Today’s unpredictable economic climate is changing the way people in the Inland Northwest do business. Entrepreneurial activity is on the rise as old and new firms fill new niches with innovative products and services, and communities like those in the Inland Northwest strive to support these new business ventures.

In response to this trend, Eastern Washington University and its College of Business and Public Administration (CBPA) established the Center for Entrepreneurial Activities (CEA) to support the 21st-century goals of stimulating, promoting, and assisting in the development of innovative old and new enterprises.

The Center’s mission includes forging links between the private, public and academic communities. The CEA and the CBPA present opportunities in education, research, and service.

To learn more about how you can benefit from the Center for Entrepreneurial Activities, contact:

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Research. The CEA works within the College, the University-at-large, and with researchers at other institutions to conduct entrepreneurial research activities in the Inland Northwest. Representative research areas include opportunity recognition, firm capitalization, and firm strategy and performance studies.

Outreach Activities. The CEA’s outreach activities are designed to address the interests of individuals starting entrepreneurial businesses, established entrepreneurs and more mature firms, and neighborhoods and entire communities. The CEA places special emphasis on enhancing opportunities for start-ups and existing firms headed by women, Native Americans and minority entrepreneurs.

Business Development is supported through:

- Workshops and seminars
- Conferences and community events
- Networking to the community (Business Resource Center)
- Specialized assistance (grants and contracts)

“As a public regional comprehensive university, it is a part of our mission to address crucial issues of the region. We are committed to help educate business and would-be-business people to be able to respond creatively to the economic needs of the region. This is something appropriate for us to do—and something we are glad to be able to do,” said Dolores Tremewan Martin, Dean of the EWU College of Business and Public Administration.
The Herbert B. Jones Foundation believes that entrepreneurism and small business are the backbone and the strength of our economic system. The Foundation promotes this belief through the initial and temporary support of new business programs managed by post secondary educational entities in the state of Washington. They want the business community to be a vibrant and productive environment and the recipients of the Foundation’s support to positively impact our greater business community.

In 1947, he started his own business, Business Machine Service. After Mr. Jones retired in 1971, he realized he wanted to do something worthwhile with his estate. He wanted to help those interested in small business and entrepreneurism. He worked with several Puget Sound universities during the 1980’s before establishing the Herbert B. Jones Foundation prior to his death in 1998. He was an advisor, mentor, and teacher. His work continues on through his foundation.

BRC conducts a series of seminars and workshops for the development of business projects and plans, and has created an “incubator without walls.” The incubator provides management assistance, short courses and seminars, and is a networking source for all businesses.

In September 2003, Eastern Washington University’s College of Business and Public Administration’s Center for Entrepreneurial Activities announced the receipt of a Herbert B. Jones award for $46,563 to be used to establish a Business Resource Center (BRC). The BRC is responsible for providing enhanced networking, education, and services directly to the people of the Inland Northwest and the Spokane area.

The grant was for the first year of what should become a multi-year project to enable EWU to work more closely with the business community, students, Gonzaga University and Whitworth College. The BRC conducts a series of seminars and workshops for the development of business projects and plans, and has created an “incubator without walls.”

The incubator provides management assistance, short courses and seminars, and is a networking source for all businesses.

Terry Sanchez was hired as the director for the Business Resource Center (BRC). Since he began on October 1, 2003, the BRC has partnered with Gonzaga University and Whitworth College to present a series of business planning seminars featuring local business professionals. The BRC has started the CBPA’s first annual business plan competition, and provided assistance to many new firms.

The BRC continues to survey the East Central business community gathering data on business support needs, training needs, and business/community planning issues.

To contact the Business Resource Center, call Terry Sanchez, 509-358-2231 (voice), 509-358-2267 (fax), or tsanchez@mail.ewu.edu (e-mail).
The Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation works with partners to encourage entrepreneurship across America and to improve the education of children and youth. The Foundation focuses its operations and grant making on two areas: entrepreneurship and education.

“We strive to foster an environment nationwide in which entrepreneurs have the information and tools they need to succeed. The Kauffman Foundation promotes entrepreneurial success at all levels. We work with leading educators and researchers nationwide to create awareness of the powerful economic impact of entrepreneurship, to develop and disseminate proven programs that enhance entrepreneurial skills and abilities, and to improve the environment in which entrepreneurs start and grow businesses.

In education, we work in partnership with others to improve the lives of children and their families, to create an environment where they enter school prepared to succeed and, once in school, are able to prepare for life as productive, contributing citizens. We support programs that promote children’s development from birth to young adulthood. We provide funding and technical assistance to build quality programs and provide services in the areas of early education, urban K-12 education and mentoring.”

The grant to Eastern’s College of Business and Public Administration (CBPA) supported the development of entrepreneurship courses within Eastern’s Master of Business Administration (MBA) program. It also enabled research and service activities leading to journal publication and to outreach support for existing businesses in the region.

“We are delighted that the Kauffman Foundation is providing support to help our emerging MBA entrepreneurship program grow,” said Dr. Robert Schwartz.

Over the past year, eight EWU faculty members (Drs. Nancy Birch, Vance Cooney, Brian Grinder, Dean Kiefer, Patricia Nemetz-Mills, Vince Pascal, and Robert Schwartz, and Mr. Dave Gorton) have been busy developing new MBA courses, case studies, and research papers. The faculty assisted nine firms or organizations with their business development needs and have developed case studies for use in the classroom and for submission to professional publications. These cases include a ski resort, several software firms, an environmental recycling firm, the city of Spokane, and an energy firm. A number of research articles have been published in refereed proceedings and several are being considered at journals. The articles covered topics including E-commerce, venture capital, opportunity recognition, failed firms, clusters and incubators.

New MBA entrepreneurship courses cover topics including Human Resources, Finance, Marketing, Consulting, Business Planning, and other entrepreneurship-related courses.
In the early 1990s, the College of Business and Public Administration created a Distinguished Professorship in Entrepreneurship to attract and retain an expert specialized faculty member to strengthen and expand the College’s entrepreneurial curriculum and to assist the broader community with better prepared entrepreneurs to succeed in business.

Over the past decade, the CBPA has increasingly emphasized the importance of students working to improve the communities served by the University. Students at the undergraduate and graduate level have provided research and analysis for more than 150 business enterprises; assisted regional communities with growth and development plans; and repeatedly won national recognition for excellence.

The Center for Entrepreneurial Activities is a natural extension of these community-directed efforts already in place at EWU. It will more directly and efficiently support the University’s goal of providing quality student-centered education and service to the community. The Center for Entrepreneurial Activities will also enhance the principles of the “engaged university” in which community service is integral to EWU’s mission.

The CEA now works actively in the East Central area as a partner with the Urban Planning faculty and students to create an enhanced quality of life for the citizens of that area. Further, the CEA has provided assistance to the Hillyard neighborhood, recently completing a feasibility study for a transportation incubator for the area.

The CBPA is part of the engaged University and the faculty, staff, and students of EWU play a major and continuing role in the community. Dr. Schwartz is a special advisor on economic development matters to the Mayor of Liberty Lake.