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Hearing from Student Entrepreneurs:
Needs & Perspectives on University Entrepreneurship Resources

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ABSTRACT

The idea of infusing entrepreneurship into education has spurred much enthusiasm in the last few decades. Entrepreneurs have been the driving energy of innovation, technological development, economic growth, and job creation (Maresch, et al., 2016). In today's knowledge economy and era of rapid technological development, the influence of entrepreneurial education has become critical to fostering the entrepreneurial actions necessary for economic growth. In order to build sustainable entrepreneurial communities on campus, universities should hear from student entrepreneurs and understand their needs and perspectives. This research provides a practical data analysis of the needs and perspectives of 200 subjects, including current students and alumni from 15 universities across the US. Additionally, this study transmits stories from four subjects connected to The Pennsylvania State University at different stages of venture.

Results indicate that universities should proactively aim to track student entrepreneurs' engagement with university resources, as well as provide guidance on the resources they would need at the various stages of their ventures so students can maximize their engagement with resources on campus. Furthermore, transparently sharing an updated standardized data set on entrepreneurship actions and intentions among ecosystem stakeholders would unlock a much-needed and efficient collaboration while creating a sense of belongingness within the community. Ultimately, proper visibility into a university's entrepreneurial ecosystem would generate positive students' perceptions of the university's entrepreneurial climate, helping unclog opportunity identification and translating entrepreneurial intentions into observable entrepreneurial behavior (Geissler, et al., 2012).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
Chapter 1 Literature Review	1
Sub-Chapter 1.1 What is ‘Entrepreneurship’?	1
Sub-Chapter 1.2 Entrepreneurship in University Ecosystems	2
Sub-Chapter 1.3 Why Should Universities Listen to Students?	4
Chapter 2 Methodology	7
Chapter 3 Results	9
Chapter 4 Story from An Unsure Student Founder	13
Chapter 5 Story from An Aspiring Student Founder	15
Chapter 6 Story from A Current Student Founder	17
Chapter 7 Story from A Current Alumni Founder	19
Chapter 8 Conclusion & Further Considerations	21
Appendix A Additional Insights from Data Analysis	25

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Subject’s Demographics and Entrepreneurial Background.....	9
Table 2: Omar Barakat - Story from An Unsure Student Founder.....	13
Table 3: Nicholas Symer - Story from An Aspiring Student Founder	15
Table 4: Aidan Rauscher - Story from A Current Student Founder	17
Table 5: Alexander Isaacson - Story from A Current Alumni Founder	19

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Everything started at Happy Valley VC. The platform allowed our team to break existing barriers limiting the general student body at Penn State from engaging in the space, as well as lifting up the community and entrepreneurial spirit across campus through student-centric initiatives. From building an entrepreneurial community, to designing educational and recruiting programs, and hosting pitch competitions, conferences, and countless series of events featuring professionals in the space, my evolving immersion in the intersection between finance and entrepreneurship led to the most valuable lessons I take with me post-graduation.

Despite the majority of my work was focused towards Penn State's entrepreneurial ecosystem, I also embarked larger projects. I co-founded one of the largest student undergraduate venture summit and the largest network of university student-run venture funds, accelerators, and organizations across the globe, invested in and supported pre-seed student startups through the leading student-run venture fund in the United States, and most importantly, learned directly from investors with exceptional track records in the space through fellowships and mentorship program.

Chapter 1

Literature Review

The idea of infusing entrepreneurship into education has spurred much enthusiasm in the last few decades. Entrepreneurs have been the driving energy of innovation, technological development, economic growth, and job creation (Maresch, et al., 2016). In today's knowledge economy and era of rapid technological development, the influence of entrepreneurial education has become critical to fostering the entrepreneurial actions necessary for economic growth.

Sub-Chapter 1.1

What is 'Entrepreneurship'?

Some definitions of entrepreneurship suggest that people should be encouraged to start their own company. However, this leans on a rather narrow definition of entrepreneurship. Other definitions imply that it is not at all about starting new organizations, but instead about making people more creative, opportunity-oriented, proactive, and innovative, adhering to a wide definition of entrepreneurship relevant to all walks in life. More broadly, some others bridge these differing approaches by noting that everyone can and should train their ability and willingness to create value for other people. This research agrees with Lackéus' definition of entrepreneurship, which states that "entrepreneurship is when people act upon opportunities and ideas, transforming them into value for others through financial, cultural, or social forms" (Lackéus, 2015). This is at the core of entrepreneurship and is also a competence that all citizens

increasingly need to have in today's society, regardless of career choice. Ultimately, creating new organizations is then viewed as one of many different means for creating value.

By the same token, the concept of entrepreneurial identity has recently been attracting increasing attention. It has been argued that the identification with the specific roles associated with entrepreneurship is an important element to consider oneself as an entrepreneur. An increasing number of contributions have focused on the relationship between Entrepreneurship Education (EE) and Entrepreneurial Intention (EI) (Duening, 2017). For many years, there was a perception that entrepreneurship was a personality trait. Today, we recognize that entrepreneurship can be taught and that EE includes a set of skills and knowledge that can be imparted in the classroom and through a range of well-designed experiences (Murray, 2018). Fortunately, EE is being conducted in a growing number of schools (Liguori, et al., 2019), while academic research has shown that EE increases EI, especially when there is little or no previous entrepreneurial experience (Maresch, et al., 2016).

Sub-Chapter 1.2

Entrepreneurship in University Ecosystems

Universities across the globe have experienced increasing pressure from ecosystem stakeholders to provide EE as a way of enhancing students' entrepreneurial learning. Despite research showing that students, rather than teachers, have become the main agents of the educational process (Aparicio, et al., 2019), putting EE into practice within university ecosystems has posed significant challenges. For instance, lack of time and resources, impeding educational structures, and lack of transparency are some of the challenges faculty and staff have

encountered when trying to infuse entrepreneurship into education (Lackéus, 2015). While the bulk of research attention on EE has been on academic practices, it is widely acknowledged that the university environment and business support substantially influence EI (Çera, 2020).

Until about a decade ago, little was known about how the entrepreneurial environments and activities within the academic system influence student audiences without concrete entrepreneurial plans (Geissler, 2012). However, recently published studies on entrepreneurial ecosystems have made significant advancements for research in the realm. First, we know that entrepreneurial innovation can take place in complex or simple systems so there is no singular magic bullet solution but rather a collection of initiatives. MIT's framework for innovation ecosystems policy proposes five categories that shape entrepreneurial and innovative capacities: human capital, funding, infrastructure, demand, and culture (Murray, 2018).

Although there is consensus that such collection of initiatives is important for supporting entrepreneurship, some studies have found that infrastructure did not significantly affect faculty members' perception of entrepreneurship as a university goal, unlike students where this link exists but is weak. These concerns have been articulated even through more granular research projects, such as Robert Shedd's assessment in Penn State University's 'heavily fragmented' ecosystem (Shedd, 2010, Tornetta, 2012). Although these concerns are frequently seen across universities that have recently started implementing policies to boost EE, researchers' justification has been focused on lack of awareness of existing resources and that "university management failed to visibly integrate these structures" (Geissler, et al., 2010).

By the same token, established but disconnected ecosystems are characterized as "crowded systems with many actors and initiatives that are not operating synergistically to produce innovation" (Hoffecker, 2019). More specifically, these systems experience a lack of

coordination, insufficient information-sharing, duplication of efforts, low levels of trust, and ineffective collaboration between actors. In order to tackle such challenges, MIT's research scientist Elizabeth Hoeffcker proposed a solution to strengthen these systems. In summary, the solution involves helping actors in the system to see who is doing what and identifying the strengths of the system through mapping efforts and multi-stakeholder workshops. In addition, she mentions that these efforts may involve creating new platforms to enhance information sharing and facilitating activities to build trust and collaborative working relationships between members of the system.

Alongside the great proposal by Elizabeth Hoeffcker, this research proposes a more unadorned resolution to universities' fragmented ecosystems. Considering universities' responsibility to include "a comprehensive system of indicators to measure entrepreneurial ecosystems in their strategic plans" (Lechuga, et al., 2021), the principal investigator (PI) proposes a new approach: a repeatable model for a university's customer discovery process.

Sub-Chapter 1.3

Why Should Universities Listen to Students?

Practitioners and researchers have proposed a variety of perspectives on which stakeholders are required to boost a local economy and build entrepreneurial ecosystems. However, regardless of which stakeholders should be present, it remains a challenge to bring them together and develop a sense of collective leadership (Murray, 2018). For that reason, a more precise question to address this issue would be: who is be the most appropriate leader for an entrepreneurial ecosystem's development?

One stream of thought widely followed across the world suggests that universities are positioned as the most natural stakeholder to drive ecosystem development. Nevertheless, empirical evidence about university's impact on students' EI is rare, while universities' tendency to promote research over education has led EE research to evolved from EE as part of an economic development strategy to an academic perspective (Aparicio, et al., 2019). More specifically, the academic field of entrepreneurship is believed to be stalled due the use of econometric methodologies and secondary databases that “distance researchers from actual people and behaviors that catalyze entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship” (Kassean, et al., 2015). Put simply, despite organizational-level factors like the availability of EE increasing students' EI, universities' research orientation has negatively impacted EI (Bergmann, 2016).

Alternatively, the “Start-Up Communities” (Feld, 2012) book argues that entrepreneurs are the only individuals who can meaningfully lead ecosystem-building because they are the leaders (and not ‘feeders’) on the frontlines. Given the entrepreneurs’ central role in the innovation ecosystem, their voice is critical to ecosystem building. Without this voice from the frontline of innovation, ecosystem-building efforts may be undertaken in a vacuum, and rarely provide the support needed to accelerate entrepreneurship; instead, efforts may simply provide what other stakeholders imagine entrepreneurs need.

With the plethora of entrepreneurial resources at large universities such as The Pennsylvania State University (Penn State), there is a need to understand what student entrepreneurs actually need and what resources student entrepreneurs find useful. Given experienced entrepreneurs are more inclined to give the time and attention to entrepreneurial resources offered than those who are new to the ecosystem (Hoffecker, 2019), this research also incorporates the analysis of unexperienced entrepreneurs’ needs and perspectives.

The wider ecosystem may not always be evident to aspiring entrepreneurs: as one entrepreneur said – often the aspiring entrepreneur is like the goldfish, i.e. the last to realize that it is in water. For this reason, this study analyzes all stages from unsure to aspiring to current entrepreneurs' needs and perspectives on university-sponsored entrepreneurship resources. Guided by this overall purpose and inspired by the research opportunities identified in the current literature spectrum, this research asks the following questions:

1. In what areas within entrepreneurship are students interested?
2. What motivates student entrepreneurs?
3. What entrepreneurial roles are popular among students?
4. What do student entrepreneurs think they need to be successful?
5. What resources or events do students actually find useful?
6. What are students and alumni perspectives on university entrepreneurship ecosystems?

Chapter 2

Methodology

The study's objective is to provide a data-driven analysis through individual stories from subjects on different stages of entrepreneurship. The PI used grounded theory as its primary approach, which is defined as "an iterative qualitative approach that includes initial generative questions, gathering qualitative data, identifying theoretical concepts, verifying emerging concepts in data, reconsidering theoretical concepts, and so on, until a detailed theory that is grounded in observation is achieved" (Trochim, Donnelly, 2008).

When considering potential surveying methods, administration, population, and sampling issues were taken into account, including but not limited to: identifiable units, subject's literacy, potential cooperation, data availability, expected response rates, costs, and time. In terms of the questionnaire, the PI validated through secondary research that short and simple questions, as well as minimum text entries, would allow for a more standardized data analysis and higher response rate. Moreover, the questionnaire was completely optional, considering potential content and bias issues according to the Protocol for Human Subject Research by The Pennsylvania State University's Institutional Review Board.

Consequently, the PI opted to develop a comprehensive online email survey to collect data through the Qualtrics surveying platform. The link to the survey was distributed to student-run organization leaders and faculty, who then forwarded the survey invitation to students and alumni from their respective universities. The sample consisted of 190 students from 15 university campuses across the United States, as well as 10 recently graduated alumni.

The questionnaire was designed to capture insights from three different angles: subject's demographics and general academic status, subject's entrepreneurship experience and interests,

and subject's perspectives on university-sponsored entrepreneurship resources or events. Data analysis consists of simple statistical analysis (e.g., proportions, regressions, average, etc.), as well as geographical heatmaps to determine active locations for venture creation. Excluding responses with three or more standard deviations away from the mean, the survey's average length ranged from as low as two minutes for subjects not interested in entrepreneurship, to as high as nine minutes for subjects with robust entrepreneurial experiences.

Separately, the PI decided to conduct interviews following the conclusion of recording online survey responses to incorporate student and alumni entrepreneurs' stories into the study. During 15 virtual interviews, the PI asked the same variations of the research questions listed in the literature review based on each subject's stage of venture or entrepreneurship roles. The transcripts of the interviews were then coded to determine common themes and interesting insights.

Subjects were selected with the objective to further dive into the stories of students at different stages of entrepreneurship and interviewed for about 30 minutes. The sample consisted of two students not interested (or unsure about their interest) in entrepreneurship, six aspiring student entrepreneurs, four current student entrepreneurs, and three alumni entrepreneurs. Ultimately, the PI featured four founder stories from different stages and interests on entrepreneurship to demonstrate the diverse needs and perspectives across students within a university's campus and the importance of hearing their stories.

Chapter 3

Results

Table 1: Subject's Demographics and Entrepreneurial Background

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 90% identify themselves as Full-Time students, with 62% being upperclassmen and 35% first or second-year students
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 60% are male, while 39% women and 1% non-binary
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 24% identified themselves as international students
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 14.5% are first-generation students, while 56.5% and 49.2% of students received scholarships and financial aid, respectively
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 36% study entrepreneurship, with Business and Engineering being the most common combinations<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Out of the total sample, 37% study Engineering and 25% Business○ Other studies include Languages (15%), Social Sciences (14%), Communications (13.5%), Law (12.5%), Literature (11%), and Computer Science or Information Science Technology (12.5%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 30% of respondents have an entrepreneurial role, of which 55% had founder roles.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ 30% of the entrepreneurs with current roles were employees at startups or small businesses, 23.3% were supporters at accelerator or incubator programs, and 18.3% were venture capital or angel investors
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Out of the 68% respondents that didn't have roles, 77.78% were interested in entrepreneurship and 18.38% were not sure about their interest in the space

Throughout the grounded theory process, the PI found that not many students take advantage of resources available despite their great interest for them. For reference, although 38.8% of all subjects have not accessed any entrepreneurship-related resource or event, 30% of them have an entrepreneurial role and, out of the 68% that do not have a role, 77.78% were interested in entrepreneurship. Throughout the interview process and survey data analysis, the most popular opportunities discussed surrounding this paradox include:

First, Students should be properly incentivized and motivated to use available resources. The vast majority of subjects strongly believe that the most important resource is not funding nor infrastructure, rather a supportive community of people actively innovating which can foster student's belief that one can pursue their dream seriously. More specifically, students have

mentioned that being surrounded by like-minded, capable, and passionate problem-solving people inspires them to grow and pursue entrepreneurship.

Research has proven that value creation occurs extensively in society, and is tightly connected to people's happiness since helping others results not only in making a living but also in feelings of meaningfulness, participation, engagement, and life satisfaction (Lackéus, 2015). Surprisingly, one out of every two students have expressed the desire for more networking events or focused in-person mixers, as well as the immense value these bring – especially for aspiring and unsure entrepreneurs. After all, 26.7% out of all of the students who currently hold an entrepreneurial role listed social gatherings among the most impactful settings in motivating them to take their current role, compared to 25% for academic courses, 17.8% student organizations, and 16.1% for extracurricular activities.

Second, a need for greater efficiency while advertising resources or events, as well as leveling up the exposure of relatable entrepreneurs' "success stories" to the same status as other academic or professional areas – such as Finance. Researchers argue that it is important to stress the positive contribution entrepreneurs make to society and propose to focus on what they call "the entrepreneurial virtues". In this sense, the promotion of the "personal values of initiative, autonomy, and creativity" will be effective in making the students interested in the entrepreneurship career path (Duening, Metzger, 2017).

In fact, two out of every three students that have not accessed any entrepreneurship-related resource (38.8% of all subjects) expressed they did not know about them, while 54.5% said they did not have time to look for them – merely 18.2% of respondents said they conduct online research to find out about such opportunities. More importantly, 70.83% of students who did not access any resources or events because they were unaware of them are interested in

entrepreneurship and would have considered accessing those resources or events had they known about them. Acknowledging that providers or organizers are as concerned as students on this issue, this research found that the best distribution alternatives are as follows: email (54.8%) and social media (51.7%) were the most used channels for students to learn about resources or events, while 31.9% of respondents listed their advisor and 25.8% of respondents highlighted word of mouth from friends or family.

Third, the need to tackle a disconnect between the breadth of opportunities offered and their accessibility by providing a clear and simplified directory or playbook with points of contact, timing, and stage-focus for each resource or event. 68.9% of subjects without entrepreneur roles expressed that they “did not know how to proceed,” meanwhile 47.1% said they didn’t have enough time, highlighting the need for making these resources more apparent and easily accessible to students. The fact that 15% of students went out of their way to write additional resources they wish the university would provide to only mention resources already available on campus, such as involvement fairs for startups, team formation resources or events, for-credit programs for entrepreneurs, and projects where students can help existing small businesses or startups just to name a few, ultimately worsens the lack of awareness of these initiatives.

Additionally, there was an overwhelming concern across the board on finding co-founders and recruiting talent – especially for entrepreneurs early in the formation process. The importance of assembling teams with complementary skill-sets and diverse backgrounds was also a topic mentioned from entrepreneurs at later stages in their ventures as the number one “I wish I had” resource. According to data from the 2021 GUESSS Global Report, founding teams are of crucial relevance for both nascent and active founders: 46.5% of all nascent entrepreneurs

plan to create their business with co-founders, while 62.7% of all active entrepreneurs have at least one co-owner. Out of all the email survey respondents, 55.5% mentioned they'll like to learn about opportunities to work in startups, signaling demand for these opportunities isn't the roadblock. Instead, the PI found that the solution to this chicken and egg problem could be a simple, useful, and proven method for disseminating this information, such as a physical job board on the university's innovation hub. In fact, a warm community of current entrepreneurs could also play a huge role in alleviating this concern given that 45% of founders and 36.36% of venture investors were interested in becoming employees at other startups.

Fourth, facilitating seats for experienced students on the other side of the table through student-run venture funds, startup incubators, or scout programs, allowing them to channel their underutilized passion for breaking into the space to amplify supportive initiatives while maximizing the complex pipeline system connecting student entrepreneurs with the university's innovation ecosystem. On the one hand, 76.2% of current founders believe they need funding or capital to grow their business, of which 86.6% are Penn State founders. Similarly, 78.5% of current supporters mentioned a need of the companies they work with is funding while 44.8% of subjects without roles mentioned a lack of funding held them back from becoming entrepreneurs. On the other hand, 71.5% of all respondents want to be investors or supporters, while 81.8% of current investors decided to get this role to support entrepreneurs and develop skills or experience.

Chapter 4

Story from An Unsure Student Founder

Table 2: Omar Barakat - Story from An Unsure Student Founder

Subject's Name	Subject's Stage	Academic Year	Interesting Fact(s)	Story Keywords
Omar Barakat	Unsure Entrepreneur	Senior (Class of 2022)	Finance Major; International student	Community; Pipeline; Missed Opportunity; Teams; Awareness

At the age of 12, Omar took part in Egypt's revolution, an “eye-opening experience” that led him to use his privileges to help others and where he found his passion for invoking change. During high school, he was selected among the top 1% finalists globally to compete in MIT LaunchX, where he developed a mechanical solution for physical water pollution in the Nile River. Following the competition, he received an invitation to an incubator program but didn't take it. Eventually, Omar emigrated to the US and arrived to Penn State for his undergraduate degree in Finance.

“I didn't take the incubator because as an international student, it feels like a defeated goal before I even start given I'm not sure of the legality or sustainability of me taking such an endeavor.”

He's motivation lies on being surrounded by capable and passionate problem-solving people that pushes him to keep growing, which led him to get involved with finance and entrepreneurship student organizations or initiatives on campus during his first two years at Penn State. He highlighted his time as an intern during Global Entrepreneurship Week (GEW), where connecting with successful local entrepreneurs helped him “bring theory to real life.” He also got enrolled in the Entrepreneurship (ENTI) Minor, in which he took a role as a Teaching Assistant. Omar mentions “going from learning about growth mindset to teaching others about it helped him achieve the guiding role he aspired to have.” However, he decided to drop the ENTI minor during his Junior year because he felt there was a major discrepancy between what he learned at his Finance and Entrepreneurship courses.

“Unlike my Finance classes, the people I was in groups with [in ENTI courses] wouldn't take it seriously and lacked passion; they treated classes like a grade booster. I also felt like I was wasting my time because classes would repeat the same concepts. I eventually decided to focus on Investment Banking because the path to building technical skills was evident.”

He mentions one of the biggest challenges within Penn State's ecosystem is that “students feel isolated in a lot of ways as an entrepreneur.” More specifically, he believes that despite having a vibrant ecosystem full of brilliant business students, “entrepreneur's stories are not championed enough and only exists in the shadows compared to consulting, banking, and other popular career paths in the Smeal Business School.” In terms of resources, he mentioned many professors tell their students about them, but “not many people take advantage of them because they are not incentivized or advertised appropriately.” Furthermore, he believes “there's a disconnect between the breath of opportunities offered and accessibility,” which he thinks should be a student organization's duty.

“I know we have an uncountable amount of resources on campus but I don't know who to go for what. Unlike the finance programs I'm involved with, I don't feel there's a sense of community nor peers I can go to for advice or bounce back ideas from. I felt like I didn't fit the mold.”

In terms of Omar's needs as an unsure entrepreneur, he believes “one of the hardest things is to find co-founders with complementary skill sets,” making him think the only option is doing it by himself which he described as “too big of a daunting experience.” Separately, Omar mentioned it took him until level 400 classes to know how he could go about building a startup and feels his “window to innovate already passed.” Ultimately, despite his mixed feelings about entrepreneurship at Penn State, he enrolled again in the ENTI Minor as a Senior to “give it one more shot” before going into his Full-Time role at an Investment Bank after graduating this Spring.

Chapter 5

Story from An Aspiring Student Founder

Table 3: Nicholas Symer - Story from An Aspiring Student Founder

Subject's Name	Subject's Stage	Academic Year	Interesting Fact(s)	Story Keywords
Nico Symer	Aspiring Founder (Ideation)	First-Year (Class of 2025)	IST Major; Hispanic	Community; Pipeline; Missed Opportunity; Teams; Awareness

During high-school, Nico developed a passion for trading securities. However, his family couldn't afford computers with enough computing power to run proper trading apps, derailing his dream to one day become a quantitative trader. Upon his arrival to Penn State, he realized he was not the only one with this problem. After spending countless hours in the library during the summer learning about cloud computing and virtual machines, he decided he wanted to do something about it. At the moment, he relied mostly in his father to bounce back ideas given he didn't know of any resources he could leverage as an incoming first-year student. Nico tried to have conversations with other student peers but got frustrated of hearing "whatever is good for you" too many times.

“During blueStart, I discovered the Happy Valley Launchbox, where I got to meet with local entrepreneurs and startup advisors in my search for someone that is receptive and cares about what I have to say, and not a faceless resource.”

Nico's dream of “being surrounded by like-minded folks” eventually took him to Innoblue, an entrepreneurship student organization that introduced him to blueStart: a student-run week-long entrepreneurship festival at Penn State. Despite all the learnings from conversations with people and educational programs, he felt overwhelmed by the fact he couldn't figure out what path to follow despite the countless resources available on campus. Moreover, he tried getting feedback from advisors but he was “skeptical on receiving criticism from a person he doesn't know”. According to Nico, he was just

looking for someone to tell him what resources he should be using considering the stage he was in, some sort of roadmap that would help him pop out of the "bubble" he felt he was in when on campus.

“The most important part is not funding nor infrastructure, rather a support network of people that actually work on developing innovative solutions to big problems in our world and guidance on what resources would be best suited for his stage.”

Chapter 6

Story from A Current Student Founder

Table 4: Aidan Rauscher - Story from A Current Student Founder

Subject's Name	Subject's Stage	Academic Year	Interesting Fact(s)	Story Keywords
Aidan Rauscher	Current Founder (Pre-seed)	Senior (Class of 2022)	CompSci Major	Disconnected Ecosystem; Useful Resources; Funding

Aidan was always interested in technology and spent countless days of his childhood on his computer. As he grew older, Aidan became aware of technology-driven businesses through his Middle School's Technology Student Association. Despite his passion on startups as he progressed to college, he was unsure of exactly what it meant and encompassed. He eventually decided to study electrical Information Systems Technology given he felt Electrical Engineering was “too theory-driven with the majority of progress made in a lab or doing research.”

At Penn State, Aidan participated in the Nittany AI Challenge and met one of his current co-founders, Jake Grim. Together they formed Table Rock Markets — allowing Aidan to get a feel of what it takes to start your own venture. He found the Nittany Ai challenge to be an intersection of ideas into building solutions for big problems and has since gotten heavily involved in the entrepreneurship ecosystem. As of beginning of April 2022, Table Rock Markets has over \$350,000 in Gross Merchandise Volume with six team members and 15 clients on their platform.

Aiden is primarily motivated intrinsically: if he wants to do something, he will do it – and if he likes it, he will keep doing it. Additionally, he finds inspiration from seeing the people ahead of him and setting them as a lighthouse to build a trajectory of personal growth. In terms of the spirit of entrepreneurship at Penn State, Aidan believes there is a need to create a culture of innovation to expose students to a community, similar to the exposure students have when they do math or finance as mentioned by Omar. More specifically, he explains "this facilitates giving people the foundation they need to say that once they feel “interested in this” they can do it themselves with support from the

community.” Furthermore, he thinks “the current lack of constant startup ideas stems from more of a lack of entrepreneurial culture than an exposure or resource problem.”

“The amount of resources at Penn State is overwhelming but understandable. However, with all of the noise it is really hard to get on top of it and utilize all of the resources.”

In Aidan’s opinion, the single most important resource is pitch competitions, as well as IP offices and law clinics. In his eyes, the application of resources is one of the biggest challenges for entrepreneurs at Penn State — “there are a lot of resources floating around and underutilized.” He mentions that he’d like to have more faculty serving as an engager or connector with students to grow their interests to plant that seed of entrepreneurship. Moreover, he sees a need for “showcasing what entrepreneurship is truly about and the actual steps you need to take in order to become successful,” citing examples such as: “startup trajectories and growth paths, archetypes of people that have successfully built business, skills to develop that you will use along the way, and breaking down at a high level how to actually do it.”

“A toolkit for people to build meaningful solutions to ideas and not just a coding project nor piece of hardware is crucial to Aidan for providing potential founders with a taste of taking ownership for their ideas.”

Lastly, Aidan noted that “funding is very important however that is the rule for nearly every business.” When looking at other university resources and comparing them with the offerings at Penn State, Aidan believes that other schools have more unified funding opportunities at their schools.

“Besides a centralized pre-seed venture fund for non-dilutive funding not only would help me as a founder struggling to hire and build an MVP but also get students into the profession, there’s a need for a better network to connect founders with advisors who have more in-line experiences.”

Chapter 7

Story from A Current Alumni Founder

Table 5: Alexander Isaacson - Story from A Current Alumni Founder

Subject's Name	Subject's Stage	Academic Year	Interesting Fact(s)	Story Keywords
Alexander Isaacson	Current Co-Founder (Series A)	Senior (Class of 2017)	Finance Major; White	Motivation; Venture-backed; Ecosystem; Network; People

Alexander is the type of person that always felt he could do anything if he worked hard for it; from being terrible at wrestling to winning regionals during high school to barely getting into Penn State and creating an ever-lasting legacy, his entrepreneurial background features great learnings. He's professional experience for most of his first two years in college was focused on banking. However, that changed during his junior year as he discovered a captivating intersection between his entrepreneurial personality and passion for finance: venture capital. Upon limited resources and understanding in the space while on Penn State's campus, he founded Smeal Venture Partners (now Happy Valley VC) to fill in the gap. He brought together a diverse community of students, including designers, business, and engineers, as well as a Shark Tank-style event to provide hands on experience in the space to current and aspiring student entrepreneurs.

"I was pushed my entire life – tell me I can't and I will prove I can do it even if I have to run through walls. My motivation is based on an authentic pull and I refuse to be complacent; I strive to be my best self. I love being exposed to unknown environments while learn from really smart people, as well as the potential impact I can have through my work."

Despite his involvement in the entrepreneurial space, he opted to go for an investment banking full time position upon graduation. Within months into the role, he was involved on an electric vehicles (EVs) deal that awoke his passion for the industry. He then had a conversation with Happy Valley VC's

first engineer student who was working in the space at the moment, Nikhil, and the rest was history. Alexander and Nikhil saw a problem, iterated on various technology-enabled solutions until reaching product-market fit, and eventually fundraised \$14M from one of the largest tech corporations globally, as well as two of the world's largest prop tech and climate venture investors. In their first year, Xeal surpassed \$3M in sales and grew 300% quarter over quarter. The vision? Accelerating mass EVs adoption by 2025 from 2030, deliver the best experience for drivers, and enable real estate owners to drive change.

“World-changing ideas are arbitrary and objective, but growth doesn’t lie.”

Throughout two and a half years building Xeal, Alexander “experienced tons of stages in a very short term.” He believes founders around the pre-seed and seed stages should aim to have a strong founding team where “founders control the outcome”. Following his most recent Series A round, he mentions his focus is now on “maintaining hyper growth by having great product retention, strong relationships with customers to enable virality or network effects, and realistic deployments at scale to prove the business model.”

Alexander explains his most valuable resource is people. Everything he knows is from his network and always strives to surround himself with people smarter than him to learn from them. More importantly, he also believes the entrepreneur's path is all about building authentic relationships and “fostering a community” – which is the largest opportunity he sees at Penn State's ecosystem. In addition, he believes being a student startup at a BIG10 school allows for a huge market and opportunity for high growth momentum with little capital. He mentions that more capital means more weight in your shoulders: “\$10k is cool, \$100k is great, but beyond is perhaps not as good as people think.”

“It’s all about the students. It doesn’t matter how many resources; it matters the outcome on students – if they are not inspired, then we are not doing anything. Instead, we should strive to provide a real experience that empowers students and sparks that interest.”

Chapter 8

Conclusion & Further Considerations

As proposed by research scientist Elizabeth Hoffeecker, strengthening established but disconnected ecosystems requires helping actors in the system see who is doing what and identifying the strengths of the system through mapping efforts and multi-stakeholder workshops. Penn State University has made significant progress on developing its entrepreneurial ecosystem, but unfortunately the disconnect between stakeholders persists up to some extent. However, results from virtual interviews and data analysis on the email survey conducted by the PI has demonstrated a potential solution: a supportive community of students, alumni, faculty, staff, and other ecosystem stakeholders actively innovating which can foster student's belief that one can pursue their dream seriously.

Properly incentivizing and motivating students to use available resources is crucial. Based on primary and secondary research, an initiative some colleges within Penn State and other universities have undertaken to incorporate both student leaders and stakeholders into a cohesive community is creating what would be an "Entrepreneurship Council". It's main objective? Fostering a cohesive entrepreneurial ecosystem and promoting a supportive engagement framework for students and key stakeholders. In this case, the Entrepreneurship Council would enhance information sharing to the student body and facilitate activities to build trust and collaborative working relationships between stakeholders, while alleviating the need for greater efficiency while advertising resources or events to student – considering the preferred distribution alternatives mentioned in the Results section (Chapter 3) of this paper.

Just as Lackéus emphasizes the need to develop and establish progression models for entrepreneurial education, rather than continuing the quest for a "one size fits all" approach to

EE, the PI finds a parallel effort important to be considered: building a timeline or playbook that covers what student entrepreneurs need in different stages. In addition to including key information for each resource or event to increase accessibility, this timeline or playbook is something that can also be constantly updated and distributed by the council's members to ensure its visibility in the community.

By the same token, tackling the concern of finding co-founders and recruiting talent is imperative considering the crucial role this plays in a startup's success. One potential solution mentioned by the PI in the results section could be a physical job board on the university's innovation hub. For example, the PI found through his involvement at the 2022 USASBE Conference that North Carolina State University (NC State) implemented a similar initiative a couple of years ago following the unsuccessful deployment of digital solutions. The initiative was described by Lisa Chang, Director of the Technology Entrepreneurship and Commercialization program, as "the most popular resource on campus." The "Build A Team" board at NC State's Entrepreneurship garage is accessible to students 24/7 and split in two sides, "Want it" and "Got it", where students paste post-it notes with key information such as: skills, name, contact information, compensation, and other details.

Separately, results and secondary research suggest that providing additional and increased accessibility to non-dilutive pre-seed funding opportunities coupled with recurrent strategic support to minimize businesses' risks should be another consideration moving forward. Initiatives such as undergraduate student-run funds have recently been implemented by more than 30 universities similar in the United States on top of leading institutions dedicating hundreds of millions of dollars on sourcing and investing in student startups, signaling an increasing need for it. Since Penn State is one of the few top 30 schools for undergraduate

entrepreneurship studies in the United States that doesn't provide such an opportunity, student entrepreneurs at Penn State do not have a dedicated source of pre-seed startup capital, and students interested in venture capital or startup investing have no place to go on campus for hands-on learning.

Researchers have identified a range of developed or sharpened skills, abilities and attributes experienced by the students from their participation in the extra-curricular start-up program, highlighting two main outcomes with respect to entrepreneurial learning: venture creation competencies and enterprising competencies (Pocek, et al. 2021). Currently, the CIENT major and ENTI minor provide engaging learning opportunities to support startup development, but the entrepreneurs are limited to scholarships and grants from pitch competitions. With a true pre-seed student-run fund at Penn State, startups would get the funding they need, students would learn the analysis that drives venture investing, and everyone would get a first-hand experience that prepares them for a lifetime of success as an entrepreneur.

Ultimately, the PI suggests not only considering the information featured in this research but also the additional insights found in the Appendix A. These insights derive from data analysis from respondent's submissions and cover: subject's entrepreneurial experiences, perspectives on resources and events, and the needs and interests of aspiring or current students and alumni entrepreneurs. By leveraging these insights, the PI believes existing programs could be modify to incorporate student's interests, resulting in higher engagement and satisfaction from the end user and avoiding the use of constructivism in traditional pedagogy within a classroom (Liguori, et al., 2019). In fact, applicating agile teaching approaches to develop competencies in students is proven to be most useful when EE's focus is to "constantly address students' individual knowledge levels, framework conditions, and motivations" (Maresch, et al. 2016). As

a result, adapting programs by leveraging these insights would help foster student's positive perception on the university entrepreneurial climate, which influences opportunity identification and helps to translate entrepreneurial intentions into observable entrepreneurial behavior (Geissler, et al., 2012).

Appendix A

Additional Insights from Data Analysis

Subject's Entrepreneurial Experience

- 38.4% of subjects that studied entrepreneurship have roles
- 57% of supporters, 45.45% of venture investors, and 44.4% of employees were also interested in becoming founders
- 27.3% of current founders named academic courses among the most impactful settings motivating them to start their venture
- Of all the respondents, 55.5% mentioned they'll like to learn about opportunities to work in startups, of which 46.85% would like to work less than 10 hours and 38.74% would be willing to work part-time hours, with 48.6% preferring to work on a hybrid basis and 24.3% in person on campus.

Perspectives on Resources and Events

- 53.8% of students listed networking events and 44.1% listed workshops among the most valuable types of events, while 32.4% of students mentioned office hours and 28.5% roundtables, fireside chats, or panel discussions
- Among all the resources or events accessed by respondents at Penn State, student organizations (58.6%), conferences (47%), academic courses (41.4%), accelerators or incubators (40%), and pitch competitions (35.7%) were the most popular
 - On the other hand, only 24.3% accessed funding or capital, while 14.3% have accessed legal & IP services and merely 7% accessed student living options

- Students without roles are more likely to access academic courses (48.6%) than current entrepreneurs with roles (33.3%)
- Students that have roles are more likely to access accelerators or incubators (51.5%) than those without roles (29.7%)
- Students without roles were more likely to access student living options (10.8%) than the ones with roles (3%)
- Students with roles were more likely to access legal & IP services (21%) than students without roles (8%)
- Out of the students that accessed each resource:
 - The most popular events or conferences are: Startup Week (60.6%), Global Entrepreneurship Week (51.5%), blueStart (33.33%), and the Venture & IP Conference (21%)
 - The most popular accelerator or incubator was Launchbox (78.6%), while only 17.86% accessed Ben Franklin Tech Partners and Small Business Development Centers
 - The most popular student organization was Happy Valley VC (63.4%), followed by Innoblue (39%), Nittany AI (29.3%), and Happy Valley Communications (12.2%)
- Respondents with entrepreneurship roles believe the most useful events were hosted by (in order): companies or professional organizations (76.6%), student organizations (76.4%), accelerators or incubators (76%), and the university (71%)

- On the other hand, respondents without entrepreneurship roles believe the most useful events were hosted by (in order): the university faculty or staff (80.22%), companies or professional organizations (76.4%), student organizations (74%), and accelerators or incubators (69.33%)
- Among all the resources or events accessed by respondents from other universities, academic courses (73.5%), student organizations (61.8%), conferences (53%), and pitch competitions (32.4%) were the most popular
 - On the other hand, accelerators or incubators (23.5%), funding resources (17.6%), student living options (14.7%) and legal and IP services (5.9%) were the least popular
 - Unlike at Penn State, other universities have a significantly higher penetration in academic courses but barely half of the engagement at accelerators or incubators
- Two dozen respondents mentioned they wish their universities provide the following events or resources:
 - More year-round efforts and networking events or focused in-person mixers
 - More VC and incubator/accelerator scouts, a pre-seed student-run venture fund, more non-dilute funding opportunities or grants, as well as startup-focused financial advising and a strong cohort-based program affiliated with a venture fund or adjacent firm that is invested in their success
 - A for-credit independent study program just for entrepreneurs and classes that count towards the majors that do not require you to be in the minor to take them
 - Projects that students can participate in to help an existing small business or startup

- Better access to innovation in health-related disciplines through greater support from college of medicine
- Making the resources more apparent to students
- Education on diverse business models and explanations on how to go about starting a company and implementing ideas into the real world
- Involvement fairs exclusively for startups within the ecosystem where students could get work experience while still living on campus
- Active support on finding co-founders or recruiting talent to assemble teams with complementary skill-sets through collaboration between colleges in the university

Aspiring Roles from Current Entrepreneurs

- Of the subjects interested in entrepreneurship, 30.8% want to invest in startups, meanwhile current founders (60%), supporters (42.86%), and employees (38.9%) were also interested in becoming venture investors
- Of the subjects interested in entrepreneurship, 40.4% want to support startups, meanwhile current founders (40%), employees (27.78%), and investors (9%) would like to also have a role as a supporter

Insights on Current Founders

- 84.85% started their businesses during studies
- 69.69% became founders because they wanted to build a business, while 63.63% saw a problem they could solve

- Additionally, 55% wanted to make money and become their own boss, as well as liked the lifestyle
- 48% were inspired by someone they admire and 45% wanted to make an impact
- 87.88% of founders work part-time, with 39.4% working less than 10 hours per week in their venture
- 33.3% of founders are in the ideation or research stage, while 39.4% at the pre-revenue stage
 - Only 9% of student founders are making sales
- The majority of founders are innovating in the following industries: Fashion (18%), Agriculture & Food (12%), and Education (12%)
 - Other popular industries include Sports (9%), Technology (9%), Media & Communication (6%), and e-Commerce (6%)
- The majority of founders operate their businesses through B2C (45.45%), B2B2C (30%), while only 18% sell to enterprises
- When asked about their needs, 76.2% of current founders believe they need funding or capital to grow their business, of which 86.6% are Penn State founders
 - 57.1% need help with finding co-founders or hiring talent
 - 42.8% want mentors, of which 88% are looking for industry experts, 77% want investors, and 55% seek guidance from legal experts
 - 28.5% of founders want help with market research or analysis while 23.8% of current founders need help with business plans

Insights on Current Employees at Startups or Small Businesses

- When early employees were asked about the resources desired in order to grow the business they work in, 56.2% highlighted the need for sales and/or customer discovery, while 50% need help with marketing and 43.7% desire funding
 - Only 6.25% wanted mentorship
- 68.7% said they joined the business to develop skills or experience, while 50% of current employees did it to break into the entrepreneurship ecosystem
 - 37.5% liked the lifestyle or work environment and 18.8% did it to support a friend or family member
- 37.5% found the role through a friend or family member, while only 18.75% and 12.5% found it through an entrepreneurship event or in a class or program, respectively
- 46.67% work 10 hours or less per week in the business, while only 18.75% work part-time
- 40% of them work remotely, while 33.3% work in-person outside of campus
- 56.25% work in a business that is already making sales, while only 18.75% work on a pre-revenue business
- 31.25% and 25% work in a consumer product and software or service business, respectively

Insights Current venture investors

- 81.8% decided to become investors to support entrepreneurs and develop skills or experience, while 45.45% did it to make money

- Out of the current startup investors, 81.8% are venture capitalists, while 36.3% are angel investors, and 18.1% are co-investors
- 90.9% of student investors listed their investment focus into pre-revenue companies, while 81.8% mention they invest in post-revenue companies
- The average amount of capital student investors deploy in a given year is \$160k, with the lowest amount being \$5k and the largest amount \$400k
- 54.5% are industry agnostic, while 45.5% invest in Technology startups

Insights Current Supporters

- 93% decided to support startups because they wanted to work with entrepreneurs, while 71.4% wanted to support a community or ecosystem
- 64.3% support entrepreneurs through accelerators or incubators, while 57% support entrepreneurs through investors' portfolio support roles and 42% as mentors
- When asked about the needs of the companies they work with, 78.5% mentioned the biggest need is funding, while 71.4% believe mentorship is also something holding them back from growing
 - Other needs they highlighted for the entrepreneurs they support include: business plans (64.2%), market analysis and marketing (57%), sales or customer discovery (50%), and additional co-founders or talent (42.8%)
 - Of those who mentioned mentorship, 88.8% highlighted industry experts and investors as the most desired type of mentors, while 55.5% said another founder's mentorship is needed

- Only 33.3% and 22.2% believe the companies they work with need legal and HR mentorship, respectively
- When asked about what business models employ the companies they support, 43.7% mentioned B2C models, while 31.2% said B2B, and 25% B2B2C

Insights Aspiring Founders

- Out of all the subjects, 52.5% were aspiring founders (including entrepreneurs with other current roles)
- 74.3% of aspiring founders mentioned building a business and becoming their own boss as their main drivers behind their interest, while 62% were interested in becoming founders because they like the lifestyle or want to make money
 - 46.67% saw a problem they could solve and 42% were inspired by someone they admire
- 36% of aspiring founders are interested in selling services, while 34% inclined more towards consumer products
 - 20% are not sure yet what they'd like to sell and a smaller portion mentioned software (16%) and hardware (11%)
- When aspiring founders were asked what industries they would be interested in working in, media & communications (28%), technology (27%), and finance (27%) were the most popular
 - 17% of them also mentioned Education, Agriculture & Food, and Energy, while 15% highlighted Healthcare, Fashion, Aerospace, and Sports
 - Only 7% of them were not sure about what industries they'd like to pursue

- 37% of students interested in founding their own company would be interested in selling to both consumers and enterprises, while 21% and 11% wanted to solely focus on selling to consumers and enterprises, respectively
 - 16% were not sure yet
- 48% want to work on a hybrid basis, while 25% and 21% would be interested in working in-person inside and outside of campus, respectively
 - Only 6% mentioned they'll like to work remotely
- When they were asked about their needs to launch their business, 78% mentioned the need for funding, while 74% need help with business plans and 67% desire mentorship
 - 66% want help with market research, and 51% with marketing and branding, 48% need additional co-founders or talent, and 43% would like help with customer discovery
- Of the aspiring founders desiring mentorship, 87.7% are looking for industry experts, 64.6% want experienced founders as mentors, and 47.7% are searching for investors
 - Only 26% of them mentioned they'll like to have a mentor for legal matters

Insights on Aspiring Employees at Startups or Small Businesses

- When students aspiring to join a small business or startup as an early employee were asked what they would like the companies to sell, 62% listed consumer products and 54% said services, while 35.6% mentioned software and 22.3% said hardware
- 43.2% of them are interested in working at companies in the technology, finance, or media & communications space

- 32.4% were interested in the Education, agriculture & food, or energy industry, while 27% would rather work in startups in the aerospace and healthcare space
- Only 19% mentioned they would be interested in the Sports and Fashion industries
- 66% of aspiring employees are interested in working in companies selling to both enterprises and consumers, while 41% and 36.5% were interested in working at startups that only sell to consumers and enterprises, respectively
 - 27% were not sure yet

Insights on Aspiring Venture Investors

- 78% of aspiring venture investors are interested in the role because they want to drive innovation and make money, while 71.86% and 50% mentioned they would like to support entrepreneurs and ecosystems, respectively
- 73% of aspiring venture investors are interested in venture capital, 57% are interested in angel investing, and 33.34% would like to engage in crowdfunding
- 88% of aspiring investors want to invest in post-revenue early-stage companies, while only 30.9% are interested in pre-revenue companies and 21.4% opted for being stage agnostic
 - Only 19% of aspiring venture investors are interested in late-stage companies
- 44.4% would be interested in investing across the Energy and Media & Communications sectors, while 41.3% would like to invest in Technology or be generalists
 - Other popular industries include: Finance (39.68%), Aerospace (36.5%), Healthcare (35%), Agriculture & Food (33.3%), and Education (25.4%)

- 37% of aspiring investors would like to invest in consumer products, while 52.38% would prefer investing in services or software
 - 25.4% were not sure yet

Insights on Aspiring Supporters

- Out of all of the students who are interested in supporting startups or small businesses, 57.8% want to be involved in an accelerator, 48.4% in an incubator, and 35.9% are interested in joining a fund's platform support team
- 85.7% of students interested in supporting startups listed wanting to work with entrepreneurs among their main reasons, 71.4% said they wanted to support an ecosystem, and 42.8% wanted to support a friend or family member

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ACADEMIC VITA

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EDUCATION

The Pennsylvania State University **University Park, PA**
Schreyer Honors College | Bachelor of Science in Finance **Class of 2022**
▪ Honors Thesis: "*Hearing from Student Entrepreneurs: Needs & Benefits of University Entrepreneurship Programs*"
College of Liberal Arts | Bachelor of Arts in Chinese
Mandarin House Institute **Shanghai, China**
Language and Culture Intensive Course **Feb. - Jul. 2018**
▪ 1st student of the institute to achieve 4th level of HSK proficiency certification in 5 months (typically takes two academic years)

LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

Happy Valley VC **University Park, PA**
Managing Partner **Jan. 2019 - Present**
▪ Oversee four leadership teams (Startup Relations, Sourcing & Recruiting, Due Diligence, and Engagement) consisting of 20-people and lead strategic and operational initiatives at Penn State's student-run venture capital & startups hub
▪ Build a sustainable educational and support pipeline to foster growth and a prosperous community of founders and investors
▪ Co-Founded and administer the alumni-focused Penn State Venture Club sponsored by Alumni Ventures Group, in which we plan to evaluate early-stage syndication deals from AVG's Basecamp Fund and provide alumni investors with increased deal flow while supporting PSU startups (especially 1855 Capital's portfolio companies) and sourcing them to AVG's network

College Ventures Network **Remote**
Founding Board Member **Aug. 2021 - Present**
▪ Founded the largest venture capital and startup-related student-run conference at the moment as well as led initiatives at the first global network of student-run startup accelerators, venture funds, and student organizations from 30+ universities

Nittany Lion Fund, LLC **University Park, PA**
Fund Manager **May 2019 - Present**
▪ Managed the ~\$1.20M Consumer Discretionary Sector, ~\$300.00k Materials Sector, and ~\$450.00k Utilities Sector of the ~\$12.50M student-run hedge fund comprised solely of private investor capital striving to outperform the S&P 500 Index

Global China Connection **University Park, PA**
Chapter President **Jan. 2019 - Present**
▪ Hosted the 2021 GCC Global Summit technology, investment, and international relations panels sponsored by the world's largest student-run non-profit organization featuring esteemed industry leaders from multinational corporations and institutions
▪ Provide educational seminars to discuss the impact of developments in U.S. - China international affairs and co-host events in collaboration with Penn State's Global Programs and Department of Asian Studies to foster cultural and language inclusion

Dow Jones & Company **University Park, PA**
Barron's in Education Ambassador **Jan. 2019 - Present**
▪ Act as the liaison between the Smeal College of Business and the Barron's in Education program to tackle financial illiteracy

Penn State IFC / Panhellenic Dance Marathon (THON) **University Park, PA**
Finance Committee Member **Sep. 2018 - Feb. 2019**
▪ Collaborated with 30 others to count, track, and deposit all alternative fundraising revenue, exceeding \$11.50 M to contribute to the world's largest student-run philanthropy raising funds towards pediatric cancer research and medical support

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Dynamo Ventures **Chattanooga, TN (Hybrid)**
Venture Fellow **Jan. 2022 - Present**
▪ Work directly with Forbes 30 Under 30 recipient and Founding Partner of Dynamo Ventures on sourcing, writing a newsletter, and conducting various internal projects as well as research on the supply chain and mobility technology space

Dorm Room Fund **Philadelphia, PA (Remote)**
Investment Partner **Aug. 2021 - Present**
▪ First ever Penn Stater to join Dorm Room Fund, the premier student-run venture fund backing student-led startups

Bank of America Global Markets FICC S&T Division **New York City, NY (Remote)**
Emerging Markets (LatAm) Local Institutional Sales Summer Analyst **Jun. - Aug. 2020**
Emerging Markets (U.S.) Sales Summer Analyst **Jun. - Aug. 2021**

▪ Participated in Deal Roadshows, client meetings, internal research calls, and delivered three projects: a presentation containing LatAm NoBraMex pension funds market trends and analysis, a swaps pricing model, and a sovereign credit investment pitch
Auden Kingdom Kindergarten **Shanghai, China**
Full Time Instructor **Apr. - Jun. 2018**

▪ Educated 25 students in the English language, created lesson plans, and implemented improvements in class environment
Fitted Laundry Startup **State College, PA (Remote)**
Advisor & Stakeholder **Aug. 2018 - Present**
▪ Support customer discovery and led ambassador's program for a startup bridging the gap between laundry and fashion by leveraging visual recognition and AI to develop a three-sided marketplace for sustainably cleaning and trading clothes
▪ Support founders on various tasks such as recruiting, marketing, and managing investors or partners to grow operations=

SKILLS, HONORS & INTERESTS

Honors: McKinsey & Co. FDLA; Harvard "Summit of Americas" Best Delegate; Panama National Debate & Oratory Champion
Interests: VC & Startups; DJing; Freestyle Rap; Filmmaking; Investing; Traveling; Paddling & Rowing; Ball Sports; Languages
Languages Proficiency: Native in Spanish and English; Fluent in Italian and Chinese (Mandarin); Familiar with Python and VBA