

Berry College Student-Operated Enterprises

Executive Summary – January 5, 2010

Background

One of the key strategic goals for Berry College is to become the nation's premier four-year work experience institution. Meaningful work has been a cornerstone of a Berry education for over 100 years. In the early days, school founder Martha Berry required students to work in exchange for a portion of their tuition and other expenses. While the requirement for work disappeared in the 1960's, Berry continues to provide unparalleled opportunities for learning through the Work Experience Program and more than 95 percent of Berry students work during their four years on campus.

New Strategic Initiative

In late October 2008 President Steven Briggs and Provost Kathy Whatley charged Assistant Vice President Rufus Massey with leading an initiative to collaborate with students, staff and faculty to create student-operated enterprises. This new strategic initiative leverages the highly successful student work program, our outstanding students and Berry's incomparable campus.

Initial focus of the assignment was to convert existing campus enterprises to student-operated enterprises and to begin to identify new enterprises.

Goals of the program are to provide students with increased opportunities for higher level positions within the work program, increased responsibility through planning and operating their own enterprises, opportunity to gain valuable life skills and business skills and to enhance the academic experience by allowing students to use lessons learned in the classroom in a practical setting.

Model for Success

Student-operated enterprises are developed and managed by teams of students working in cooperation with a staff or faculty co-manager (mentor/coach). These businesses remain under the auspices of Berry College with revenues being returned to the institution for direct costs, student salaries and other infrastructure cost recovery.

Students are paid through the student work program and compete for positions specific for each enterprise. They are responsible for developing and implementing project plans, followed by business/financial/marketing plans. Side by side with the co-manager, the students operate the enterprise and ensure succession plans are in place providing continuity for the enterprise after graduation.

External business leaders and internal faculty and administrators serve on an Advisory Board to all the enterprises. This experienced and motivated group provides coaching, feedback and support to student leaders in the development and growth of their enterprises.

The Berry initiative is very unique in terms of the types of enterprises and the responsibility being shifted to student leaders. Benchmarking continues however through key learnings from programs at the University of Dayton and University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Learning Outcomes

Expected learning outcomes for students involved in student-operated enterprises include:

- Life skills
 - public speaking
 - high performance team building
 - interpersonal communications
 - conflict resolution
 - negotiation
- Business planning
- Marketing and Communications planning
- Succession planning
- Business operations
- Sales, delivery, customer service
- Finance and accounting strategies
- Project Management
- Risk Management
- Web marketing & social media (see <http://berrystudententerprises.com>)

Progress

The initiative was met with much enthusiasm by students, staff, faculty, alumni, trustees and friends of the institution. Within ninety days, the students initiated three pilot projects complete with objectives, scope, timeline, responsibilities, benefits, deliverables, risk assessment, project team organization and initial business plans.

By end of spring semester 2009, nine pilot projects were up and running along with a 'shared services' student team designed to provide 'corporate level' support for the enterprises. The 'shared services' enterprise, Berry Enterprises Student Team (B.E.S.T.) works closely with Enterprise Development AVP to ensure enterprises align with institution departments particularly finance, marketing/public relations and legal. BEST students provide support to all enterprises in their area of expertise including business planning, accounting/finance, marketing/communications, project management and web design/social media. BEST students meet weekly with AVP for planning purposes and are maintain offices in Green Hall room 113.

As approved by AVP, Provost and President, seven projects, plus the shared services enterprise transitioned into fully functioning student-operated enterprises over the summer and are up and running today. Two enterprises are currently in pilot project phase.

Training and development activities for all enterprise students/co-managers include:

- Marketing/Public Relations – workshop completed
- Legal/Risk Management – workshop completed
- Advisory Board meeting – workshop completed
- Enterprise student work positions– workshop completed (co-managers only)
- Accounting processes – planning sessions completed (Milk, Angus, Cottages)
- Innovation Conference – conference focused on Angel/Venture Capital investors
- Financial/business office – workshop planned spring semester, 2010

BEST enterprise has planned and coordinated two very successful Farmers Market events showcasing student-operated enterprises to the campus and local communities, along with a showcase of enterprises for Special Donor Appreciation event at Oak Hill. Showcase opportunities have also been coordinated during Mountain Day and at Alumni Work Week and for Board of Visitors and Board of Trustees meetings.

Recognition

Excitement for this initiative is so high that our student-operated enterprise leaders have been asked to speak about their enterprises on a regular basis. Over the last few months they have made presentations to Board of Visitors, New Romans organization, Alumni Council, Ag Alumni Chapter, East Tennessee Alumni Chapter, Class of 1956 reunion, Board of Visitors, Daughters of Berry, Campbell School Executive Advisory Council, Student-Operated Enterprises Board of Advisors, parents and potential new students at Discovery Berry, student government association and a variety of radio, newspaper and magazine interviews (Georgia Magazine, St Louis Post-Dispatch, Forbes columnist book interview, WLAQ & WRGA radio shows, Campus Carrier, Viking Fusion, Rome News Tribune, Berry Alumni Magazine, Berry Alumni Accent).

Freedoms Foundation of Valley Forge recently selected Enterprise Development AVP as recipient of 2010 Leavey Award for Excellence in Private Enterprise Education. Formal recognition for accomplishments of the Berry student-operated enterprise program will be made during special awards ceremony in March, 2010, at the Leavey Educational Summit to be held in Philadelphia.

Berry College Student-Operated Enterprise initiative is a clear example of what can happen when students are given the chance to explore, learn and take risks in a private enterprise system.

Student-Operated Enterprises - Executive Summaries

Following pages include executive summaries of current enterprises and pilot projects. In addition to these current enterprises, several others are being explored including a reading clinic for disadvantaged children, herb garden, composting enterprise, outdoor leadership enterprise, storage facility and a potential video production enterprise. Students, staff, faculty and trustees have generated over 180 business concepts as potential student-operated enterprises. Student Government Association is planning a survey of all students to assist in prioritizing this list of concept

Berry College Student-Operated Campus Enterprises

Executive Summaries

The Berry Farms Angus Beef

In partnership with a local USDA certified processor, this team offers select cuts of meat to the local Berry and Rome community. The team utilizes a phased approach to processing and packaging to provide healthy and better-tasting products from a trusted food source.

The Berry Farms Jersey Milk

This energetic team is directly marketing Berry College Jersey milk (for the first time since 1959). Customer base includes Berry and local community. Business partners include the Dairy Farmers Association (DFA), for transportation of raw milk, and Cagle Dairy, for processing and transport of bottled products. Students are directly involved in marketing, sales, delivery and accounting for this enterprise. Options for processing are being researched which include other local milk processors as well as feasibility of on-campus processing/manufacturing plant.

The Cottages at Berry

This team's goal is to reinvent the bed and breakfast experience at The Cottages. Team members provide accommodating and affordable lodging services in a tranquil atmosphere surrounded by an unforgettable natural landscape. Increased attention to comfort, service, hospitality and guest amenities are being offered to the Berry community market. The team has developed partnerships with other student run enterprises to offer Berry distinctive products and services (e.g., The Berry Farms Jersey Milk and future bicycle tours or rental packages provided by Viking Cycle Works).

The Berry Farms Season's Harvest

Objective of the sustainable garden is to provide an educational opportunity and further the organic cause in the community. Team goals include providing healthy, local produce and to reduce our collective carbon footprint. Volunteers participate in the project and two large scale Farmers' Markets have been conducted to showcase Student Operated Enterprises.

The Berry Farms Jersey Beef

This team provides healthy, tender meat products utilizing Jersey steers derived from the dairy operations. The team offers customers whole, side or quarter steer portions in partnership with USDA certified facility handling processing, packaging and product pickup.

Berry Alumni Collection

This enterprise, currently housed at the Alumni Center will provide robust on-line store in partnership with the existing Gift Shop at Oak Hill, which currently has a limited online presence. Online component will be enhanced to include a wider variety of alumni merchandise. Initial event sales, with smaller quantities of merchandise, have been undertaken to test markets. New online application will be procured. Purchasing, inventory, receiving/shipping processes will be developed to support the future online environment.



The Berry Farms Jersey Genetics

This team works in collaboration with the Jersey Marketing Service and the American Jersey Cattle Association to provide genetics products to breeders world-wide. Leveraging the strong genetic basis inherent in the Berry Dairy herd, the team utilizes professional veterinary services to harvest and market high quality embryos to breeders with recipient animals.

Viking Cycle Works *(pilot project)*

This pilot project will launch March 1, 2010. With a slogan of 'you break it, we fix it', this bike shop team seeks to solve the perennial problem of basic bike repairs as a service to students. The team will also carry a small line of replacement parts and in future phases of the project will partner with other student run enterprises such as The Cottages. A limited rental program, available to students, faculty, staff, alumni and official campus guests is envisioned as a future phase of the project. The team has begun to form partnerships with local bike shops and will refer customers for bicycle purchases and more complicated repairs.

Berry Nonprofit Strategic Services *(pilot project)*

As a new pilot project, this enterprise will help promote growth and sustainability within other non-profit organizations by providing business planning and strategic planning services. Initially, this enterprise will work with local organizations and eventually will expand beyond the local Rome/Floyd County community. This work will benefit a vast array of start-up, crisis mode and established non-profit organizations.

Berry Enterprises Student Team (BEST)

This team provides support services to all student enterprises and serves as the liaison to various institution departments, including the Finance office, Marketing and Public Relations office and General Counsel. Positions include consultants in these areas of expertise:

- Accounting/Finance
- Business management/Risk Management
- Project management
- Web design
- Marketing/Communications