Can a teaching university be an entrepreneurial university?

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

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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1 This chapter draws upon Kaan and Etzkowitz "Power of Cultural Entrepreneurship" Case Study for Project on University-Business Cooperation in the United States and Canada for the Directorate General for Education and Culture of the European Commission EAC 02-2010, Framework Service Contract to provide expertise and support for European Cooperation in Education and Training, Lot 4.