

Presentation Name: Entrepreneurial Skills Training for the New Economy: Case Studies

Organizer:

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Abstract:

Innovation is about the translation of knowledge to create societal benefits, and entrepreneurship is one mechanism for converting knowledge into real impact. Entrepreneurship is widely recognized as a driver in economic growth and job creation. Entrepreneurs embrace risks and work to generate new technologies that clean the environment, cure diseases, and improve our quality of life.

Given the potential impact, governments around the world are integrating entrepreneurship into national strategies. The new Innovation Agenda—to be released by our Federal Government in the coming months—has identified the development of an “entrepreneurial and creative society” as a priority area for Canada where “being innovative becomes a core Canadian value.” Moreover, entrepreneurial skills training is not just about building companies. It can also produce industry-ready students who are better equipped to take on challenges in rapidly changing business environments.

But how do we practically prepare Canada’s young talent to engage in entrepreneurship and innovation? How can we train students to be agile and responsive in the new economy?

The presentation will highlight select Canadian centres that have piloted new ways to train and support students in innovation and entrepreneurship. By working directly with students at all levels of study, we have developed a unique on-the-ground perspective. Their initiatives are a case in point that it is possible to successfully cultivate a culture where the entrepreneurial mindset and innovation are the new norm. In this environment, output metrics go beyond the number of new companies. This talk will show that the development of highly skilled and trained individuals for the new economy is equally important.

Since the path from idea to impact is fraught with challenges, Canada needs skilled and resourceful people to meet these hurdles head on. Canadians often look to best practices internationally to develop their training initiatives, but we believe there has been significant innovation in approaches to entrepreneurial skills training by centres across Canada. Finally, we will outline the key ways in which various levels of government can support this burgeoning national ecosystem.