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Faculty Entrepreneurial Spirit

By Klydi Heywood



Entrepreneurial spirit is often exemplified through students and alumni, but Huntsman faculty are not to be overlooked. Recently two Huntsman distance education professors saw a problem to be solved that had the potential to impact not only their students' lives, but also the communities around them.

When the USU Brigham City campus founded its own Entrepreneurship Club chapter last year, it quickly found that it took more time than originally planned. Many of the students hold full-time jobs and are the primary financial support for their families. Dr. Cynthia Gibson, lecturer in business management and the Box Elder County Economic Development Liaison, saw that the solution lay in a paid internship position for the club leadership.

"First, Dean Tom Lee needed to approve the idea, and second, we needed to find the funding for it," Dr. Gibson said. "Dean Lee immediately saw the vision, and it was such a blessing when the funding announcement came this spring."

The club chapter has three divisions: projects, economic development and service. The paid intern's responsibilities will include organizing consulting projects with local small businesses, working with the local Rotaract Club to execute service projects, and leading a marketing plan for a portion of the Box Elder County tourism department.



"This club will truly benefit the community from many angles," Dr. Gibson said.

Accounting professor Rhett Hunt also saw a challenge with his students in conjunction with local CPA firms in Roosevelt, Utah. Many of the firms were apprehensive about hiring accounting students full-time without them having prior field experience.

Professor Hunt's recently awarded RCDE grant will reimburse an accounting firm up to 20 hours a week during tax season for one student's work. Then at the end of the season, it is up to the firm to decide if they want to hire the student.

"The demand is on both sides," Professor Hunt said. "We hope this will help local firms invest in USU students and what we're doing out here. This also gives students hope that they can stay in the community they love and use their education."

"We are impressed and deeply grateful for the entrepreneurial spirit shown by both Cynthia and Rhett and for their initiative in always focusing on our students," Dean Douglas D. Anderson said.