Entrepreneurship Education at European Universities and Business Schools
Results of a Joint Pilot Survey

OECD International Conference
Foster Entrepreneurship: The Role of Higher Education
June 23-24, 2005
Karen Wilson
European Foundation for Entrepreneurship Research
Survey Objectives

• To gain a perspective on the level and growth of entrepreneurship education in Europe.

• To identify trends in entrepreneurship education in Europe (i.e. topics, approaches, etc.).

• To understand the training and development needs of faculty teaching entrepreneurship.

• Collect information about European entrepreneurship Chairs and Centres.

Note: The results of this pilot survey are not meant to provide a fully comprehensive view of entrepreneurship education in Europe but to provide indicative and directional data.
Summary of Survey Findings

• Entrepreneurship education in Europe has been growing dramatically over the past five years and is expected to continue growing.
  – However, entrepreneurship remains primarily elective.
  – Entrepreneurship still tends to be offered in stand alone courses, rather than being integrated across the curriculum.
  – A greater critical mass of entrepreneurship faculty, research and course material is needed.

• Networks between faculty teaching entrepreneurs across Europe are limited.
  – Most survey respondents work at academic institutions in their home country.
  – Less than 20% spend time teaching outside of the country.
  – While innovative teaching approaches are being tested throughout Europe, there has been little sharing of these practices across borders.

• There is a strong interest for further training in the teaching of entrepreneurship.
SMEs vs Growth Companies

• There is not a clear distinction in Europe between high growth companies and other small and medium enterprises (SMEs), which are not always growth oriented.
  – The legacy and number of family owned businesses and SMEs in Europe make these a visible sector of the economy.

• Clearer definitions of entrepreneurship are needed in Europe to ensure that the proper programmes and incentives are put in place for various types of organizations.
Survey Process

• Online survey conducted during a ten day period: May 13 - 22, 2004

• Total of 450 people invited to participate:
  – 350 efmd/EISB members in Europe
  – Additional 100 targeted faculty of entrepreneurship

• Over 50% response rate: 240 responses
  – Representing 164 schools, including the majority of the EQUIS schools in Europe (40 out of 50).

• Responses from 25 countries, with good distribution across Europe.
Methodology

• Survey focused on entrepreneurship education at universities and business schools across Europe.
  – The goal was to reach those engaged in entrepreneurship activities
  – Therefore, the results are not an average of all institutions in Europe but skewed towards those offering entrepreneurship.

• The survey was targeted to individuals, but captured both the faculty and institutional view:
  – The first half of the survey was focused on the activities of the faculty member responding.
  – The second half of the survey focused more broadly on the entrepreneurship activities of the institution.
Profiles of Respondents

• About 40% of respondents are full or associate professors:
  – 31 of the faculty responding hold Entrepreneurship Professorships/Chairs
  – Another 25 indicated that they hold roles, such as chairing departments, programmes, etc.

• The respondents have been teaching entrepreneurship for an average of 9.5 years.

• The respondents spend the majority of their entrepreneurship teaching time at the MBA/Masters and undergraduate levels:
  – Undergraduate: 24%
  – Post-graduate (MBA/Masters): 35%
  – Executive education: approx 17%
  – Doctoral: approx 7%
  – Other: 17%
The Growth of Entrepreneurship Education in Europe is Strong

- According to survey respondents:
  - Growth last 5 years:
    - Substantially: 61%
    - Some: 32%
    - Not at all: 5%
    - Decline: 2%
  - Growth next 5 years:
    - Substantially: 58%
    - Some: 37%
    - Not at all: 4%
    - Decline: less than 1%
The Position of Entrepreneurship within the Curriculum is Evolving

• However, most entrepreneurship courses are still elective:
  – Undergraduate: 73%, Postgraduate: 69%
• Entrepreneurship is usually taught as a stand alone subject in Europe.
  – It is not well integrated throughout the curriculum, with the exception of the institutions that have been teaching for longer periods of time.
    • Until there is enough focus and critical mass of entrepreneurship knowledge and material within an institution, it is difficult to leverage into other courses.
    • A common path of evolution appears to be: one or more faculty teaching entrepreneurship, growing into a small group, creation of a department and, in some cases, a centre.
• There is an increasing critical mass of entrepreneurship faculty at institutions across Europe, however, still not enough to meet the demand:
  – According to the survey, there is an average of approximately five faculty at each institution with entrepreneurship programmes, up from the reported average of 2.5 in an EFER survey(1) conducted in 2000, however, not all of those faculty are full-time or fully dedicated only to entrepreneurship.

1) "Entrepreneurship Education and its Funding", Dr. Bert W.M. Twaalfhoven, EFER, June 2000
Most Entrepreneurship Centres Started in the Past 5 Years

Many centres were proceeded by units or departments focused on entrepreneurship, some that had existed for 20-30 or more years.

Note: These are approximate start dates based on survey responses and clustered by 5 year segments.
Range of Selected Research and Teaching Topic Areas

- Entrepreneurship
  - Start-ups
  - Business Plan Writing

- SMEs

- Family Business

- Business Strategy
  - Finance/VC
  - HR
  - Marketing
  - International

- Innovation
  - Technology
  - Healthcare

- Policy/legislation/entrepreneurial environment

- Gender/minority issues

- Socially responsible entrepreneurship
Most Survey Respondents Teach Locally

- The survey indicated that only 17% of the respondents teach entrepreneurship beyond national borders.

- According to the survey results, faculties are composed primarily of nationals and are half as international as the students:
  - International teachers: 10%
  - International students: 21%

- There is both an opportunity and interest in Europe for more sharing of international research, teaching and best practice between faculty to ensure students are being exposed to relevant issues.
Language

• At the undergraduate level, most entrepreneurship courses are conducted in the local language.
• At the post-graduate (MBA/Masters) level, most of these courses are conducted both in the local language and English.
• At the executive education and doctoral levels, English is predominant.
A Variety of Teaching Methods Are Being Utilized

- Lecture
- Cases
- Projects
- Exercises
- Reading
- Entrepreneur's Visit
- Computer Simulations
- Other

Often
Sometimes
Rarely
Course Materials

• Almost half of all materials used in the entrepreneurship courses in Europe are generated locally:
  – Faculty teach with a mix of lectures as well as formats that don’t use conventional course materials.

• Case studies could be leveraged more:
  – Many faculty indicated an interest for training in the case method of teaching.
  – Training in case writing is also need.

  • When cases are used, most are sourced externally.
    – One third of the respondents use the European Case Clearing house to source case materials.
Training and Development Needs Identified in Survey

![Bar chart showing training and development needs]

- **Workshops**
  - Strong Interest
  - Some Interest
  - No Interest

- **Research Methods**
  - Strong Interest
  - Some Interest
  - No Interest

- **Case Teaching**
  - Strong Interest
  - Some Interest
  - No Interest

- **Case Writing**
  - Strong Interest
  - Some Interest
  - No Interest

- **Online Courses**
  - Strong Interest
  - Some Interest
  - No Interest

- **Communication Skills**
  - Strong Interest
  - Some Interest
  - No Interest
Respondents Indicate Need for Training and Sharing of Practices

• Teachers of entrepreneurship are proactively seeking more innovative, practical and hands-on methods for teaching entrepreneurship:
  - Methods & exercises
  - Innovative approaches
  - Action learning

• Many teachers have experimented with a range of approaches to make the teaching of entrepreneurship as close to reality as possible.
  - Examples of approaches utilized: Role-playing, group discussions/presentations, creativity exercises, problem solving, scenarios, workshops via internet, group projects, self-directed learning, contacts with firms, consultancy/mentoring exercises, student research projects & case studies, experience exchange, group diagnostics, “live” cases, students interviewing entrepreneurs, business plan competitions, elevator pitches, advisory clinics, film & video, company visits, research papers, business games, field studies, student consulting projects with companies, distance & online learning/computer conferencing/small group work.

• Sharing the lessons learned and best practices from these approaches would be valuable.
About 68% of the respondents claim to have been associated with the launch of a business venture since 1990.

The lower number responses for technology transfer is a likely due to the fact that technology and scientific universities were not reached as thoroughly by the survey as business schools.
Is There Too Much Focus on The Start-up Phase?

• Many respondents commented that the heavy focus on the start-up phase may be overshadowing the more important trends in entrepreneurship in Europe:
  – Culture, attitudes, skills
  – Growth phases of entrepreneurial firms
  – Difference between SMEs vs high growth companies
  – Intrapreneurship within companies

• The percentage of alumni from European schools starting companies is also still relatively small, only 10% according to survey respondents:
  • However, only 50% of the schools currently track alumni starting companies
  • Also, most graduates start companies later in their career and, with many of the European programmes being relatively new, it is hard to measure the impact of these programmes.
Overall Conclusions

• Europe needs more educational programmes and faculty focused on entrepreneurship:
  
  – Universities should formalize entrepreneurship as an important part of the curriculum
    • Require students to take entrepreneurship courses
    • Integrate entrepreneurship topics into other courses
    • Focus on all of the entrepreneurial growth phases, not just the start-up phase
    • Establish better links with business and entrepreneurs
    • Support workshops and training programmes for faculty teaching entrepreneurship
    • Encourage the sharing of good practices, across their own institution as well as with other institutions

  – Policy makers should support efforts to increase entrepreneurship education in Europe
    • Provide support for training of teachers in entrepreneurship
    • Facilitate the sharing of good practices in entrepreneurship education
    • Support the creation of networks and faculty exchanges across national borders.
For Further Information

Visit: www.efer.nl

Contacts:

• BTwaalfhoven@efer.nl
• KWilson@efer.nl