New Center for Entrepreneurial Excellence Begins to Draw in Innovative Thinkers

By Steve Eaton

The Jon M. Huntsman School of Business officially launched its Center for Entrepreneurial Excellence with an event that celebrated the very kind of innovative, visionary thinking that created the Center in the first place.

The Center launch included visiting VIPs, speeches, a ribbon cutting, and predictions that this will prove a milestone in the progress of the Huntsman School of Business. Mike Glauser, a successful entrepreneur and author, is the executive director of the Center, and he says he is building a network called the "Aggie 100," a group of entrepreneurs who will assist the Center by offering to be mentors, to speak, and to judge student competitions. The Center will offer people assistance with business plan development, branding, website design, securing start-up capital, and more, he said. The Center will focus on not just technology startups but also on new businesses in the broad range of industries that make up 80 percent of the U.S. economy.

The launch event featured remarks from USU President Stan Albrecht, Dean Douglas D. Anderson, and Dr. Glauser. Jim Davis, head of the Management Department, and David Bradford, representing the Governor’s office, also spoke.

“This Center is available for all students, in all colleges, in all departments across all of our campuses across the state of Utah,” Dr. Glauser said at the opening. “This is not exclusive to students in the Huntsman School of Business.”

Dr. Glauser said the Center would also help people off campus who come in looking for assistance. He said that there is evidence that shows that the more diverse a start-up team is, the more likely the venture will succeed.

“We are very serious about bringing people together,” he said. “We are serious about launching new companies, creating jobs, and growing our economy.”
The Center will play a leadership role in developing curriculum for the Huntsman School of Business that will be aimed at nurturing the entrepreneurial instincts in students, he said.

Dean Anderson said the center has put together a great team. Dr. Glauser was the founder and former CEO of Golden Swirl Management Company and of Northern Lights. He also wrote the book, “Glorious Accidents: How Everyday Americans Create Thriving Companies.”

In addition to Dr. Glauser, Dr. Davis, and Eric Schulz will be engaged with the Center. Dr. Davis launched the well-known Gigot Center for Entrepreneurial Studies at Notre Dame in 1998, and during the ten years he was its director, it was consistently ranked among the top 20 programs in the country. He joined USU in 2011 as head of the management department at the Huntsman School of Business.

Mr. Schulz is the former head of marketing for the Larry H. Miller Sports & Entertainment Group, a job that included promoting the Utah Jazz. He is the author of The Marketing Game, How the World’s Best Companies Play to Win. The Center plans to utilize his expertise especially in areas of branding, Dr. Glauser said. They will work with four USU faculty members who have particular expertise in entrepreneurial studies: Ken Snyder, Dave Herrmann, Dan Holland, and Chris Reutzel.
“This center will go on and become very significant, not only in the lives of our students, but also of the citizens of this great state,” Dean Anderson said. “It is just a joy to see how this is coming together.”

Utah State University President Stan Albrecht called the creation of the center a “significant step forward.”

“If you look at the trajectory that this institution is on, I hope you all feel the sense of excitement that we feel,” he said.

Dr. Davis talked about the benefits of thinking like an entrepreneur.

“To me, entrepreneurship is all about passion,” he said. “It's all about excitement. It's discovery. It's living life. Living your life. Charting your path. Living your destiny and not somebody else's.”

Mr. Bradford said that many entrepreneurs opt to do something they love, and are willing to “cast away” some of the “safe comforts of a traditionalist career.”

“I am completely convinced that education is the secret sauce to launching successful, sustainable businesses,” he said.