# School of Social Policy & Practice University of Pennsylvania Spring 2016

**SWRK 798**

**THE SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURIAL APPROACH TO COMMUNITY REINTEGRATION**

Class Time:

Feb 6 – April 23, 2015 Saturdays, 12:00noon-2:30 p.m.

Instructor: Charlotte R. Ren, Ph.D. Office Hours: by appointment Office: SH-DH 3016

Email: rren@wharton.upenn.edu

TA: Seongho An (Doctoral Student, SP2) Office Hours: by appointment

Email: anseong@sp2.upenn.edu

# COURSE DESCRIPTION

SWRK 798: The Social Entrepreneurial Approach to Community Reintegration is one of its kind. In this independent study course, students work closely with the instructor and partner agencies to experiment a social entrepreneurial approach to community reintegration for formerly incarcerated people.

This independent study provides a unique and flexible opportunity for students to work together on a new program called Penn Restorative Entrepreneurship Program (PREP). Led by Dr. Charlotte Ren ([www.charlotteren.net](https://webmail.wharton.upenn.edu/owa/redir.aspx?SURL=njhWeYrafPa1kTE3_VWaRY5NURKWXsRBctRkkxBe7P7UJwQfkhDSCGgAdAB0AHAAOgAvAC8AdwB3AHcALgBjAGgAYQByAGwAbwB0AHQAZQByAGUAbgAuAG4AZQB0AA..&amp;URL=http%3a%2f%2fwww.charlotteren.net)), PREP identifies a small group of formerly incarcerated individuals based on survey and interview results and selects students from various schools at Penn to offer ten-week intensive training on starting and running a small business. After the curriculum training, PREP continues to provide a support system to help them turn business ideas into reality. Through PREP, we hope to develop and demonstrate a sustainable and replicable model to effectively transition formerly incarcerated individuals back to the community.

Our field partner, Rescue Mission of Trenton, is a 100-year-old public charity located in Trenton, New Jersey ([http://www.rescuemissionoftrenton.org/](https://webmail.wharton.upenn.edu/owa/redir.aspx?SURL=3gK9hVrvp3OYX4uUIzBlJMcL56zOElOqGl_IBX4rXIjUJwQfkhDSCGgAdAB0AHAAOgAvAC8AdwB3AHcALgByAGUAcwBjAHUAZQBtAGkAcwBzAGkAbwBuAG8AZgB0AHIAZQBuAHQAbwBuAC4AbwByAGcALwA.&amp;URL=http%3a%2f%2fwww.rescuemissionoftrenton.org%2f)). Rescue Mission (hereafter referred to as “The Mission”) provides a variety of support services to formerly and currently incarcerated individuals, which complements well with the entrepreneurship training that PREP offers. Our campus partner includes SP2’s Goldring Reentry Initiative (GRI) and the Wharton Social Impact Initiative, among others.

# COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students will develop competencies in the following key areas:

1. Understand the theory and principles of the social entrepreneurial approach to

community reintegration for formerly incarcerated individuals;

1. Obtain hands-on knowledge on a specific program element (e.g., launching a business, micro-enterprise development; etc.) or a specific aspect of program development (e.g., stakeholder analysis and engagement; development of a support system; program evaluation; etc.);
2. Acquire an understanding of the skills involved in designing and implementing such an innovative and integrative program;
3. Be capable of applying an innovative solution to similar social problems; and
4. Understand the nature and scope of the community reintegration problem, as well as the current practices and their limitations and challenges.

# COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Course grades will be assigned as follows:

1. 1st Session Teaching: 30%
2. 2nd Session Teaching: 30%
3. Guidance of Your Client’s Business Plan: 20%
4. Final PREP Report: 15%
5. Other Participation: 5%

Your course grade is a function of the requirements listed below. Be aware that for team work some consideration will be given to how teammates evaluate your performance.

1. Design and Teach Two Sessions (30% each session)

This is the most important requirement of the course. Seven sessions (Session 3- Session 9) need your inputs. You will select two sessions, design the content, prepare the slides and teach the two sessions to the selected formerly incarcerated people (hereafter referred to as “clients”).

By 6:00pm EST 02/5 (F), you need to email me the first three preferences of your sessions. Then based on your preferences, expertise, and the efficient allocation of teaching resources, I will assign you to two sessions. If you already have a preferred co- teacher for your sessions, you two can send me a joint email about the session preferences. I will try to accommodate your request and assign you two to co-teach the sessions.

What do I mean by “designing and teaching a session”? It involves at least the following efforts (but is not limited to):

* 1. Preparation: conduct independent research on the selected topics and create your session slides (detailed notes need to be inserted for the slides).
	2. Teach: give your lecture, interact with your clients, explain to them the assignments, and keep track of the development of their business ideas.
	3. Provide feedback: the clients will submit small assignments for each session. The assignments are designed on the basis of the teaching content of the previous session. You are required to offer feedback to the clients’ assignments.
	4. Coordinate with the previous session: Before your session, meet (either in-person or through emails or Google Drive) with teachers of the previous session and learn the key points of that session so that there is continuity and consistency across

sessions. Such prior-session coordination is necessary for you to learn how to provide feedback to the clients’ assignments.

For each session on Saturday, the teachers should email the instructor and Seongho the draft of the slides for preview and feedback by 6:00pmEST of that Wednesday. You are encouraged to meet with Seongho before your session to discuss your teaching strategy or plan.

1. Guide Your Client’s Business Plan (20%)

Based on your preferences, you will be matched with one client at the beginning of the training module. You will guide the client throughout the semester to work on his/her business plan. *To be able to offer useful guidance, you will need to study other sessions’ content because a business plan applies and integrates concepts and knowledge from all sessions*.

Email is the preferred way of communication between you and your client. For track record, always copy me on the emails!

In addition to the two sessions you design and teach, you need to visit Trenton at least once before the final presentation session. The purpose of the Trenton visit is to help your client *get ready for the final presentation*.

1. Final PREP report (15%)

At the end of the semester, you will submit a final, individual report to reflect on your PREP experience and offer suggestions for the future development of PREP. An adequate submission will require at least 5-6 pages, 1.5-spaced, 12 point font. You should use a business report format rather than essay style. Please read Appendix 1 carefully to learn how to format a business report. The write-up is due by 6:00pm EST 05/02/2016 via email*.*

1. Other participation (5%)

Other participation includes your attendance and participation of the site visit and prior-training meetings, and your extra efforts to help implement PREP. For example, if you prepare extra teaching material for PREP which however is not used yet for this semester’s teaching, submitting it will get you bonus points in this category.

Note that all group grades will be subject to adjustment based on the peer evaluation scores. A sample form is provided in Appendix 2.

# REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

* I will use Google Drive to post required and suggested readings, and other important files.
* We will also use Google Drive to work together on teaching material and share slide slides.
* A Canvas website is available, but mainly for posting grades at the end of the semester.

# GRADE SCALE

The following grading scale will be used for final grades.

# IMPORTANT COURSE POLICIES:

## Submission of work and late assignments/papers

All assignments/papers are to be submitted via email. Final report is due by 6:00 p.m. EST on the assigned due date. A deduction of one full letter grade will be taken for all late submissions. The instructor may make exceptions in exceptional circumstances. Failing to plan ahead, unfortunately, is a common problem and not an exceptional one.

## “No drop” policy

Once you are enrolled in the course, you are *NOT allowed to drop* the course without penalties. The reason for this policy is that your dropping the course will jeopardize PREP’s partnerships, and the ability for PREP to recruit such clients and continue similar training in the future --- the consequences extend beyond one or two training sessions.

# WHO ARE ON OUR PREP TEAM?

I am delighted to announce that PREP has seven team members this semester! Below I provide the name, contact information, brief background and relevant experience of each member (listed in alphabetic order).

## Jessica M. Drake

jdrake@sp2.upenn.edu | 267-770-612

Jessica is an SP2 Master of Social Work (MSW) graduate student and has worked as a Social Work Intern in various organizations including the Interfaith Center of Greater Philadelphia and Turning Points for Children-Food and Wellness Network.

## Kevin Guckin

kevguck@gmail.com | 215-208-9297

Kevin is an MSW graduate student of SP2. He has extensive experience using trauma- informed and culturally-appreciative methods to engage primarily adult and young men in critically understanding the impact of power and control in the context of societal expectations around masculinity.

## Gabriel Kalmuss-Katz

gak@sp2.upenn.edu | 201-658-7767

Gabe is an MSW graduate student and a GRI Intern. Gabe has experience in several detention, correctional and reentry facilities, including working for the San Diego Juvenile Detention Facility where he led creative non-fiction and poetry workshops for high school students housed at the facility.

## Sara R. Solomon, MPH RD

sarasol@upenn.edu |215-290-8454

Sara is a Master student of SP2’s Nonprofit Leadership program. She is the Deputy Director of the Center for Public Health Initiatives at Penn. She has over ten years of experience leading, developing and directing that strategic vision of public health practice and

research-based initiatives, and four-semester teaching experience for Master of Public Health (MPH) students at Penn.

## Erica Sucher

ericasucher@gmail.com | 703-298-5744

Erica is an MSW graduate student of SP2. She worked as an MSW Field Education Placement/ Intern for the Treatment Research Institute, an independent, nonprofit research and development organization dedicated to science-driven reform of treatment and policy in substance use by translating research into improved policies and programs.

## Kelsey Woida

kelseywoida@gmail.com | 714-504-0050

Kelsey is an MSW graduate student of SP2 and a GRI Intern. For GRI, she provides therapeutic case management for incarcerated people before and after their release from prison, develops individualized reentry plans in collaboration with clients, maintains a case load and conducts weekly one-on-one sessions with each client, participates in monthly meetings with community partners including the Philadelphia Defender Association, Office of the District Attorney, and Adult Probation and Parole Department.

# COURSE SCHEDULE

*Note: The instructor reserves the right to adjust schedule as needed.*

A course calendar, which covers the topics to be covered in individual sessions and the assignment for clients, is attached. This schedule is subject to change for reasons including the changing needs of clients, the appearance of new and more interesting topics, etc.

Changes to the calendar will be announced via email as soon as practical.

I summarize the training content of entrepreneurship as “what, who, where, why, money, and how.”

* What? Product/service
* Who? Customer
* Where? Location
* Why? Industry and market analysis
* Money? Financials of the business
* How? Marketing your product/service, Launching and managing your business Session Location: Rescue Mission of Trenton Conference Room



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| **Module I: PREPARE for PREP** |
| **Session 1** Date and Time TBD | **KICKOFF SESSION****Meetings on Penn campus for*** PREP introduction
* Course design and requirements
* Introduction to entrepreneurship
* Sharing experience of working with formerly incarcerated people (especially by GRI Interns)
 |
| **Session 2**02/0612:00noon-2:00pm | **SITE VISIT to the Mission****Participants:** Charlotte, Seongho, and PREP team**Description**The purpose of the site visit is to learn about the Mission, which is the main context of our program's training sessions, and also get to know your clients. We will meet with a couple of Mission executives who take part in PREP and about ten clients who just enrolled in our PREP training sessions. After self- introductions, we will meet in groups to learn more about their background, what they want from our program, what business ideas they have, and what challenges they have encountered or may foresee in implementing the business ideas.I will meet with all of you at the SEPTA entrance within the 30th StreetStation on **10:30AM EST 02/06/2016**. It's important that you all **arrive on time**. We will purchase tickets and depart as a group by taking the 10:49am |

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|  | train. We will take the 2:00pm train to return from Trenton to Philadelphia. Your transportation costs will be covered by PREP. |
| **Module II: TEACH for PREP6** |
| **Session 3**02/2012:00noon-2:30pm | **BASICS --- Ready to Start Your Business?*** Mini Case 1[7](#_bookmark6)
* Characteris[tic](#_bookmark6)s of an Entrepreneur
* Business Etiquette
* How to write a business memo?
* How to deliver a business presentation (in particular, an elevator pitch)?
 |
|  | Assignments for clients (to be submitted at the beginning of *next* session): Deliver a 5-minute oral presentation on:1. What business do you want to start?
2. What characteristics do you think you have for an entrepreneur?
 |
| **Session 4**02/2712:00noon-2:30pm | **WHAT, WHERE & WHO --- Formalize Your Idea*** Mini Case 2
* WHAT? define your product/service
* WHERE? location of your business
* WHO? Who is your customer? What are the characteristics of your target customers? Estimate the market size (e.g., possible number of your customers, relevant source of information)?
 |
|  | Assignments for clients (to be submitted at the beginning of *next* session): Write in a Word document and present in class for 5 minutes to address:* What product/service does your business offer? Be as precise as possible.
* What’s your choice of location? Why do you choose this location?
* Who is your customer (describe the characteristics)? How many of them are there (you need to do your research here)?
 |
| Penn Spring Break (03/05 and 03/12): No sessions |
| **Session 5** | **WHY --- Conduct Your Feasibility Study*** Mini Case 3
* What is the benefit your product/service offers to target customers?
* Industry Analysis

o What industry is your business in? |
| 03/19 |
| 12:00noon |
| -2:30pm |

6 For Module II, the “you” refers to our clients. In other Modules, the “you” refers to the PREP team members.

7 The series of Mini Cases are a set of examples about how formerly incarcerated individuals turned into entrepreneurs. I have prepared several mini cases. You can add your own mini case when you see fit.

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|  | * Is the industry attractive for a new entrant like you (e.g., supplier power, buyer power, threat of substitutes, and ease of entry)?
* How strong is the existing competition?
* Can you get a sense of if there’s room for a new player in the space?
* Marketing strategy for a micro enterprise
	+ How can you reach your customers?
	+ Can you come up with an approach that ensures your customers are hearing from your company more than once and receiving new information each time?

Assignments for clients (to be submitted at the beginning of *next* session): Continue working on the Word document by adding data and insights on:* The benefit issue: Why would your customer buy your product/service?
* What industry are you in? Is the industry favorable or not for you? Is the level of competition high?
* What marketing strategy would you use to sell your product/service? Present in class for 5 minutes the new insights.
 |
| **Session 6**03/2612:00noon-2:30pm | **THE CORE --- Putting Together Your Business Plan*** Mini Case 4
* How to write a business plan?
	+ Executive Summary
	+ Description of your business (What? Where? Who?)
	+ Why? (Is the industry good? Is the market big enough?)
* Resources available for local small businesses
	+ Small Business Administration (SBA) support
	+ Training agencies
* How to conduct Internet search to use these resources?

Assignments for clients (to be submitted at the beginning of *next* session): The Word document you put together in the previous two assignments is the first draft of your business plan. Now conduct more Internet search and revise your analysis on:1. Industry: Is the industry attractive or not? Any competition in the local market?
2. How big is your market?
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|  | More importantly, work with your mentor to:3. Complete the first three steps of the Business Plan Template[8](#_bookmark7). Use the content you wrote in the Word document and fill in relevant answers in the template.Present in class for 5 minutes the new insights. |
| **Session 7**04/0212:00noon-2:30pm | **MONEY --- Finance Your Business*** Mini Case 5
* Start-up costs
* Revenue-cost tables and balance sheets
* Funding options (especially for micro enterprises)
 |
|  | Assignments for clients (to be submitted at the beginning of *next* session): Complete Step 4 of the Business Plan Template:* Create a revenue-cost table (an excel table)
* How much funding would you need to start your business? Provide justification.
* Present in class for 5 minutes your financial estimates.
 |
| **Session 8**04/0912:00noon-2:30pm | **HOW --- Launch Your Business*** Mini Case 6
* Registration
* Licenses and permits
* Choice of entity forms
 |
|  | **IN-CLASS EXERCISE --- Work on Your Final Deliverables**After the lecture, you will work with your mentors to:* Complete the remaining steps of the business plan template
* Prepare the final presentation slides and practice the final presentation.
 |
| **Session 9**04/1612:00noon-2:30pm | **HOW --- Managing Your Growing Business*** Mini Case 7
* Hiring and firing employees
* How to file and pay taxes
* Business laws and regulations
 |
|  | **IN-CLASS EXERCISE --- Work on Your Final Deliverables**After the lecture, you will work with your mentors to:* Complete the remaining steps of the business plan template
* Prepare the final presentation slides and practice the final
 |

8 The Business Plan Template is *a copyrighted document* I prepared for PREP. In this document, I have organized the business plan writing process into six steps. Completion of the six steps is sufficient for you to deliver an effective business plan for PREP.

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|  | presentation. |
| **Module III: REFLECT on PREP** |
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| **Session 10**04/2312:00noon-2:30pm | **FINAL SESSION**Deliverables: Final Presentation and Business Plan DUE in classThe clients will deliver a formal presentation of their business plan (10 minutes). |
|  | All PREP members are required to attend because you have served as “personal mentors” for your clients to help them develop business plan and practice presentation. |
| 05/02 | ***DUE:*** |
| 6:00pm | ***FINAL PREP REPORT*** |
|  | Submit via email your final report to reflect on your PREP experience and |
|  | make recommendations for the future development of PREP.  |
|  |  |

**APPENDIX 1: HOW TO FORMAT A BUSINESS REPORT?** [**9**](#_bookmark8)

Writing a business is an unpleasant task for those who do not enjoy organizing and writing information. However, once you learn a specific format and use it in several business reports, your dislike transforms to delight in personal achievement.

1. Begin the business report with an executive summary. This section is usually all a top executive or high-level manager reads. Make this section concise and easy to read. The main points, conclusions and recommendations are the primary components of the executive summary. Write this section last **after** you have had time to fully evaluate the report information in its entirety.
2. Include an introduction section after the executive summary. The introduction section includes the report background and any methodology used to address the issue the report discusses. For example, the introduction of a business report about whether television ads are effective could include a methodology explaining the number of telephone interviews conducted with households to answer this concern.
3. Put the main body of the report next. The main body is the details behind how you addressed the business issue at hand. Separate the main section into logical subsections.
4. Finish the business report with a conclusion and recommendations section. In this section, wrap up all the points presented and discuss the implications of what you discovered. Finish the report by recommending what the business should do with the presented information.
5. Add an **appendix** for non-essential information like maps, charts and graphs that support your points but are not necessary to explain it. The appendix is very detailed information that an expert uses when reading the report, so technical terms are acceptable.
6. Always add **page numbers**.
7. Always add **references**. To learn how to cite, check this web link of the *Strategic Management Journal*, the top journal in the management field: [http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1002/%28ISSN%291097-](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1002/%28ISSN%291097-0266/homepage/ForAuthors.html) [0266/homepage/ForAuthors.html.](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1002/%28ISSN%291097-0266/homepage/ForAuthors.html) Read the subsection **“Reference and citations style”**.
8. If you need any extra explanation for an argument, you should insert a **footnote** to add the explanation.

Want to find out more about business report format? Read: <http://bestentrepreneur.murdoch.edu.au/Guide_To_Report_Writing.pdf>

9 Source of information:

<http://www.ehow.com/how_2272372_format-business-report.html>

**APPENDIX 2: PEER EVALUATION SAMPLE FORM**

It is required that every student fill out and submit via email the peer evaluation form at the end of semester when s/he submits the final project report.

One of the enduring difficulties of using group projects in a class is assessing the contributions of individual group members to the final product of the group. Consequently, in evaluating group project work and assigning grades, I like to have input from the members of the groups that participated. In this regard, I would like you to evaluate each of your group members on the following scale:

1 = this group member did virtually nothing on the project.

2 = this group member gave minimal input, i.e., he or she came to some meetings and did a few things to contribute.

3 = this group member gave a fair amount of input, i.e., he or she came to most meetings and contributed in meaningful ways.

4 = this group member substantially contributed to the project, i.e., at almost all meetings, made strong contributions to data collection, analysis, writing, organizing, etc.

5 = this group member was a mainstay of our project, a major contributor.

Before you assign a score to each group member, please consider your responsibility in this task. Evaluation is always unpleasant. It is always hard to decide what is "fair". On the other hand, it will be something you face the rest of your managerial career and it is not to be taken lightly.

Equity is not just a perception; it is real. Members of organizations who contribute more should expect more. Be fair, be honest, but be frank. Students who receive an average rating that is less than 3 but greater than or equal to 2, i.e., 2.0 to 2.99, by other team members will have at least 10% deducted from their group work point total; students who have an average rating less than 2 will have 20% deducted. The instructor reserves the right to make other adjustments if necessary.

1. Record a rating (1-5) next to each person's name, including your own;
2. **Provide comments (this is required)**;
3. Submit it to me in person or via email.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Group #:** | **1st Session** |
| *Team member name* | *Rating (1-5)* |
| (your name here) |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
| **Group #:** | **2nd Session** |
| *Team member name* | *Rating (1-5)* |
| (your name here) |  |
|  |  |

Comments:

About your professor:

Charlotte R. Ren

I am a visiting Assistant Professor of SP2 and a Senior Fellow of Wharton at the University of Pennsylvania. Previously I was on faculty at Purdue University’s Krannert School of Management where I taught courses in Strategic Management, Innovation Management, Entrepreneurship, and International Business at the undergraduate, MBA, and Ph.D. levels. I obtained my Ph.D. degree in Management and Master degree in Economics from UCLA, and my undergraduate degree in International Politics with a minor degree in Law from Peking University, China.

My research interests focus on two areas, competitive strategy, and innovation & entrepreneurship. My current research investigates how business and nonprofit organizations compete along nonprice dimensions including product variety, geographic location, and service. For example, my research shows that when retail stores offer “price match guarantees” that prevent them from turning to price reductions to attract consumers, they compete in product variety depending on whether their rivals are co- located or not. I also examine how organizations adjust innovation strategy and manage corporate entrepreneurial processes to improve their technological competence and overall performance. My research covers a variety of setting including retail industry, hard disk drive industry, computer workstation industry, and charter schools.

My research has been published in the *Academy of Management Best Paper Proceedings, Management Science,* the *Journal of Management,* and the *Strategic Management Journal*. My paper “the Rise and Fall of Entrepreneurial Opportunities inside Organizations: A Process Model for Corporate Entrepreneurship” received the “Research Promise” Award from the Entrepreneurship Division of the Academy of Management Conference. I have served as a regular reviewer for the Academy of Management conference, and also for the *Academy of Management Journal, Organization Science*, *Strategic Management Journal* and *Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal*.

When I am not teaching or doing research, I enjoy jogging, yoga, travelling, cooking, and re- reading pre-modern classical Chinese literature and novels of Eileen Chang.

I look forward to working with you this semester. Best Regards,

*Charlotte*

Professor Charlotte R. Ren

PREP: Final Report Mary Archer SWRK 798

5/2/17

University of Pennsylvania

# Introduction

The Social Entrepreneurial Approach to Community Reintegration has been a unique, informative experience working to apply an innovative,

empowering solution to the social issue involving returning citizens. Throughout

this course I have come to understand the nature and extent of the reentry crisis brought about by the epidemic of mass incarceration. I believe that the Penn Restorative Entrepreneurship Program (PREP) provided a valuable framework

and model for which to effectively transition and empower for merly incarcerated individuals back into the community.

# Strengths

One of the most powerful components of the course was the ability to work one -on-one with participants to provide mentorship throughout the process of developing a business plan. I found this to be effective as it provided an opportunity to apply the learning related to creating a business plan directly to a specific business idea. Additionally, the partnership allowed for strong rapport to be built among the team, therefore allowing the par ticipant to feel supported. While this was a strength of the course, it was largely dependent on the participant’s level of motivation and dedication to their business plan. For example, two of the participants dropped out midcourse therefore leaving

mento rs without projects to work on. When working with a population that faces many challenges related to reentry and recovery, this is to be expected, and illustrates the need for supportive programs such as PREP to provide assistance to individuals such as those from Trenton Rescue Mission.

Throughout this course I have learned a great deal about starting a business, specifically through the lens of a returning citizen. I believe that

opportunities to mobilize individuals in these situations are extremely val uable and not nearly as prevalent as they should be. For example, many individuals

involved in the criminal justice system have immense potential; particularly often being business -minded, profit driven, able to take calculated risks and resilient;

qualiti es that are valuable in entrepreneurs. Furthermore, often times these individuals exit the prison system facing enormous barriers to success that contribute to oppression, stigmatization and recidivism. I have witnessed this

throughout the year as an inter n with the Goldring Reentry Initiative (GRI) where many of my clients faced challenges including financial instability,

unemployment and substantial court fines to pay upon release. They return to society with nothing aside from a tarnished criminal record that will disqualify them from many employment opportunities. Often times they are over qualified for the employment that they can secure, most of which does not pay living wages. This is frustrating to witness as many of them are extremely intelligent a nd motivated and would certainly thrive in a program like PREP, which would provide them with the opportunity to utilize their talents and

successfully reenter society.

Another strength of the course was the way in which all voices were heard, thus foster ing a collaborative, teamwork approa ch to developing a

business plan. For example, allowing the participants to share their homework at the beginning of the class was useful to encourage participation and to inform

the mentors of the participant’s evolving business details and vision. The student - led teaching sessions were also a unique component of the class that allowed

for a collective learning process. Assigning each set of students two classes to teach was also useful because it allowed students to co ncentrate on a

particular area of business plan development, therefore if there were additional questions, those particular students could provide assistance.

One final strength of the course was the strong relationships fostered among the group. I really enjoyed getting to know the participants and other mentors and this allowed our work to feel more meaningful. I believe that the smaller class size and the informal nature of the beginning of class contributed

to this strength. For example, sharing a meal at the beginning of class and simply

getting to know each other created a special bond that would not have been possible with a larger group.

# Recommendations

The course was a very positive experience that I am glad I was able to be a part of. I see great potential in the PREP model and with a few minor changes it could have even more impact on the issues involved with reentry. One suggestion for the course would be to encourage participants to develop

business ideas that are uniquely innovative and meet a particular need. For example, the participant business plan related to afterschool recreation for students in an area prone to violence and drugs is a valuable idea that can be transformative and impactful, however the business idea to start a hot dog

stand does not have the same influence or magnitude, thus making it more difficult to pitch, particularly as it relates to the Franklin Prize Competition.

A second suggestion for the course is to allow time for the participants

and mentors to work on the com puter together. This would allow the mentors to help participants navigate Google drive, design the business components

collaboratively, and create a plan for next steps and communication

throughout the week. I think that requiring weekly communication bet ween mentor and participant would also be useful to hold both individuals

accountable and to ensure that the participant is working on the business and feels supported. This is important because it can be overwhelming for

participants, many of whom do not have high levels of education or computer literacy, to have to plan a business and complete homework, therefore frequent communication would allow the participant to feel thoroughly supported

throughout the process. This could help to avoid participants dr opping out of the course as well, as they would feel less overwhelmed with more support in

their assignments and business development.

With such limited time and such large tasks to accomplish it is important that mentors and participants are both utilizing all of the class time. During the

course I noticed that the work distribution and attendance among the mentors was not even which could create issues for the success in the course. It is

important that all mentors are present at every class unless there is an

emergency. I believe this is something that must be upheld and enforced in all courses, and particularly in this class given the importance of creating

relationships with the participants and working collaboratively.

During the teaching portions it would be helpful to require an integration of more activities that allow participants to learn while interacting with each

other and with the mentors. I believe this would be valuable to help participants apply what is being taught, while also engaging th em and encouraging

participation in class. While there is a lot of work to be done, it is important that the participants are interested and enjoy coming to class each week.

As the course continues and improves, it would also be useful to provide financia l opportunities for the business plans to become a reality. For example, we discussed the idea of obtaining funding for seed money. This would create motivation and allow the hard work of the participants and their visions come to life, as they would be pr ovided with more opportunities to implement their business rather than just participate in the course. The Franklin Prize Competition is a good example of this type of funding. One suggestion could be to utilize

networks within the Penn community, such as alumni who have the potential funds to contribute to the course. Aside from funds, alumni that are experienced entrepreneurs could also provide mentorship and guidance regarding business development.

# Conclusion

The most impactful and memorable part of this course was last week’s first business pitch. It was inspiring to see the accomplishments and pride of the

participants, particularly their skill level and knowledge when presenting their businesses. It was very rewarding to witness the hard work and dedi cation throughout the course come together in these presentations.

The PREP model has immense potential as a means for promoting

successful reentry to those exiting the prison system. Throughout the course we have observed case studies that prove the potential of individuals with criminal records, such as Tracy Syphax or Benny Se Teo, who developed successful

businesses after being incarcerated. The concept of training individuals involved in the criminal justice system to become entrepreneurs is being implemented in other organizations across the nation and appears to be successful. For

example, Defy Ventures, a program that provides personal and leadership

development, entrepreneurship training, mentoring, financial investment, and business development to current and formerly incarcerated individuals. This program has served over 550 entrepreneurs -in-training and has financed over 165 businesses that create jobs and keep these individuals out of jail, as their participants have a recidivism rate of only 5%. It is clear that the current height of mass incarceration creates a devastating impact on individuals and communities; therefore providing supports for returning citizens to become

leaders and achieve financial stability is necessary now more than ever.

Incarcerated individuals are one of the most overlooked, stigmatized groups in society. The current recidivism rate of over 60% represents an

unprecedented failure on behalf of our nation and a devastating cycle for families and communities. The Social Entrepreneurial Approach to Community Reintegration seeks to address this issue as an innovative, positive way to provide entrepreneurship training, providing the opportunity to uncover and

redirect the leadership abilities of returning citizens.



**TRENTON**

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May 23, 2017

Professor Noam Wasserman, Award Chair Innovation in Entrepreneurship Pedagogy Award

The Academy of Management Entrepreneurship Division

Dear Professor Wasserman and members of the Award Committee,

I provide this letter in support of Dr. Charlotte Ren's nomination for the prestigious Innovation in Entrepreneurship Pedagogy Award. I understand that this nomination is in recognition of her graduate course entitled "The Social Entrepreneurial Approach to Community Reintegration,"a course that Dr. Ren designed and taught while visiting the University of Pennsylvania. The Rescue Mission of Trenton, where I work in the capacity of the Chief Operating Officer, has been the field partner for this innovative and impactful course for the past three years.

Our partnership started back in 2015, when Dr. Ren launched a new program-Penn Restorative Entrepreneurship Program (PREP)-that integrates knowledge across schools and disciplines to help people who are formerly incarcerated to become entrepreneurs. At the core of this program was this graduate course. At the time, I was pursuing my Master's Degree in Nonprofit Leadership at Penn while working full time at Rescue Mission. When I learned about PREP and that Dr. Ren was look ng for a field partner, I knew we were a perfect match: Rescue Mission is a 100-year-old public chari'ty offering a variety of support services to formerly and currently incarcerated people. Rescue Mission had much expertise and experience working with our target population, but entrepreneurship training is something that we were lacking. Once we met, the rest was history.

Here is how this semester-long course works. Dr. Ren would enroll a team of graduate and undergraduate students from various schools at Penn (including the School of Social Policy & Practice, Wharton, Law, and College of Arts and Sciences), and Rescue Mission would recruit a team of program participants: aspiring entrepreneurs who are in the process of transitioning from prison to the community. Both teams would work closely to go through a ten-week intensive training on starting and running a small business. *A* key component of the course is the opportunity for Penn students to work one-on-one with program participants to provide mentorship throughout the process of developing a business plan. Program participants would ultimately present a business plan to a panel of experts-Penn faculty, successful entrepreneurship, and community leaders who might be potential investors-at theend of the course.

The PREP project has become a transformative course offered at the Rescue Mission. So many clients ask about the course and how can they get involved. So many of the clients we serve are helpless and hopeless, because they have been told over and over by the criminal justice system that they are not worth an opportunity. This is not true and the PREP program affords these individuals hope, and allows them to dream. Many of the individuals who are served by the Rescue Mission have talents that just need to be let out. PREP allows them to let their talents shine. This course has helped transformed each and every individual's life it has touched.

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I would like to provide you with one example of the impact PREP has had. There was an individual by the name of James that took the class with the first cohort. Just some quick background on James, he is in his mid 40s and has spent 25 years of his life in and out of jail because of his addiction. One would say the odds were stacked against James. He would say that PREP was the opportunity he had waited his whole life for. His business idea was not the best as it was already something that had been developed and refined, but he fought through the class and put his heart and soul into the course and learned a lot. James completed treatment at the Rescue Mission and finished his obligations to the State of New Jersey. James has now with all his knowledge from the PREP

program opened his own catering company that has catered lunch for the New Jersey State Parole Board on numerous occasions. James has famously said "I have gone from serving time for the state of New jersey to serving them and having the pay me for it." *A* story like James's is what the PREP program is all about.

I am happy to learn that Dr. Ren is being nominated for the Innovation in Entrepreneurship Pedagogy Award. It has been a wonderful experience to partner with Dr. Ren on this unique and impactful course. I support without reservation her nomination and hope the nomination will be favorably considered.

Thank you for your consideration.

Barretf T.·

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