Changing Campus Culture: DifferenceMakers @ UMass Lowell

Steven Tello, Assoc. Vice Chancellor
Brenda Evans, Assoc. Dean of Students

Presentation Points

- DifferenceMaker Program
- Motivation
- Vision
- Engagement
- Challenges & Rewards

What is the DifferenceMaker Program?

- Programmatic effort to introduce creative problem solving, innovation and entrepreneurial action to students and faculty across the campus and across all academic disciplines.
- Raise student awareness and understanding of how their UMass Lowell education can help them to make a difference in the world.
- Launched June 2012
Goals of DifferenceMakers

- Introduce UML students to creative problem solving, innovation & social entrepreneurship
- Connect current students to our alumni’s experience
- Accelerate purpose in students’ education
- Encourage a Socially Responsible Ethos

UMass Lowell Innovation Ecosystem

**ACADEMIC PROGRAMS**

- DifferenceMakers
  - Freshmen Seminars
  - Honors Program
  - Faculty Fellows
  - Enterprise Coops
- Existing
  - Entrepreneurship BSBA, MS ITE
  - MS Comp. Science, Option
  - SLICE - Engineering

**STUDENT ACTIVITIES & LEADERSHIP**

- DifferenceMakers
  - Move-In Weekend
  - Freshmen Convocation
  - $3000 student awarded
  - Living Learning Community
  - $25K DM IdeaChallenge
- DifferenceMakers
  - Move-In Weekend
  - Arel Moodie, Climate Change
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- MV Sandbox
- IdeaLaunch
- IdealSpace
- New Incubator Space
- Robotics, CS/Apps
- MV Sandbox – Campus Catalyst
- MDS Internship Challenge
- M2D2 Incubator & Venture Pitch
- CVIP Licensing/NVC
- Faculty Seed Grants
- Others

**DIFFERENCEMAKERS**

- Year I
  - Move-In Weekend
  - Arel Moodie, Climate Change
  - Freshmen Convocation
  - $3000 student awarded
  - Living Learning Community
  - $25K DM IdeaChallenge
- Move-In Weekend
  - 800 students
  - Honors Program
  - 50 students
  - Faculty Fellows
  - 6 faculty
  - Enterprise Coops
  - 4 students
  - $25K DM IdeaChallenge
Motivation for DifferenceMaker Program

- Our Students
- Our Alumni
- Our Legacy
- Our Chancellor

UMass Lowell: A Public Enterprise for Entrepreneurship & Innovation

Engagement

- Of Students, Faculty, Alumni, Community

Students
- Through Course Participation
- Through Student Activities & Leadership
- Through Residence Life
- Experience viewed as fun, rather than school work

Alumni
- Want to engage with with our students
- Mentor & Judging opportunities
- Financial support
- Events & Activities help connect alumni

Learning with Purpose

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Engagement
Of Students, Faculty, Alumni, Community

- Faculty
  - Through Course Work
  - Faculty Fellows
  - As Mentors

- Community
  - Social Entrepreneurship focus links us
  - Strong Service Learning program on campus
  - Reach out to Foundations & Nonprofits
  - Partnership with Deshpande Foundation

Challenges
Participation beyond Business & Engineering
- Not all disciplines embrace Entrepreneurship
- Must connect with the Social Mission

- Top-level support important, but Bottom-up pressure is critical
- Space – as effort grows, more space needed
- Funding is available
  - Seed with grant or institutional funds
  - Effort attracts alumni support
- Building the Team

Challenges & Rewards
- Students & Faculty are engaged
  - Introduced 1600 Freshman in Orientation and Intro. sessions
  - Engaged 45 student teams, 125 students in IdeaChallenge
  - 20 faculty from all 6 colleges
  - 30 Intro to DifferenceMaker class sessions
- Alumni are engaged
  - $35 K support in Year 1, growth anticipated
  - 15 alumni volunteers for IdeaChallenge
- Community is engaged
  - Non-profits soliciting student teams
  - Foundation interest growing
Resources Needed

- High-level Commitment
  - Chancellor’s Office, Student Activities & Leadership, Alumni Development

- Alumni support
  - Alumni love the concept, support it financially and in-person
  - Alumni support sways Deans & Faculty

- Lots of Energy
  - Student, Faculty, Program-level

- Community Connection
  - Projects & Support

DifferenceMaker Future

- Annual DifferenceMaker IdeaChallenge
  - Grow Alumni support
  - Build electronic social network

- Component of all Freshman Seminar Classes

- Expand Senior Capstone Activity across disciplines

- DifferenceMaker Student Organization

- DifferenceMaker Passport/Certification

www.uml.edu/differencemaker