

Writing an Innovation and/or Entrepreneurship Philosophy Statement

Your innovation and/or entrepreneurship philosophy should reflect your personal values and beliefs about innovation and/or entrepreneurship. It is a self-reflective statement that describes what you believe and provides concrete examples of what you do to support those beliefs. It is written in the first person and should convey a professional image of your innovation and/or entrepreneurship. A well-developed innovation and/or entrepreneurship philosophy will provide a way to purposefully assess your innovation and/or entrepreneurship approach and enable you to articulate your innovation and/or entrepreneurship beliefs and values to your students, your peers, and others.

Most innovation and/or entrepreneurship philosophy statements are 1-4 pages long and cover three core areas: objectives, methods, and evaluation. They tend to be discipline-specific and will have nuances that reflect that. An innovation and/or entrepreneurship philosophy is also a document in progress, and it should change and evolve as your innovation and/or entrepreneurship experiences build.

Core Areas

What are your objectives as an innovator and/or entrepreneur?

It is important to start by describing where you want to end. In other words, what are your objectives as an innovator and/or entrepreneur? The rest of your philosophy statement should support these objectives which should be achievable and relevant to your responsibilities; avoid vague or overly grandiose statements. On the other hand, you will want to demonstrate that you strive for more than mediocrity or only nuts-and-bolts transference of facts.

Consider these writing prompts:

- Do you hope to foster critical innovation and/or entrepreneurial strategies, facilitate the acquisition of life-long skills, or prepare mentees to function effectively in an innovative and entrepreneurial economy?
- What is your role in orienting students, to what it means to be an innovative and/or entrepreneurial person in your field?
- How do you delineate your areas of responsibility as compared to your mentee' responsibilities?
- In what specific ways do you want to improve the mentorship of students in your field?

- Are there discussions in academic journals or in professional organizations about shortcomings in the mentorship of students today or unmet needs in the discipline and do you have ideas about how to address those shortcomings and needs?

How will you achieve those objectives?

Once you have a clear vision of your innovation and/or entrepreneurship objectives, you can discuss the methods you use, or will use, to achieve those objectives. Here is also where you can elaborate on your knowledge of innovation and/or entrepreneurship theory as the topic(s) relate to the innovation and/or entrepreneurship strategies you implement.

It is useful to explain specific strategies or methods you use and tie these strategies directly to your innovation and/or entrepreneurship objectives. For example, if you include a field trip as part of your mentorship, what are the learning objectives associated with the fieldtrip? How do you decide whether to use collaborative or individual projects based on your innovation and/or entrepreneurship objectives? When appropriate, relate your strategies to national-level needs for innovation and/or entrepreneurship in your discipline. If you have developed mentorship materials that have been or could be disseminated, be sure to discuss them and how they support your innovation and/or entrepreneurship objectives and possibly national-level disciplinary objectives.

How will you measure your innovation and/or entrepreneurship effectiveness?

In this section discuss how you intend to measure your effectiveness relative to the objectives and methods you have outlined. Because your innovation and/or entrepreneurship objectives are most likely related to mentees, you will probably use measures of mentee attainment of mentorship outcomes. Consider having a peer to evaluate your innovation and/or entrepreneurship efforts and provide input on the quality of innovation and/or entrepreneurship materials you have developed. Having multiple methods of evaluation rather than just a single source provides a more comprehensive picture of your innovation and/or entrepreneurship effectiveness.

Why?

A final section to include in your innovation and/or entrepreneurship philosophy statement is quite simply- Why do you pursue innovation and/or entrepreneurship? Here is where you can be, if not grandiose, at least a bit grand. What, to you, are the personal rewards of innovation and/or entrepreneurship? How do you want to make the world better? When you are overworked and feel undervalued, to what ideals do you return to rejuvenate yourself and inspire your mentees? How do you want to make a difference in the lives of your mentees? Why does innovation and/or entrepreneurship matter to you?

Summary

Responses to these questions will require some reflective thought and you will likely benefit from discussing them with other faculty. Consider bouncing your responses off your colleagues, ponder their responses, re-evaluate your positions, revise, talk some more, etc. Over time your responses will change to reflect how you have grown and changed as an innovator and/or entrepreneur. Think of your innovation and/or entrepreneurship philosophy as a work in progress over the course of your career.

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