

# **Facilitating Cross-Disciplinary Collaborations Focused on Innovation and Entrepreneurship: The West Virginia University IDEA Fellowship Model**

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## **Abstract**

Innovation supports the sustained provision of valued organizational services across the private, public, and non-profit sectors. Rapidly expanding integration of technological innovations into the process of modern nursing requires nurses to develop more complex technological and business-related competencies. Educating and training nurses to better understand and use new technologies within the modern health care system has not kept up with the introduction of new innovations, and nearly all clinical innovations and tools are being developed by disciplines outside of nursing. Understanding and support for innovation and entrepreneurship education as a component of professional programs is poorly developed across most universities and colleges working to prepare graduates for our contemporary workforce. However, some institutions of higher learning are currently working to enhance their overall economic impact potential through integration of innovation and entrepreneurship courses, workshops and product/service innovation and design labs, across a wider variety of academic programs and disciplines. Although these initiatives assist in expanding competency profiles of their graduates, meeting accreditation standards, and improving potential for funding contingent upon articulation of potential economic impact, in most institutions these initiatives are often localized and limited to traditional areas like engineering and business. Yet, the future necessitates that healthcare providers work with others as their fields intersect around new and increasingly integrated business practices and clinical technologies.

This presentation will highlight the role of West Virginia University's (WVU) IDEA Fellowship Program, a cross-disciplinary, university-level program, in the development of a nursing course focused on innovation and entrepreneurship. Learning activities and associated assignments aimed at equipping nursing students with the necessary communication, innovation (design), and entrepreneurial competencies required within the modern workforce will be presented and discussed. WVU's IDEA Fellowship Program serves as a model to prepare all faculty to teach concepts related to innovation and entrepreneurship. Through this program, faculty from various disciplines are inclusively engaged in sharing the practices and methods that support the teaching of entrepreneurship and innovation to students across a state-wide campus, resulting in enhanced course content and rich learning experiences that support innovation and entrepreneurship competencies. Additionally, this program can assist students in learning more about being job creators in their field of study.