

Can a teaching university be an entrepreneurial university?

Civic Entrepreneurship and the Formation of A Cultural Cluster in Ashland, Oregon¹

by

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Abstract:

There has been debate over whether a teaching university can be an entrepreneurial university (Clark, 1998). In a traditional conception of academic entrepreneurship focused on achieving commercial profit, a research base may be a pre-requisite to creating spin-offs. However, if we expand entrepreneurship into a broader conception to map its different forms such as commercial, social, cultural and civic entrepreneurship, it is clear that the answer is positive. In this study, we focus **on** the Oregon Shakespeare Festival (OSF), which has transformed a small town based on resource extraction, a market and a rail-hub into a theatre arts and cultural cluster. The convergence of entrepreneurship, triple helix model, cluster and regional innovation theories, exemplified by the Ashland case, has provided a model as instructive as Silicon Valley, to seekers of a general theory and practice of regional innovation and entrepreneurship. **The role of** Southern Oregon University (SOU) in the inception of a cultural cluster gives rise to a model for education-focused universities to play a significant role in local economic development through civic entrepreneurship.

Keywords: teaching university, entrepreneurial university, civic entrepreneurship, cultural cluster, regional innovation

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