



**ALLAN P. KIRBY CENTER
FOR FREE ENTERPRISE
AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

WILKES UNIVERSITY

Activity Report June 2015 – May 2016

The **INSTITUTE** for

Public Policy & Economic Development
at Wilkes University

A collaboration among Keystone College, King's College, Lackawanna College, Luzerne County Community College, Marywood University, Misericordia University, Penn State Wilkes-Barre, The Commonwealth Medical College, University of Scranton & Wilkes University

Allan P. Kirby Center for Free Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Annual Report 2016

The Allan P. Kirby Center for Free Enterprise and Entrepreneurship (APKCFEE), located on the campus of Wilkes University, serves Northeast Pennsylvania in the development of businesses. The Center also functions within the university as an affiliate of the Jay S. Sidhu School of Business and Leadership, working with undergraduate and graduate students to provide real world experience and application of the principles learned in the classroom. The APKCFEE was founded in 1993 by Allan P. Kirby, who was serving on the Wilkes University Board of Trustees, as a way to honor his father, the late F.M. Kirby. In July of 2014, the Kirby Board of Managers appointed Rodney S. Ridley Sr., Ph.D., to be the new director of the Allan P. Kirby Center. The aim and goals of the Center have remained the same since its establishment: “to launch and run the businesses of the future,” to build and develop the entrepreneurial climate of Wilkes-Barre and Northeastern Pennsylvania, and “to pursue the constitutional goals of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness through the free enterprise system and entrepreneurship.”



Business Development

A total of twelve businesses were started in the 2015-2016 academic school year. The Allan Kirby Center supplied these new businesses with 680 hours of consultation, and provided intellectual property assistance, including patents, trademarks, and copyrights. In addition to aiding in the development of new companies, the center also consulted and assisted 22 existing businesses. The primary forms of assistance given to the existing businesses were commercialization and the application for products patents.

	Numbers
Businesses Started	12
Consulting Hours	680
Existing Business	22
Consulting Hours	390
Jobs Created	29
Revenue Change	\$1,084,800
Intellectual Property	12
Commercialization	12
Royalty Revenue	0
Capital Secured	\$405,000
Student Engagement	11
Incubator Tenants	5
Services Provided	See Below
Job Growth	0
Jobs Retained	78
Success Stories	The Bearded Ladies & Co., Bepa Studio, Snowmoon llc

A recent addition to the Kirby Center is the Wilkes Enterprise Center (business incubator), a space dedicated for developing businesses. During the year, five new companies occupied this space: Kraken Boardsports, a supplier of outdoor recreational products; Magnesium Works, a company that manufactures therapeutic wraps and treatments for physiological ailments; MC2 Consulting Group, which offers Business Development and Training for leadership at all levels; Penn 3D, an Additive Manufacturing company; and Purely Social, a business focused on social media and digital marketing.

Community & Industry Outreach

The APKCFEE worked in cooperation with 28 other statewide organizations to participate in a community and industry outreach. Such organizations varied from universities, to technology and science associations, and local economic institutions. Some of the institutions were the Greater Wilkes-Barre and Greater Scranton Chambers of Commerce, United States Association for Small Business and Entrepreneurship (USASBE), Association of University Technology Managers (AUTM), International Business Innovation Association (INBIA), Ben Franklin Technology Partners of Northeastern Pennsylvania, and Lehigh and East Stroudsburg Universities.



Education

The Kirby Scholars Program provides Wilkes University students, graduate or undergraduate, an opportunity to work hands-on in their field while also acting as a resource to the Center. Scholars must be among the top-performing students in their area of study, and are carefully chosen through a rigorous selection process. The Kirby Scholars for the 2015/2016 academic year are as follows:

Title	Name	Major Area of Study
Kirby Scholar	Brian Surdovel	Accounting
Kirby Scholar	Thomas Carton	Business
Kirby Scholar	Nicole Zukowski	Communications
Kirby Scholar	Justin Topa	Communications
Kirby Scholar	Emily Messinger	Education
Kirby Scholar	Kayla Gradwohl	Engineering
Kirby Scholar	James Musto	Integrative Media
Kirby Scholar	Emily Absalom	Legal
Junior Kirby Scholar	Taylor Barker	Business
Junior Kirby Scholar	Nicole Kutos	Integrative Media

In addition to assisting in the development of new businesses, the APKCFEE also offers academic courses on entrepreneurship and economics. All of these courses are considered part of “Continuing Professional Education” for the professionals. Five such classes were conducted during the year, along with four presentations on similar subjects at regional high schools, the Hazleton Chamber of Commerce, and the Great Valley Angel Network. The total enrollment for these courses and programs was 154 individuals. Training Events are also provided throughout the year, including competitions, conferences, lectures series, seminars, and showcases on various topics.

Mentors

APKCFEE has formed alliances with many local business professionals, having them serve as mentors for the center's entrepreneurs. Mentors guide these new business owners in whatever aspect needed. Among the thirty one mentors, there is representation from four law firms, three accounting firms, ten businesses, three manufacturers, one university (Wilkes), and one school district. This variety of occupational backgrounds offers a solid foundation for all students and clients involved in mentorship process.



Survey Results

At the completion of the academic year, a client survey was conducted. A total of nine clients participated in giving feedback. Two of the clients were affiliated with Wilkes University (Microgrant recipients), the other seven were not. Only one of the clients was a tenant in the Business Incubator. The clients were asked to identify the types of assistance received (eight responded) the most common responses were: Mentorship (50%), Business Development (37.5%), and Graphic Design (25%). Four clients answered to the outcomes of their business after help from the center. Outcomes listed were job creation, job retention, prototype development, and students engaged. Eight of the nine clients responded to the question of their services and outcomes. When asked if they would refer APKCFEE to other potential clients, eight out of nine surveyed responded "yes." When asked about the quality of services provided on a scale of one to five: one client answered "2," three clients answered "4," and five clients answered "5." There were several responses as to how the overall experience with APKCFEE could be improved, including better communication, further help and guidance, and assistance with marketing.

Kirby Lecture Series

The Allan P. Kirby Center for Free Enterprise and Entrepreneurship (APKCFEE) hosts two lectures per year, one in the fall and one in the spring. The APKCFEE brings in speakers to lecture about topics of entrepreneurship and the creativity that helps drive it. The forums are open to the public and free of charge, so members of both the student body and the wider community are encouraged to attend. These lectures are meant to encourage attendees to pursue entrepreneurship, which will hopefully lead to a thriving business ecosystem in the Wilkes-Barre area.

The fall 2015 Kirby Lecture Series, featured Michael Reagan, son of the late former President Ronald Reagan. Mr. Reagan is an author, a news commentator, and a radio host. In October of 2015, Reagan delivered a speech entitled "Know Your Audience," in which he shared with his audience the importance of beginning lectures or speeches with a story and being able to relate the topic of discussion with the audience. Reagan also spoke of his father's presidency, reminding his audience that "If you never fail, you'll never really understand success," and to remember that we can all achieve great things if we "don't worry who gets the credit."

In March 2016, Mary Fisher was the lector. Ms. Fisher is an activist, and author, and an author. She is an advocate for universal women's empowerment and health care reform, especially the revised view and treatment of AIDs patients. Fisher delivered a speech about xenophobia and how it relates to entrepreneurship. She and her family have felt the effects of xenophobia when Fisher was diagnosed as HIV positive, and she argues it is the "enemy of entrepreneurship." She also talked about women's business problems, and how that things like poverty and inadequate education are just some of the problems holding not just women back, but also global entrepreneurship.



CLIENT PROFILE:

Owner: Danielle Mimms

The Bearded Ladies & Co.

East Center Hill Road

Dallas, PA 18612

Web: <http://thebeardedladiesandco.com/>

County: Luzerne

Industry:

Dog Care Products - Retail

Year Founded:

2015

Assistance Provided:

Branding

Marketing/Market Positioning

Intellectual Property Mgmt.

Financial Analysis

Business Planning

Industry Resources Access

Danielle Mimms is a loving dog mother of two, as well as a rising entrepreneur. She started her business in mid 2015 and has been growing it ever since. Her company is centered on products for dogs to travel with their owners, inspired by Danielle's own love of traveling the United States with her husband and two dogs, a miniature schnauzer and Kerry blue terrier. Both Danielle and her husband have jobs in NEPA, but their hearts are with their traveling excursions.

The idea for Danielle's product was created out of personal necessity. Danielle wanted to create a product that would eliminate her metal dog crate scratching her car's leather seats every time she traveled with her pups. Danielle did extensive research for something that she could buy to protect the interior of her car, but could not find the product she was imagining. Therefore, Danielle decided to put her creative talents to use and make a product that fulfilled her needs.

It was a product other pet owners would be interested in. Danielle went through many iterations of her product, tweaking the design to best fit the standard crates and to make the product more versatile. Danielle inadvertently filled a need in the pet accessory industry by creating a multi-functioning crate carrier, dog bed, and detachable leash. From her original design, she has branched out with an array of different products.

These products are not in the typical brick and mortar store of her own. Danielle and her husband do not wish to be tied to one location with this business. It was their love for travel that brought the business forth, and they do not wish to forgo their passion because of it, so she has chosen to only sell in other boutiques and online. As of right now, she is in the process of getting a website up and running, but she is having fun traveling and going to different online boutiques with her products. As previously mentioned, Danielle and her husband have a miniature schnauzer and a Kelly blue terrier. Both of her dogs are female and have little beards of fur. Since her dogs are her inspiration, she named the company after them--The Bearded Ladies and Co. When this business was a concept, Danielle chose to work with the Allan P. Kirby Center at Wilkes University (APKCFEE). She remains a client of the APKCFEE so she can reach her desired goal for the business.

At the genesis of her company, Danielle knew she had a feasible product, she understood she needed assistance in certain areas in order to become a sustainable business. She came to the APKCFEE looking for guidance in this venture back in the summer of 2015 and remains an active client over a year later. Some of the services that the APKCFEE have provided to Danielle for her business include: branding, marketing, market positioning, intellectual property management, financial analysis and projections, business plan development, and assistance with accessing industry resources.



CLIENT PROFILE:

Owner: Michele Geiser
 Bepa Studio
 Dallas, PA
 Web: <http://www.bepastudio.com/home.html>
 Phone: (570) 814-0036
 County: Luzerne
 Industry:
 Art & Photography
 Year Founded:
 2013

Assistance Provided:
 Financial Analysis
 Operations Analysis
 Marketing Analysis
 Recordkeeping
 Networking

Bepa Studio was created in 2013 by artist, M. Michele Geiser, when family and friends encouraged her to pursue her creative abilities professionally.

The meaning of Bepa is roughly translated to faith. Through her photography and her distinctive ability of digital vision, she carries out the idea of faith with a strong connection to nature.

Born and raised in Pennsylvania, Michele has grown to appreciate the ever changing beautiful seasons, and world around us. Desiring to share life's moments, that slip away never to exist again, is part of who she is. Creating art gives her the opportunity to allow these moments to survive endlessly, and also incorporate her strong connection to nature.

Currently living in the Back Mountain area of Northeastern Pennsylvania, Michele has a love for travel and will visit anywhere just to gain the experience. Having worked in both interior and floral design, she has been able to take her artistic gift to the next level with her unique digital design talents.

By creating Bepa Studio, she wanted a way to make individuals recognize the beauty in everyday surroundings that are not usually seen. With photos ranging from 11 countries, throughout the Northern Hemisphere (that are turned into unique works) Bepa Studio strives to share its intimacy with nature in a way that others may also come to appreciate the beauty and splendor of Earth's elements, God's creations.

Among her love for nature photography, Michele also enjoys painting, sketching, reading, traveling, and is strong in her faith.

Michele began to work with the APKCFEE in 2015 as a way to grow her business. Michele is an artist first and foremost and was looking for mentorship for the business side of things. Since becoming a client of the Center, Michele has received help in many areas especially recordkeeping, operational analysis and marketing analysis. Michele is also a recipient of the APKCFEE Micro-Grant program, for which she submitted a formal application and received an award for use in business operations. Michele will continue to be a valued client of the APKCFEE. Both she and the Center staff have enjoyed their relationship thus far.

Center Staff

DR. RODNEY S. RIDLEY, SR. • EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR

Dr. Ridley has expanded APKC's mission to include creating and running the businesses of the future. He is the founding Director of the Wilkes Business Incubator and Technology Transfer Office. Prior to his current position, he was Director of & Associate Professor in the Engineering & Physics Division at Wilkes University. Prior to joining Wilkes, he held the positions of Engineering Director at Velox Semiconductor, Vice-President of Technology at Data Friendly Inc, and Principal Engineer & Key Technologist at Fairchild Semiconductor. His research interests include semiconductors, nanotechnology, biotechnology and intellectual property management. He actively consults in these areas with companies like GE and Texas Instruments. He holds 27 patents, authored numerous articles, has been a keynote speaker and serves on several boards & committees. He holds a PhD in Engineering Science & Mechanics and an M.S. degree in Electrical Engineering, both from Penn State University. He also received a B.S. degree in Physics from Lincoln University (PA).

MR. CHARLES J. PIERCE • ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Prior to his current position, Mr. Pierce held various consulting positions at the Wilkes University Small Business Development Center (SBDC) and was the most recent Assistant Director/Interim Director. He earned the prestigious ASBDC State Star Award for Pennsylvania in 2012, which is given to recognize the best employee in the Pennsylvania SBDC network. Prior to joining Wilkes, he owned his own small business, which had him in direct contact with many local real estate offices as a property maintenance specialist. His areas of expertise center on small business continuity services, financial analysis and valuations, and general small business operations. He has conducted many local seminars on topics within these areas and has also presented and partnered with many local economic development agencies.

He holds an MBA and a BBA with a concentration in finance and marketing, both from Wilkes University. He also holds specialized training in community and economic development, disaster preparedness, and machinist services.

MR. GERALD EPHAULT • EXECUTIVE-IN-RESIDENCE AND ADJUNCT PROFESSOR

Gerald Ephault is the Executive-in-Residence of the Allan P. Kirby Center for Free Enterprise and Entrepreneurship at Wilkes University. Mr. Ephault also serves as an Adjunct Professor in the Jay S. Sidhu School of Business and Leadership. He previously served as Chairman of the Industrial Advisory Committee of Wilkes University's Engineering and Physics Department. His relevant business experience includes technology transfer and entrepreneurial development activities as the Pocono Regional Manager for the Ben Franklin Technology Partners of Northeastern Pennsylvania, Lehigh University; and previously as Plant Manager for a major book manufacturing corporation. He received a MBA from Marywood University and undergraduate degrees from the University of Scranton.

Ms. Lorna Galiford • Office Assistant

Ms. Galliford is responsible for coordinating office activities and logistics for the Kirby Scholars and meetings and events. She also coordinates the communications and marketing of events and activities of the Center while provide office support to the staff.



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