

Create some "space" similar to makerspaces where students, staff and faculty can realize their creative ideas, share their passions and learn to be better

CURRENT CHALLENGE:

Innovation and Entrepreneurship have become the flagship in many companies and ACADEMIC CAMPUSES. Stanford and MIT, among numerous other universities, have supplied the society with many significant inventions and successful entrepreneurs. Having been in three different school at three different states has given me some perspective about innovation on campus. This is the challenge I want to address:

- The level of exposure of Fresno State students to innovation and entrepreneurship.
- The facility that fosters innovation, invention and creativity.

PROPOSED SOLUTION:

My solution is to create some "space" similar to makerspaces that have been done in many campuses around the USA. Makerspaces have been very successful wherever it's placed. Fresno Ideaworks is one good example. However, why don't our Fresno State students use Ideaworks' facility?

From my observation through Innoventures, a program sponsored by Lyles College of Engineering, and other student inventive projects, I have noticed a few things. Students pursuing the projects usually build things out in their garage with very limited number of tools and expertise. Their ideas are good, but the fabrication and execution are not well conducted. Those issues are the main obstacles impacting the success chance of their projects. Now, go back to the previous question. They don't use Ideaworks, in my opinions, because of several reasons.

- 1) The commute between Fresno State campus and Ideaworks site and the limited parking spaces there.
- 2) More importantly, the number and quality of tools there.
- 3) Probably most important reason is the lack of people with expertise there for students to seek advice. The lack of peer pressure and support from students with similar interests.

Creating a makerspace on Fresno State campus will address most if not all the hurdles listed above. I'm aware that to create such space, it will requires few crucial elements.

- 1) Space: at an appropriate and strategic location to maximize the visibility. The University will work with colleges and departments to make this happen. The Lyles College of Engineering is a very strong advocate for innovation and entrepreneurship.
- 2) Funding: money to furnish the space, acquire tools and hire people. The startup funding may be shared between University, colleges, departments and donors. The long-term operating cost can be covered by monthly membership fee.
- 3) Human resources: personnel to administer and supervise the "space".

Possible names for the "space": Creative Corner, Open Seed, MakerDog, etc.

BENEFITS TO FRESNO STATE:

If the "makerspace" is created, the immediate beneficiary will be Fresno State students. I know that lots of our students are creative and have very good, potential product ideas. What they need is a place that they can realize the ideas, share the passions and learn to be better. The "space" is very conveniently accessible for students as well as faculty and staff whoever want to work on their creative projects. Students can ask professors to visit their projects to give instant feedback. The "space" will be the place for people with similar interests in products and business to collaborate, cooperate and start their ventures. The visibility of the "space" will give a feeling of a dynamic and innovative campus. The students will be more active in many aspects of their campus life. If some startups are successfully launched from the projects at the "space", the waves of innovation and entrepreneurship will surely raise the level of our University. Together with the Lyles Center, the "space" will make Fresno State the central hub of innovative and creative activities.

Not only making Fresno State students more entrepreneurial and innovative, but the "space" can also serve Fresno residents. With the membership, they can use the facility and consultation offered at the "space" for their creative projects. If the "space" at Fresno State is successful, it will prompt other regional universities, colleges and high schools to follow. That movement will positively change the culture of Fresno and Central Valley into a very dynamic and innovative one. This is very similar to what Bitwise is doing to the IT business segment. All these changes will help in the development of our regional economy.