Living-Learning Honors Program for Freshmen and Sophomores

The Entrepreneurship and Innovation Program (EIP) provides University of Maryland Honors College freshmen and sophomores with the opportunity to live and learn entrepreneurship and innovation. Created by the Maryland Technology Enterprise Institute (Mtech) based on its highly successful Hinman CEOs program, this living-learning program helps students build the entrepreneurial mindsets, skill sets, and relationships invaluable to anyone engaged in developing and disseminating new ideas. Students receive a world-class, interdisciplinary education that will support them in creating and launching innovative, impactful solutions to today’s problems.

Experiential Learning

Students are part of a special experiential learning model comprised of challenging courses, seminars, workshops, competitions, volunteerism, and company creation activities. They participate in a variety of creative and innovative thinking exercises and hands-on projects, as well as Mtech’s annual Technology Start-Up Boot Camp. EIP students may also compete in the university’s $75K Business Plan Competition and apply for a share of the annual $50,000 Mtech Impact Seed Fund. In collaboration with faculty who have launched, operated and advised successful ventures, students develop innovative business ideas and create team-based product and service plans.

Living Community

As a living-learning program, all EIP students live together for both years of the program in the La Plata residence hall on reserved floors. The proximity to fellow program students from varied disciplines creates a rich, diverse community, a dynamic atmosphere promoting the free flow and sharing of ideas and a critical mass for team-building and entrepreneurial activity. La Plata is also close to other living-learning programs and convenient to the recreation center, athletic fields, and dining hall.
Coaching and Mentoring
Emphasis is placed on coaching and mentoring to help students develop their entrepreneurial abilities, generate innovative ideas and start companies. The program office location in the residence hall provides easy access for students to visit staff to discuss their latest venture idea or tackle a tough legal, financial, or ethical question. The program director is readily accessible for on-demand coaching of teams and for mentoring individual students on a one-to-one basis.

Challenging Academics
As an Honors College academic program, EIP combines small classes taught by exceptional faculty coupled with the wide range of educational opportunities offered by a large research institution. The Entrepreneurship and Innovation Program track, which consists of 16 total credits, starts with “Foundations in Entrepreneurship and Innovation,” a one-credit first-year program-wide course focused on building the entrepreneurial mindset and introducing basic entrepreneurship principles and terminology. In the second semester, “Contemporary Issues in Entrepreneurship and Innovation” inspires student innovation and creative problem-solving through interactive lectures, workshop activities, and case studies in contemporary issues such as energy, life sciences, healthcare, and technology. The third semester’s “Exploring International Entrepreneurship & Innovation” provides an introduction to the opportunities and challenges of entrepreneurship and innovation from a global perspective. The fourth semester capstone course, “Social Entrepreneurship Practicum,” combines strategy, planning and leadership skill-building through the development of an innovative for-profit product or service concept with social benefits. The academic program also consists of an introductory one-credit Honors 100 colloquium, which includes a community service project, and is designed to broaden students’ understanding of the personal and social value that a higher education can provide. In addition students choose two three-credit courses from a wide variety of Honors College seminars taught by top faculty from disciplines throughout the university. Honors seminars and courses are an excellent way to satisfy graduation requirements and may count towards general education requirements and student majors.

Impact Seed Fund
An annual $50,000 seed fund managed by Mtech is available for Entrepreneurship and Innovation Program students. These funds are dedicated exclusively to those new ventures that make a positive social impact, typically in education, healthcare, the environment, and related areas. Funds are provided as grants to students, with no payback or equity requirement, and are to be used for R&D or working capital for student ventures.

At the University of Maryland, we believe that a firm grasp of the entrepreneurial process and mindset benefits every person engaged in developing new ideas. The core goal of the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Program is to infuse students with that knowledge and its accompanying skills. Armed with an entrepreneurial mindset, Entrepreneurship and Innovation Program students and alumni can drive economic growth by launching successful ventures and/or by joining companies to bring innovative products and services to market.