

Category: Excellence in Specialty Entrepreneurship Education

Office of Entrepreneurial Initiatives

Houston Community College

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Submitted by Maya Durnovo

Houston Community College
Office of Entrepreneurial Initiatives (OEI)
GCEC Nomination in Specialty Entrepreneurship Education

1. Clearly state the target audience for your specialty program and the genesis of the program.

The HCC specialty program target audience is minority and women owned businesses who comprise 31% of all entrepreneurial businesses in Houston, Texas. Houston ranks sixth among the 50 largest metro areas in the Nation for minority owned businesses (*U.S. Census Bureau*).

HCC's entrepreneurial programs began in 2008 with a \$100,000 Chancellor's Innovation grant designed to address the economic decline in North Spring Branch. In response, the HCC Annual Business Plan Competition was created to stimulate new enterprises and grow existing small businesses. The competition generated unparalleled interest in training particularly by minority owned business owners who struggle to survive and often fail due to lack of business skills. The Small Business Administration (SBA) identifies the lack of business skills as the key reason 70% of small businesses fail in the first 10 years.

Over the past 14 years, the Office of Entrepreneurial Initiatives has won \$24 million in grant dollars and developed 10 Signature Programs to support the business community with business skills, with a focus on the minority-owned small business community. The goal of each program is to provide the skills and knowledge to start and/or grow a business so that it becomes self-sufficient, builds wealth, and can attain the American Dream.

2. Outline the program including expected outcomes, participants, and partners. Provide examples of how the program has expanded access to entrepreneurship education to a unique, underrepresented and/or significant target audience.

HCC offers the following programs:

Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) provides access to contracts, markets, and financing. Over the past 8 years, minority businesses won \$541 million in contracts and \$623 million in financing. As a result, over 500 minority businesses prospered and created 1,400 new jobs. MBDA hosts the annual *Salute to Minorities in Construction* luncheon to acknowledge supporters and partners: Asian, Black, LGBT, Hispanic, Indo American, East End, West Houston chambers, HMSDC, Houston-SBA, SCORE, Export Council, City of Houston-OBO, HAUL.

Open for Business for Women Entrepreneurs-Women of Color funded by Wells Fargo has served 874 women since October 2021. Participants completed small business success series, digital and financial clinics including credit, certification, and leadership workshops. *Women Who Lead* program was inaugurated to help bolster their vision, confidence, and resolve.

Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses is designed for underserved businesses to grow through a 100-hour curriculum with business advising; the goal is to complete a business growth plan. Since 2011, 920 businesses have graduated with a growth plan; 73% of graduates grow their revenue, 54% hire new staff and the program has a 99% graduation rate. The impact on the local economy is \$1.7 billion dollars representing 16,500 employees. Partners include: Asian, Black, LGBT, East End, and Hispanic chambers, City of Houston-OBO, Banks: Wallis, Amegy, Wells Fargo, BBVA, Allegiance; GHP, the Cannon, Impact Hub, etc.

HCC Business Plan Competition The competition is now in its 15th year with \$338,000 awarded in seed money and over 570 contestants. 93% graduate with a business plan; the competition is totally funded by strategic partners: Wallis Bank, LiftFund, Allegiance Bank, Capital One, Frost Bank, Accel Lifestyle (previous 1st prize winner), Vertical Web and Faith in Business, West Houston Chamber, the Cannon, Three Brothers Bakery.

HCC Small Business Success Series © A 40-hour curriculum developed by entrepreneurs for entrepreneurs who want to start or grow a business. 2,129 highly diverse participants--who represent Houston's demographics--have graduated and developed a business plan.

Mattress Mack School of Selling © 12-hour curriculum designed to teach the basics of effective communication, irrespective of one's business. Over 3,300 participated virtually and in person and was promoted by Mattress Mack himself!

Verizon Innovative Learning Initiative: A summer camp for underserved middle school students (6th-8th grade) to discover STEM through 3D printing, Robotics, Virtual Reality and Micro Bits. Summer 2022 brought 155 students on campus for three weeks of learning, discovery, and introduction to a college campus.

Bilingual Small Business Programs: Small Business Success Series © has been translated into Spanish and delivered to 60 Hispanic business owners at the Mexican Consulate. Digital Skills, a 32-hour curriculum to teach digital skills presented to 40 micro-entrepreneurs in Spanish. These microentrepreneurs survived the pandemic by marketing through new websites and social media.

HCC Student Hackathons/Inventathons: two-day week-end events designed to teach high school and college students project-based learning to address challenges such as the Environment, Water, Resiliency and Health. Over 600 students have participated and created novel products and ideas.

Student Pitch Competitions: 12-15 hours of instruction designed to catalyze social change by teaching college students how to deliver a concise, effective, and compelling pitch on a social issue. Since 2015, 1,500 students have participated; 42 students started a business.

3. Identify some of the unique characteristics of this program compared to your peers & discuss how other schools could replicate this program to serve specialty audiences.

There are five unique characteristics of Entrepreneurial Initiatives:

- 1) **Strategic Partnerships** with Chambers of Commerce and Economic Organizations: HCC has developed 36 strategic partnerships; we collaborate, co-sponsor, and co-host multiple events at HCC locations and develop Memorandums of Understanding to formalize the partnership. Chambers: Black, Hispanic, Asian, Indo American; SBA, SCORE, City of Houston, Banks: Allegiance, Wallis, Wells Fargo, Capital One, Frost, Cadence, BBVA, the Cannon, Verizon, Glenda & David Regenbaum, Liftfund, Mexican Consulate, etc.
- 2) **Entrepreneurs in Residence (EIR):** Entrepreneurial Initiatives invites successful men and women of diverse ethnic backgrounds to join HCC entrepreneurial work through full-time pro-bono work. These experts develop practical curriculums, serve as faculty members, lead workshops, and serve as experts in all phases of starting and growing a small business. HCC has four full-time Entrepreneurs in Residence.

- 3) **Diverse Staff Members:** our staff is diverse, dynamic, and energetic, willing to take risks, eager to innovate, willing to collaborate and are “go getters.”
- 4) **Grants:** We apply vigorously for local, regional, and national grants to support this work.
- 5) **Community College is committed to the small business community:** our mission is to help entrepreneurs start and grow their business, bolster the local economy, create jobs and build Houston’s business ecosystem by growing small business, minority, micro, LGBT, veteran, and women owned businesses.

Provide a list of three to five specific achievements/outcomes to date with a brief explanation.

- 1) Entrepreneurial Initiatives has won to date \$24,000,000 in grant dollars which enables us to offer all programs at no cost or minimal cost. A list of the grants is included in our supplemental data (attached). Most of these grants are written by the Chief Entrepreneurial Officer who has leveraged her skills to support minority businesses.
- 2) Since 2008 when Entrepreneurial Initiatives launched, we have served over 9,300 small businesses. The majority or 75% are minority owned underserved businesses who have accessed business skills, funding, contracts, and experienced business growth. They have become alumni members of their respective programs to stay connected, to update their skills, to do business with one another, and they give back to support our programs.
- 3) During the 2020 Pandemic, we pivoted to a virtual environment. We didn’t know that we would grow as a result! Providing online programs helped many businesses remain in business because we focused on teaching digital skills and learned ourselves that we could reach a broader audience with a virtual presence.
- 4) We are particularly proud of the Women Who Lead for Women of Color program: an innovative approach to build leadership skills via a vision board, teaching to be bold, intentional, and owning one’s vision. Over 60 women of color have participated.

4. Appendix: Provide up to two (2) items of your choice that best reflect the goals and outcomes of your specialty entrepreneurship program.

The OEI staff is proud to have won the 2020 NACCE (National Association of Community College Entrepreneurship) *Entrepreneurial College of the Year* for its work in serving the Houston small business community, particularly the minority community. In 2021 the *Houston Business Journal* awarded OEI the *Diversity in Business Award* for its work serving the minority business community.

HCC is one of 15 colleges selected for the 2022 NACCE *Entrepreneurial College of the Future Initiative* designed to fuel the future with an entrepreneurial mindset to build capacity and create momentum for greater results in workforce development, fundraising, student success, and silo busting. HCC’s project is an enterprise titled “*Makeovers for Life!*” *Glam Squad Democratizes Glamour:* a feminine approach to help women of color, particularly homeless women and those disenfranchised to experience a makeover: *First* in appearance through beautiful clothes, flattering hair, and good nutrition to experience physical and emotional confidence to restore hope. *Second:* these women are introduced to career pathways to build a life of economic self-sufficiency and growth. Student Services will join this enterprise with career counseling. Funding will be secured through donations and gifts.



Minority Business Development Agency



Minority Business Goals

1. Connect minority businesses with contracting opportunities
2. Connect minority businesses with financing
3. Bolster the growth of global competitiveness
4. One-on-one business advising
5. Building wealth for minority owned businesses

Houston MBDA assisted Emerald Standard with their minority business certification and introduced him to prime contractors and team at George Bush Airport which landed him a \$3.2 million dollar contract. His business increased by 30%.



Rogelio Pombrol, President, Emerald Standard; Electrical Contractors & Engineers





Objectives

- Complete a 100-hour curriculum
- Opportunity to work with business advisors
- Collaborate in small “Growth Groups”
- Develop a Business Growth Plan
- *Network with local and national graduates!*



Goldman Sachs Program Began in 2011 at HCC



“The program taught me to “own” the business instead of being in it, the modules helped educate me to fill in gaps in the business for it to be a strong, growing and sustainable small business. Despite the pandemic and economic downturn, the GS10K alumni network and Goldman Sachs continue to provide support and advocate for us, small business owners. #MakeSmallBig!”

Irsan Tisnabudi, Aria Services, Inc.
Goldman Sachs Cohort: 12



Programs for Women

875 women of color served in 2021-22

Goals

1. Increase the economic impact of women-owned businesses on both families and communities.
2. Increase awareness of business ownership as a viable means of economic self-sufficiency;
3. Stimulate public policy and system changes which support and strengthen the economic impact of women



DIANA ROSAS, CEO
of *Que Bonito Mexican and Fashion*

Women's Boot
Camp
in Spanish



In December 2021, she won the first prize at the Wells Fargo Open for Business Latino competition hosted by Houston Community College

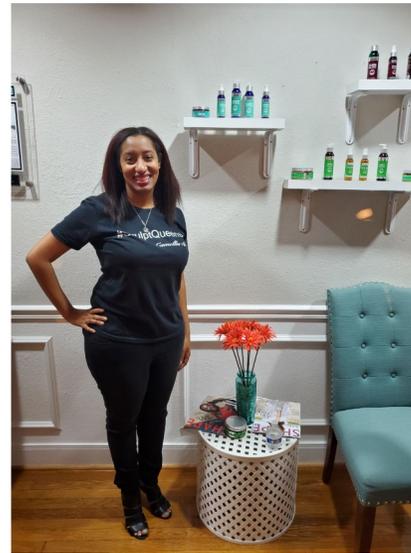


HCC Business Plan Competition

Skills to Start a Business

Objectives

1. Finance (including pre-qualifying)
2. Leadership & Team Development
3. Business Models, Marketing/Sales
4. Putting It all Together (Business Plan)
5. Effective Pitches



Lyndsey won first place in the 2019 HCC Business Plan Competition & Launched her first location later that year.

"The competition experience was invaluable! I stepped back from working for my business to work on my business plan and make sure it was conducive to what I wanted to accomplish. The prize money went toward the opening of our first location (2,000 sq.ft.) later that year."

Lyndsey Brantley,
Owner,
CEO of Camellia Alise
Spa





Small Business Success Series by HCC®

Skills to Start a Business

Objectives:

1. Vet the Venture – Are My Ideas Lucrative?
2. Ignite the Entrepreneur in You!
3. Financials for Small Business Launch & Growth
4. Sales & Marketing Powered Up
5. Minimizing Risk & Class Graduation



Carmen Flores, Owner,
Visual Artist Catapult Art Studio

“I found HCC during the pandemic and took the Small Business Success Series to learn the business side of turning my dream into reality. I logged into the interactive sessions while my children did their lessons. The SBSS helped me define my concept, establish clear market positioning, differentiation and vet my business assumptions!” Carmen Flores





HCC Mattress Mack School of Selling®

Objectives:

1. The Art of Listening
2. Persistence
3. The Ability to say NO
4. Caring Customer Service
5. Building a Book of Business
6. What You Learn After You Know It All



"Being a part of HCC Mattress Mack School of Selling® has given me a clear advantage as a new business owner. I was able to develop soft skills such as learning how to say no to customers when saying yes could compromise my business profitability. The knowledge I have attained has allowed me to grow my business beyond what I imagined and maximize my profits in a short time.

Mecca Lucille Muhammad,
Owner,
Founder, Ms. Lucille's Protein
Cookies





Programs for Underserved Youth

Objectives:

1. Build awareness, excitement & engagement;
2. Explore their world in an entrepreneurial way;
3. Engaging in college activities at an early age;
4. Introduced to technology, robotics, STEM, social entrepreneurship and problem-solving.

155 middle school students on campus & virtually for 2021 summer and in person in 2022!



**Black Girls Code
(Tech Skill Building)**



***Grant from Verizon Innovative Learning with
National Association of Community College Entrepreneurship***



Student Appathon

Objectives:

1. Online program created during COVID to engage students in developing new Apps
 - a. Build technical skills
 - b. Build connections with others
 - c. Resiliency!
 - d. Project based learning



Monica Lee - HCC Student; Grower's Connection, Monica created an app showcase to help the urban plant growers connect, find educational content, and helpful sustainable tips in one place. First female president of the Computer Science Association.



Impact

HCC Goldman Sachs 10,000 small businesses:

- 925 graduated in Houston
- Each business develops a Business Plan
- 73% Grow their business in Revenue
- 54% Hire new staff
- Alumni Association is active & dynamic

Minority owned businesses were able to secure:

- \$570 million in contracts
- \$627 in financing
- Staff created 1386 jobs
- Served 500 clients who prospered

Salute to Minorities in Construction is Houston “must” event!

HCC Business Plan Competition:

- 14 years old
- 571 contestants
- 93% graduate with Business Plan
- \$312,000 seed funding
- Alumni Association is active & dynamic

HCC Small Business Success Series:

- 2,129 participants
- 95% graduate
- 75% grow their business
- Outstanding evaluations
- Alumni Association

HCC Business Digital Academy:

40 minority family-owned businesses in 2020 reached new markets & grew their business with an online presence

HCC Mattress Mack School of Selling: 2,400 enrolled- 2020-21

Student Entrepreneurial Programs:

Since 2015 1,400 students participated in Pitch Competitions, Hackathons, Inventathons and student clubs



HOUSTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE Entrepreneurial Initiatives



Grants Won

HCC Innovation Grant by HCC Chancellor	\$100,000	BBVA Grant to develop Financial Literacy	\$3,000
Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses	\$10,000,000	Minority Business Development Agency	\$4,639,318
Minority Business Development Agency	\$4,639,318	Houston Ascend-w/ Lift fund	\$60,000
MBDA Disaster Recovery Grant	\$500,000	HCC Foundation Grant: Bold Ideas Pitch Competition	\$8,500
MBDA Disaster Resiliency Grant	\$500,000	Verizon Grant for youth	\$454,000
Women's Boot Camp, TWC	\$23,000	Wells Fargo Grant - Small Business Success Series	\$80,000
Wells Fargo Grant - Small Business Success Series	\$80,000	Verizon Emergency Grant for micro-businesses	\$50,000
Morales Boot Camp	\$2,500	Capital One for BDA support	\$17,500
Texas Workforce Commission Grants: for small businesses	\$1,778,574	Mattress Mack Grant to Build a School of Selling	\$8,700
JJG Development Grant	\$3,500	Gift from Entrepreneur in Residence: Glenda and David Regenbaum Center for Entrepreneurship-NW	\$100,000
SCORE workshops	\$1,032	Capital One	\$100,000
Institute of International Education (IIE) HIVE program	\$5,000	Open for Business for Women Entrepreneurs, Wells Fargo Foundation	\$750,000
		MBDA Pandemic Recovery	\$727,384
			\$24,631,326