

Sections

- Front Page
- News
- Opinions
- Columnists
- Sports
- Men's Hoops
- Go Wild
- Live Culture
- Police Beat
- Datebook
- Comics
- Crossword
- Special Sections
- Photo Spreads
- Classifieds

The Wildcat

- Letter to the Editor
- Wildcat Staff
- Search
- Archives
- Job Openings
- Advertising Info

Student Media

- Arizona Student Media Info
- UATV - Student TV
- KAMP - Student Radio
- The Desert Yearbook
- Daily Wildcat Staff Alumni

CAMPUS NEWS

Entrepreneurs say motivation is the key to success

By Zach Colick
Arizona Daily Wildcat
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Eller College business students have recently helped develop an entrepreneurship club for fellow risk takers wanting to share similar interests and assume the gambles of taking on a business venture.

Sean Conway, a marketing junior, said the UA's lucrative entrepreneurship program is a very competitive major with a large demand of students and thought he should help promote a club or business venture he has wanted to be a part of ever since he started selling lemonade in front of his house as a kid.

Being an entrepreneur has never been about the money for Conway but rather being a self-starter.

"Hopefully, I won't ever have to work for someone; I can start my own business," Conway said. "You make the mistakes now so you don't make them in the future."

Conway said he saw the demand for the club after seeing a group called "I'm an Entrepreneur" on Thefacebook.com, where more than 150 students joined to connect to students with similar interests. He said he wants to spread the entrepreneurial spirit around campus and let students know they don't need a job after college when they can start their own business.

"We are working to promote entrepreneurship for students so they can meet people with similar ideals before their senior year in college," Conway said. "We would like to not only encourage this way of life throughout campus, but also to the Tucson community."

Though the club's first meeting is slated for next fall, Conway said he wanted to get the club's message out to students before the end of the school year. Posters will adorn the Eller College of Management to help promote the club that Conway hopes will reflect the TV show "The Apprentice," in keeping with the boardroom theme of formulating innovative business ventures.

Conway said the club will offer speakers from around the community to talk to students about how they started a business from the ground up and how these students can do something similar. He said the group will work together with struggling businesses around Tucson in helping to formulate ideas to save them from going out of business and putting them "back in the green."

"Networking between one another and encouraging each other's dreams is one of the most important things entrepreneurs can do," Conway said.

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Conway said funding will come from entrepreneurs around the city as well as the Associated Students of the University of Arizona.

"We want to take advantage of all those resources," Conway said.

Jim Jindrick, a professor in the Karl Eller Center and McGuire Entrepreneurship Program, is an adviser for the club and said he has offered the students "a few ideas to get the ball rolling."

He said, however, that the best role for an adviser is to offer a scope of wise, sage advice, but keep hands off the daily operations.

Jindrick said networking, both among themselves and with the local entrepreneurial community, is a way in which the students can share their innovative business proposals and ideas with people who share similar interests and have gone through similar experiences.

"I've suggested the club start by inviting a variety of entrepreneurial speakers to share their stories. There are lots of resources here in Tucson," Jindrick said. "I've found most early entrepreneurs are interested in 'war stories;' what successful entrepreneurs have done to get their ventures off the ground and running."

Students taking charge in setting the groundwork for a future career path have impressed Jindrick. He said after the club gets running, the members can tackle another venture together, hopefully for a profit.

"Starting this club is an entrepreneurial venture in itself," Jindrick said. "It's a great experience taking an idea to fruition, and it should be an excellent experience for all."

Jindrick said the best way to control one's future is to start young and come up with innovative ideas like Conway has.

"Starting any new venture at any age isn't easy. There are certainly risks, but the rewards are usually worth it," Jindrick said. "The experience of starting this club, successful or not, is going to be very valuable for the next enterprise Sean and his cohorts undertake."

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