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// I don't believe I could have started my business just anywhere. ECU and Greenville have provided me all of the tools and support I need for my business to thrive. I can't imagine a better place to start a business than in eastern North Carolina. //

Taylor Hicks | Owner, Simple & Sentimental  
ECU Senior, Business Management



### THE PROCESS

RISE29 takes a holistic approach to job creation and retention in the state's eastern 29 county region – ECU's home base of operations that many university students, faculty and partners call home. Students begin their journey in the program with a business idea, a technological innovation, or a desire to help a community. Advancing through the program, students are placed into teams before receiving research and development support and business plan mentoring. Teams will then branch off into one of two paths: launching a microenterprise or enacting an established business continuity plan. Newly launched microbusinesses provide an economic boost to the region, while continuity plans may include succession or expansion proposals aimed at preserving and enhancing economic vitality. Finally, RISE29 entrepreneurs will receive continued mentoring after graduation to help sustain business success.

### RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT

ECU and its partners are providing research and development support through a variety of approaches, from student housing programs to financial support. Below is a sampling of the resources provided through RISE29.

- Big Data Analytics and Visualization
- Horizon Living Learning Community
- Industry and Community Partner Mentoring
- Microenterprise Fund
- Miller School of Entrepreneurship
- Multi-Campus Research Labs
- NSF I-Corps@ECU
- Office of Innovation and New Ventures
- Pirate Entrepreneurship Challenge
- Small Business and Technology Development Center at ECU
- Van and Jennifer Isley Innovation Hub

### INTERNS WANTED

RISE29 is accepting applications for summer interns. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis, but preference is given to applications received by April 15. As part of the RISE29 internship, students will:

- Have the opportunity to learn and experience innovation, entrepreneurship and community engagement
- Interact with faculty researchers, university administrators, mentors, and external partners including industry, local government, nonprofit, NGOs, and small businesses across eastern North Carolina
- Conduct industry research, use problem-solving skills, develop cost-effective recommendations, and learn to communicate in a professional manner

The position begins in May and continues through the end of June. Interns will work 30-40 hours per week. Hourly rate is \$10. For more information about this opportunity, contact RISE29 at [rise29@ecu.edu](mailto:rise29@ecu.edu).





## Crisp Small Business Resource Center

(left: web page screenshot)

[business.ecu.edu/msoe/crisp/](http://business.ecu.edu/msoe/crisp/)

## Crisp Small Business Resource Center

Leveraging the Miller School of Entrepreneurship applied research expertise, the Crisp Small Business Resource Center provides ECU's students and community the best practices and proven knowledge required to start and sustain enterprises in western North Carolina.



Community Workshops



Executive Education



Student Projects



Thought Leadership & Grants



Accelerate Rural NC



Faculty Alliance



Resource Portal

### Accelerate Rural NC

*Accelerate Rural NC is a rural business accelerator focused on helping small businesses gain access to global markets with innovative products. Key components of the accelerator include e-commerce development, development of high-value offerings for niche markets, and export training.*



## Van & Jennifer Isley Innovation Building

*Made possible thanks to a \$2 million gift from Van and Jennifer Isley of Raleigh, NC, the Isley Innovation Hub will provide a 15,000 sq. ft. main campus space where business, engineering, technology and art students collaborate on product innovation.*



Proposed Isley Innovation Hub

## Collegiate Entrepreneur's Organization (CEO)

*CEO founded in 1983 supports more than 16,500 emerging collegiate entrepreneurs annually. Through a global network of more than 250 college and university chapters, CEO supports and inspires the growth and development of any student that seeks to be entrepreneurial.*



Brady Hillhouse (center) is past president of the ECU CEO chapter and won a national Student Leadership Award

## Chartered Sigma Nu Tau National Entrepreneurship Honor Society

*ECU is the 31st Sigma Nu Tau chapter overall and 2nd among NC universities. Sigma Nu Tau's mission is to promote, recognize and reward academic excellence in entrepreneurship.*



First ECU Sigma Nu Tau Inducted Members

## Summer Innovation Academy

*A weeklong free program for area high school students to experience the entrepreneurial lifecycle. Students come prepared with an idea and move through the ideation process to discern whether or not their idea has merit. Academy activities focus on finance and marketing and close with a trade show style event where student teams pitch their idea to ECU representatives, high school teachers, and members of the community.*

# Bachelor of Science (BS) Degree in Entrepreneurship

Miller School of Entrepreneurship · East Carolina University®

The Bachelor of Science in Entrepreneurship provides students the opportunity to develop an entrepreneurial mindset and skillset through highly engaged coursework. Students select a specialty area of knowledge based on entrepreneurial interest. Completion of the degree equips students to become entrepreneurs or use their skills and knowledge to forge an entrepreneurial career in small businesses, family businesses, or larger corporations. Minimum degree requirement is 120 s.h. as follows:

## GENERAL EDUCATION (40 semester hours)

### English (6 s.h.)

ENGL 1100 Foundations of College Writing (WI) 3 s.h.  
ENGL 2201 Writing about the Disciplines (WI) 3 s.h.

### Health and Exercise Sport Science (3 s.h.)

HLTH 1000 Health in Modern Society 2 s.h.  
KINE 1000 Lifetime and Physical Activity and Fitness Laboratory 1 s.h.

### Humanities & Fine Arts (9 s.h., at least one course each in humanities and fine arts)

PHIL 1175 Intro to Ethics, PHIL 2274 Business Ethics or PHIL 2275 Professional Ethics 3 s.h.  
COMM 2020 or 2410 3 s.h.

### Math (3 s.h.)

\*MATH 1065 or 1066 3 s.h.

### Natural Sciences (7 s.h., including 1 lab hour)

### Social Sciences (9 s.h., with courses in at least two subjects)

\*ECON 2113 Principles of Microeconomics 3 s.h.  
\*ECON 2133 Principles of Macroeconomics 3 s.h.  
PSYC 1000 Introductory Psychology or  
SOC1 2110 Introduction to Sociology 3 s.h.  
3-hour general education elective

### COGNATES (3 s.h.)

\*MATH 2228 Elementary Statistical Methods 1 OR 2283 Statistics for Business 3 s.h.

### ENTREPRENEURSHIP CORE (45 s.h.)

FINA 1904 Personal Finance 3 s.h.  
\*ACCT 2101 Survey of Financial and Managerial Accounting 3 s.h.  
\*FINA 2244 Legal Environment of Business 3 s.h.  
\*ENTR 3500 Entrepreneurship Essentials 3 s.h.  
\*FINA 3500 Money Management for Entrepreneurs 3 s.h.  
MKTG 3500 Entrepreneurial Opportunities and Marketing 3 sh.

MKTG 3852 Cultural Environment of International Business 3 s.h.

ENTR 4212 Innovation and Opportunity Assessment 3 s.h.  
ENTR 4222 Entrepreneurial Finance 3 s.h.  
ENTR 4232/MKTG 4332 Professional Selling 3 s.h.  
ENTR 4242 Entrepreneurial Strategy WI 3 s.h.  
ENTR 4252 New Venture Launch WI 3 s.h.  
ENTR 4500 Entrepreneurial Bus. Planning WI 3 s.h.

### Choose 2 from:

ENTR 4262 Small Business Management SL 3 s.h.  
ENTR 4272 Managing the Family Business SL 3 s.h.  
ENTR 4955 Topics in Entrepreneurship 3 s.h. (may be repeated with Director's approval up to 6 hrs)  
ENTR 4995 Internship 1, 2 or 3 s.h. (may be repeated with Director's approval up to 6 hrs)

### MINOR OR SPECIALTY AREA (18 s.h.)

18 hours of courses in a minor or specialty area to be selected by the student and approved by the program director based on entrepreneurial interest, with 6 hours of junior level courses (3000 level or above). Student may choose 18 hours from an existing minor or certificate or design a specialized area of focus. Faculty and program director will work closely with students and advisors to ensure appropriate fit between these courses and entrepreneurial interests before acceptance into the BS degree.

### LEADERSHIP COMPONENT (9 s.h.)

BUSI 1200 Strategy First 3 s.h.  
BUSI 2200 Experiential Leadership: Teams in Action 3 s.h.  
BUSI 3200 Professional Development and Ethical Leadership 2 s.h.  
BUSI 4200 Leadership Capstone 1 s.h.

### ELECTIVES: (as needed to complete 120 s.h.)

1200 Bate Building  
phone: 252.737.6763  
email: msoe@ecu.edu  
web: business.ecu.edu/msoe

**Appendix 3- Funding Structure as of 2021**

Total Funding \$12,310,000

