



Highlighting the Innovation & Entrepreneurship Institute

00:08–00:27

Andrew Coletti: Hello and welcome to this episode of The T in Teaching. My name is Andrew Coletti, and in this episode, we are going to focus on the services of Innovation and Entrepreneurship Institute at Temple University. To talk about the program and the benefits of IEI, I'm joined by Michelle Hstand and Alan Kerzner. Michelle joined Temple University full time last year as the managing director of IEI.

00:28–00:51

Andrew Coletti: She's been teaching at Temple for the past seven years, always in innovation and entrepreneurship topics, and previously ran a project at Temple helping a university in South Australia set up their entrepreneurship program. Prior to her time at Temple, Michelle started and ran the innovation function at Independence Blue Cross. She also has a consulting business and has worked with many companies thinking about how to work in new, innovative ways.

00:52–01:15

Andrew Coletti: Alan has been at Temple University for seven years as assistant professor and director of the Temple University Entrepreneurship Academy. Alan has been at Temple University for seven years as Assistant professor and director of the Temple University Entrepreneurship Academy, which is focused on facilitating incorporation of entrepreneurial thinking and doing in the 16 nonbusiness schools within Temple.

01:15–01:45

Andrew Coletti: In this role, he has worked with the Tyler School of Arts and Architecture to establish the successful Bachelor of Fine Arts and Entrepreneurship Studies degrees conducting the university wide social impact slash changemaker, challenge workshops and competitions, as well as the freelancing and Working for Yourself program. Prior to joining Temple Alan taught part time at Warren, NYU, and the University of Queensland in Australia and established the Institute of Global Student Success, which helped international students achieve professional success in the United States.

01:45–02:04

Andrew Coletti: He started his career with Fortune 100 companies such as Procter and Gamble and Johnson and Johnson, as well as worked in several startup and private equity owned companies. Thank you for listening and please enjoy. I am joined by Michelle Hstand and Alan Kerzner. Thank you both for joining me.

02:04–02:07

Michelle Hstand: Yeah, thanks for having us. And we're excited to talk about this.

02:07–02:13

Andrew Coletti: All right. Let's just jump in with what the mission of IEI is and what you guys aim to do?

02:13–02:44

Michelle Hstand: So our mission at IEI is to ensure the Temple community, which we define as students, alumni, faculty and staff, have the innovative mindsets and the tools they need to think differently to do critical problem solving, to create new things. And ultimately that allows them to have more successful careers, bigger impact in their communities, and more fulfilled lives. We have academic programs and co-curricular programs that are focused on those mindsets and those tools.

02:44–02:59

Michelle Histan: So we're helping people who want to start businesses or side hustles, who want to be a source of change in their community and start nonprofits, or do good work for their community and work with their community members, or who want to contribute new ideas and ways of thinking within existing organizations.

02:59–03:15

Andrew Coletti: Yeah, I like how you started it off by talking about the Temple environment, the entire environment. It's an all-encompassing idea. And then I like that you mentioned the tools to succeed, the tools to innovate. Let's talk a little bit about those tools and services that you guys offer. Let's start with students. What kind of tools and services do you offer students?

03:16–03:44

Alan Kerzner: So, we are really an overall resource, if you will, we're a hub of expertise. We have 108 mentors, successful entrepreneurs, funders who are available to students, alumni, faculty. But at the end we really help people develop ideas or even the step before an idea when they're just saying, "Hey, I'm really thinking about this issue," and try and figure out how to do something about it.

03:44–04:20

Alan Kerzner: So we'll help them along that we help them create new ventures and really different ways to approach problems. We do have an entire tool set we can share, and when it comes to faculty, we're also available to help them think about ideas they have and maybe size businesses or businesses they want to start. We've done this a lot with STHM professors, with engineering professors, because obviously professors see a lot.

04:20–04:31

Alan Kerzner: They're thinking constantly and they're very creative. So we help them take that, if they're interested, and develop it into a successful venture.

04:31–04:48

Andrew Coletti: Yeah, that's great to hear. And it sounds like IEI is not just either student or faculty focus. Like you were saying earlier, Michele, it's really all-encompassing to the temple community. So I know that you guys talked about a lot of the different services you have, but let's just start with the curricular side of what you guys offer.

04:48–04:59

Andrew Coletti: So for students at Temple specifically, what can they look to gain from IEI in terms of their curriculum, their degrees, or their experience at the actual university itself?

05:00–05:28

Alan Kerzner: Okay. Well, I sort of separate that into a couple buckets. For people interested in careers in innovation and entrepreneurship, they will learn the skills they will get. It's a requirement that we will provide an internship for them to actually get experience in new and emerging companies, and they will be constantly networking with people within what we call the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Philadelphia.

05:29–05:59

Alan Kerzner: Also, though, for Fox students, we have dual majors or minors. And so, if I'm a finance student or MIS or whatever, I could get a minor at Fox, provided I fulfill all the Fox requirements, with just three additional course. Just three. And one of them could be a Gen Z course. We run SGM0827, which is about creativity and organizational innovation.

05:59–06:37

Alan Kerzner: So, it's very easy for students in Fox to get a minor or to do a double major. There's one woman who graduated last year. She was a finance major and she took an IEI major. A double major. Is right now running a very successful balloon design company for major events and things like that. We also, importantly, from a faculty standpoint, can work with faculty to help them enhance the entrepreneurial and innovative content within their courses.

06:37–07:11

Alan Kerzner: And as a matter of fact, seven years ago we created Temple University Entrepreneurship Academy under IEI, and the goal there was to facilitate entrepreneurial thinking in doing throughout all the schools of the university. So for instance, we worked with Tyler School of Art and Architecture, and we created nine Bachelor of Fine Arts Degrees with Entrepreneurial Studies to help art students be able to get meaningful jobs, focus on their passion in organizations.

07:12–07:48

Alan Kerzner: We work with a required gen-ed course, intellectual heritage, to which always would focus on social problems. A historical literature perspective on historical problems in this country and the world. And what they found as students were walking out of those courses disenfranchised and hopeless because, hey, these problems have existed forever. So we've implemented modules for that course where they learn about creative problem solving, how rather than just learning about issues, how to go and solve them.

07:48–07:48

Andrew Coletti: Yeah.

07:48–08:10

Andrew Coletti: Well, it's great to hear that. Not only do you guys offer programs and activities and organizations outside of Fox itself to really help, as you were saying earlier, build kind of a path forward of innovation for a lot of different people in areas at the university. I think what's so interesting about what you just said is most people don't know IEI for the actual curricular programs you offer.

08:10–08:23

Andrew Coletti: You're known for more of the extracurricular activities. Those are the really big, fun activities. Michelle, maybe you can tell me a little bit about what you guys do throughout the semester what kind of activities and organizations you guys do that really help students interested innovation?

08:23–08:44

Michelle Histan: Yeah, So just like our academic programs, we call them our co-curricular programs. They're open to everyone across campus. That's no matter what major you are, what school you're in, that's whether you're a student, faculty member, an alumni or staff. Right. And our co-curricular programs, we run really three big ones throughout the year. So we're currently in the midst of our innovative idea competition.

08:44–09:03

Michelle Histan: Our idea competition is exactly what it sounds like. You can submit an idea. It doesn't have to be well-developed. But what's really nice about that is you get good feedback on your idea and you can think about how to build that out. So that's going on now. You can submit until October 11th for that. Next, we'll run our Changemaker Challenge, which is a version of this that was really focused on ideas that do good for the world.

09:03–09:20

Michelle Histan: And then in the spring, we run our Be Your Own Boss Bowl, which is our big competition that was really well known and the Be Your Own Boss Bowl is about a business plan, so you need to have a business plan and often it's businesses that are up and running. It doesn't have to be. And that is one where there are significant prizes where folks can win money toward their business and toward their work.

09:20–09:36

Andrew Coletti: That sounds excellent. The ability to maybe even kickstart an idea that you have and get to see it in action, get to see all of the different ideas and innovations that students have come to life and get to see them test it against other people's ideas. You're right to be your own boss. And not only because it's a great name is one of the things that you guys are so well known for.

09:36–09:51

Andrew Coletti: Now I want to transition a little bit to the success stories because IEI really is a valuable part of Temple's community and has been for some time. Alan, You mentioned one student who came through and now runs a successful balloon design business. Do you guys have any other stories that you want to share?

09:51–10:39

Alan Kerzner: Yeah, I mean, one we'd like to share and anyone who's on the first floor of 1810, Liacouras will probably hear her see her: Jung Park. She got an undergraduate degree from us, I think about five or six years ago. She's a dynamo. She has started a very successful, basically bartending for service business. It's called Cocktail Culture. She also is now started a karaoke business where they go, she and her team she's built go to corporate functions, to restaurants, to all types of events, and basically put on a karaoke show with an active class participation, or I should say, audience participation.

10:39–11:04

Alan Kerzner: And Jung is great. She came back to us actually to help in the spring. One of the things that we run we use is called a freelancing workshop series. We now call it Working for Yourself because we have a lot of marketing people who want to go into social media who join us, a lot of consultants, whatever, and we brought Jung back as a panelist and she's such a dynamo.

11:04–11:07

Alan Kerzner: She is now adjuncting two courses for us.

11:07–11:08

Andrew Coletti: It's great to hear.

11:08–11:34

Alan Kerzner: And she's just loving it. Another one that we could talk about is Jared Cannon, who most people know from Simply Good Jars. He was a sous chef who came and got an entrepreneurial degree and said, There's got to be a way to provide really good, healthy food to people outside of a restaurant in an environmentally friendly way.

11:34–12:04

Alan Kerzner: So they basically provide very healthy salads, gourmet salads in jars and if you return a jar, they make a donation of a free meal to Philabundance to feed the hungry. And we've had another James Calcagni from Engineering developed the first prosthetic leg that is very easily usable in a shower. It's waterproof and the way it functions and bends.

12:05–12:13

Alan Kerzner: I didn't realize this. A lot of people with prosthetics have a hard time taking showers, and so this really makes that a lot easier.

12:13–12:31

Andrew Coletti: Yeah, these are really great stories to hear. And something that stood out to me about all three of those stories is, you know, when people think of innovation, especially in a business school, I think they think of your typical business student. But you shared the example of a sous chef who creates their own business, a karaoke business, a balloon business, and now a prosthetics business.

12:31–12:48

Andrew Coletti: And I think that gets to the fact that people don't always appreciate what IEI able to bring to the table. And that gets me to one other aspect, which is I feel like faculty don't know about IEI or don't know enough about IEI to tell their students to go in there or themselves to interact. So open mic, what do you want to say to faculty?

12:48–12:52

Andrew Coletti: What should they know about IEI and what should they be telling their students going forward?

12:52–13:29

Alan Kerzner: Well, I think one important thing is it's notâ€¦ IEI is not tradition or business, okay? There were two recent surveys, creative problem solving, which is at the core of all courses and of which Michelle is an expert in, has consistently been listed as a top ten skill that employers of undergraduate graduates want to see. So, you know, there's communication, there's interpersonal skills, but creative problem solving is always a top.

13:29–13:53

Alan Kerzner: At the graduate level there's a new study that says strategy and innovation are critical today and will even grow in importance over the next five years. So I think the first thing we would say to faculty is and so we're teaching people not just what it is, but how to apply it successfully. And that's true. Don't matter what your field, what your life goals or whatever.

13:53–14:17

Michelle Hestand: Yeah, and I would add to that that what we really want faculty to know is IEI is not just for students who want to start a business, right? So everything Alan just said rings so true. We are focused so much on how to creatively and critically problem solve, which is a very in-demand skill, but will also benefit our students no matter what field they're going into.

14:17–14:34

Michelle Hestand: Right. So I used to run innovation at Independence Blue Cross. It's an insurance company. What does insurance have to do with innovation? Right? It's not something you think of. But for students who want to work in a particular industry or in an organization, they will still need to be able to bring these skills to the table. So that's what's so important.

14:34–14:54

Michelle Hestand: And I also want to make sure folks know Alan talked about the major and the minor. We also have a certificate for non-Fox students, so every student on campus should be thinking about that innovation certificate because it makes them more marketable and it helps them stand out when they're out there in the job market. And again, it's only three courses, one of which is a gen ed, one can be a gen ed.

14:54–15:05

Michelle Hestand: So we really want students to know and for faculty to help guide their students to; Hey, when you're thinking about electives, think about doing this minor or this certificate which will help you stand out and be noticed in the job market.

15:05–15:23

Andrew Coletti: Great. So it really feels like you guys are both giving a tangible thing to students, helping them test out their ideas through all the different activities you do, even a chance to kickstart their business, winning some money in these organizations, but also the intangible skills, the skills that really are something that employers are looking for that are just valuable in the workforce today.

15:23–15:40

Andrew Coletti: Another thing I think is a lot of people think innovation and entrepreneurship. That's not me, that's not who I am. But it really feels like IEI has made an effort to be open to just about anybody. But again, maybe students still are a little apprehensive or faculty are apprehensive about reaching out to I know you guys have some stuff coming up.

15:40–15:54

Andrew Coletti: Can you tell me a little bit about one where students and faculty can find you guys? I know in the podcast we will link your page on Temple's website so they can find you there, but where else can they find you guys and what else do you guys have going on coming up in the future?

15:54–16:12

Michelle Hestand: Yeah, they can find us by walking in, right? So our space is in the bottom of 1810 Liacouras in the back and the accelerator space. Come on over, reach out to Alan or to me via email. We love to meet up with people and have coffee and chat about it. And to your point of it sometimes feels scary or ambiguous.

16:12–16:28

Michelle Hestand: I didn't know what any of this was until I kind of taught myself and learned it a few years back. So this is really we want people to know it's not scary, it's accessible to everybody and you don't need to know anything when you walk through our door. That's why we're here. So it shouldn't feel off-putting or anything.

16:28–16:35

Michelle Hestand: I'd say reach out to us by email, come into our space, visit our website. And what we have coming up is our Changemaker challenge. You want to talk about that?

16:35–17:05

Alan Kerzner: Sure. So as Michelle mentioned, the innovative idea competition will occur. Actual submissions October 11th and the actual event is November 8th. Okay. November 8. Yeah. Yeah. So we're a team here! And then for the Changemaker Challenge, we're going to start with social impact workshops. It'll be the first week of November. We always start off with what we call an inspirational speaker.

17:05–17:33

Alan Kerzner: Last year was Malcolm Jenkins, ex-Philadelphia Eagle, but a gentleman, a person who has done tremendous good throughout communities, in America, in New Orleans, in Philly, all over two years ago we had the VP of Product Design and Sustainability from Patagonia and everyone should listen over the next couple of weeks and we'll let them know who their big speaker is for the first week in November to kick off our social impact.

17:33–17:50

Andrew Coletti: Yeah, this is great to hear. And it sounds like you guys really keep the calendar full with events coming up, but it also sounds like a student or a faculty member really has an idea or just wants to talk to you guys. You guys are super approachable. First floor of 1810 Liacouras Walk. They can just come in and it sounds like you guys are excited just to talk to people.

17:50–18:04

Andrew Coletti: So it sounds like if you have any time or you want to come talk to them, you either reach out or just come in and talk to them that way. Michelle, Alan, thank you guys so much for coming in here and talking about IEI and thank you for the work that you guys do with the Temple community.

18:04–18:20

Michelle Hestand: Thank you. Thanks for highlighting IEI, we love it!

