

AGRIBUSINESS ENTREPRENEURSHIP 2010

Course Popular Statewide



Panel members are left to right, Kathleen Frederick, Randall A. 'Randy' Ezell, Debbie Hawley and Michael Wanniger



Jane Bachelor prepares panel members (from left to right) Evangeline Grissom Bruhn John Hartman, and Debbie Hawley prior to class time. Panel member Robert Barfield was not present that day

Business Community Appreciation

"Area business professionals and business owners were extremely generous with their time and with the information they shared with students," said Bachelor.

Students enrolled in the University of Florida's Agribusiness Entrepreneurship course, offered during spring semester 2010, studied entrepreneurship and the importance of creating a comprehensive business plan with which to start or expand their own businesses. A key goal, according to Jane Bachelor who designed the course for the UF Indian River Research and Education Center (IRREC), and which has gained popularity among UF students statewide, was for course participants' to gain important insights about the essentials of creating or running a successful business. Those who enrolled in the course either currently operate their own businesses, have the desire to start an independent business, or they wish to purchase a franchise in the future. To enhance the students' learning experience, local business leaders including prominent attorneys; CPAs; bankers; financial planners, marketing, communications, human resources and internet services consultants; economic development and workforce initiatives leaders; a freelance writer and Emmy award-winning former ABC TV producer; and independent business executives spoke to students regarding their respective areas of expertise.

The University and IRREC are very grateful to the following firms and independent business men and women who made this course such a success: AXA Advisors, LLC; The Backus Museum and Art Gallery; Community Bank Consulting; Dean Mead Minton & Zwemer, Attorneys at Law; Economic Development Council of St. Lucie County; Evangeline Grissom Bruhn CPA Inc.; Florida Unemployment Appeals Commission; Hilliard Groves Inc.; OceanGrown Inc.; PD-go! Web Solutions; Proctor, Crook, Crowder & Fogal, Certified Public Accountants and Associates; Seacoast National Bank, Treasure Coast Education, Research and Development Authority; and Workforce Development Board of the Treasure Coast.

"Area business professionals and business owners were extremely generous with their time and with the information they shared with students," said an enthusiastic Bachelor.



Course Created Business Plan In Use on Goat Farm

The course focused on the fundamental and crucial elements of the business plan, including the product's or service's concept history, background and description; goals and objectives; the marketing plan; legal requirements; alternative forms of ownership; financial plans and projections; organizational, managerial and staffing plans; and special considerations pertinent to each respective business model.

"The purpose of the course was for each individual to complete the semester with an actual, usable document to utilize in their developing or expanding business, or to gain the expertise to apply at some future time to implement the business of their dreams," explained Bachelor.

Plant City, Balm Research and Education Center students from left to right are: Gabriella LaBoy and Nina Baker



LEFT: Apopka student and local agriculturist Brandon Page holds a goat at his family goat farm.

RIGHT: Jane Bachelor, MBA



Class participant Brandon Page's course-created business plan is currently in use for a new facet of his family's farm operations, goat meat. The unique commodity is high in demand among ethnic groups and market shortages are frequent. Page said President and CEO of Community Bank Consulting, Randall Ezell, provided valuable input for his business plan. He had not realized the value of his land was the most compelling feature when seeking a business loan.

"The course helped me a great deal with financials and especially with identification of markets for this unusual product," said Page. "In order to be successful you need to know who your target audiences are, know where to sell your product, and determine which advertising venue is best. With the new goat herd, we're looking forward to a solid secondary income for the farm."

Bachelor is senior lecturer and academic marketing coordinator for IRREC. She is a human resources professional with experience working in Fortune 200-500 companies and with independent business/management consulting. With her many contacts throughout the region, Bachelor assembled a consortium of high-level professionals, each with a specific expertise pertaining to the various elements of a business plan. Throughout the semester, various guest speakers discussed their specific areas of knowledge as students progressed through each segment of business plan development. Students worked individually, writing business plans for currently operating or for 'future-wish' business implementation.

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Bradley R. "Brad" Gould, Esq.



The speaker's bureau was launched with overview information from professionals representing Dean Mead Minton & Zwemer, Attorneys at Law, and The Treasure Coast Research Park. Bradley R. "Brad" Gould, Esq., represented the legal business. During his presentation he explained the types of and made comparisons amongst small business entities. He highlighted their respective tax consequences, estate planning, probate and asset protection. Mr. Gould practices in the area of federal income, estate, and gift tax law and family business succession planning. He represents businesses and business owners in all types of business and tax matters, including choice of entity, mergers and acquisitions, reorganizations, and other general business matters.

With more than 40 practicing lawyers, Dean Mead Minton & Zwemer, Attorneys at Law, provides full-service legal representation to businesses throughout Florida and consistently ranks among the best law firms in the state.

Ben Devries is Executive Director of The Treasure Coast Research Park, a 3-square mile area in western St. Lucie County which offers research firms a place to conduct scientific exploration. DeVries explained marketing, competitive analysis and entrepreneurship to course participants.

"The business plan is your road map to success or failure. If you begin with a plan, success is certain," said Devries.

Each business plan was presented to a panel of community experts at the completion of the course.

"The students benefited from having individual interaction with experts specifically involved with every aspect of business plan development. At the end of the course, each student had the 'reality experience' of presenting his or her final business plan to a panel made up of small business owners and senior-level business executives. The panel's feedback was invaluable to students if or when they decide to launch the businesses they created their plans around.

"We are very appreciative to all in this community who participated in this program for the University of Florida's students statewide," Bachelor said.

Ben Devries, Executive Director, Treasure Coast Research Park



Panel members evaluate course participants, L to R are: Debbie Hawley, Randall A. 'Randy' Ezell, Michael Wanniger and Kathleen Frederick



Larry Pelton, President for the Economic Development Council of St. Lucie County



President for the Economic Development Council of St. Lucie County Larry Pelton introduced students to concepts of market size, demographics, economic issues and industry trends. His presentation outlined compelling business reasons to locate on the Treasure Coast and in the state of Florida. The Economic Development Council of St. Lucie County is a nonprofit membership organization supporting growth and expansion of local and regional economies. Students learned the value of task force purpose, goal development, implementation, execution, and outcomes measurement. Pelton leads the council with a committed strategic vision to recruit and develop science and technology clusters to develop a new economy here

Panel Members

Randall A. 'Randy' Ezell, Former Senior Vice President, Harbor Federal Savings Bank;

Kathleen Frederick, Executive Director, A.E. Backus Museum and Gallery;

Debbie Hawley (served on two panels), MA in Mental Health Counseling; Chief Financial Officer for Hilliard Groves Inc.;

Michael Waninger, Vice President/COO for Workforce Solutions, Workforce Development Board of the Treasure Coast;

Robert Barfield, Senior Vice President, Martin County Commercial Team Leader—Seacoast National Bank;

Evangeline Grissom Bruhn, EA CPA PFS President Evangeline Grissom Bruhn CPA Inc. dual professional with AXA Advisors; and,

John Hartman, CEO, OceanGrown Inc.

Panel members Robert Barfield, John Hartman, Evangeline Grissom Bruhn and Debbie Hawley (front row) Jane Bachelor and student Eliza Duane (back row) Not pictured are Kathleen Frederick, Randall A. "Randy" Ezell and Michael Waninger



Christopher "Chris" Fogal, CPA and President of Fogal & Associates. LLC



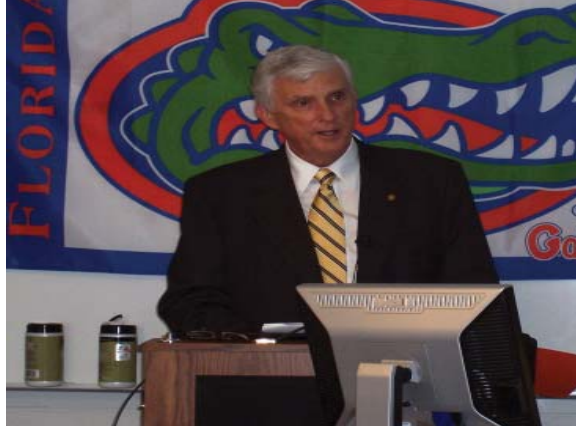
where "The Research Coast" is emerging as a premier scientific community in Florida and in the world's global village.

Christopher "Chris" Fogal, CPA and Principal with Proctor, Crook, Crowder & Fogal, Certified Public Accountants and Associates, discussed business capitalization and the importance of pro forma statements, accounting, financial and inventory controls and financial records' requirements for entrepreneurs and franchise owners. Mr. Fogal has extensive experience in high-end tax and strategic planning, acquisitions and dispositions of businesses, succession planning, and chief financial officer services such as budgeting and financing for smaller companies.

Proctor, Crook, Crowder & Fogal is one of the largest firms on Florida's Treasure Coast, with almost 60 employees in four offices. For more than half a century the firm's professionals have been dedicated to increasing, not simply reporting profitability. They are dedicated to assist businesses to remain profitable, providing maximized tax savings for individuals and helping them plan to pass their legacies onto next generations.

In addition to obtaining loans and utilizing multiple banking services, entrepreneurs have other financial planning matters to consider. E. H. "Klip" Klueppelberg, Jr. ChFC, CLU and Divisional Vice President for AXA Advisors LLC, is an expert in

E. H. "Klip" Klueppelberg, Jr. ChFC, CLU and Divisional Vice President for AXA Advisors



financial planning. His presentation included the steps individuals should take when preparing to launch a new business and how to most prudently purchase a business or franchise. Klip also discussed how and when to create benefits packages for employees, such as retirement plans and 401Ks, and what to consider when selecting health insurance coverage packages.

AXAAdvisors, LLC, is a brand of AXA Financial, one of the premier U.S. organizations in financial protection and wealth management. Klip has been inducted into AXA's Hall of Fame and has also received the company's prestigious Hallmark Award for lifetime production.

Within the last ten years, internet websites have emerged as one of businesses most important tools and assets. Steve Schwartz, owner of PD-go! Web Solutions, located on the worldwide web at: www.pdgo.com

Steve Schwartz, owner of PD-go! Web Solutions



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AEB 4136



IRREC Fort Pierce student Eliza Duane

Having launched the business in 1999 as a part-time venture, he and his wife and co-owner Pamela, soon found themselves self-employed full-time for the new business within only a few months. Today, the two have created more than 700 websites for clients: national and international businesses and organizations. at UF/IFAS's Mid-Florida Education and Since 2002, the Schwartz's have specialized in designing affordable websites which allow clients to edit and update their own websites, without professional technical and programming skills. At this time, PD-go!'s business focus is on business expansion, franchise expansion and staff expansion.

"I learned a lot from Steve Schwartz's presentation for my business because I'm creating an organic clothing store where customers will buy online, I won't have a store location," said course participant Eliza Duane. "His expertise on how to position the website with key words to reach the maximum market of web browsers was very helpful to me."

Business legal obligations with unemployment insurance are required by law. The Honorable Thomas Epsky, and an Independent Human Resources Consultant and Commissioner for the Florida Unemployment Appeals Commission explained this very important aspect of business operations. As commissioner of the commission, Epsky adjudicates unemployment compensation cases appealed and then forwarded to an appeals referee.



Thomas Epsky, Independent Human Resources Consultant and Commissioner for the Florida Board of Unemployment Appeals Commission

Epsky explained business owners' legal obligations regarding unemployment insurance and other employee legalities.

Marketing and promoting a business was addressed by Terry Ann Palumbo, who has led a long and successful career as a freelance writer, book editor and marketer. Her course presentation covered marketing a business to specific audiences, publicity, special promotions and audience perception. Ms. Palumbo has extensive experience as a freelance TV writer and is a seven-time Emmy Award-Winning TV producer, having worked for a number of years in New York, New York with some of the nation's most popular TV features, including E! Entertainment Television, ABC7/New York Specials and Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous hosted by Robin Leach.

Terry Ann Palumbo,
freelance TV writer and producer



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UF/IFAS West Florida Research and Education Center student Joseph James, in Milton

A total of ten business plans were created as a result of the course delivery, and each time it is offered, the course is becoming more popular statewide.

Of the ten students, four were situated in Apopka at UF's Mid-Florida Research and Education Center, three, at Milton, at UF/IFAS's West Florida Research and Education Center; one in Plant City, at UF/IFAS Education and Research Center, and another in Fort Pierce, at the UF/IFAS Indian River Research and Education Center.

In Milton, student Joseph James created a business plan for an appraisal service currently in operation; Audrey Davis's plan was for a "green" ranch that markets grass-fed beef, free range chickens and eggs, organic produce and other offerings. Carmen Whitaker's plan is for a nursery business, Carmen's Amazing Garden, specializing in Florida native plants, apple varieties which can be grown in a warmer climate and lawn care supplies.

In Apopka, Jon-Paul Grimes' plan, for Sign of Water Inc., is a currently licensed aquatic landscaping and natural area mitigation enterprise; Kaitlyn McBride's plan for Lazy Daisey, Yoga, Massage and Tea House, is an endeavor she wishes to pursue along with her sister; Younes Belmour's plan, Tomato Pro, is for a small greenhouse production tomato enterprise. Brandon Page's goat farm plan is in full implementation.



UF/IFAS Mid-Florida Research and Education Center student Younes Belmour, in Apopka

Eliza Duane in Fort Pierce is developing a website for her organic clothing business, Green and Glam Online Clothing Boutique.

In Plant City, Gabriella LaBoy hopes to own and operate Scents, offering retail fresh flowers, silk arrangements, gift plants, baskets gourmet foods, confections and other gifts. Nina Baker created a plan for a wholesale nursery business in Wimauma, Fla., for distribution of annuals and perennials, groundcovers, vines, shrubs, trees, mulch and soil.

UF/IFAS Mid-Florida Research and Education Center, Apopka students Younes Belmour, Kaitlyn McBride and Brandon Page. On the right is Academic Support Services Coordinator Diane Mealo



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UF West Florida Research and Education Center students
Joseph James, Audrey Davis and Carmen Whitaker

Each plan incorporated expert knowledge gained from multiple speakers who provided incredible value to each of the student entrepreneurs.

Panel members provided feedback to each student presenter, designed to further prepare class members for a 'real world presentation, as they implement their respective business plans and launch or extend their current business operations.

"This course provided me with so much more than a traditional college course," said Page. "My family has farmed for a long time and we're using a lot of what I learned in the course with the citrus business also, in addition to the new goat farm I worked with in my class business plan. We had input from many real experts. It was so valuable."

At the end of the 6-week session, each student presented their respective business plan to a panel of experts, Panel members provided feedback to each presenter designed to further prepare class members for a 'real world' presentation, as they implement their respective business plans and launch or extend their current business operations.

"Students completing this course leave with a clear understanding of what is really involved in developing a complete and comprehensive business plan and the critical steps involved in fulfilling your business ownership dreams," explained Bachelor.

**Agribusiness
Entrepreneurship,
AEB 4136,
is offered each spring
semester.**

**For information about the
course or to be placed on a
contact list for notification
of registration, contact
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