



Community Colleges as Incubators of Innovation

Rebecca A. Corbin and Ron Thomas, editors

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Community Colleges as Incubators of Innovation, edited by Rebecca A. Corbin and Ron Thomas, explores how community colleges in the United States are implementing entrepreneurial learning environments in order to better prepare students to thrive in the constantly evolving workforce. Entrepreneurship is more than an academic discipline within a business department.

It is a culture that needs to be woven into all aspects of the college from the top leadership down to the various stakeholders in the community. Forming entrepreneurial environments is an interdisciplinary endeavor and stimulates students to think critically, be creative, take risks, and develop new solutions to problems. The editors and each contributing author demonstrate how community colleges are positioned to equip students to hone these skills and implement them in their local communities.

Each contributor focuses on aspects of program development, designing curriculum, and how to build programs that engage the community. Some use their executive experience as college presidents or administrators to explain how to integrate entrepreneurial culture into the life of the college. They identify how to build an entrepreneurial ecosystem that explores how to utilize assets and use those assets to bridge the school with community partners in order to build stronger communities. Other contributors argue that the changing economy in the US needs a workforce that is prepared for continuously evolving employment environments. Each contributor emphasizes how community colleges and students need to maintain workforce relevancy in order to build strong local communities.

One particular strength of the *Community Colleges as Incubators of Innovation* is the discussion about moving entrepreneurship away from a strictly business concept. Bree Langemo explains how the concept needs to be broadened to signify where people are able to see “opportunity when others see none” (15). Teaching students to seize opportunities to affect changes in their personal lives and in their communities is a mindset and skill that can be cultivated across disciplines. Another strength of the book are the numerous data points and statistics that the contributors present to support their arguments. Contributors Christopher Mullin and Doan Winkel present a particularly critical statistic projecting that half of the workforce in the US will be part of the gig economy by 2020 (61). Students who are equipped to work creatively and independently are more prepared to integrate into a workforce that has become driven by independent contractors and self-employment.

How do the disciplines of religion and theology engage with or implement entrepreneurial environments to help prepare students for work and life beyond college? In many ways, these disciplines already participate in fostering this environment by sharpening critical thinking skills and developing original ideas through the study of ethics, leadership, and decision-making. Entrepreneurial pedagogy builds upon these activities and encourages religious and theological educators to implement a backwards design approach in their course development to better mold students who see and take new opportunities when others see none. Although the book is tailored for community colleges, institutes and departments focusing on religious and theological studies in any capacity ought to think about how they can prepare their students for the new realities of the workforce so they can best use their education to be creative and relevant contributors in their local communities.