

Benchmarking Analysis: Social Entrepreneurship Centers

December 2019

In the following report, Hanover Research presents the results of a benchmarking analysis of Social Entrepreneurship Centers, specifically highlighting trends in form and function among seven institutions in the United States.



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Executive Summary

Benchmarking Analysis: Social Entrepreneurship Centers

Recommendations

Based on an analysis of Social Entrepreneurship Centers at seven institutions in the United States, Hanover recommends:

- 1 **Develop a Social Entrepreneurship Center that offers relevant experiential learning opportunities, guest speakers/conferences, funding opportunities, and relevant advising.**

All benchmarked competitor programs feature these four categories of offering. Such offerings are primarily geared at students but are sometimes available to the community at large. The exact format of these elements varies significantly among competitors, so institutions have quite a bit of freedom in designing specific offerings.

- 2 **Develop a minor in Social Entrepreneurship, offered through the center.**

Of the seven reviewed institutions, only Wake Forest University Offers a credential-awarding program: a minor in Entrepreneurship. A similar minor around Social Entrepreneurship would be a unique offering. This minor should be open to all students, regardless of major, as Social Entrepreneurship inherently encompasses many elements of the liberal arts tradition.

Key Findings

Benchmarked centers are generally run by an executive director or program coordinator. Other dedicated personnel tend to be limited. Courses offered by the center may be taught by the center's director, an entrepreneur-in-residence, or faculty from other academic departments.

Most centers offer grants or competitions that may lead to entrepreneurial seed capital. The size of the funds awarded varies significantly. For example, completion of the Social Entrepreneurship Launch Program at Wheaton College yields a \$500 startup stipend. Meanwhile, the Patricelli Seed Grant at Wesleyan University is \$5,000.

Centers are generally funded by alumni donations and philanthropic organizations. In some centers, donations are designated for specific projects. For example, the David Stone Tree House Fund at Middlebury College provides grants supporting community-building projects.

Most benchmarked centers physically resemble academic departments. These centers have dedicated offices and possibly a gathering space, but no larger dedicated space. Instead, institutions utilize other spaces on-campus to offer events and student development workspace. The primary exception to this is Middlebury College, which has an entire building for gathering, innovating, and co-working.

Five out of seven benchmarked centers offer at least one course for-credit. The for-credit offerings may include traditional classes (e.g. Oberlin College), short bootcamp-style programming (e.g. Middlebury College), or an entire minor (the minor in Entrepreneurship at Wake Forest University).

External partnerships may yield programming, funding, or other experiential opportunities for students. Examples of such partnerships are [Social Impact 360](#) at Wake Forest University (a training organization partnership among 12 institutions across the nation), [MassChallenge](#) startup incubator internships at Wheaton College, and [Projects for Peace](#) at Wesleyan University and Middlebury College.

Research Questions and Methodology






Benchmarking Analysis: Social Entrepreneurship Centers

Methodology

To assist University A as it seeks to understand the concept of and market for a Social Entrepreneurship Center, Hanover conducted a benchmarking study to determine the characteristics of such centers at other US institutions. The analysis aims to provide insight into interrelated research questions about the form and function of these centers.

The following analysis is based on a review of information drawn from institutional websites as well as publicly available data sources. Hanover selected the seven institutions included in this analysis based on a manual search for institutions with similar centers.

Research Questions

-  What institutions have stood up a similar center?
-  What is the leadership and/or managerial structure of these centers?
-  What resources and opportunities does the center provide?
-  Who predominantly funds these centers?
-  What is included in the center's physical space?

Benchmarked Institution Characteristics

Institution	Location	Social Entrepreneurship Program/Center Name
Gettysburg College	Gettysburg, PA	Entrepreneurship & Social Innovation Initiative
Wake Forest University	Winston-Salem, NC	Center for Entrepreneurship
Wheaton College	Norton, MA	Wheaton Innovates Now
Wesleyan University	Middletown, CT	Patricelli Center for Social Entrepreneurship
Denison University	Granville, OH	The Red Frame Lab
Oberlin College	Oberlin, OH	The Center for Innovation and Impact
Middlebury College	Middlebury, VT	The Innovation Hub

Student Opportunities

All benchmarked centers offer relevant experiential learning opportunities, guest speaker/conference events, funding opportunities, and advising.

Experiential learning at the seven benchmarked centers usually takes the form of a co-curricular entrepreneurship/social impact program, competition, and/or internship. **Guest speaker events** may be offered individually or as part of a lecture series or conference. **Funding opportunities** are generally grants to support student-developed projects (including entrepreneurial ventures, peace-building projects, and community-building projects), or stipends to support student internships or study within a certain sphere. **Advising** is offered by dedicated personnel as well as experts from the community or industry.

Only one benchmarked center offers an entire credentialing sequence – a minor in Entrepreneurship at Wake Forest University.

Five out of seven centers offer, or are directly connected with, at least one for-credit course (except for Wheaton College and Denison University). Other than Wake Forest, no other center directly hosts a minor, major, or other credentialing sequence.

Global Opportunities

At least four institutions offer opportunities abroad.

Grants to support the completion of an entrepreneurial or social impact project abroad are the most common type of international opportunities. Such grants are not necessarily funded by the center directly. For example, at least two centers (at Middlebury College and Wesleyan University) participate in the Projects for Peace [program](#).



Outside of grants, opportunities abroad may include social impact internships (Middlebury) or seminar leadership (Wheaton).

Community Connections

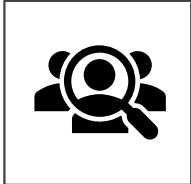
Benchmarked centers connect to the local community through mentorship, public events, and outreach programs.

Several centers allow or even encourage entrepreneurial community members to be mentors or sit on the center’s advisory board. Events offered by competitor centers may allow for community attendance, or even community participation.

Finally, at least three centers have some sort of direct outreach into the community. Two connect students to local non-profits for experiential learning (Wesleyan University and Denison University), and Middlebury College offers free expert entrepreneurial advising to local community businesses.

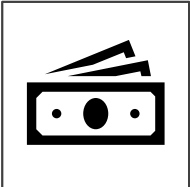


Personnel, Funding, and Space



Benchmarked centers are generally run by an executive director or program coordinator. Three centers house at least one “entrepreneur-in-residence,” an experienced entrepreneurial mentor for students who may also teach courses.

Available information suggests that alumni donations and philanthropic organizations are the most common sources of funding for these centers, though some have connections to corporate donors.



In terms of physical space, benchmarked centers are most like academic departments, generally consisting of offices and some gathering space. Most utilize other campus spaces for events, classes, and student development workspace.

Profile: Entrepreneurship & Social Innovation Initiative at Gettysburg College

Benchmarking Analysis: Social Entrepreneurship Centers

Student Opportunities

The Entrepreneurship & Social Innovation Initiative (E-SII) offers workshops, career mentoring, and fellowship opportunities to Gettysburg College students.

The [Business-Entrepreneurial \(B-E\) Thinking Program](#) is a series of workshops and events that “[help students develop their entrepreneurial skills and professional potential](#).” Students that complete the program may enroll in a for-credit independent study (ECON 463), to develop an entrepreneurial concept.

The [Entrepreneurial Fellowship](#) is an opportunity to further develop leadership and entrepreneurial experience with the possibility of receiving funding, potentially for a project [abroad](#). Students do not have to have completed the B-E Thinking Program to apply for the fellowship, but it is encouraged. Mentorship is integrated into the B-E Thinking Program and the Entrepreneurial Fellowship.



The [events](#) offered as part of the B-E Thinking Program in 2019 included:

- How to Job Search and Network like An Entrepreneur
- Philosophy and Critical Thinking: How the Liberal Arts Help You to Think Entrepreneurially
- Video Chat with Cam Chidiac, Founder of Drywired



Space and Leadership

Dedicated space and personnel for E-SII are limited.

The E-SII website lists two [staff](#) members: an entrepreneur-in-residence (who is also a faculty member in the Economics Department), and the Entrepreneurship & Career Mentoring Coordinator. The workshops and events offered as part of the B-E Thinking Program are led by faculty members as well as business and entrepreneurial leaders from outside of the institution. Students participating in the Fellowship are advised by members of the [Entrepreneurial Advisory Council](#), which is composed of successful entrepreneurs from a variety of industries.

The E-SII website notes that the program office is located in the College Union Building, but the events listed as part of the B-E Thinking Program in 2019 were held at a variety of rooms across campus. This suggests that dedicated space for E-SII is limited.



Community Connections and Funding

Alumni, parents, and friends may participate in career mentoring through E-SII, and experienced entrepreneurs may join the Entrepreneurial Advisory Council.



These are the two main methods of engagement available to the community outside of the institution. Community members may also sign up to receive a quarterly [newsletter](#).

The E-SII is [financially](#) supported through alumni, parents, and friends.

This is primarily through *Gettysburg Great: The Campaign for Our College*, a substantial fundraising effort.



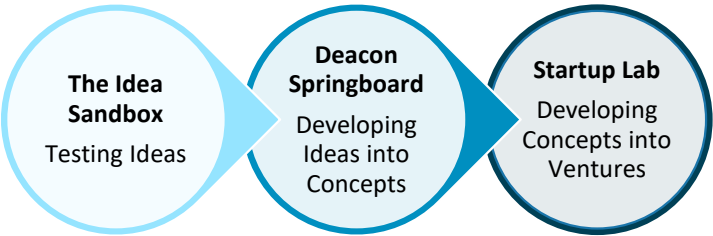
Profile: Center for Entrepreneurship at Wake Forest University

Benchmarking Analysis: Social Entrepreneurship Centers

Student Opportunities

The Center for Entrepreneurship offers a minor in Entrepreneurship, as well as three co-curricular programs that support students at each stage of the entrepreneurial life cycle.

The [minor](#), the most [popular](#) minor at Wake Forest University, may accompany any major offered at the institution. The three co-curricular programs are intended to complement the curriculum and provide experiential learning to students as they pursue their own entrepreneurial endeavors. All three programs provide **financial support**, either as testing funds ([The Idea Sandbox](#)) or seed capital ([Deacon Springboard](#) and [Startup Lab](#)). These programs provide **guidance and mentorship** from faculty, successful entrepreneurs (including the two entrepreneurs-in-residence), and industry experts. Of these three programs, only The Idea Sandbox is not listed as an elective for credit towards the minor.



Social Impact 360

Wake Forest University is one of 12 institutions across the nation that participates in [Social Impact 360](#) (SI360), a “mentorship-based training organization” for college-age social entrepreneurs.



Based out of Washington, DC, this year-long program aims to guide students through the development of a socially impactful entrepreneurial venture. Guidance is provided by peer mentors, and funding for SI360 comes from a variety of major corporate sponsors.

Entrepalooza

The Center for Entrepreneurship hosts a free conference, open to the public, entitled *Entrepalooza*.

The [conference](#), two days long and held on-campus, features guest lectures from successful entrepreneurs and presentations from Startup Lab student teams. Student teams can also compete for startup funds in the [Deac Tank](#) competition during *Entrepalooza*.

Leadership and Community Engagement

The Center for Entrepreneurship is led by an executive director and houses two entrepreneurs-in-residence.



The center’s website lists 11 [faculty and staff](#) members. In addition to the executive director and the entrepreneurs-in-residence there is a faculty chair, a Startup Lab director, a program director, and an administrative coordinator. The entrepreneurs-in-residence provide mentorship and lead the Deacon Springboard program. There is also an [advisory council](#) that provides guidance and mentorship to students and to the program.

The Center for Entrepreneurship is essentially an academic department, with gathering space and limited opportunities for community engagement.

Community members may attend *Entrepalooza* or subscribe to the center’s [blog](#), which publishes student accounts of their experiences in the program. The exact size of the center is unclear, though its Facebook page features pictures of a general [gathering/meeting](#) space.








Profile: Wheaton Innovates Now at Wheaton College

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Student Opportunities

The Wheaton Innovates Now (WIN) program offers workshops, opportunities to pitch and showcase ideas, an entrepreneurial bootcamp, and experiential learning through partnerships and student-led seminars abroad.

It is unclear whether any of these [offerings](#) may be taken for academic credit.

	Offering	Description
	Social Entrepreneurship Launch Program	An entrepreneurial bootcamp that builds students' business and professional skills; successful completion results in a \$500 business startup stipend
	Student Showcase and Pitch Competition	Opportunities for students to present their ideas and gain visibility for their entrepreneurial endeavors
	Workshops and Other Development Opportunities	Some examples include: a Personal Branding Workshop, pitch coaching, and a field trip to the Social Entrepreneurship Greenhouse in Providence, RI
	Experiential Learning with MassChallenge	Project-based and internship-based learning opportunities with the “world’s largest startup accelerator”
	Leadership and Innovation Seminars Abroad	Students partner with faculty to deliver seminars in Rwanda and Ghana that “seek to encourage social entrepreneurship and innovation among high school students”

Wheaton Innovates Now also offers two programs for high school students.

High school students can attend lectures about Innovation and Social Change during the Discover@Wheaton summer program or attend WheaLead – a one-day student-and-faculty-led forum on those topics.

Partnerships

In addition to a partnership with the startup incubator MassChallenge, WIN has a partnership with the Global Center for Social Entrepreneurship Network (GCSEN).

The partnership with [GCSEN](#) most obviously manifests in the collaboration to develop the SE Launch Program. GCSEN offers online courses in social entrepreneurship, business coaching and consulting, and a Social Venture Research Certificate to both students and adult learners.

“Start your Social Venture Journey and learn how to move the world to a better place with access to education, coaching, and professional support at every step along the way.”



Funding, Personnel, and Space

Funding for WIN comes from the Diana Davis Spencer Foundation.

This philanthropic [foundation](#) is committed to the promotion of “national security, entrepreneurship, self-reliance, free enterprise, and...quality of life” through its philanthropy. The Diana Davis Spencer Foundation also supports GCSEN, most recently with a renewed [grant](#) of \$700,000 in September 2019.

WIN consists of study and gathering space and has a dedicated administrator.

The program office and the studying/gathering [space](#) are located in the basement below the registrar’s office.

The website provides contact information for the program administrator. No other specific faculty or staff are mentioned, with the exception of Wheaton President Dennis Hanno (who originally launched the seminars abroad and remains involved with them).

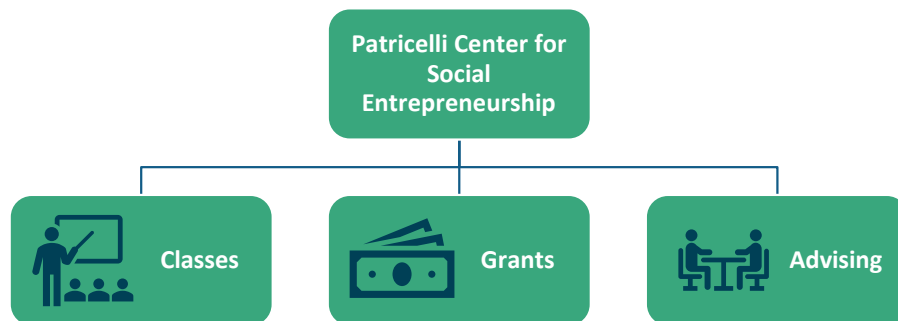
Profile: Patricelli Center for Social Entrepreneurship at Wesleyan University

Benchmarking Analysis: Social Entrepreneurship Centers

Student Opportunities

The Patricelli Center for Social Entrepreneurship (PCSE) offers for-credit classes, a variety of grants, and entrepreneurial advising to Wesleyan University students.

The [classes](#) are open to any Wesleyan student, regardless of major. The [grants](#) include support for conference attendance and summer projects/internships, seed capital for entrepreneurial ventures, and funding to participate in the [Map The System](#) competition. Advising is generally provided by members of the [Patricelli Center Advisory Board](#), who also serve as guest-speakers for the center.



Funding, Personnel, and Space



Begun with funding from the Robert and Margaret Patricelli Family Foundation, PCSE currently receives financial support from [Propel Capital](#) and the [Newman's Own Foundation](#).

The PCSE director teaches several of the classes offered at PCSE. Faculty from Wesleyan-internal partnerships also teach classes at PCSE.



PCSE is located in the [Allbritton Center](#), the “hub of civic engagement” at Wesleyan, which also houses the Jewett Center for Community Partnerships, the Allbritton Center for the Study of Public Life, and a [variety](#) of smaller departments.

Global Opportunities

PCSE grants support a variety of global change efforts and outreach.

In addition to the grant supporting participation in the Map The System competition at Oxford University in England, PCSE participates in the [Davis Projects for Peace](#) (DPP) program which provides financial support for student-designed peace-building projects. Several of the Wesleyan winners of this \$10,000 grant have designed and led projects abroad. For example, in 2018, five Wesleyan students won a DPP startup [grant](#) to fund their nonprofit distributing menstrual hygiene kits to young women in Ethiopia and Guyana.



PCSE also offers \$5,000 seed grants to help student entrepreneurs implement their socially impactful projects, which may be abroad. For example, one of the 2019 [winners](#) aims to bring access to proper sanitation to a rural community in Kenya.

Partners and Community Connections

PCSE has a variety of partners within the University, including the student-run non-profit Kai Entrepreneurship.



[Kai Entrepreneurship](#) offers field trips, speaker series, and other programs to promote openness and inclusion within “tech and social entrepreneurship.”

PCSE connects to the community in a few ways:

- The Nonprofit Board Residency [Program](#), offered by PCSE partner the Jewett Center for Community Partnerships, connects students with local nonprofits for experiential learning.
- The Allbritton Center, where PCSE is located, [encourages](#) community involvement through volunteer, service-learning, and research partnerships.
- A wide variety of individuals may sit on the PCSE Advisory Board, including alumni, faculty, parents, students, and staff.
- PCSE is a frequent topic/contributor for Wesleyan’s civic engagement blog, [ENGAGE](#), which can also be found on Twitter and Facebook.

Profile: The Innovation Hub at Middlebury College

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Student Opportunities

The Innovation Hub offers for-credit programming, mentorship and experiential learning, and a wide [array](#) of events and funding opportunities.

Category	Innovation Hub Offerings
<div>For-Credit Programming</div> <div></div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Individual classes in entrepreneurship, oratory, and rhetoricA four-week collaborative learning program that emphasizes skills in leadership and innovationOne of the core courses for the minor in Global Health
<div>Mentorship and ELO*</div> <div></div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Advising across the hub's various offerings and fieldsPublic speaking coachingFree advising for local small business owners and entrepreneursSocial impact internships
<div>Funding Opportunities</div> <div></div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Funded internships in global health, entrepreneurship, and management/innovationGrant competitions for innovation and entrepreneurshipProjects for Peace grant competitionSocial entrepreneurship fellowship programFunding for projects that connect Middlebury to the surrounding community
<div>Events</div> <div></div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Conferences around leadership, social impact, and innovative thinkingField trips and scavenger hunts to learn about entrepreneurship and problem-solvingSeveral public speaking competitions

*Experiential Learning Opportunity

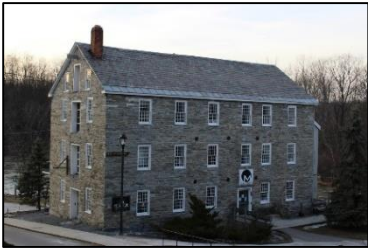
"Leadership, creative thought, intellectual risk taking, and reflection."
Core values at the [Innovation Hub](#)



Space and Personnel

The Innovation Hub offers a variety of gathering, co-working, and incubating spaces for student development.

The Innovation Hub building includes offices and a conference room. The Old Stone Mill and Annex, in partnership with the hub, offers extensive [space](#) for over [200](#) students to work on any project they like provided it is "nonacademic and self-designed."



Mill/annex tenants may work on developing their entrepreneurial ideas or creative projects, or they may operate a startup from the space. The Innovation Hub also offers co-working space through the Vermont [Center](#) for Emerging Technology.

The Old Stone Mill, a dedicated [space](#) for student innovators.

The Innovation Hub is overseen by a Director of Programs, with additional [personnel](#) dedicated to each of the main sub-programs.



Global and Community Connections

Community members may attend hub events and benefit from small business advising, while students may get involved with the local and global communities in a variety of ways.

The Projects for Peace [program](#), a multi-university endeavor, awards \$10,000 grants for peace-building projects, which are often abroad. Middlebury students may also engage in a social impact [internship](#) locally or abroad. Finally, the David Stone Tree House [Fund](#) awards grants of up to \$1,500 to fund student projects aimed at fostering connection between the local community and campus.



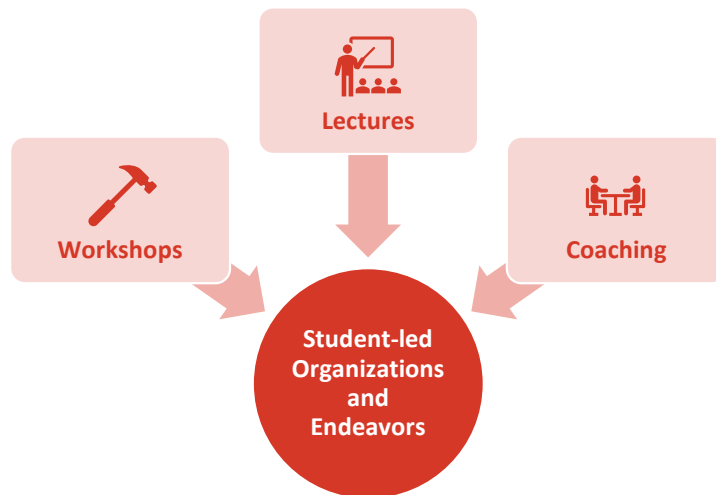
Profile: The Red Frame Lab at Denison University

Benchmarking Analysis: Social Entrepreneurship Centers

Student Opportunities

The Red Frame Lab offers workshops, lectures, and personalized coaching to promote entrepreneurship, design-thinking, and social impact among Denison students.

Access to the [Red Frame Lab](#) is not restricted to students within any particular major or department, and the lab does not have any for-credit offerings. Instead, the lab focuses on supporting and advising student-led organizations and endeavors.



Some of the workshops offered by the Red Frame Lab include:

- [IRE|MIX](#), an entrepreneurship summit where alumni and students network and share ideas
- [3 Day Startup](#), an opportunity for experiential learning with entrepreneurship
 - One 2019 participant was given the [opportunity](#) to travel to the Netherlands to participate in the Global Entrepreneurship Summit
- User Experience Design [Workshop](#), a three-day experience meant to guide students through what “design-thinking” is all about

Student Organizations

The Red Frame Lab supports experiential learning through student-led entrepreneurial organizations and a team of social impact student fellows known as the RED Corps.

The [RED Corps](#), working with the Division of Student Development and the Red Frame Lab, seeks to identify challenges present on the Denison campus, posit solutions to them, and ultimately initiate a positive change.

Two student-led entrepreneurial [organizations](#), supported by the Red Frame Lab, provide students with hands-on experience in entrepreneurship:



Denison Venture Philanthropy provides opportunities to learn about philanthropy by investing in local non-profits. In addition to investing their personal time, students invest funds donated by Denison alumnus David Kuhns.

Denison Enterprises provides entrepreneurial learning through a coalition of student-run business ventures on campus.

Personnel and Space

The Red Frame Lab is led by a general coordinator and houses an [entrepreneur-in-residence](#).

The lab has three additional [staff](#) members: an entrepreneurship coach, an operation coordinator, and the Assistant Vice President for Student Development.

The Red Frame Lab features gathering [space](#), whiteboards, chalkboard walls, and materials to aid in prototype experimentation.

The lab is housed in the [Student Union](#), which also houses a food market, mailroom, bookstore, auditorium, and additional gathering spaces.

Profile: The Center for Innovation and Impact at Oberlin College

Benchmarking Analysis: Social Entrepreneurship Centers

Student Opportunities

The Center for Innovation and Impact (CII) offers an Introduction to Entrepreneurship class, experiential learning opportunities, guest lectures, grants, and advising to Oberlin students.

The center is also affiliated with the student-run [Oberlin Entrepreneurship Club](#), with which it collaborates to offer the Startup Weekend program.



Community Connections

The LaunchU program is open to all members of the Oberlin community, including students, faculty, staff, alumni, and parents.



The [program](#) consists of a two-week entrepreneurship bootcamp, generally completed as part of a team. Upon completion of the bootcamp, teams may opt to enter the associated Pitch Competition to vie for project funding.

Space and Personnel

Several of the center's events are held in the Birenbaum Innovation and Performance [Space](#), though this is not the official address for the CII.

The main [webpage](#) for the CII, articles about [LaunchU](#), and other [articles](#) about the center all feature pictures of the Birenbaum Space.



The photo above is taken from the CII [website](#).

For example, the photo to the left shows LaunchU competitors listening to a guest speaker in this space.

The official address for the CII, which is also given as the office of the center's director, is Room 115 in Robertson Hall.

The center is led by the Director of Entrepreneurship, with no other apparent dedicated personnel.

Only one other person is listed under the [staff](#) tab on the center's website – an affiliated staff member, the Director of Conservatory Professional Development.

Intro to Entrepreneurship

Students in this class benefit from "hands-on project-based learning," and are encouraged to write about their experiences on the [Oberlin Entrepreneurship blog](#).



"Students learn what it means to work as a team, to identify a problem, ideate and test solutions, design a rough prototype and develop a sustainable financial model for execution."

[Introduction to Entrepreneurship and Leadership](#)

