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Programs to help young entrepreneurs burgeoning

Students show interest in starting businesses

By [Kathleen Gallagher](#) of the Journal Sentinel

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Brookfield - Halfway into a five-year, \$5 million grant to spur entrepreneurship, the University of Wisconsin-Madison has started a host of programs designed to help get students into business.

The university has used the money to roll out new initiatives, from an arts enterprise club to a specialized dorm community and an event similar to speed dating, only with experienced entrepreneurs, said Charles B. Hoslet, senior special assistant to the chancellor and managing director of UW-Madison's office of corporate relations.

"The Kauffman grant allowed us to push entrepreneurship teaching and learning across campus beyond the walls of Grainger Hall," which houses the university's business school, said Hoslet, who was guest speaker Thursday at a meeting of the Wisconsin Innovation Network.

The ranks of the self-employed have declined 0.6% in the last 10 years, according to an analysis of U.S. labor statistics by Case Western Reserve entrepreneurship professor Scott Shane.

But the rocky economy and the desire of young people to run their own businesses has led to heightened interest in entrepreneurship around the country.

There's been an "explosion" of student interest in entrepreneurship in Wisconsin high schools - and of competitions trying to lasso that interest, said Noel Radomski, director of the Wisconsin Center for the Advancement of Postsecondary Education at UW-Madison's school of education.

The entrepreneurship movement in the state is "deep, broad and ingrained," said Tom Still, president of the Wisconsin Technology Network.

The timing of the Kauffman grant was perfect, Hoslet said. UW-Madison is building its \$150 million Wisconsin Institutes for Discovery, a planned center for interdisciplinary research that will help commercialize discoveries. The Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation, UW-Madison's technology transfer powerhouse, hired a manager in 2007 to deal exclusively with business start-ups.

Representatives from BizStarts Milwaukee, Marquette University and UW-Whitewater also spoke at the WIN event about their entrepreneurship efforts.

BizStarts has pulled together 20 southeastern Wisconsin colleges to share best practices and opportunities to learn about entrepreneurial education.

In the fall, Marquette will begin offering an entrepreneurship certificate that allows people with undergraduate degrees to take graduate classes to build their ability to run a start-up.

UW-Whitewater is developing an entrepreneurship major and has gotten funding from the business community to offer "Experiments in Entrepreneurship," an independent studies program, said Debra S. Malewicki, an assistant professor of management.



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