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Clark University students with members of the school's entrepreneurs-in-residence program, left to right, student Patrick E. Shea, student Jane R. Kaplan, Aaron J. O'Hearn, Zachary J. Zielsinski, student Ashley Emerson Gilbert and David A. Jordan, president and CEO of the Seven Hills Foundation.

## Boundless enterprise

### Clark expands entrepreneur-in-residence program

By Lisa Eckelbecker

TELEGRAM & GAZETTE STAFF

WORCESTER — Even as an accounting major in college, focused on the calculation of dollars and cents, David A. Jordan knew that his career would not lie strictly in business.

Now, as president and chief executive of the Worcester-based Seven Hills Foundation social service agency, Mr. Jordan believes that the same can be true for today's college students — that success in one career field can spin off opportunities in other areas of life.

It is a message the executive wants to emphasize as he takes on a new role, entrepreneur-in-residence at Clark University, a position in which he could be working with undergraduates from across the college who want to know how to act entrepreneurially while also pursuing art, science, math and other fields.

"If we can provide that glimmer of insight, undergraduate students who may have an interest in pursuing business or another field outside the social fields, they can also use those technical skills to benefit humanity," Mr. Jordan said.

It's an ambitious agenda shared by

Clark, which is expanding its field of entrepreneurs-in-residence to six professionals for the 2006-2007 academic year. Some, including Mr. Jordan, will teach classes. Others will create special events or programs and mentor students. Their expertise spans science, technology, the arts, sales and management.

The entrepreneur-in-residence initiative exists within an innovation and entrepreneurship program that Clark only recently began offering as a minor. About 40 to 50 students have chosen the option, and all must put what they learn to work by creating a business or event or some-

thing similar from scratch, according to Edward J. Ottensmeyer, dean of Clark's Graduate School of Management.

"We don't see entrepreneurship as being exclusively a business-related concept," Mr. Ottensmeyer said. "It has to do with innovative, creative thinking in many types of professional endeavors."

That concept is slowly catching on across the country. Not that entrepreneurship courses are anything new. More than 2,100 colleges and universities offer at least one course in entrepreneurship, and more than 300 institutions offer entrepreneurship courses for students not in business schools, according to the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation in Kansas City, Mo. Eighteen colleges in 2006 had entrepreneurship departments, up from seven in 1999.

Some in academia and the business world, however, have looked skeptically upon college-level entrepreneurship courses, wondering whether the creative process of conceiving an idea and launching a product or group or company is something that can be taught or probed with intellectual rigor.

Yet entrepreneurship education is important to students because it bridges the academic world and the real world, and reflects a society in which individuals can advance by bringing their ideas to life, said Judith A. Cone, vice president of entrepreneurship at the Kauffman Foundation, which funds the development of entrepreneurship courses and activities at colleges. Students need look no further than Google Inc.'s \$1.65 billion deal to acquire YouTube Inc., an online video sharing service launched by two young men, for evidence of how entrepreneurship is playing out today, she said.

"We all live in an entrepreneurial society," she said. "The era of big business controlling society and a small, insignificant entrepreneurial sector is gone. We feel that all students need to understand society as it is today."

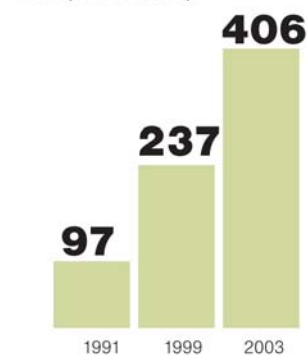
Some students recognize it.

"A lot of times in liberal arts schools, you don't come out with a skill," said Ashley Emerson Gilbert, a Clark student majoring in international development and a member of Initial Advantage, a student-run group focused on entrepreneurship. "You need, sort of, a real-world approach, in terms of what you can create when you get out of college."

Clark selected its current group of entrepreneurs-in-residence for their experience, networks and track records in

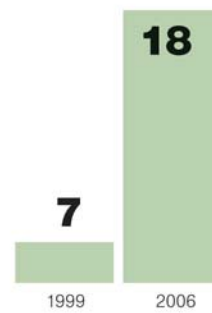
## Teaching entrepreneurship

U.S. college endowed chairs and professorships in entrepreneurship



Source: Kauffman Foundation

Entrepreneurship departments at U.S. colleges and universities



T&G Staff/DON LANDGREN JR.

bringing ideas to life, according to the university. In addition to Mr. Jordan, the group consists of Jamie B. Rotman, president of Designcenters.com and a member of the family that owns Rotmans furniture of Worcester; Lawrence E. Lapidès, vice president of worldwide sales for the software company Averant Inc. of Hayward, Calif.; Douglas K. Mellinger, vice chairman of Fairfield, Conn.-based Foundation Source, which provides services to foundations; Ronald Ranauro, chief executive of Westboro-based Gene-IT, a bioinformatics company; and James L. Bildner, a general partner in the Colorado venture philanthropy firm New Horizons Partners LLC.

A key force in recruiting them was George Gendron, executive director of Clark's innovation and entrepreneurship program and the former editor-in-chief of Inc. magazine. What distinguishes Clark's approach from that of other colleges and universities, Mr. Ottensmeyer said, is the attempt to appeal to students from multiple departments.

"The unique part about Clark's approach to this is that it's built from the ground up as a campuswide initiative, which means it's not simply a business thing," Mr. Ottensmeyer said. "It's not focused on building new businesses. It's focused on helping students move forward, take steps in the direction of things they're most passionate about, and that may not be business."

Some of the entrepreneurs-in-residence said they can relate to that approach because they possessed no notions of entrepreneurship when they went to college.

"I don't think it ever really entered my consciousness at that age," said Mr. Ranauro. "It didn't have the same place of emphasis in our society as it does now. It's only looking back on 25 years that I would describe myself that way."

Mr. Lapidès, who earned bachelor's and master's degrees in physics, thought his career would take him into academia as a professor of physics. Instead, he has worked in the electro-optics and software

industries, including stints in start-up companies, and obtained a master's of business administration degree from Clark.

"If you look at the businesses that get started, the number of businesses that get started by people with management degrees are vanishingly small," Mr. Lapidès said. "The people who have the ideas for new businesses are the scientists or the artists or the musicians or people like that. They're actually the ones that have the cool ideas."

For students, what entrepreneurship instruction offers is a connection to the world beyond the theory of academia, said Patrick E. Shea, a Clark student majoring in management.

"The way college is set up now, you get a degree, you get out there alone, you get an apartment, you get a job and you say, 'Holy crap, I'm not going to make it in this world,'" Mr. Shea said. But entrepreneurship courses can "really get you out there to try something and do it yourself."

A number of students pursuing entrepreneurship minors have already started businesses while at Clark in fields such as landscaping, car detailing, disc-jockey production and entertainment, and outsourced school stores. Zachary J. Zielezinski is president and Aaron J. O'Hearn is director of sales of Interactive Purchasing Solutions, which creates online stores for private and parochial schools.

"When it comes down to it, the best time to engage in entrepreneurial activities and start your own business is in college," before student loan debt kicks in and while collegiate support systems are still in place, Mr. Zielezinski said.

Starting a business also provides direction, said Mr. O'Hearn.

"In August 2005, when we incorporated, I knew what my job was going to be after college," he said.

Many college students, however, may not be so certain. Formulaic school instruction and busy parents and teachers also may not provide the guidance or feedback that can help young people explore career possibilities, which might mean helping a student with an interest in photography to consider what goes into opening a gallery, said Ms. Rotman. Entrepreneurs-in-residence may be able to fill that role, she said.

"Young people may not know what they want to do for the rest of their lives, but I think by college they definitely start developing interests in different things," she said. "I think they don't have opportunities to explore them, and that can be crippling."

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