

GEORGE W. TRUETT THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Baylor Ecclesial Entrepreneurship Program (BEEP)

Rationale:

The Baylor Ecclesial Entrepreneurship Program (BEEP) embeds scholarship and the practice of Christian social innovation within an existing entrepreneurship ecology. Christian social innovation is a collaborative enterprise (Jones and Hogue, *Navigating the Future*), and BEEP intends to expand the collaborative structures that enrich a dynamic entrepreneurship ecology, at Truett, across Baylor, and in the surrounding Waco community.

Second, BEEP responds to the shifting contexts that surround the life of faith and the competencies that ministry requires. While ministry has always required creativity and resourcefulness, the contemporary demands of religious leadership invite a new imagination for innovation. Spiritual entrepreneurship begins with the “who” and attends to the contexts that surround faith (Dean, *Innovating for Love*). Drawn forth by love, BEEP expresses a hopeful craft of ecclesial renewal. This future can be carried by resourcing and expanding two expressions that guide work at these intersections: [The Program for the Future Church](#) (PFFC) and Truett’s M.A. in [Contextual Witness and Innovation](#). The PFFC is a collaborative community that pilots solutions for the emerging and pressing challenges facing the Church. Similarly, the newly launched M.A. expands the notion of calling to include all kinds of giftings and vocations. It affirms that genuine and impactful witness to Christ takes place through our engagement with critical problems locally and around the world.

Third, BEEP connects the study and practice of entrepreneurship to local congregations. BEEP will advance Truett’s educational mission “for and alongside the church” by enriching the connections and imagination that sustain the ecclesial ecology that surrounds Baylor, Waco, and Truett graduates. Following Benac’s work in *Adaptive Church*, which describes the relationship between ecclesial entrepreneurs and an ecclesial ecology, we see the need to strengthen these connections as sites for renewing ecclesial imagination in and through theological education.

Purpose:

Four objectives guide the proposed project:

1. Pilot a credit-bearing incubator that enables Truett students to learn spiritual entrepreneurship alongside local ministers, nonprofit leaders, graduates, and entrepreneurs.
2. Build upon existing initiatives and adjacent expertise to enhance the ecclesial entrepreneurship ecology at Baylor and within Waco.
3. Nurture partnerships and funders to sustain the piloted initiative and provide local ecclesial entrepreneurs with funding for their ventures.
4. Provide flexible curriculum options for students who wish to pursue theological education in support of broader entrepreneurial efforts.

Truett is ideally located to pilot the proposed initiatives. Following a period of institutional innovation that gave rise to the two lead partners, there is now a network of collaborators and experiments to start and sustain this work. Moreover, as a seminary embedded at a R1 university, the project team can pilot the program and publish findings.

Project Team:

Dr. Dustin Benac and Dr. Mike Stroope will serve as co-directors for the proposed project. Dr. Stroope will oversee the curricular aspects, and Dr. Benac will oversee the community-based partnerships. The PFFC’s Project Manager, Juli Kalbaugh, will oversee BEEP’s financials.

Program Design:

BEEP will pilot a credit-bearing incubator that includes six modules. This course follows the Models and Practice of Christian Social Innovation course and is organized around six guiding questions:

1. Who is an innovator?

This module will explore questions of identity, belonging, and the relationship between new ideas and the broader community that catalyzes and sustains spiritual entrepreneurship.

2. What keeps us from innovating?

This module will explore the personal, contextual, and institutional barriers to innovation. Students will leave with the ability to assess the assets and limitations in their context in order to determine the type(s) of innovations to cultivate.

3. Where does innovation take place?

This module explores the contextual character of spiritual entrepreneurship, grounding participants' work and imagination in relation to the particular communities they serve.

4. What are the best practices for spiritual entrepreneurship?

This module explores the concrete practices and processes that guide spiritual entrepreneurship. Combining practical insights with guidance from practitioners, this module will equip students to move an idea to design and pilot and then explore ways in which to scale their innovation for impact.

5. How do we unlock the individual and collective imagination spiritual entrepreneurship requires?

This module will prepare students for the "Start Up Bus" learning event by exploring the form(s) of imagination that spiritual entrepreneurship requires. Developed in partnership with Ministry Architects, students will leave with practical tools and real-life examples of spiritual entrepreneurship.

6. Start Up Bus: How do we design and pitch the right ideas?

This final module will invite participants to pitch their proposed ecclesial innovation and consider next steps. Executed in partnership with the "Start Up Bus" facilitators, this module will embed budding spiritual entrepreneurs within an ecclesial ecology that can nourish their ongoing work.

Upon the completion of these six modules, students who wish to launch social innovations will be matched with a contextual mentor who can guide them through the launch process over a six-month period.

Collaborators & Partners:

BEEP builds upon a robust network of partners and collaborators who work at the intersection of innovation, entrepreneurship, and theological education. These partners and their supporting roles include:

Project Partners:

- Andy Hogue: Associate Dean and Director of Baylor Social Innovation Collaborative
 - Panelist for module 2
- Emily Hunt-Hinojosa: Clinical Professor and Director of Academic Excellence Initiatives
 - Panelist for module 2
- Peter Klein: Professor of Entrepreneurship
 - Panelist for module 2
- Chris Ingram: Local entrepreneur

- Panelist for module 3
- Gannon Sims: Senior Pastor, Cliff Temple Baptist Church
 - Panelist for module 3
- Carey Sims: Innovator and Spiritual Director
 - Panelist for module 3
- Trey Wince: President, Ministry Architects
 - Co-moderator for module 5
- Mark DeVries: Founder, Ministry Architects
 - Co-moderator for module 5
- Shannon Hopkins: Co-founder, RootedGood
 - Contextual mentor
- Kathi McShane, Changemaker Initiative
 - Contextual mentor
- Carlos Huerta, Director for Community Initiatives, Center for Transformation
 - Contextual mentor

BEEP works at the level of the ecclesial ecology, drawing partners and facilitators from across the ecology that sources and sustains spiritual entrepreneurship. Appendix A details additional stakeholders in this ecology.