The 2015 SERS Program at Tennessee State University

Presented by
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INTRODUCTION

- The Student Engagement Retention Success Program at TSU
  - Relationship of program to mission of Center for Entrepreneurship and Economic Development (CEED)
  - Focus was on incoming low income, under-represented, minority engineering students and Davidson County high school students
Positive Outcomes

- CEED accomplished objective of merging concepts of entrepreneurship, engineering and STEM
- Students became critical thinkers and critical analysts
  - Used team building skills to solve problems
Positive Outcomes, Continued

- Students were able to create a product or service, prepare a business plan, and present to a panel of judges
  - Plans far exceed expectations

- Program was guided by a steering committee
Negative Outcomes

- Student participation impacted because of conflicting and competing events
- Not originally planning for the expenses related to a business plan competition
- Challenge in clearly identifying target group
  - Often access to students was for entire classes
Diversity Initiative

- Focused on low income, underrepresented minority students
- Diverse group of steering committee
  - Composed of faculty, staff, students, business leaders, business owners, government representatives
Army Corp of Engineers Project

- Field trip to Old Hickory Dam, hosted by Small Business Representative for the Army Corp
  - Information session with Army Corp engineers who talked about dams and production of power
  - Tour of the facility with a discussion of history
  - Information about engineering careers
Problem Solving Project

- Fathom Group Session on creativity

  - Fathom is a youth empowerment program which provides a place for students and community partners to collaborate

  - Guided students throughout a creativity project of developing a way to drop an egg without breaking it
Business Plan Competition

- Two student teams were formed
  - Mentored by graduate students
  - Followed the lean canvas model
  - Business ideas developed
    - Cell phone manufacturer that had upgradable parts – no need to buy new phone
    - Hair product and services for African American women – test hair and produce products specifically for each client
Other Projects

- Class visitations to discuss entrepreneurship, engineering and STEM
- High school visitations to discuss entrepreneurship, engineering and STEM
- Organization meetings to discuss entrepreneurship and engineering
- Career fair where various business owners came and made presentations
Pilot to Expansion Program

- Build on foundation of pilot program
- Change lean canvas approach to full business plan
- Introduce creative financing - crowdfunding
Conclusion

- **Suggestions**
  - Use program to build a pipeline for recruiting students
  - Plan adequately. Include sufficient amounts for administration
  - Seek partnerships with other organizations
  - Be creative in teaching students to be creative