



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 entrepreneurs, 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