

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY LAUNCHES GLOBAL CENTER FOR SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

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The following information was released by George Mason University:

George Mason University today announced the launch of the Mason Center for Social Entrepreneurship, a university-wide, multi-disciplinary initiative that seeks to position Mason at the vanguard of the social innovation movement.

"The Mason Center for Social Entrepreneurship will foster leaders, research and strategies for tackling major social challenges of the 21st Century," said Peter Stearns, Mason Provost. "Mason with its tagline, 'Where Innovation is Tradition,' is a natural place to break new ground in this ever-evolving field."

Roger Stough, Vice President for Research and Economic Development, announced the appointment of Greg Werkheiser as the center's inaugural managing director. Werkheiser, a lawyer, educator and social entrepreneur is founding director of The Phoenix Project. The Virginia-headquartered organization engages in social entrepreneurship-focused teaching, technology and partnership-building. Under Werkheiser's leadership, the Phoenix Project's team and programs will align with the new center.

"Greg has been devising new strategies for preparing leaders to meet society's great challenges for 15 years. We are very excited to welcome his passion and vision and the experience of his team to this defining effort of the university," Said Stough.

"Social entrepreneurs tackle failed social system economic, educational, and environmental with business savvy and solutions that stick," explained Werkheiser. "The world needs their audacity and we invite them to consider the center at Mason as a second home."

Paul Rogers, assistant professor of English will serve as faculty director and Philip Auerswald, associate professor in the School of Public Policy will serve as Senior Scholar, both helping to engage scholars in the work of the center. Deans and faculty members in several departments, including the School of Management, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, the School of Public Policy, and New Century College have all been instrumental in laying the groundwork for the center and will play a vital role in the its activities.

U.S. Senator Mark Warner, a long-time supporter of the social entrepreneurship movement, commented, "The new center is ideally situated for its mission: it is located on the campus of a university known for innovation, within sight of our Nation's Capital, in the middle of this region's world class information technology corridor, and surrounded by leading social sector organizations."

The center results from a year-long planning process involving a dozen academic and administrative units and draws on leadership university wide. Programs in 2011 will set the stage for the center's active engagement in

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GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY LAUNCHES GLOBAL CENTER FOR SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

finding entrepreneurial solutions to urgent challenges facing the region, the nation, and the world, combining legacy Phoenix Project programs, current Mason initiatives, and emerging efforts, including:

- * The Social Innovation Program, a six week academic and experiential summer institute, now in its sixth year, that prepares 30 top undergraduate and graduate students from a national applicant pool for roles as future social entrepreneurs.
- * The Accelerating Social Entrepreneurship Conference, the fourth in a series of national meetings, to be held in the early fall of 2011. The Corporation for National and Community Service cosponsored the last ASE conference, which featured panelists from the White House Office of Social Innovation, Google, and Microsoft and drew participants from 14 countries.
- * Changemaker Campus Activities, including infusing entrepreneurship pedagogy and practice throughout all academic departments, bringing social entrepreneurs from around the globe to campus, supporting student organizations and hosting campus-wide events catalyzed by Mason's partnership with Ashoka and membership in the AshokaU Consortium.
- * Innovations, a prominent journal featuring cases authored by experts in innovation; commentary and research from leading academics; and essays from globally recognized executives and political leaders. Harvard's Kennedy School of Government and MIT's Legatum center for Development and Entrepreneurship jointly host Innovations with Mason. Philip Auerswald is a co-founder of the journal, and serves as its co-editor.
- * AVAIL, a web-based portal in development with Learn and Serve America and technology company TRUiST to partner more effectively the nation's 15 million university students and faculty with community organizations around social entrepreneurship activities.
- * Social Innovation Professionals, a consulting firm comprised of center staff and affiliated faculty and students that provides social entrepreneurship-focused counsel to public, private, not-for-profit and academic institutions seeking to increase their social impact.
- * The Social Entrepreneurship Awards, a way to celebrate and invest in campus and community leaders whose research, outreach, or promising ideas represent the hope of the social innovation movement.
- * Innovation Speaker's Bureau, access for organizations worldwide to compelling spokespersons on entrepreneurship and innovation topics.
- * The Social Entrepreneur in Residence Program will welcome a leader to join in the Mason community's study and pursuit of ground-breaking ideas for social impact.

In its first year the center will also grow its research program to provide opportunities for faculty and students at all levels to explore the issues and analysis critical to the advancement of the field.

For more information on the Mason Center for Social Entrepreneurship, please visit www.masoninnovation.org.

About George Mason University

George Mason University is an innovative, entrepreneurial institution with global distinction in a range of academic fields. Located in Northern Virginia near Washington, D.C., Mason provides students access to diverse cultural experiences and the most sought-after internships and employers in the country. Mason offers strong undergraduate and graduate degree programs in engineering and information technology, organizational psychology, health care and visual and performing arts. With Mason professors conducting groundbreaking research in areas such as climate change, public policy and the biosciences, George Mason University is a leading example of the modern, public university. George Mason University Where Innovation Is Tradition.

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