

Student businesses get a boost

A business school program helps students put their ideas to work

By James Scripps
Oregon Daily Emerald

Starting a small business is a difficult task for students who are also juggling school and a social life, not to mention trying to make enough money to survive.

One outlet for students who are dealing with this difficult situation is the Braddock Education Success Team, a program that started three years ago at the University to tutor business students. Although this is still the main function of the program, it also has developed into a useful resource for student entrepreneurs.

"Our primary function is to be a resource for business students who need academic help," said Randy Nelson, director of BEST. "But we also do business plan development."

BEST helps students develop a structure for their new businesses, which helps determine whether

the idea is viable.

"Basically we saw that students who wanted to start their own businesses needed resources that we have the ability to coordinate. We can help provide students with everything from the expertise of experienced entrepreneurs to the knowledge of an accounting student."

A recent survey revealed that nearly 40 percent of business school students have an idea for a business, Nelson said.

The program has helped with the development of three business plans, including Robert Maris' Orca Designs, a company that makes longboards (long skateboards) and the Landsailor, an product that incorporates a longboard with the sail from a windsurfer.

Other businesses that received help from BEST but have not yet been started are a Mexican restaurant and an Internet provider.

Nelson is also working with the Lundquist Center, an arm of the business school that helps students coordinate classroom work with practical experience, to cre-

WHO: Braddock Education Success Team
WHAT: Tutoring for business students, and help for entrepreneurs.
WHERE: 271 Gilbert Hall
WHEN: Open Monday through Thursday, 12 to 6 p.m.

ate a student business incubator.

The idea behind the incubator is to create an environment where several student businesses can share resources such as staff, office space and equipment to help their enterprises get off of the ground.

Planners hope that the business incubator will be in operation by next year.

"If we are able to get the business incubator started, it will allow students to take the next step in advancing their business," said Barry Weisband, director of the Lundquist Center for Entrepreneurship. "It will provide inexpensive space, shared resources, expertise from University faculty and students and better access to capital."


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