



Entrepreneurship + STEM = Success

By Olenka Cullinan, national director, STEM Entrepreneur Program, Base 11, Costa Mesa, California

Last fall, a small group gathered after work hours in the Bay Area Entrepreneur Center at Skyline College, just a stone's throw from Silicon Valley. They were the first cohort in a unique course that combined entrepreneurship with the increasingly popular STEM fields (science, tech, engineering and math).

They seemed an unlikely team - an immigrant studying English, a college staff member, and a fully employed businessman. But they all shared a common dream of starting their own business. The 16-week curriculum, developed by the nonprofit Base 11, aimed to equip them with the entrepreneurship training in addition to hands-on experience with cutting-edge technologies.

New York Times best-selling author and former publisher of *SUCCESS* magazine Darren Hardy contributed some of his most sought-after executive training lessons as modules in the curriculum. His lessons cover the entrepreneurial mindset, 21st century skills, and productivity strategies of super-achievers — all based on insights he gained from years of interviewing the most successful innovators in the world, like Richard Branson and Elon Musk. None of these lessons had ever been offered to an audience of community college students before.

Unlocking Potential

Lessons from Hardy and the other contributors are delivered by an on-site instructor from the college's staff, through the curriculum provided by Base 11, which includes online videos, presentations, and a student and trainer workbook. "I'm honored to help these college students - all

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New York Times bestselling author Darren Hardy delivers a lesson for community college students based on his book *Entrepreneur Rollercoaster*.

of whom have tremendous abilities but haven't had access to the right resources in their lives to unlock their true potential," said Hardy.

When the class wasn't meeting at the entrepreneur center at Skyline College, it met at the campus's new Base 11 Innovation Center, which features a Fab Lab. There, students learned to use laser cutters, 3D printers, computer-aided design (CAD) and other technology to rapidly create prototypes of their product ideas. MIT alumnus Blair Evans, a tech entrepreneur and Fab Academy guru, developed the curriculum for the Fab Lab portion of the program.

"What I liked most about the class is definitely how dynamic and participatory it is," said Eduardo Jáuregui, one of the students in the inaugural cohort at Skyline. His team used the 3D printers to create a physical box to go with its "Gentleman's Box" subscription service business idea.

Distinct Pairing

"This distinct pairing of teaching business acumen and tech skills in a Fab Lab is what makes the STEM Entrepreneur Program stand out," said Regina Stanback Stroud, president of Skyline College. "Base 11 has brought a tremendous array of resources to Skyline College that most community college students would never have access to."

The course culminated with modules on how to successfully pitch your business or product idea to potential investors. As the program grows, plans include pitch competitions between different college groups in front of potential investors. At the first STEM Entrepreneur Summit, students practiced their pitches in front of the national casting director of ABC's *Shark Tank*, Brandon Andrews. By integrating their maker spaces into an overall educational program, community colleges can provide essential entrepreneurial education that fuels innovation and business growth in the community.

Base 11 offers a special discount for NACCE member colleges. To learn more about how Base 11 can help your campus implement a STEM Entrepreneur Program, contact Olenka Cullinan at 714-371-4200. ●



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