



WAYNESBURG  
UNIVERSITY®

## Outstanding Emerging Entrepreneurship Center Award Application

GCEC 2023

Submitted By:

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## **Rationale for Creation and Stakeholders**

Waynesburg University (WU) is a small liberal arts university of approximately 2,000 students located in rural Western Pennsylvania, about an hour south of Pittsburgh. In our campus community, 40% of students are first generation college students and 90% of students receive some form of financial aid.

The eHIVE, the university's multidisciplinary innovation and entrepreneurial hub, was officially opened on October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2018. The center serves all students and faculty through co-curricular events and academic programming. The eHIVE is part of the Entrepreneurial Leadership Program and both work together to create a culture of proactive, innovative, and ethical problem solving. For an overview of the eHIVE and our Entrepreneurial Leadership Program, please view our Program Overview video in Appendix B.

Prior to the center's launch, University President Douglas Lee secured a transformational gift in 2017 to create an endowed chair in Entrepreneurial Leadership. His vision was to create a cross-campus entrepreneurial ecosystem that would benefit all students inside and outside of the classroom. He realized that because so many of our students have financial aid obligations after graduation, the traditional entrepreneurship center model focusing on student startups was probably not the right approach for the campus. Instead, he wanted all WU students, regardless of major, to learn to think like entrepreneurs. In 2018, Professor Mindy Walls was hired as the chair and WU launched their Entrepreneurial Leadership Program.

The success of the center and our ability to create an entrepreneurial ecosystem on campus relied heavily on gaining the support of university stakeholders. In 2018, our primary stakeholders were the students and faculty of WU, along with the W. Robert Stover Foundation, our primary donor. To begin creating an entrepreneurial ecosystem, we first gained approval by university administration to introduce all students to the entrepreneurial mindset in their freshmen seminar course. Multiple pathways were then designed for students to develop this mindset inside and outside of the classroom. eHIVE events and competitions provided students with entrepreneurially focused learning opportunities. A Faculty Fellows Program was developed to gain faculty support. eHIVE events were also developed in partnership with other campus departments to foster new growth. Our donor pool was quickly expanded from our initial seed gift when donors saw the growth of the center and how quickly the entrepreneurial mindset was spreading across campus. Alumni and friends of the university acted as mentors and guest speakers. We partnered with county and township

leaders to develop a town and gown project focused on researching rural community transportation issues. This project was developed with the Heinz School of Public Policy at Carnegie Mellon University, a leading research institution.

This past year has been pivotal for our center. We have taken over the operation of our campus spirit store, launched an Entrepreneurial Leadership Scholars program, and started a micro-industry using our new maker equipment. Our success has led to \$1.8 million in grants and gifts this year, which includes the construction of our new center and operational support.

## **Strategic Goals, Objectives, Metrics and Team Structure**

Our vision for the eHIVE and the Entrepreneurial Leadership Program is to create a culture of proactive, innovative, and ethical problem solving which will provide Waynesburg University students with the skills, abilities, and experiences they need to thrive in a rapidly changing world. Strategically, we have set the following goals to help us achieve this vision:

1. Instill an entrepreneurial mindset in all students as a way to think, learn, and problem-solve.
2. Provide multiple pathways for students to develop targeted skills based on the student's level of interest and career aspirations.
3. Create an inclusive, coordinated, and collaborative infrastructure to support this culture development across campus.

Our objectives evolve yearly but relate to the following broad themes: key experiential learning opportunities, student/faculty/staff programming, and community partnerships. The eHIVE reports our progress in our annual reports. Please see the Annual Report Links in Appendix B for detailed information.

Success of the eHIVE and program initiatives are measured by key metrics. Each year we measure our total Entrepreneurial Leadership Engagement by documenting participation in eHIVE events, eHIVE idea coaching, course enrollment, and faculty fellow engagement. Our total engagement has grown from approximately 600 in 2018-2019 to over 2,300 in 2022-2023. See Annual Reports for detail.

When the eHIVE opened, it was staffed by the chair and two student workers. As we have grown, we have added staff. In Fall of 2023, we will have 13 WU employees and 10–17 students working with the center. See Appendix for current organizational chart.

## Milestone Timeline

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For a larger full-page timeline, please visit Appendix D.

## Achievements

Key Experiential Learning Opportunities	Student, Faculty & Staff Programming	Community Partnerships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Nest Learning Lab</li> <li>Makerspace and Micro-Industry</li> <li>Plastics Project (AR 2021-2022) See also video in Appendix B</li> <li>Project Grow (AR 2020- 2021, and 2021-2022) See also video in Appendix B</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>eHIVE student coaching, faculty/staff advising (All ARs)</li> <li>Faculty, staff, and student programming (All ARs)</li> <li>Workshops and Competitions (All ARs). See also video in Appendix B</li> <li>EL Faculty Fellows (All ARs)</li> <li>EL Scholars Program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DOT grant with CMU. (AR 2020- 2021, and 2021-2022)</li> <li>Greene County &amp; Allegheny Conference Community Incubator</li> <li>Entrepreneurial Leadership Council – founding member. (ELC is a regional Ent. Educators group)</li> </ul>

## Unique Achievements

While each initiative listed above is integral to our success, in an interest of space, we will highlight only a few here. See Appendix B for our Annual Reports, web links, photos, and videos for details.

*The Entrepreneurial Leadership Scholars Program* is a competitive scholarship program for students majoring or minoring in Entrepreneurial Leadership. Selected students

not only receive a scholarship, but they also become part of a cohort that receives spiralized programming, and unique value-added opportunities specifically designed for them by the eHIVE. The Scholars serve as Entrepreneurial Ambassadors across the campus and in the community. They also act as student advisors for the eHIVE, the Nest Learning Lab, and Makerspace micro-industry. This year our scholars also designed and operated two separate popups and represented WU at a regional innovation challenge.

**The Nest Learning Lab:** In September of 2022, the administration gave the campus spirit store (The Nest) to the eHIVE to run. We quickly turned it into a student learning lab. It is managed by a Graduate Assistant and staffed by students who can work their way into management roles. While the students are overseen by the eHIVE Director, they are involved in all operational and buying decisions for the store. The Nest also partners with faculty to become a “client” for project-based learning. In addition, we showcase products made by faculty, staff, and students. The eHIVE provides coaching on pricing and presentation and facilitates a blind jurying process to select products for inclusion in the store.

**WU Plastic Initiative:** In the Summer of 2022 our Entrepreneurial Leadership Program was nationally recognized as a ‘Rising Star’ at the Deshpande Symposium. This title was awarded in recognition of the Plastics to Progress course, piloted in 2021. The Faculty Fellows and Chair of the EL Program team launched this course with the question “How might we use plastic waste to solve a social problem?”. Our goal for the course was to provide a true interdisciplinary approach to problem-solving. In the liberal arts tradition, we wanted our students to see a problem and iterate solutions using a variety of perspectives. The course was very successful and as a result we are creating a micro-industry run out of the eHIVE to upcycle our campus plastic waste into products that can be sold. See the Plastics to Progress video in Appendix B for more information.

**Makerspace Micro-industry:** Based on the success of our plastics class, in 2022 we received a \$200,000 gift of maker equipment. We immediately put that equipment to work in the classroom and as a micro-industry on campus. We make products for The Nest and take custom orders for products from units on campus and in the community. The addition of The Nest and The Makerspace have increased our visibility on campus and have led to more clients for the eHIVE. Our interest in student-run businesses is growing. We are currently working with the administration to revise the policy prohibiting student-run business on campus. Our new policy will require student-run businesses to work with the eHIVE prior to being approved to operate on campus. See Appendix B for photos of our work.

**Project GROW:** This eHIVE initiative grew out of our Social Entrepreneurship course. Our students worked remotely with a women’s group in an impoverished village in the Dominican Republic to help them foster economic growth. Through the eHIVE and course, students helped the women develop a community savings group, become a legally recognized organization, and trained startup jewelry and bakery businesses. WU students helped the group to

develop jewelry, which is sold in our campus store. See Appendix B for video.

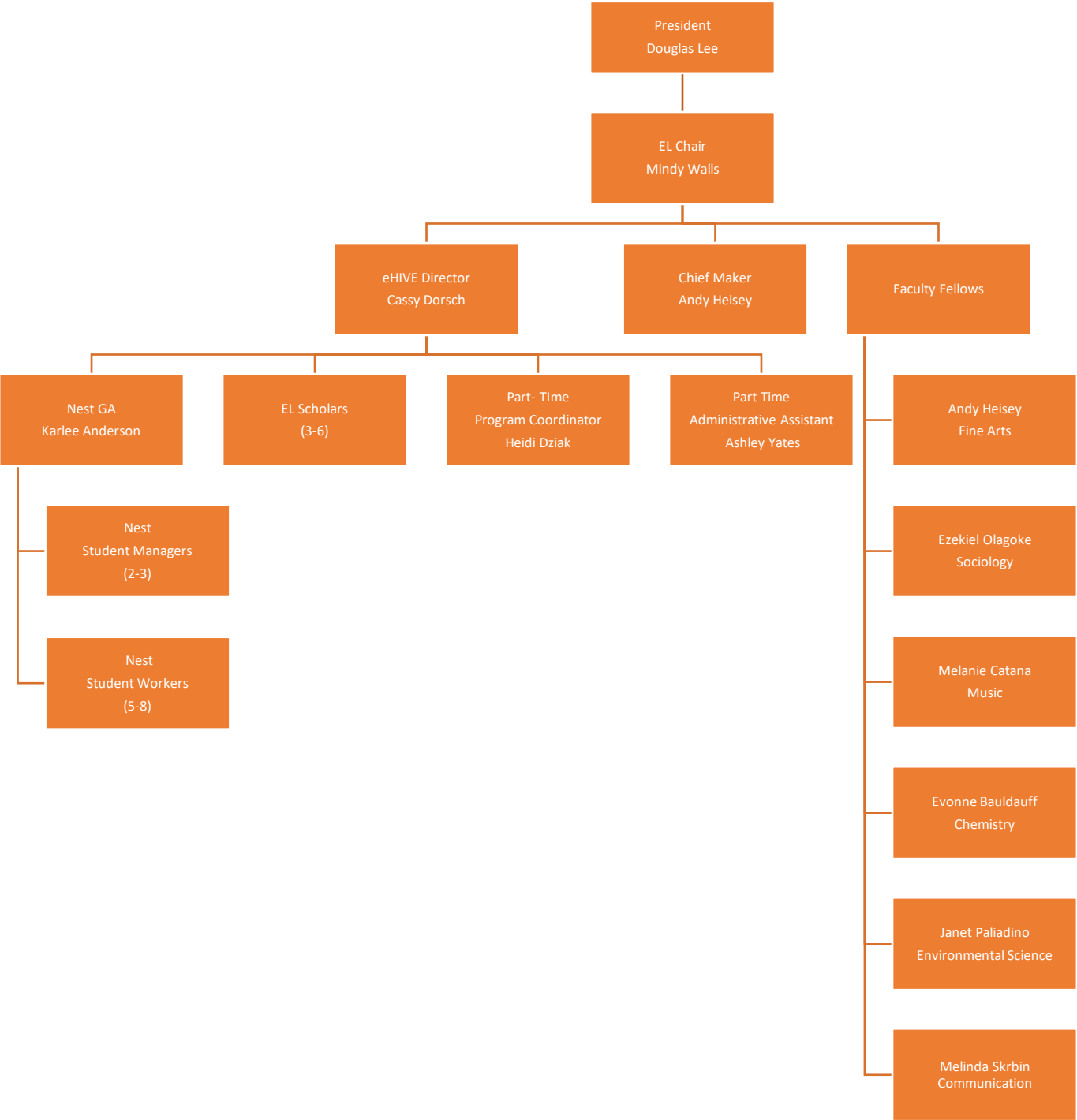
## **Differentiation and Sustainability**

Entrepreneurship at WU is different in both focus and implementation. Instead of focusing on building student businesses, we focus on building an entrepreneurial mindset and skillset so that all our students can solve problems that they encounter in their communities. We believe that entrepreneurship is both a study and a practice so our coursework and eHIVE activities are intertwined. Our approach is problem-based, highly experiential and designed to allow our students to grow in areas that are important to them. In the last five years we have built an entrepreneurial mindset across a campus that previously had none. Our programs and initiatives have led to more innovation, experimentation, and design thinking. In the post-Covid world, we are seeing more student interest in pursuing a startup, engaging in our Nest learning lab, or developing products in our Makerspace. We believe that our work makes our students better problem-solvers, better employees, and better citizens.

The eHIVE is a presidential initiative and thus has support at the highest level of the university. Our chair reports directly to the President thereby eliminating layers of approval. This reporting structure has allowed us to be nimble and capitalize on opportunities quickly. As a result, the eHIVE has grown exponentially over the last five years and is poised for continued growth in year six. We have a strong foundation, solid leadership, and are well staffed. See Appendix A. Our work has been recognized nationally by the Deshpande Symposium and our leader was one of four Americans invited to participate in Idea Lab for MENA countries, where she presented on Building Entrepreneurship Centers. See Appendix B.

Our engagement continues to evolve and grow because we think and act entrepreneurially. We find opportunities that fulfill our objectives and resonate with our stakeholders. Our funders agree. This year we have raised \$1.8 Million in grants and donations. This fully funds the construction of our new eHIVE and Makerspace as well as provides operational support. See Appendix B for drawing. We have also developed two revenue streams with The Nest and our Makerspace micro-industry. While education remains the top priority in both efforts, we are working towards self-sustainability for both initiatives.

Appendix A: Organization Chart





## Appendix B:

### **Video Links:**

Program Overview: <https://youtu.be/ch1NSs5EfLQ>

Plastics to Progress: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mTb-W7\\_SeBM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mTb-W7_SeBM)

Project GROW: <https://youtu.be/C6LgiHuFQdY>.

Innovation Challenge: <https://youtu.be/l8wVhyXcS6M>.

Big Dream Gathering: [https://youtu.be/6ij\\_RKOP26c](https://youtu.be/6ij_RKOP26c)

### **Website Links:**

eHIVE: <https://www.waynesburg.edu/academics/entrepreneurial-leadership>

eHIVE Instagram: [https://www.instagram.com/waynesburg\\_hive/?hl=en](https://www.instagram.com/waynesburg_hive/?hl=en)

Nest Student Learning Lab: <https://www.waynesburg.edu/campus-life/nest>

Nest Instagram: [https://www.instagram.com/wu\\_nest/?hl=en](https://www.instagram.com/wu_nest/?hl=en)

Idea Lab for Improving Business and Entrepreneurship Education in the Middle East and North Africa  
<https://sites.google.com/view/dubaiidealab/schedule>

### **Annual Report Links:**

2018-2019: <https://www.waynesburg.edu/sites/default/files/2020-08/2018-2019%20Annual%20Report.pdf>

2019-2020: <https://www.waynesburg.edu/sites/default/files/2020-09/2019-2020%20Annual%20Report.pdf>

2020-2021: <https://www.waynesburg.edu/sites/default/files/2022-01/2020-2021%20Annual%20Report.pdf>

2021-2022: <https://www.waynesburg.edu/sites/default/files/2023-01/2021-22%20Annual%20Report.pdf>

*Note: The 2022-2023 Annual Report is still in the development phase*



**WAYNESBURG UNIVERSITY**  
**eHIVE**  
An Entrepreneurial Hub for  
Innovative Ventures & Endeavors

**SERVICES:**

Startup Coaching:

- Business
- Non-profit

Events, Competitions, and Workshops

Experiential Learning Opportunities:

- Academic Major or Minor
- Nest

Maker's Space:

- 3-D Printers
- Laser Cutting
- Prototyping

**Open to all majors and minors**

Contact: [ehive@waynesburg.edu](mailto:ehive@waynesburg.edu)



Appendix C: New eHIVE Floorplan



**eHIVE Plan**



## Appendix D: Milestone Timelin

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