

When I initially embarked on my journey as a full-fledged MBA student, I was very excited to embrace the subject matter that goes along with an AACSB accredited institution. Yet, as the semester dragged on I realized that I wasn't learning how to think outside of the corporate box. In fact, I looked over at my classmates next to me and realized that we were all part of the same rat race. Ironically, we all had different aspirations but we seemed to be chasing the same goal of landing a corporate job. A few weeks later, some of my classmates began to discuss their concern, in regard to a lack of innovative tools and concepts within our curriculum. Which raised the question, should it be the responsibility of the university to provide these tools?

The more I thought about the role academia should take to promote innovation and entrepreneurship; the more I was told by faculty members that they were working on it. In fact, I was told that Clark Atlanta University was in the early stages of building an innovation center on campus. Although the concept of “build and they will come” can be an effective approach, I began to think about what I could do personally to foster innovation and entrepreneurship at CAU. It was at that moment that I realized colleges and universities need a combination of tools, activities and creative environments to invigorate their innovative landscape. At that time, my Statistics professor Dr. Davis informed me that I would have the opportunity to become a University Innovation Fellow. UIF would give me the platform to be an advocate for innovation and assist in implementing a creative space for students to ideate. In addition, I would have the chance to share basic frameworks and tools that assist students in enhancing their campus' creative environment. This was a wonderful opportunity and I did not take this important task lightly.

Myself and three other students have been working in conjunction with Stanford University and the Epicenter organization as candidates for the University Innovation Fellows program, which trains students to become catalysts of innovation and entrepreneurship within their respective institutions. I have learned a great deal about Clark Atlanta University's Innovation landscape and all of the wonderful programs that our school has to offer. However, the information silos that exist across departments and between students needs to be eradicated. So on behalf of me and the other UIF colleagues at CAU I would like to invite you all to download the new CAU app, which will provide lots of information and insight for everyone on campus to enjoy. Additionally, it will keep everyone informed and begin to break down communication barriers along the way. Our goal as UIF members is to get CAU stakeholders, communicating and working together to make our university a place that continues to produce quality employees but also innovators and entrepreneurs as well.

As an advocate for innovation and entrepreneurship, I want to stress the importance of students participating in the act of "doing" rather than just "learning". For that reason, my team and I will be launching CAU's bi-annual Lean Startup Machine event on campus in mid-April 2015. This is a great opportunity for young innovators and entrepreneurs to come together for a three day event, that will teach you how to take an idea, verify that consumers want it and create a minimum viable product that people are willing to purchase. I believe that events like lean startup, will be the tipping points that transform not only CAU students but the entire AUC environment into an innovative atmosphere that will help shape tomorrow. Our motto at CAU

“Find a Way to foster Innovation or Make One”

goes right along with the mindset of diligent innovators that impact our world, because at Clark Atlanta University, “we find a way or make one.”