



Guest: Debra Jonasson-Young, Executive Director, Stu Clark Centre for Entrepreneurship

Title: Applied entrepreneurship education

Note: Vocalizations such as 'um' and 'ah' have been removed from this transcript for clarity.

Introductory Montage

IDEA START Podcast explores all things creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship. Co-created by IDEA START & The Centre for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning. Join us to move your ideas to impact with University of Manitoba Community.

Introduction

JANINE

Today on the Ideas Start podcast, we are going to take a look at applied entrepreneurship education. We're joined by Debra Jonasson Young, the executive director for entrepreneurship at the Stu Clark Centre for entrepreneurship at the Asper School of Business. And, Debra has a very rich professional background and community involvement. We're going to take a look at how she has used that to help shape the services, the supports that are the resources that are available to support students in doing applied entrepreneurship education here at the University of Manitoba. Let's start the conversation.

JANINE

Debra Jonasson Young, welcome to the Idea Start podcast. We are delighted to have you today. For our audience listening in, Debra is the executive director of the Stu Clark Centre for entrepreneurship at the Asper School of Business. And, yeah, we're so pleased to have you here to learn from you. To learn a little bit about you as well, and your, your history and what you're bringing, to this, and very important role at the University of Manitoba. So welcome to the studio.

RAJEEV

Welcome, Debra.

DEBRA

Thank you very much. Both Janine and Rajeev, I'm excited to be here and excited to be able to talk a little bit about, this Stu Clark Centre for entrepreneurship.

Main Interview

JANINE

Yeah. Wonderful. Well, how about before we get into all of that, let's find out a little bit more about you. Can you tell us a little bit about your background and and what intrigued you about this role and.

RAJEEV

Oh what an amazing background, we all know what it is. But, you know, everybody needs to know this.

DEBRA

Well, thank you very much. I do have a, I come from private sector. I have a very large business background. I certainly worked my way up from a student right up to the top position in, Manitoba, northwestern Ontario with Eaton's. So, over probably 400 categories of merchandise there. So I got to know everything from furniture to cosmetic to, baby clothes and lawnmowers. And, so I have a very broad background there. Ran the good portion of the Western Division for Eaton's for a number of years and, multiple, many hundreds of millions of dollars in revenues and about 2000 employees. After I left Eaton's, I came back to Asper and, got my MBA in the short 11 month program.

And then I went on, to, be VP of video and cable systems, which is entirely different from retail. Was there for a few years and until it sold and then went on as vice president of Shoppers Optical a national optical retailer was there till it sold. Then I went on to, to Dufresne Furniture and Appliances as vice president.

So lots of background in retail. You really learned a lot and you get to know the customer and consumer behavior. And then, joined the university nine years ago as, executive director of the Executive Education Centre, downtown and came out to the Stu Clark Centre about six years ago. Also actively involved in the community, sit in the board of the associates was, also on the, executive of the, Institute of Corporate Directors of Manitoba, setting the board of Manitoba Hydro and sat for nine years on the board of the Manitoba Museum.

So have, some fairly deep community experience and connections.

JANINE

Yeah, absolutely. Thank you for that.

RAJEEV

Oh, that's impressive. Thank you.

JANINE

So, as you know, Debra, my undergrad was at the School of Business and Entrepreneurship, like 20, 25 years ago. And so I remember actually, when, what is now the Stu Clark Centre was getting started. But can you tell us a little bit about that, like how it really came to be and then like some like big highlights or maybe over it's like quarter century of existence.

That's impressive.

DEBRA

So, the Stu Clark Centre opened in 1997. It was a vision of Izzy Asper for, of course, at the time, and it was funded through the Asper Foundation, through an endowment there. And, of course, our own Moe Levy, who was involved with the Asper Foundation at that point in time and is now the director of IDEA START, was very instrumental in getting that actually set up.

So it started in 1997. And, I'll fast forward to 2008 when Stu Clark came on board. It was originally called the Asper Centre for Entrepreneurship, and then Stu Clark came on board with another, nice endowment. Both their beliefs in entrepreneurship is a pathway forward for, for students. We're very deep. So he came on board then and the centre was renamed to, the Stu Clark Centre for Entrepreneurship.

We we, probably some milestones would be our 25th anniversary, which was, a few years back. And we had a big party for that. And, also the fact that, Stu Clark Centre has grown and morphed over a number of years and provides probably different services from what there were when you did.

JANINE

I think so, yeah.

DEBRA

But we've expanded, and, are very proud of what, how we support the entire university student community.

RAJEEV

I think that that's a mark of a great institution that do evolve with time. And you and you provide what's necessary. You know, it's relevant.

JANINE

Yeah. And I think that, you know, Debra, your experience in retail and understanding the customer helps to meet that.

RAJEEV

Exactly.

JANINE

What do students need now is different than what they needed then.

DEBRA

Yeah, absolutely. It's very different. And entrepreneurship models have changed significantly over the years. I mean you you know there's that Dragon den model but there's there's many

other things like social entrepreneurship is a very big, obviously a very big focus with a number of students going forward. So, the evolution of not just what we do, but the evolution of entrepreneurship in our world has been huge over the past decade or so.

RAJEEV

That's right.

JANINE

Yeah. Yeah. That's a good point. Actually. How we teach it also has evolved too. That's good.

RAJEEV

And the ecosystem also has changed in many tools. I'm sure you would have seen the evolution of that as well.

DEBRA

Yeah. Yes. The ecosystem in Manitoba is fantastic. Before I came and was focused on entrepreneurship, it's a hard it's a hard ecosystem to understand.

RAJEEV

I see okay.

DEBRA

And it took it took me a little while to really get to know what it looked like.

RAJEEV

Right.

DEBRA

You know, what's involved in the university was ecosystem for students. And then the other parts of the ecosystem that, students can, themselves evolve to that, you know, like North Forge, Futurpreneur, Women's Enterprise Centre.

RAJEEV

That's right.

DEBRA

So, there is a very rich source of support.

RAJEEV

So much out that there.

DEBRA

There is, there is it's huge. Yeah.

RAJEEV

You know, for, for me, from the time I've been here, the Stu Clark Centre has been all about, you know, applied entrepreneurship, if I may. Right.

DEBRA

Yeah.

RAJEEV

That's how you like to look at that. And, and it's so important because today, increasingly, students are taking to entrepreneurship as a new career alternative.

DEBRA

Yes.

RAJEEV

And UM is all about, supporting careers.

DEBRA

Yes.

RAJEEV

And so in this applied entrepreneurship space, you know, how how would you say the Stu Clark navigates that.

DEBRA

Okay.

RAJEEV

How does it deliver?

DEBRA

Yeah. That's a great question. First of all, what is applied entrepreneurship? And it really is about being on the ground with students. It's boots on the ground. It's where the rubber hits the

road. And it really is being there one on one. Coaching students through the process of entrepreneurship, if they start a business, you know, how to educate them through that process. And, the applied part means in many ways, you have to be there when they need it. You have to magically appear when they need help, and then you have to kind of like back off so that they can apply that and get to understand and internalize that thought process. And then, and then when they need you again, you just kind of have to magically appear.

RAJEEV

Yeah, yeah. But that support, that sounds to me like a superpower. And, we are grateful I guess that Stu Clark Centre is here and, there to do this.

DEBRA

Yes, yes.

RAJEEV

So tell us more a little bit more about how you actually deliver applied entrepreneurship to students.

DEBRA

Yeah, So, you know, I think, there are a few different ways we look at applied entrepreneurship within our model. And of course it's, it's hard to do everything for everybody. But we, we kind of look at it in three categories high touch, medium touch and, and more of a tactical approach.

RAJEEV

Wow, that's interesting. High touch, medium touch and tactical approach Yeah I touch medium touch. That interesting, super interesting. I want to know more. What's, what's high touch?

DEBRA

So some students really need a lot more hand-holding or they need it right at the beginning of the process to get going.

RAJEEV

Yeah, that makes sense.

DEBRA

And so, you know we offer a number of different things as it relates to high touch. Number one is certainly, one on one coaching through our startup coach who is Ben Isakov.

RAJEEV

Ben Isakov.

DEBRA

And Ben has his amazing background and experience. And, you know, he's been with us for about a year and has, touched well over a 100 students already in terms of actively coaching them, through the process and through their businesses. And, often students come back repeatedly.

RAJEEV

Yes.

DEBRA

So they may come once, but they may come 5 or 6 times, depending on where they're at in the process.

RAJEEV

Ben's such a great guy.

DEBRA

He's he's very knowledgeable.

RAJEEV

And yeah, he makes, you know, coaching look so easy.

DEBRA

Yeah, yeah.

RAJEEV

He's super approachable. So and so students if you haven't really met Ben Isakov and if you've got an idea, go ahead and meet him today.

DEBRA

Come see us. You bet.

RAJEEV

Yeah, yeah.

DEBRA

You bet. He loves working with students.

RAJEEV

Yeah, he does. Yeah.

JANINE

And so maybe Debra, can I just confirm?

DEBRA

Yeah.

JANINE

You know, you're based in the Asper School of Business, but can any student go.

DEBRA

See any any students?

JANINE

Okay.

RAJEEV

Yes.

DEBRA

As a matter of fact, if faculty members or staff wanna come and see us, we're there for anybody on campus. We primarily deal with students both undergrad and MBA students, but anybody can come and see us for whatever reason and do not at all feel intimidated. If you say, I don't have an idea, but I want to be an entrepreneur, come and see us, we'll walk you through it. If you say, I have an idea, but I don't know how to start coming through us, we'll talk you through.

JANINE

Yeah.

DEBRA

Come and see us. We'll talk you through it. And so, wherever you're at in your journey, that's what we're here for. And I should also I should also indicate that all of our services, are free. We don't charge students anything.

And, we have, something called 'start up tree' where they can go in and make an appointment, with Ben online and then either meet with him virtually or come and see him in person. And then, you know, demand has been so great for his services. Ben is now working on more of a group coaching model and process.

RAJEEV

Oh that's interesting.

DEBRA

Yeah, that will help that he can intake more students at one point in time because.

RAJEEV

So what's this group coaching model. Is it that there'll be multiple coaches at the same time or multiple?

DEBRA

It's identical actually just one on one coaching because we're still putting students through a process. What's your idea? Can you validate it? You know, what's your marketing plan? All of that. But the group coaching one means more students come in at one point in time. And the beauty of that is that they become peer to peer coaches too.

JANINE

Which is support each other.

DEBRA

Which is more valuable. Yes. Yeah.

RAJEEV

That's interesting. So that's evolution right there.

DEBRA

Yeah, yes it is definitely. And so that's the higher touch model and it requires more time and, and you know more one on one. We've recently launched what we talk about is our medium touch model which is a bit more group based. But and it's all virtual and it is, how to start a side hustle. Oh, and, we're working with a fellow named Jeff Mitchell, and this whole reports under Ben, Be kind of oversees all of these, pieces in the game.

RAJEEV

Let's just, take a step back. And why don't you tell us, for some of us who might not know, how do you define a side hustle? I mean, what's a side hustle?

DEBRA

Oh, good point. A side hustle, a side hustle is still starting a business. But you may be starting a business that is off the corner of your desk. You're working full time. You have this idea you want to, you want to take it to market, and, you're going to commercialize, and it won't, maybe maybe, duplicate your full time job, but it will, provide you with more income, whatever.

A lot of students start side hustles because they can do their work. They can do their school work and then come back and and have a side hustle business. Also a side hustle sometimes for people more in rural communities and everything becomes important because it's their ability to break into a market in a, in a small way and then start learning how to run a business and develop.

RAJEEV

That's amazing.

DEBRA

So it's different from, you know, I'm starting a business, and, but the principles are all the same.

JANINE

Right.

DEBRA

So our how to start a side hustle program six weeks virtual. You're taking, you have to apply, six weeks virtual. You're taken through the entire process. There are about 20 between 20 and 30 students in each intake.

And we will do three intakes a year. And again, no cost to students. The Stu Clark Centre picks up the cost on this. And what occurs there is there's a walk through the process. They have one on one coaching, of course, with with Jeff at the same time. And they, they at the end of, of their sessions, they're able to continue in a group format, with Jeff for one year after that, again free. And then when the next cohort starts.

RAJEEV

And there's follow up, that means.

DEBRA

There's follow up, always follow up.

RAJEEV

So you, you, you know, you won't be left high & dry.

DEBRA

You're not left alone.

RAJEEV

And there's there is support.

DEBRA

Yeah, yeah.

JANINE

That's that applied model.

DEBRA

Yes, that's the applied because we're, we're trying to get you through to starting your business in a way that, that makes it easier for you. And, you know, until you get up and running and sometimes when you're scaling up also.

DEBRA

They'll also have that year of additional coaching, and they'll feed into that community where the first cohort fit into that.

RAJEEV

Wow, that like a such a great model to have. You know, so you start with your learning, you get follow up support.

DEBRA

Yeah.

RAJEEV

And then you become part of a community. Right?

DEBRA

Exactly. Exactly.

RAJEEV

Perfect. This this is great. Yeah. But students, you must remember that it is free, but you still have to apply. You still have to apply. Right? So, just don't think too much about it.

DEBRA

Yeah.

RAJEEV

If you've got an idea and you can do this while you're still a student. So go ahead and and apply.

DEBRA

Right.

So the third the third way that

RAJEEV

The more tactical touch.

DEBRA

Yeah it's more of a tactical in it. Some students don't really want they don't need somebody holding their hand or walking them through, but they wake up one day and they say, oh, you know what? If only I had a computer scientist to help me with my data. If only I had an accountant. If only I had a law student to help me, you know, work through some of the legal issues.

If only I had an engineer who could help. We constantly get questions like that where they really need tactical, tactical, help. And, we have a, program or a platform called Startup tree where students can now go in and as if they have their business, they can go in and say, hey, is there a computer science scientist out there who wants to get involved with us for a little bit so that we have, we can call upon your knowledge and you can share that.

Or conversely, if you're a student who really wants to get involved, you can actually go in and get your stuff in there and say, I want to. I'd love to be able to help you with your marketing challenges. So, the beauty of this again, is that the more, the more we get students working with students, assisting them in helping them.

When we talk about experiential models and collaboration, they learn these great competencies about how to work with one another, how to come in and offer your services and understand what what the needs are and apply it, appropriately.

RAJEEV

This is great. So let me just understand this a little bit.

DEBRA

Yeah.

RAJEEV

So what we are saying is that, let's say somebody needs these, this, this specific, help.

DEBRA

Yeah.

RAJEEV

They have these specific asks, right. Like, like lawyers or, computer engineer. Or or anything like that.

DEBRA

Yeah.

RAJEEV

Which is more like a professional consultancy.

DEBRA

Yes, yes.

RAJEEV

And then they could come in and take that help as they need it.

DEBRA

Yep.

RAJEEV

Or the second scenario is that as students you would want to contribute.

DEBRA

Right.

RAJEEV

You have skills. And now you feel like you want to be part of a team, or you want to contribute in a project.

DEBRA

Or learn how to run a business.

RAJEEV

Or learn how to run a business.

DEBRA

Right.

RAJEEV

And they could still come in.

DEBRA

They come in on on either stream and the match happens.

RAJEEV

So is this a is this is this program called something or.

DEBRA

It's it's it's it's again called, the peer to peer network. And if you go in through Startup Tree again, you come in through the Stu Clark Centre for Entrepreneurship website and then you, link in to the peer to peer network there. And so we're, you know, it's in its infancy stage, so it's just starting to grow and, but but we're trying to encourage.

JANINE

Yeah, that's great.

DEBRA

And the beauty of what students get working with students is, I think it's one of the most incredible things we can do.

RAJEEV

Yeah, absolutely.

DEBRA

Right. And then the second part of that one is, it's we haven't fully developed it yet, but it will work on the same principle where we will have, community businesses or business leaders think of, a marketing organization who's willing to give up, half an hour of their time a week to take a very specific question from a student on marketing.

JANINE

Okay.

RAJEEV

Oh that's interesting

DEBRA

So there's a lot of mentorship programs around like that. We we right now do that on a regular basis. We hook students up, you know, through band with other individuals who can assist them and help them, where we might not have the expertise or where they need something very specific. But being able, to allow students to come in to a platform and actually book an appointment with, you know, maybe a lawyer, maybe an IP lawyer, maybe a marketing expert on branding or websites.

You know, all of a sudden that provides them with another place where they can go, to solve their particular issues when they come up.

RAJEEV

Wow, that's that's, I think, amazing. And that's the need of the hour. Right. Because a lot of students nowadays, have a ton of ideas and maybe they're even working on it.

DEBRA

Right.

RAJEEV

And all they need to do is go ahead, create their account on startup tree folks, startup tree and go to Stu Clark's website. And then link up and.

DEBRA

They'll be able to find it.

RAJEEV

And then they'll be able to find it. Right.

DEBRA

And you know Rajeev, you're absolutely correct. Whether you're growing up in internally within an organization or whether you have your own business. We all hit blockages at times when we hit that barrier, that blockage sometimes of we can't readily find the answer. We give up. Yeah. And and sometimes when we find that answer, often it's a simple answer.

Yeah. And when we find it, we're able to move on to do greater things. So we're trying to ensure that when the blockages occur, we magically appear and help our students aAgain, in terms of, of, you know, finding continuing on that path forward.

JANINE

So, yeah, you know, as I listen to you talk to, I think a little bit about some of these like layers of benefits because of course, we all want to see students launched successfully. Like, that would be wonderful. Right. The impact of that. But there's also of course the learning component where a university, that's why they're here.

But then there's also like this, just like really beautiful, like experience as a university student, right?

DEBRA

Right, right.

JANINE

Like to meet other people like that. That could be a rich part of your time here on your part.

RAJEEV

That's right. The community part.

DEBRA

Is incredibly important because we're not we're not an island. We're not a silo. Throughout our careers. We all need people. We need to work with people. We need to collaborate. And so the more, opportunity you have to do that right here when you want to, you'll learn the fine art of what that's like.

JANINE

Yeah, lovely.

RAJEEV

Yeah. Thank you so much Debra for sharing all this.

DEBRA

And then then, you know, finally, in all of that, it culminates in, in, in what we're now calling innovate meets, which is, is really, again, that community where all of these people who are working with us through the centre can come into a larger community of all of all of the ones, that have been touched by us and are currently in process and can also have that peer to peer experience within, within a larger community through a variety of different things.

You know, a couple of those things are what we do with, with our webinar series. We do a webinar every two weeks and it's, housed online, in our resource center.

RAJEEV

That's right.

DEBRA

So, you can either join us live as part of our community, or you can, you can, catch it later on when you have time to.

We also have free resources on the website, terms of templates, business plan models and templates and everything. Or we link through to those areas that can really assist and helps students.

RAJEEV

That's right.

That that's the innovate meets is that larger community.

DEBRA

Yes.

RAJEEV

Which students can be part of the peer-to-peer help. They can get access to resources.

DEBRA

Yes.

RAJEEV

Continue their learning.

DEBRA

Exactly.

RAJEEV

You know, continuous learning is such an important thing as an entrepreneur.

DEBRA

Yes.

RAJEEV

Talking about learning, Debra, I cannot let you go today without, you talking about and telling our audiences about the, the wonderful educational programing.

DEBRA

Yes. That Stu Clark does, in partnership with Asper.

DEBRA

Yes.

RAJEEV

So why don't you just tell us a little bit about that.

DEBRA

I will do that. I think what's important to understand is, to the commercialization process, you know, from an entrepreneurship perspective, is, is a bit of an art and a science, and it is called entrepreneurship. And, and so what occurs there is you can get formal education, you know, through the Asper school, because we're the business school, it is definitely where the formal part of the education occurs.

And, you know, there are you can you can actually if you're an Asper student, you can, get an undergrad major or a concentration in entrepreneurship at the MBA, MBA level. But also there are a number of courses for non Asper students that, are also available for anybody else. As long as it works into your schedule.

I think the most critical ones to talk about is there is a mandatory entrepreneurship course at the undergrad level, and there is a parallel course offered at the to non Asper students that walks them through the same program about how to start a business at, the Stu Clark Centre. We actively support that by by actually putting on a pitch competition two times a year for 350 students each time.

So over the course of a year, 700 Asper and non Asper students and there's a lot of scientists and engineers and ag (agriculture) and art and, and recreational services and everything who come through that program. So there's a number of things from a formal education perspective that you can get through us and both Ben our, venture coach to start up coach and myself, both teach I at the MBA level been at the undergrad level, which also, you know, serves to hone our skills and, and ensure that, we're speaking the same language at the Stu Clark Centre versus, versus, in class and then the other the other thing I would say is, the Stu Clark Centre worked very, very closely with the Faculty of Science to develop and, a, entrepreneurial mindset course, which is I think will be running for its fifth time in Winter this year.

And Josh Zaporzan who was our startup coach at the time, helped to produce and is still teaching it now.

RAJEEV

I know the Faculty of Science, the Science Innovation Hub, the, the folks from there, talk very highly of it.

DEBRA

Yes.

RAJEEV

And the students have been through that program. I know some of them. And they have, they have, you know, their experience with the program has been really great.

DEBRA

Yes. I hear very, very good things.

RAJEEV

That's right.

DEBRA

Yeah.

RAJEEV

While we at that, we are talking about learning.

DEBRA

Yes.

RAJEEV

You know, I think you should talk about the new venture championship. Oh. It's coming. I mean, I can't wait for this edition.

DEBRA

Right, right. So the Stu Clark New Venture Championships are a international business plan competition, that we have put on long before I started. And I'm pretty sure, you know, close to 25 years now.

JANINE

Really, oh wow!

DEBRA

It continues to evolve and everything do. But it is, an international competition. And, Amy Jones is the mastermind behind that, and she puts on an amazing event.

We have 32 teams that are chosen 16 undergrads, 16 graduate level, and they're all vying for about \$60,000 in cash prize.

JANINE

Wow!

DEBRA

It's it's it's a wonderful, wonderful, high charged event with over 50 community judges coming in, senior leaders from, around our community who dedicate their time to come in and provide feedback and guidance to, to the, various, students.

JANINE

I have to get into this a little bit Debra, because I think these competitions are so interesting. Like, obviously there's this learning component of practicing your pitch, but the prize money is like significant.

DEBRA

Yes. Oh, yeah.

JANINE

For, for businesses who maybe really want to launch, like, can you share some.

RAJEEV

Maybe this is really a funding source.

JANINE

That's right.

DEBRA

That's right. Yes it is. It definitely is.

And the beauty there are a number of competitions that occur around North America. And some of our students go down to those competitions.

RAJEEV

Right.

DEBRA

But the beauty of us is we we we don't tell students, hey, how to spend the money. So the, top level, grad team gets 20,000, the top level undergrad team gets 10,000. And then we have various prizes, you know, from there, including, social entrepreneurship focus prize.

JANINE

Yeah, wonderful.

DEBRA

And so, our, students who win this money can use it for whatever they want, including, working on their business.

So we had, actually a Manitoba student, win the competition a couple of years ago, and he had a great idea for, you'll love this, marijuana packaging. Which packaging was it's hard to come by in Manitoba. He developed something that, and is very highly regulated. And he, he did win the 20,000, and, has put it into his business to.

RAJEEV

Really!

DEBRA

You know, to various things. So it's, so it's beautiful for students. They also get this amazing, coaching from the judges. And yet what we also find is sometimes the judges are so enamored by the various, business models and everything that they actually connect after in order to continue on with the relationship and, and assisting, after that.

DEBRA

So it really is a, you know, it's it's it's, it brings everybody together in this beautiful community of helping and and it's exciting.

JANINE

Yeah.

DEBRA

But when you hear some of these businesses, like, they're very sophisticated. We have, universities from all over North America. So Johns Hopkins, UBC, Waterloo, University of Florida, University of, California, Arkansas, which continually wins. They are the ones to watch,

because they, they seem to always win prizes no matter what. And often first I would definitely look to them to emulate whatever they're doing.

And we, it's just an amazing time. And these students, there's over 70 students by the time we're done. And they're all listening to these presentations, taking them in and and learning how to think on their feet, answer questions. And,

RAJEEV

I know I was there last day. Yeah. Yeah. I can't wait to attend this one.

DEBRA

Yeah. Good.

RAJEEV

And this is so exciting. And the whole atmosphere there. Right.

DEBRA

Yes.

RAJEEV

I mean, everybody is like minded. The kids get to meet, different teams from different geographies.

DEBRA

Yeah.

RAJEEV

They get to make friends. They get to spend time in, our beautiful city.

DEBRA

And, yes, we do.

RAJEEV

And also, you know, it gives them exposure in terms of what are the different ideas and how different teams are approaching these ideas.

DEBRA

Right.

RAJEEV

So it's it's great exposure.

DEBRA

Yeah. And I'd like to, make one other comment and that is I think there's only about three universities in Canada to run these competitions. This is the largest business plan competition.

RAJEEV

Largest business plan competition in Manitoba. Wow!

DEBRA

And and we are as a matter of fact, Amy does such a great job. We're renowned for for what we put on. So it's worth it to either, apply for. And if you can't apply for, come and watch it, because you'll be amazed.

JANINE

Yeah, I know it's not the target audience, Debra, but I've taken my youngest daughter, who's ten to all your pitch competitions because she's interested and she loves to watch. She loves to, you know, vote herself who she would, pick. And, so it's important for the the community is really promoting entrepreneurship.

DEBRA

And just one other, important thing that I forgot to talk about with students, and that is, with respect to, you know, the venture or the startup coach program itself, what Ben does on one on one coaching has now qualified, for the co-curricular record.

RAJEEV

Oh that's great.

DEBRA

So we're doing, we're, we're applying for a number of other things that we do to to be a part of that program.

So if you're looking at doing something, starting a business, it will now be recognized on your co-curricular record too. So yeah, it's another benefit at the University of Manitoba.

RAJEEV

Absolutely. That's a big one. Yeah.

JANINE

Yeah. And I think it's important because as we often say, these competencies are important whether you end up in a business or an organization.

RAJEEV

Yeah.

JANINE

So that's a way to demonstrate to an employer that I've been building these entrepreneurial thinking skills.

DEBRA

You just hit that nail on the head because, you know, I know as is working in private sector and, and hiring people that if somebody comes to the table with some kind of entrepreneurial background, we know they they really understand the entire business process.

JANINE

Yeah.

DEBRA

And, and, it really adds to, marketability as it relates to, the hiring process.

JANINE

Yeah.

DEBRA

Yeah.

RAJEEV

So I guess what we're saying is students even if you don't want to become entrepreneurs, necessarily.

DEBRA

Yes.

RAJEEV

But if you have an idea, go try it.

DEBRA

Go try it, yeah.

RAJEEV

And, it'll help you with your entrepreneurial skills and it'll help you with your career.

DEBRA

Go through the business planning process because you're gonna understand what that looks like and when. And, even if you work internally as an intrapreneur, you, you, you have a greater understanding of the bigger picture. And that's always critically important to employers.

JANINE

Yeah. Wonderful.

Well, Debra, thank you so much for joining us today on the IDEA START podcast. And we'll be sure to link, some of your resources to the episode so our audience can, explore further what's all available.

DEBRA

Well, I've greatly enjoyed it. Thank you, to you both, Janine and Rajeev and definitely to, IDEA START for, making these podcasts happen. I'm really thrilled to be here and really thrilled that you've, you've highlighted the Stu Clark Centre for Entrepreneurship.

RAJEEV

Well, well, as always, Debra, the pleasure is all ours.

DEBRA

Yeah. Thank you.

RAJEEV

Thank you, thank you.

Outro Montage

RAJEEV

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