

Co-Creation of an Entrepreneurship Living Learning Community: A Case Study of Interprofessional Collaboration

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Abstract : This paper investigates interprofessional collaboration (IPC) in the context of entrepreneurship education. Collaboration has been found to enhance problem solving, leverage expertise, improve resource allocation, and create organizational efficiencies. However, research suggests that successful collaboration is hampered by individual and organizational characteristics. IPC occurs when two or more professionals work together to solve a problem or achieve a common objective. The necessity for this form of collaboration is particularly prevalent in cross-disciplinary fields. In this study, we utilize social exchange theory (SET) to examine IPC in the context of an entrepreneurship living learning community (LLC) at a large university in the Western United States. Specifically, we explore these research questions: How are rules or norms established that govern the collaboration process? How are resources valued and distributed? How are relationships developed and managed among and between parties? LLCs are defined as groups of students who live together in on-campus housing and share similar academic or special interests. In 2007, the Association of American Colleges and Universities named living communities a high impact practice (HIP) because of their capacity to enhance and give coherence to undergraduate education. The entrepreneurship LLC in this study was designed to offer first year college students the opportunity to live and learn with like-minded students from diverse backgrounds. While the university offers other LLC environments, the target residents for this LLC are less easily identified and are less apparently homogenous than residents of other LLCs on campus (e.g., Black Scholars, LatinX, Women in Science and Education), creating unique challenges. The LLC is a collaboration between the university's College of Business & Public Administration and the Department of Housing and Residential Education (DHRE). Both parties are contributing staff, technology, living and learning spaces, and other student resources. This paper reports the results an ethnographic case study which chronicles the start-up challenges associated with the co-creation of the LLC. SET provides a general framework for examining how resources are valued and exchanged. In this study, SET offers insights into the processes through which parties negotiate tensions resulting from approaching this shared project from very different perspectives and cultures in a novel project environment. These tensions occur due to a variety of factors, including team formation and management, allocation of resources, and differing output expectations. The results are useful to both scholars and practitioners of entrepreneurship education and organizational management. They suggest probable points of conflict and potential paths towards reconciliation.

Keywords : case study, ethnography, interprofessional collaboration, social exchange theory

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