

Introduction

The contemporary landscape of innovation is increasingly shaped by centers built to foster creativity, collaboration, and commercialization. Drawing on interviews with innovation centers around the country and my experiences consulting with innovation centers for Caterpillar, Bosch, the City of Lockport, Buena Vista's Virginia Innovation Accelerator (VIA), and more this project will outline a framework for creating innovation centers within various organizational structures, including corporations, academic institutions, and cities. The products for this project will be an academic paper for a peer-reviewed journal, a multimedia project/podcast with recorded interviews of innovation center leaders and members, and a toolkit for organizations considering the development of innovation centers. The need for the establishment of such a framework is underscored by the important role these centers play in creating the next generation of innovators and entrepreneurs.

Summary

Innovation centers, spanning corporate, academic, and municipal domains, have emerged as important ecosystems for advancing technological and business frontiers. In the academic sphere, universities have been establishing centers to incubate business ideas and foster innovative projects. Vel and Higa discuss the transformation of higher education institutions into entrepreneurship and innovation hubs, pointing out the strategic approaches required in their design and development, as well as their impact on building entrepreneurial mindsets among students.¹

The role of innovation centers extends beyond educational settings into municipal development and corporate strategy. Morisson defines these centers as collaborative spaces crucial for the development of 'knowledge cities,' contributing significantly to urban regeneration and knowledge dissemination.² In the corporate sector, innovation centers serve to catalyze technological advancements, as investigated by Kahn and Dempsey and others.³

This project, in alignment with the Lenfest Grant's emphasis on scholarly and creative work, will bridge the gap between theoretical frameworks and practical applications in establishing innovation centers. It will integrate insights from business, technology, and urban studies, to

¹ J. Vel and Kentaro Higa. "Designing Innovative Campuses for Tomorrow's Students." *Planning for higher education*, 44 (2016): 11.

² Arnault Morisson. "Innovation centres as anchor spaces of the 'knowledge city'." *Global Business and Economics Review* (2019). <https://doi.org/10.1504/GBER.2019.10019684>.

³ Kenneth B. Kahn and J. Dempsey. "An Investigation of Centers for Innovation." *International Journal of Innovation Science*, 4 (2012): 89-100. <https://doi.org/10.1260/1757-2223.4.2.89>.

propose a model for establishing and managing innovation centers. The proposed model will consider various organizational structures and cultural contexts, aiming to provide a blueprint adaptable to various settings. A collaboration is already underway through Community Based Learning and BUS 376 - Design Thinking with VIA that will provide a useful launchboard for the research. Additionally, this project will create a living document of established and emerging innovation spaces, providing practitioners and academics with frameworks and insights into the development of such centers through podcast interviews, photographs, and other materials.

Resources required to develop the concept include equipment to record podcast interviews and travel funds to meet with people at innovation centers around the United States. Interviews will be conducted both on-site and virtually using recording equipment to produce the podcast and for paper citations.

This project will be the culmination of years of work with innovation centers, and will establish my skills as an industry expert and teacher-scholar by deepening my understanding of innovation ecosystems. It will contribute to the fields of entrepreneurship, innovation, and leadership, providing valuable insights for practitioners and academics.