Preface

This book is a collection of edited chapters on research in entrepreneurship and community engagement, in the context of Syracuse University’s award-winning model of Scholarship in Action, with its emphasis on sustainable campus–community entrepreneurial partnerships and applied research on the outcomes of these. Each chapter is written by a key academic leader at Syracuse University who participated in the partnership between the university and the Central New York community. This is the ‘Syracuse Miracle’, a transformation that has occurred in Central New York as a result of the engagement of Syracuse University with the community in social, environmental and economic development.

Chapters are grounded in research on technology entrepreneurship, community engagement and entrepreneurial new models of education. Each chapter includes the authors’ initiative in Central New York, the model of engagement, background on comparable models at other institutions and their effectiveness, and the outcomes of the campus–community partnership including the success factors and failures of the initiative.

In the book we use a broad definition of the term ‘academic entrepreneurship’. Our definition is not the traditional definition of the institution transferring its technology and research to create new ventures, as used by Steffensen et al. (1999); Meyer (2003); Perez and Sanchez (2003); Shane (2004); Link and Scott (2005); and Prodan and Drnovsek (2010), among many others. The definition of academic entrepreneurship used in this text is similar, but not identical, to the definition used in Glassman et al., (2003) and their focus on faculty as entrepreneurial thinkers. Our definition is similar to the definition of intellectual entrepreneurship used by Cherwitz and Sullivan (2002); Cherwitz and Darwin (2005); Cherwitz and Beckman (2006); and Beckman and Cherwitz (2009), and their philosophy of universities operating more collaboratively with their local communities to create value.

Faculty, as entrepreneurial thinkers, seek new ways to engage with the community to create value, and this value creation within a local community establishes the university as an anchor institution. Campus–community partnerships create value for the community by providing students, faculty and resources to make a difference in economic development, venture creation, or assistance to nonprofit organizations or local residents. Campus–community engagements also provide value to students by exposing them to real-world
activities that have an impact, from working with disabled veterans to creating new methods of teacher education. These projects also provide value to the institution by spreading a positive message about the organization within the community, creating goodwill toward the university and creating a signature for the organization locally, nationally and internationally.

The three chapters in Part 1 are about technology entrepreneurship and community engagement, focusing on innovative programs in technology, technology transfer and student technology ventures. The arguments for the impact or effectiveness of commercializing university technologies are not considered. Instead, the emphasis is on collaborating with the ‘community’ on technology, where the community includes a major international bank and its interest in providing a stronger business-technology curriculum for students; or the community represents groups of Central New York students who are interested in starting ventures; or the community is the group of innovators in New York State who want to use their technologies to start companies.

Part 1 includes chapters by Professor Robert Heckman and Jeffrey Saltz on successful corporate university partnerships; Professor Michael D’Eredita and Sean Branagan on launching a program to support students’ technology companies; and Professor Ted Hagelin on a new model of supporting technology transfer. Heckman and Saltz provide an innovative and entrepreneurial way to educate technology professionals in the financial services industry. Executives from JPMorgan Chase, alongside faculty from Syracuse University, constructed a new interdisciplinary curriculum in global enterprise technologies. Faculty from the Whitman School of Management, the School of Information Studies and the L.C. Smith College of Engineering and Computer Science worked with banking executives to build a new curriculum that prepared students for working in the twenty-first-century financial services industry.

D’Eredita and Branagan show how academic entrepreneurship, in partnership with the Syracuse technology community and Chamber of Commerce, can lead to innovative technology entrepreneurship education for students. The Syracuse Student Startup Accelerator was launched to give entrepreneurial students in Central New York the support structure of courses, incubator space and funding to be successful. This innovative accelerator builds on the strengths of other national incubators.

Hagelin describes the Syracuse Technology Commercialization Clinic, an entrepreneurial approach to technology transfer that, with financial help from the New York State Science and Technology program, has helped to commercialize research across New York State. Hagelin’s program combines the best of intellectual property law programs, technology commercialization and business planning to provide usable reports to companies who are deciding about whether to launch a new product or venture.
The three chapters in Part 2 are on community engagement and entrepreneurship and focus on innovative and entrepreneurial programs that engage the Central New York community. Part 2 includes chapters by Professor Deb Kenn on transforming a community law clinic to support community entrepreneurs; Professor Jill Hurst-Wahl on supporting successful community entrepreneurs in distressed communities; and Professor Steve Davis on starting a community newspaper in partnership with local residents. These programs encourage community residents to be entrepreneurial, and involve students in collaborative and educational experiences as partners with them.

Kenn focuses on the community development law clinic at Syracuse University and its unique approach to economic development and supporting entrepreneurship. Working with the South Side Innovation Center, the Community Development Law Clinic helps local entrepreneurs to protect intellectual property and start new ventures. This model of a law clinic goes beyond the traditional approach of helping lower-income clients with their legal needs.

Hurst-Wahl also describes her work with the South Side Innovation Center, and her innovative lecture series to support local entrepreneurs. Talking Business: A Conversation with … featured workshops by local entrepreneurs aimed at students and local residents. These community conversations help universities to reach out into the community and bridge the gaps between town and gown that sometimes exist.

Davis, also working on Syracuse’s South Side, tells a story of starting a newspaper with students and community residents in an economically challenged neighborhood. As a professor in the nationally ranked S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications, Davis offers the challenges and rewards of connecting the students in his newspaper classes with real-world issues confronting a local community.

Part 3, on entrepreneurship, engagement and new models of education, includes chapters by Gary Shaheen of the Burton Blatt Institute, on services for entrepreneurs with disabilities and an innovative program that connects them with university students to provide support; Professor Michael Haynie and Gary Shaheen on providing entrepreneurial education through the award-winning program Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans with Disabilities; Professor Ruth Small on factors that contribute to innovation and entrepreneurship among adults; and Professor Ben Dotger on a new entrepreneurial program that provides teacher education.

Shaheen creates the term ‘inclusive entrepreneurship’ to describe innovative programs that reach out to entrepreneurs with disabilities in Central New York. A collaborative campus–community partnership around the course Entrepreneurship Consulting provided student support for entrepreneurs with disabilities and imparted lifetime skills of assistance and understanding to the
students taking part. Haynie and Shaheen further this concept by teaching entrepreneurship to veterans from the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan who were disabled during their service. This is another example of social entrepreneurship with a community connection working to enrich the lives both of those served and of the students who participate in the program.

Small’s research on motivation leads to an innovation continuum among adult entrepreneurs, and she shows that the need for access to information is a factor in adult entrepreneurship and innovation. Her survey of adult innovators supports the need for information and motivation for entrepreneurship.

Dotger shows an entrepreneurial approach to teacher education. He uses medical education technology to innovate in teacher education and school leader education by simulating parent–teacher conferences. His program has shown a better way to prepare teachers, and he hopes to franchise this to other schools of education nationwide.

Each of these authors participated in a small way to the revolution of Scholarship in Action occurring at Syracuse University. As more action-based scholarship occurs, academic innovators and entrepreneurs continue to have a real impact on the Central New York economy. True partnerships continue to be formed between community residents, innovative faculty and students who want to engage, help and start ventures locally.

REFERENCES


