New NJUEDI Program Sets the Bar for Urban Economic Development

CUEED has unveiled a multi-faceted new initiative that brings together some of its core programs into a single, ambitious model for bolstering American competitiveness and dynamic urban economies. The goal of the New Jersey Urban Entrepreneurship Development Initiative (NJUEDI) is to increase the number of entrepreneurs and create jobs in urban markets using a three-pronged approach:

**Urban entrepreneurship program at Rutgers Business School**

With entrepreneurship assuming greater importance as a career option for many students, this program — open to business and non-business students alike — will provide the tools for business success. Coursework will be combined with the creation and support of student-run entrepreneurship organizations such as the Urban Entrepreneurial Council (see related story p. 3) and hands-on collaboration with local small businesses in the Newark community and beyond.

**Training program for developing entrepreneurs**

The second NJUEDI component expands upon CUEED’s successful Entrepreneurship Pioneers Initiative (EPI), now completing its second year. EPI was designed to meet the needs of first-generation entrepreneurs with training, one-on-one and group counseling, and networking opportunities. NJUEDI will expand EPI beyond its original nine-month scope with additional intensive training and counseling to address specific long-term business development and growth goals.

**Statewide network of social entrepreneurs**

Historically an underutilized approach for simultaneously creating economic and social value, social entrepreneurship integrates social goals and problem solving into its core business model. Through NJUEDI, CUEED will establish the first-ever statewide effort to connect social entrepreneurs not only with financial and technical resources, but also with each other. The network will feature three annual Entrepreneurship and Innovation Summits, ongoing workshops and events, and the Social Innovation Institute, a program to help nascent social entrepreneurs develop their venture ideas into business plans and investment proposals.

Says CUEED Managing Director Jasmine Cordero, “NJUEDI supports our research findings as to the tools and programs needed for not only increasing the number of urban entrepreneurs, but also creating jobs in urban markets — and ultimately enhancing quality of life in America’s urban centers.”

For more information on NJUEDI, call CUEED at (973) 353-5987.
Lifelong runner Jerome D. Williams has likely found his track star training handy as he hits the ground running as the inaugural Prudential Chair in Business.

Dr. Williams, who officially joined Rutgers Business School–Newark and New Brunswick’s Department of Management and Global Business and CUEED as professor and research director on July 1, is already hard at work. He’s making local connections to continue some of the research he began back at the University of Texas at Austin, where he held a joint appointment as the F.J. Heyne Centennial Professor, Department of Advertising, and in the Center for African and African American Studies.

Of particular interest to Dr. Williams is the issue of childhood obesity. Though obesity — especially among the young — and business may not appear connected at first glance, the impact on commerce and community can be costly on several levels, he says. “Part of our research, for example, looks at supermarkets in urban areas, the systemic issues that limit access to affordable, nutritious food or safe places for children to be physically active, and the policy reform necessary to reverse childhood obesity, especially in underserved populations.”

In addition to his research, Dr. Williams is teaching a course in multicultural consumerism this semester. The East Coast native is also enjoying being closer to his family, including five children and eight grandchildren, as he settles into his new role at Rutgers Business School and CUEED.

“My whole career has been about social justice and equity in the marketplace and serving underserved consumers,” says Dr. Williams. “With our work at CUEED, we can make a real difference.”

CUEED Partners in “Game Changing” Living Cities Initiative

Newark was one of five U.S. cities recently chosen by Living Cities, a collaborative of 22 of the world’s largest foundations and financial institutions, to receive millions in funding to help improve the housing, schools and health of the city’s low-income families.

The plan, known as Newark’s Strong Healthy Communities Initiative, will be coordinated by the Center for Collaborative Change. CUEED will serve as the initiative’s data partner, tasked with developing a measurement, evaluation, and reporting system that will help nonprofits, businesses, and government agencies work together to assess and meet local needs. During the program’s three-year timeline, Newark will be eligible for up to $15 million in grants, commercial loans, and other low-cost loans to create healthy hubs around three city schools.

As CUEED’s Fellow Quintus Jett explains, the data system designed by CUEED will have two major components. “First, it will provide rapid feedback on performance activity to guide operational planning, process improvement, and program innovation. The system will then feed this data to key stakeholders —public and private sector entrepreneurs, employers and developers — to guide the development of services to address the specific needs of low-income communities,” says Dr. Jett.

As data partner, CUEED hopes to provide the necessary feedback to create a more sustainable, responsive, and thriving eco-system within Newark’s low-income neighborhoods.
Nobody blinked when business students wanted a program in entrepreneurship. But people took notice when interest extended to students in departments like fine arts and political science. It seems the desire to be an entrepreneur, to own and operate your own business, extends beyond the walls of the business school. And The Center for Urban Entrepreneurship & Economic Development (CUEED) met that desire when it sponsored an entrepreneurship minor for undergraduate students on the Newark Campus in fall 2010.

This represents a distinct shift in the approach historically taken by universities in preparing students for their careers. In the past, schools have focused on getting students ready to work within an organizational framework, whether corporate or government. Now students in the entrepreneurship minor program are getting the training they need to develop and run a successful business for themselves.

The core curriculum — developed by CUEED Director Dr. dt ogilvie, Dr. Arturo E. Osorio, and Dr. Jeffrey A. Robinson in collaboration with their fellow CUEED faculty, faculty from other departments, and the dean’s office — is designed to expand the career opportunities available to 21st-century students. The minor builds on Introduction to Entrepreneurship and includes basics in marketing, finance, and accounting for non-business majors, as well as electives in social and urban entrepreneurship, creativity, and technology innovation.

Thinking creatively about business

One popular undergraduate class taught by Dr. Osorio, Urban Entrepreneurship & Economic Development, led some students to launch the Urban Entrepreneurial Council (UEC), a student club focused on combining arts and entrepreneurship. The council plans to work with local businesses to create momentum for socio-economic change in Newark.

One example of the council’s activities is the proposed installation of an art gallery at 1 Washington Park, which houses the business school, to expose the building’s considerable traffic to the work of local artists and generate revenue for both the council and the artists on display. Additionally, the council has formed a partnership with the Newark Museum to expand the museum’s arts program for children into the adjacent RBS building during the summer months. This will allow Rutgers faculty, staff, and students to bring their children to work to participate in the hugely popular program.

"Art stimulates a different part of the brain; it helps business students to think creatively as well as critically."

So, why the focus on art? According to senior Peter Schlittenhardt, one of UEC’s co-founders along with Jonathan Collazo and Haseeb Qazi, "Art stimulates a different part of the brain; it helps business students to think creatively as well as critically. The goal of projects like these is to help students see potential everywhere and think more creatively about how they can make the world a better place."

To fund both programs, the UEC is taking donations from local business and members of the community. Contact Dr. Osorio at (973) 353-1062 or osorio@business.rutgers.edu for more information.

Expanding business career options

The broad-ranging classes and extracurricular opportunities of the entrepreneurship program are currently available in Newark to business and non-business students. In New Brunswick, the program is open to business majors and it is expected to be available to non-business majors in beginning next spring.

“We want to be the lightning rod that brings everything together for these students. People are disenchanted with corporate America, especially when it comes to social issues and how business is done,” says Dr. Osorio. “It’s hard to find a company that mirrors your values, one in which you see yourself working for 20 years or more. People want their independence and to see firsthand how the work they do makes a difference.”
Since its inception, The Center for Urban Entrepreneurship & Economic Development (CUEED) has taken its mission far beyond the walls of the Newark campus and into the streets of the community it calls home.

Two results-generating programs — the Entrepreneurship Pioneers Initiative (EPI) and the Halsey Street demonstration area — are just the start, showcasing the power of partnerships when academia, government, and the private sector come together in a purposeful way.

**EPI: Helping entrepreneurs grow**

Now in its second year, EPI was designed to help first-generation entrepreneurs grow their businesses via a mix of workshops, one-on-one and group counseling, mentoring, and networking opportunities during an intensive nine-month program. Says Godwin Dzantah, operations manager of Union, NJ-based Charles Moving & Storage and a graduate of the first EPI class, "The program helped us not only to run our business more efficiently, but also to prioritize what we needed to do to grow."

As a result of the training, Charles Moving & Storage created two new positions — one focusing on commercial business development, the other responsible for the company’s internet marketing.

Though the inaugural EPI program formally ended with graduation in January, the class is still going strong. Two EPI students, Anthony Thompson of WSI Innovations and Jinni Rock-Bailey of Rock-Bailey Enterprises, spearheaded an alumni group that meets monthly to hash out business issues and listen to insights from guest speakers. Look for the CUEED monthly highlight next month featuring graduates from both EPI programs.

**Entrepreneurial expansion on Halsey Street**

Nowhere is CUEED’s vision more evident than on Halsey Street, a formerly blighted neighborhood that became the focus of an intensive business renewal effort in 2008. CUEED teamed up with the city and local businesses in what soon became a model for targeted business development.

Working closely with the city of Newark, local non-profit foundations, and lenders, CUEED provided technical assistance, classes, and access to microloans that helped several Halsey Street businesses expand during one of the nation’s toughest economic downturns.

Soon, three new businesses were attracted to the area, creating a “tipping point” that turned Halsey Street into a now-thriving commercial district. A fourth business, Cravings, celebrated its grand opening in late October.

From structured programs like EPI to the public-private partnerships that launched the transformation of Halsey Street, CUEED’s innovative programs foster momentum for local businesses — and use that momentum as a powerful lever to drive economic vitality in Newark and beyond.
CUEED Research Initiatives

CUEED’s multidisciplinary and collaborative approach to research translates into support for a broad array of initiatives and interests that support the center’s mission. Here’s a quick snapshot of our team’s current research areas of interest:

dt ogilvie, Ph.D., Rutgers Business School–Newark and New Brunswick
- Economic development of the inner city
- Creativity in strategic decision making
- Executive leadership strategies of multicultural women in the executive suite
- The use of creativity to enhance business and battlefield decision making

Jeffrey A. Robinson, Ph.D., Rutgers Business School–Newark and New Brunswick
- Urban entrepreneurship
- Culture and arts as sources of socioeconomic development
- Urban food systems
- Underserved populations in urban settings (ethnic, culture, or education-based)
- The creative class
- Ethnographic work in urban contexts
- Social networks

Jerome Williams, Ph.D., Rutgers Business School–Newark and New Brunswick
- Childhood obesity
- Marketplace discrimination

Quintus R. Jett, Ph.D., School of Public Affairs and Administration
- The role of mapping in facilitating entrepreneurial development and community investment
- Innovative business models for underserved communities
- Strategies for non-profit change and transformation

Taja-Nia Henderson, J.D., Rutgers Law School–Newark
- Local government law
- Land use
- Legal, economic, and psycho-social consequences of offender reentry in urban areas

Christopher Wheat, Ph.D., Rutgers Business School–Newark and New Brunswick
- New industry formation
- Entrepreneurship and government policy
- Global business
- Social networks

In support of these varied research initiatives, CUEED hosts broad-ranging events and discussions to promote advocacy, interdisciplinary exchange, and intellectual collaboration. For more information on upcoming events, contact individual CUEED faculty members or visit business.rutgers.edu/CUEED.

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Rutgers Business School–Newark and New Brunswick (RBS) is an integral part of one of the nation’s oldest, largest, and most distinguished institutions of higher learning: Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, founded in 1766. Rutgers Business School has been accredited since 1941 by AACSB International—the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business—a distinction that represents the hallmark of excellence in management education. Today, with a focus on Business, Science, and Technology, Rutgers Business School is educating more than 4,500 undergraduate and graduate students at two main campuses in New Jersey as well as six satellite locations in New Jersey, China, and Singapore. Steeped in academic excellence, with a distinguished faculty and a corps of over 30,000 successful alumni, Rutgers Business School is highly ranked by the Financial Times, U.S. News & World Report, BusinessWeek, and The Wall Street Journal. It is recognized as one of the top three business schools in the greater New York metropolitan area; it is ranked #6 nationwide for “Most Competitive Students” by The Princeton Review; and is part of the campus that is ranked #1 in diversity nationwide by U.S. News & World Report, for 12 straight years.

Upcoming CUEED Events

Below is just a sampling of some of the events being coordinated by CUEED faculty and staff through the end of the semester:

CUEED Fellows Gathering
Thursday, December 9, 2010
3PM-6PM
CUEED Fellows convene to share their current research and meet with Research Director Jerome Williams.

EPI2 Graduation
Friday, December 10
10:00AM
Graduation ceremony for the second class of the Entrepreneurship Pioneers Initiative.

Public Contracting Forum
Monday, December 13, 2010
10AM-2PM
Public contracting can be neglected as a driver of urban economic development and entrepreneurship. This roundtable will convene faculty, practitioners, and local government to develop an agenda for research and action.

Note: Most events are by invitation and not open to the public. Please contact CUEED at (973) 353-5987 for more information.