“Entrepreneurship Education in Argentina: The case of San Andrés University”

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ABSTRACT

The educational system of Argentina does not generate vocations nor capacities to undertake new ventures. People are not formed with entrepreneurial mentality. On the contrary, the current education and social aspirations are oriented to work in large companies. However, in the last years this trend seems to begin to revert. A proof of the growing interest in the theme is observed in the rise of courses, funded chairs, enterprising capacities development laboratories and other activities oriented at this purpose both in public universities and in private ones.

This paper has two main objectives. First, it presents a report of the evolution and explores the state of advance of the education in Entrepreneurship in Argentina's universities using an assembly of interviews in depth with main actors, program directors and students. Second, it presents the pioneering experience of teaching in the first endowed chair in Argentina and South America at San Andrés University and shows some of the results, the teaching methods and the pedagogical model. The paper concludes by discussing the future of the entrepreneurship education in Argentina, how can the form of teaching be improved and what is the impact upon the students.

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INTRODUCTION

“In the past few years, for many reasons, but mainly given the growing and prolonged unemployment rate, society has started to recognize the existence of entrepreneurs. Men and women who create their own enterprises, generating employment and wealth, in ways that differ from the capitalist. These individuals, as Say² assumed, gather skills that are less common than the ones needed to follow faithfully the orders given by others. Men and women that have already been recognized for their important social and economic role, their initiative and creativity, their entrepreneurial and risk taking spirit, their courage and valuable contribution to society; and who at the same time are being encouraged and supported by governments, political parties and managers of all levels” (Veciana, 1997).

This growing interest has trespassed the academic environment as shown by the significant increase of Entrepreneurship courses available at North American and European universities observed in past decades³. It is interesting to stress the fact that such courses have been established thanks to the initiative of governments, universities, business chambers and other several social players. The reasons being, education is one of many ways by which entrepreneurial spirit can be fostered and the increased consensus related to the convenience of incorporating Entrepreneurship to universities' programs. This agreed upon convenience has to do with the undoubtedly positive effects that the emergence of new enterprises has on economic development, the creation of employment and the dynamics of business activity.

With regards to Latin America, the educational system has not contributed to the development of skills that encourage entrepreneurial spirit, or so it seems. The academic programs of most universities of the region have a tendency to focus the education of their students towards a professional career as employees, and rarely consider the opportunity of developing competencies that will allow alumni to start their own projects (Ussman and Postigo, 2000).

The case of Argentina is no an exception. A recent study (Kantis, Angelelli, Gatto, 2000) demonstrated that Argentine society doesn't promote nor values an entrepreneurial career, and that the educational system does not generate skills or competencies of entrepreneurs. Graduates lack entrepreneurial mentality, given that the education they receive as well as social expectations are oriented to working and being promoted within big companies.

² Jean-Baptist Say (1767-1832). French Economist. The first to define and develop the concept of entrepreneur as an economic subject different from the capitalist.

³ Research done by Vesper and Gatner (1997) show that in 1967 there were only 10 Universities with Entrepreneurship programs, while in 1994 there were a vast number of courses offered by 383 Universities in 9 different countries.

Nevertheless, throughout the last decade, this tendency has begun to change. Several universities, both public and private, started introducing Entrepreneurship courses, incubators and business plan contests. It's worth noting that the offer is not homogeneous in terms of the target, the objectives, the quality and the professors' background.

Given the recognized importance of education as a way to encourage the creation of new enterprises and promote entrepreneurial spirit, as well as the growing interest shown by Argentine Universities in this field of study, this paper's purpose is to explore the evolution and current situation of Entrepreneurship Education in Argentina and present the pioneering experience of teaching in the first endowed chair in Argentina and South America at San Andrés University; discussing some of the results obtained and describing the teaching methods and pedagogical model.

METHOD

Diverse sources of information were used in the study. Primary information was obtained with in-deep interviews to main actors related to entrepreneurship education, such as program directors, researchers and professors. The research for the case of the Karel Steuer Chair in Entrepreneurship of San Andrés University was done using a survey answered by 43 students of the "Business Plan and Venture Creation" course. Specific academic references and publications of this field of study were used as secondary sources of information.

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I. WHY TEACH ENTREPRENEURSHIP AT UNIVERSITY LEVEL?

We suggest, like Klandt (1993), “that entrepreneurial capabilities are not inborn but can be learn, and therefore assume that they may be enhanced or developed by a guided learning process”. But, what are the implicit purposes of Entrepreneurship education? Authors such as Varela (1997), Korurilsky (1995) and Veciana (1998), amongst others, present the following:

- ☒ Legitimize entrepreneurship and develop an entrepreneurial culture with the purpose of fostering economic growth through the creation of new firms and employment.
- ☒ Change the attitude towards the entrepreneurship function, the entrepreneur, and the entrepreneur’s image among students.
- ☒ Access to the “make a job” option.
- ☒ Develop and stimulate the entrepreneurial skills, producing in the mid and long term, a generation of new and better trained entrepreneurs, well informed about when, where, with whom, and how to start a new business.
- ☒ Prepare students for a dynamic labor market where entrepreneurial skills are valued and looked for by large companies.
- ☒ Contribute to the development of intrapreneurs.
- ☒ Produce knowledge by researching in this field of study.

Considering these objectives, Entrepreneurship Education can be divided in two areas, according to the distinction made by Laukkannen (2000):

Education about Entrepreneurship. Develops, constructs and studies the theories referred to the entrepreneurs, the creation of firms, the contribution to economic development, the entrepreneurial process and the small and middles size firms. It addresses both graduate and undergrad students, masters, PhD’s, policy makers, and researchers. In other words, everyone interested in entrepreneurship as a social phenomenon.

Education for Entrepreneurship. This area addresses present and potential entrepreneurs. Its objective is to develop and stimulate the entrepreneurial process, providing all the tools necessary for the start-up of a new venture both inside and outside existing organizations. According to Mason's (2000) definition, "it is proposed to develop the core skills and attributes necessary to roll out a new venture and to identify pre-start-up needs".

There is a fundamental difference between the definitions presented. The first one is based on the construct and transference of knowledge about the field, while the second one focuses on the learning experience and the development of competencies, skills, aptitudes and values (Ussman and Postigo, 2000). Therefore, the teaching methods used in each of these areas are not the same. It is of interest then, to mention which methods are most frequently used by each one, base on the teaching methods described by Klandt (1993).

TEACHING METHODS	FOR	ABOUT
▪ Readings books	X	X
▪ Listening to lectures	X	X
▪ Speakers programs	X	X
▪ Watching videos of entrepreneurs	X	
▪ Practical work	X	
▪ Writing BP	X	
▪ Computers simulations	X	
▪ Written case studies	X	X
▪ Excursions/company visits	X	X
▪ Role games	X	
▪ Working with entrepreneurs	X	
▪ Preparing papers/theses	X	X
▪ Students entrepreneurial club	X	
▪ Workshops for peers	X	X
▪ Consulting services by students		X
▪ Researches		X

Source: Adaptation from Klandt (1993).

Now that we have identified the objectives of Entrepreneurship Education, and have established the distinction between its two main areas, we present some of the extensive evidence that justifies its introduction to the academic environment.

The most recent evidence refers to a study published by the IADB⁴ (Kantis, Ishida and Koromi, 2002) in which the role of the educational system as a way to promote the entrepreneurial spirit and the creation of new ventures is widely mentioned. Results show that the education system in high schools, technical schools and universities do not to promote entrepreneurial attributes and competencies among students. It also states that the critical age to incubate and create a new venture is between 25 and 35 years old, and that universities

⁴ The purpose of the study was to identify the key factors that stimulate or condition the use of entrepreneurial skills in each step of entrepreneurial processes in Latin America and East Asia.

and other academic institutions should motivate students and promote the development of competencies such as: the ability to handle uncertainty and risk, creativity, negotiation and commercial skills, teamwork, networking and problem solving.

To conclude, the study shows that in Latin America, the entrepreneurial orientation and competencies are obtained mostly through work experience, leaving the education system in a secondary and more limited role, providing technical skills that are far from being a wide and complete set of capabilities, attributes and needed attitudes to become a true entrepreneur.

Veciana (2002)⁵, states that education will be an increasingly needed but insufficient condition, for the creation of new ventures, and emphasizes that empirical evidence shows a positive relationship between formal education and venture success. With regards to this statement, the author explains that the failure rate for new ventures created by individuals with low levels of education is almost 80 percent, while the rate for ventures created by graduate students is well under 20 percent; and concludes that:

- In a world of information and knowledge, graduate education is and will be more and more important for the creation of new ventures related to new technologies.
- Graduate students represent a very important source of entrepreneurs.
- There is an imminent need for venture creation programs as independent fields of study, in the same way there are finance, management or accounting programs. Furthermore, these programs will have to be responsible for teaching, researching and promoting the entrepreneurial culture inside academic institutions, as well as making good use of existing scientific and technical knowledge for the venture creation process.

Other studies, such as Lafuente and Salas (1989), provide empirical evidence that shows that individuals with high levels of education tend to be involved in firms with high survival ratios, especially when technological knowledge is required. They point out that education is a valuable asset for those firms, in which we can usually find a positive relation between the educational level of the founder and the organizational performance.

According to Laukkanen (2000), the introduction of entrepreneurial education at an undergraduate level can be understood as the strategic response of universities and business schools in the recent more demanding environment

⁵ In Kantis, H., Ishida, M., Komori, M. (2002). *Entrepreneurship in Emerging Economies: The Creation and Development of New Firms in Latin America and East Asia*. Inter-American Development Bank.

and ongoing evolution of societies that make entrepreneurial capabilities and action increasingly useful, even necessary.

With a more global perspective, Kourilsky (1995) states that the economic growth of countries will hinge on the ability to create new jobs through entrepreneurship. “Successful entrepreneurship, in turn, will require well trained aspiring entrepreneurs willing to take the helm of venture creation. Effective initiatives in entrepreneurship education will be increasingly critical for expanding the flow of potential leaders from our school systems with the passion and the multiple skills needed not only to give birth to the inherent risky entrepreneurial enterprise but to guide it successfully through the initial growth phase which is so subject to infant mortality”.

In any case, there are a number of difficulties when trying to focus education towards entrepreneurship that rise from the existing differences with the kind of education we could describe as generic or management oriented. Laukkanen (2000) lists the possible friction issues:

Managerial Emphasis	Entrepreneurial Education
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Generic humanistic education ▪ Focus on functional specialization ▪ Analytic or decision-support orientation ▪ Academics objective detachment ▪ Ideals of equality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Contextualize professional training ▪ Building generalist or pragmatic competencies ▪ Decision-making, personal involvement, social action ▪ Commitment to real-life business objectives ▪ Acceptance of relative, occasional inequality

We can conclude that education is a genuine and useful tool that stimulates entrepreneurial spirit. The available evidence on the positive relationship that exists between the level of education of entrepreneurs and the probability of success of their ventures, together with the responsibility academic institutions have in terms of responding to the changes and the needs of the context, more than justify the introduction of entrepreneurship programs in universities. This becomes even more important in Latin American countries where education clearly does not foster entrepreneurial spirit, and where the creation of new ventures that generate employment and economic development are needed urgently.

II. ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN ARGENTINA

II. 1) Brief description of Latin America

Before moving on to the report of the evolution and explores the state of advance of the Entrepreneurship Education in Argentina, its worth describing the Latin American context in order to better understand the phenomenon under study. Anyways, the scarce bibliography published in the region is a strong limitation to the analysis.

We have found a study concerning Entrepreneurship Education in Latin America in which Varela (1997) points out that there are many different factors that explain the under develop of the region. Among them, he stresses that Latin American culture does not promote the entrepreneurial spirit or the entrepreneurial activities.

Meanwhile, given the difficult circumstances these countries have to face, he argues that new ways of promoting social and economic development have to be found. Thus, trying to produce role-models, entrepreneurial leaders and values, scientific and technological knowledge, industrial and financial infrastructure, overall, an entrepreneurial culture. He emphasizes the need for significant changes in the education system in Latin America, aiming to produce a transformation in culture and values necessary to stimulate entrepreneurial spirit.

A review of entrepreneurship education in Latin-American countries demonstrates that in Colombia, the field has been developing since the early 80's, when there already were over 10 universities with a wide academic offer⁶.

Méjico is also one of the first countries in the region to include Entrepreneurship in Universities, especially the Instituto Tecnológico de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey, the ITAN and the Universidad Autónoma de Mexico. Other interesting experiences are Costa Rica⁷, Perú (Universidad del Pacifico and ESAN), Honduras, Panamá and Brasil. For the rest of the Latin American countries such as Argentina, the experiences have been very recent and there is almost no information about them.

⁶ The first University to introduce the subject into the academic program was ICESI back in 1984. There are over 10 other Universities in that country involved with this discipline: Escuela de Administración de Negocios (Bogotá), Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana (Medellín), Universidad del Valle (Cali), Corporación Universitaria Autónoma de Occidente (Cali), Universidad de los Andes (Bogotá), Corporación Universitaria de Ibagué (Ibagué), Universidad Industrial de Santander (Bucaramanga), Universidad del Norte (Barranquilla), Universidad Francisco de Paula Santander (Cúcuta), Universidad Autónoma de Manizales (Manizales), and Universidad Santiago de Cali (Cali).

⁷ Instituto Tecnológico de Costa Rica and INCAE.

II. 2) A Report of Argentina

This section describes the evolution of entrepreneurship education in Argentina's universities and explores its current situation. It also tries to explain the reasons for the emergence of courses, seminars, competencies, and activities related to the field.

We can start by mentioning that an important change has been taking place in the university education of Argentina since the 90's, and its still present. A change observed in both private and public universities, that implies an increase in the academic offer and a change in the role of universities as generators of qualified labor; as agents that influence and contribute to the development of the environment. Its worth noting that the description the situation that we present is intended to be an exploratory study that will enable us to get an overall picture without providing complete and detailed information to allow a truly deep nation-wide analysis.

Nowadays, there are around 36 national public universities and other 37 private ones⁸. These universities are distributed around the country in an uneven way, and offer undergraduate and graduate degrees, as well as masters and in some cases even PhD's. Approximately, 33% of the public institutions, and 20% of the private ones, are engaged in some activity related to Entrepreneurship.

It is hard to establish categories and construct a taxonomy that will allow a rigorous analysis of the situation, even more so if we consider the limited information available. So we can start with the previously mentioned distinction between Education about Entrepreneurship and education for Entrepreneurship.

Most Universities in Argentina have focused their attention in the introduction of courses, seminars, research programs, and incubators that target potential entrepreneurs and students who already have a venture idea. This is remarkable because very few efforts were made to develop education about entrepreneurship.

⁸ Contacts the authors for detailed information.

- ⇒ **Education about entrepreneurship.** As mentioned before, it is focused on the learning and teaching processes related to theories about entrepreneurs, the entrepreneurial function, and the creation of ventures. It is destined to students, researchers, policy makers and social players interested in entrepreneurship as a discipline of knowledge and social phenomenon.

In this group we could find a Masters Program on Economy and Industrial Development at General Sarmiento and Mar del Plata National Universities, with the support of the European Doctoral Program in Entrepreneurship. More recently, the first International Seminar on Entrepreneurship was jointly developed by the Karel Steuer Chair in Entrepreneurship at San Andrés University and Industry Institute of General Sarmiento National University.

- ⇒ **Education for Entrepreneurship.** The rest of the academic offer has focused on the education for entrepreneurs with the purpose of transmitting and developing competencies, attributes, skills and values.

Some of the Universities have Entrepreneurship courses at the undergraduate or graduate level, and offer specific seminars on the subject. Most of the private institutions have business plan contests, while the public ones have incubators. However, we would like to point out that few institutions in this group have research programs or allocate resources to training their staff on entrepreneurship related topics.

- ⇒ **Determinants of the emergence and evolution of Entrepreneurship.** It would be interesting to determinate the variables involved in the emergence of entrepreneurship in argentine universities, but unfortunately this is beyond the reach of this paper's purpose. Anyways, we can still mention the ones that seem most important because it can help us understand the ongoing change.

Among the most relevant factors, the growing unemployment rate and a 5-year-old stagnated economy have increased the demand for entrepreneurship education. Main actors argued that the society favors a positive attitude towards entrepreneurship, particularly among students.

At the same time, senior students get their degrees with unfavorable chances of getting a job suited to their skills and requirements. Thus, they are forced to consider independent projects that will give them the opportunity of developing a professional career. In addition, big firms, on their part, are increasingly recognizing the value of including individuals with entrepreneurial profiles to their staff.

Main actors agree that universities have the responsibility of responding to social needs, and therefore cannot ignore the importance of entrepreneurial education, and the strengthening of an entrepreneurial culture in the society.

The academic interest in this field has collaborated to accelerate the development of this phenomenon. This comes as no surprise given that those same academics were the ones with the initiative needed to introduce the subject in their respective institutions; at least this seems to be the case for most Argentine universities.

The global trend of encouraging the creation of new venture that started in the 80's has been present in Argentina as well. On top of this, we must consider the importance of micro, small, and medium-size firms in the economic structure of the country. According to data from INDEC⁹, 99.7% of these firms concentrated 78.3% of employment back in 1995.

Other factors that have probably been of great importance are the emergence of the new economy and the traditional process of reproducing what leading international universities do in terms of entrepreneurship, at a domestic level.

Overall, these were the factors that enabled, to different extents, the emergence of entrepreneurship in a traditional educational system such as the Argentine one, in a 10-year period.

In conclusion, we can say that the educational system in Argentina at university level has come to reconsider its role due to the requirements of the environment. This transformation is evidenced by the development of the discipline of entrepreneurship, especially in universities with a business or engineering orientation.

⁹ INDEC: Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos.

III. KAREL STEUER CHAIR IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP: The Case of San Andrés University

This section presents the pioneering experience of teaching in the first endowed chair in Argentina and South America at San Andrés University. The purpose of this case study is to introduce some of the results, the teaching methods and the pedagogical approaches used. Reporting on this kind of experiences is a very useful exercise that contributes to debating the ways in which entrepreneurship education can be improved (Mason, 2001).

San Andres University's objective has been to provide an education based on leadership, social responsibility and entrepreneurial attitude since its foundation. It pretends to encourage the development of an entrepreneurial spirit and culture that enables the emergence of new enterprises. The result obtained: 12% of alumni is or has been involved in the development of a new venture.

Courses, seminars and other activities developed in the area of entrepreneurship go back to 1997; timeframe during which relevant information was gathered and the pedagogical model of the project was designed. The commitment with the project was reassured with the creation of the Karel Steuer Chair in Entrepreneurship in the year 2000. Its main objective is to foster the entrepreneurial orientation and social conscience of students, who should have to be capable of identifying opportunities, developing new projects, assume risks, and acquire an ethical commitment with society.

Contrary to other Universities in Argentina, San Andrés has an integrated academic program on entrepreneurship. This means that students from every undergraduate orientation have the possibility of developing their entrepreneurial potential, choosing a specific academic program since their first year.

This academic track has been conceived to match a four-year degree. It includes three units in a mandatory first year course, two special seminars, and three elective courses. This integrated program establishes a solid and complete academic offer for undergraduates. We now present and describe different aspects relevant to the case:

III. 1) Institutional Positioning

The Karel Steuer Chair in Entrepreneurship is independent from the Business Administration Department. It does not have the rank of other academic departments but it still reports directly to the academic Dean. This institutional position is related to the fact that the purpose of the program is to

foster the entrepreneurial spirit of all students throughout various orientations, and not just focused on the business majors. The financing of its activities is also independent thanks to the support and contribution of a donor; thus becoming the first nominated program in South America.

III. 2) Staff

The program's teaching staff includes: three full-time university professors with academic orientation in the area of entrepreneurship¹⁰, an average of three international professors invited to teach every year¹¹, and a group of executives in residence¹².

An operative assistant coordinates 5 students who are interns on the program, and a teaching assistant in direct relation with full-time professors helps with ongoing research projects, papers, and the guidance of students working on their graduation thesis related to the discipline.

Students working as interns are responsible for writing case studies¹³, for organizing activities¹⁴, and updating the website. Outside the University's sphere, a group of entrepreneurial alumni helps with the writing of case studies and mentor student's projects. Finally, the

program has a support network for its activities consisting of entrepreneurs both with and without college degrees.

III. 3) Chair Model

The entrepreneurship program is structured according to the grouping of activities in two main areas:

1. Academic Development
2. Entrepreneurship Center

¹⁰ They are supported by a program of permanent updates that include training activities in the most prestigious international institutions related to entrepreneurship; such as the European Doctoral Program and the Symposium for Entrepreneurship Education at Babson College among others.

¹¹ International Professors come from: York University (Canada), ESCP-EAP (France), Babson College (USA), European Business School (UK), among others.

¹² The tasks of these senior entrepreneurs are: mentoring projects, participating in empirical investigations and lectures to graduate students.

¹³ With the assistance of the academic staff.

¹⁴ Conferences and special events such as "E!Day".

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Academic Development

This area consists of: a) an academic program, b) a research program and, c) a local case study writing unit.

a) Academic Program:

1° YEAR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Three units on Entrepreneurship as part of the course “Introduction to Business Administration” that include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Lectures about Entrepreneurship’s theories and basic concepts. ✓ Interaction with an entrepreneur that allows students to have close access to primary sources of information. ✓ Designing and starting an entrepreneurial activity.
2° YEAR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Seminar on Social Entrepreneurship: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Provides an introduction to social entrepreneurship and a set of tools useful to start-up independent new ventures, as well as ventures inside non-profit organizations. □ Seminar on Creativity and Innovation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Develops a creative perspective on problem solving situations, providing techniques to identify opportunities.
3° YEAR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Finance for Entrepreneurs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ In this elective course the students exercise the mechanisms needed to assess the value of projects, identify financing sources and negotiate with investors.
4° YEAR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Business Plan and Venture Creation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ This elective course concentrates on business plan development, in which students are personally assisted by professors and entrepreneurs. The business plans developed are presented to potential investors. □ Growth Strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ This elective course concentrates on the biggest challenge that established new ventures have to face after the start-up: growth. Students, some of them with ongoing ventures, discuss different strategies with the assistance of entrepreneurs and businessmen with vast experience.

All of these courses are one semester long. Except for the units included in the “Introduction to Business Administration” course, which is mandatory for first year students of all mayors, the rest of the courses and seminars are elective therefore they don’t have a captive audience and depend on students’ interests and appropriate promotion.

b) Research Program

The fields of study developed by the program's on-going investigations are:

c) Local case study writing unit

The purpose of this unit is to develop case studies of local entrepreneurs to be used on the courses of the academic track described. The writing process implies the active participation of the entrepreneur, who is also present at the lectures that refer to his or her venture. The cases are written by students and alumni under the supervision of the academic team. By the end of 2002, the program plans to have finished the first 5 cases.

Entrepreneurship Center

The program wasn't conceived exclusively for the contribution to the development of students' entrepreneurial skills. This second area of the model is the main link between the academic world and the real life entrepreneurs. The relationship between them is of the outmost importance for the dynamism of the model and it can benefit the learning process as well as the evolution of the pedagogical process applied.

In this area, 12 annual conferences about entrepreneurship are held, specifically targeting the academic community. The purpose of these conferences is to generate a discussion forum and to promote the interest in the subject by spreading its relevance, its potential and its current situation. Month after month, the audience for these conferences has been increasing, proving the growing interest of entrepreneurship related topics and the effectiveness of the efforts done by the program to sponsor and promote the discipline.

Once a year, a special event called "Entrepreneurs' Day" or "E!Day" is organized. This event consists of inviting a number of heterogeneous entrepreneurs on one same day, to talk about their "life experiences". Students

can walk around campus and learn from different kinds of ventures, from diverse sectors and magnitudes first hand. This allows an early stimulation of entrepreneurial capacities, and encourages assistants to identify various entrepreneurial models.

Complementary activities in this area are also developed, which are needed to achieve a better academic offer, and to strengthen the network and alliances of the program. Such activities include: open seminars organized jointly with other universities, courses to develop entrepreneurial skills among non professionals, especial conferences, an executives in residence program, and a small unit of strategic support for start-ups.

III. 4) Teaching Methods

Different methods are used to teach the courses included in the academic track. The most popular ones are: lectures, entrepreneurs as guest speakers, case analysis, discussions, writing business plans, working with entrepreneurs (mentoring), and graduation thesis.

It is a top priority that students develop real experiences such as: having contacts with entrepreneurs, facing complex situations, learning through problem solving, and being capable of decision making under uncertainty.

Just as in other universities around the world, the teaching process is based on “active learning” and “problem based learning”. Active learning has the following characteristics as stated by Bonwell and Eison (1991)¹⁵:

- Students are involved in more than listening.
- Less emphasis is placed on transmitting information and more on developing students' skills.
- Students are involved in higher order thinking.
- Students are engaged in activities.
- Greater emphasis is placed on students' exploration of their own attitudes and values.

Problem based learning is characterized, according to Bridges (1992)¹⁶ by:

¹⁵ Veciana (1998)

¹⁶ Veciana (1998)

- The starting point for learning is a problem.
- The new problem is one that students are apt to face as future professionals.
- The knowledge that students are expected to acquire during their professional training is organized around problems rather than disciplines.
- Students, individually and collectively, assume a major responsibility for their own instruction and learning.

The syllabus, bibliography, study materials (cases, lectures, investigations and others) are available at the program's website organized by course or activity and with codified access.

III. 5) Profile of students that have attended the "Business Plan and Venture Creating" course

Although the program has a detailed track record of every student that participates in activities and courses organized, we will only present the results for the "Business Plan and Venture Creation" course¹⁷.

The course objective is to guide students in the development of their ideas and business plans. Through teamwork, students have to design a business development plan for a particular start-up project. The course is one semester long, and is given twice a year. It consists of two lectures and one tutorial a week, that add up to six hour of class per week. The average number of students that attend the course each semester is 35.

General Description

Table 1. Degree

SUBJECT	%
Business Administration	82.35
Economics	8.82
Political Science	0
Communication	5.83
Accounting	3.0
International Relations	0
TOTAL	100

¹⁷ Contact the authors for more information.

San Andrés University has six different majors. As seen in table 1, most of the students that attend the course belong to the business major.

Table 2. Academic Year

YEAR	%
1	0
2	0
3	35
4	65
TOTAL	100

Table 3. How did you know about the course?

Source of Information	%
Internet	23.5
Saw a sign somewhere in campus	47.0
Through friends	23.5
Other	6.0
TOTAL	100

As mentioned before, except for the units included in the “Introduction to Business Administration”¹⁸ course, the rest of the courses and seminars are elective. Therefore, the “Business Plan and Venture Creation” course has to compete with other elective courses organized by other departments, depending exclusively on students’ interest. The program is forced to promote its activities through campus to inform and try to catch students’ attention. Results show that students learn about the existence and content of the course through announcements and signs hanged in notice boards.

Table 4. Students’ by gender

Sex	%
Male	68
Female	32
TOTAL	100

¹⁸ The “Introduction to Business Administration” course is mandatory for all majors.

Table 5. Age of students

Age	%
20	0
21	23.5
22	56.0
23	17.5
24	3.0
TOTAL	100

Table 6. Family environment

	% Father	% Mother
Businessmen / Entrepreneurs	30.0	22.0
Executive / Manager	25.0	3.0
Self-employed / Professional	22.5	29.0
Employee	12.5	6.0
Other	10.0	40.0 ¹⁹
TOTAL	100	100

It was interesting to find the existence of entrepreneurial parents, to try to determine the influence of roll models in this group of students. Results show that 30% of fathers and 22% of mothers are entrepreneurs.

Table 7. Why did you choose this course? (in percent)²⁰

	1°	2°
I like the Professor	10	6
I wasn't interested in any other elective	0	0
I think it will help me get a job	13	34
Planning on creating my own venture in the future	65	21
Curiosity	7	18
Other	5	21
TOTAL	100	100

We can see that the first reason students had for choosing the course was that they were already planning on creating their own venture. Now, it's interesting to note that the second reason for choosing the course has to do with the possibility of getting a job. This illustrates the increasing preoccupation of students due to the high unemployment rate, and the idea that universities are expected to respond to the needs of the context.

¹⁹ Most cases correspond to house-wives.

²⁰ Students had to choose the first two options they considered as most important.

Among the reasons cited as “other”, students considered that the topics discussed in the course were fundamental because they are not included in any other course, and also mentioned their interest on the subject.

Table 8. What are your preferences regarding your future career path? (N=34)(F: False, N: Neutral, T: True)

	F	N	T
I would like to go into a Masters Program	4	13	17
I have a clear vision of the career path I would like to follow or the firms for which I would like to work.	10	12	12
I want to work for a large firm.	7	23	3
I want to work for a small or medium size firm.	13	19	2
I would like to work in the Public sector.	26	7	1
I expect to work in different firms throughout my career.	2	9	23
I would like to work abroad for a while.	1	5	28
I have no plans yet.	21	6	7
I plan to start my own venture after graduation.	7	17	10
I plan to start my own venture in a few years.	5	13	15
I plan to start my own venture after working for a few years.	3	9	22
I'm open minded about creating my own venture.	0	4	30
I'm not interested in creating my own venture.	30	3	1
Firms don't employ for life any more.	4	14	16
There's a high probability that if working for any organization, my job won't require all of my intellectual capacity.	7	11	16

The most relevant results related to the career path preferences can be summarized in the following:

- 50% have the intention of attending graduate school, while 40% are neutral about the idea.
- 67% is neutral about the preference of working for a big company, and 56% are neutral about working for small or medium size firms.
- Almost 30% is considering the possibility of creating their own ventures after graduation, and 67% would rather do it after working for a few years and gaining professional experience.
- Finally, a surprising 89% were open-minded about creating their own ventures.

Table 9. Do you consider venture creation to be easier or more difficult than it was decades ago?

	%
1. Easier	65.7
2. More difficult	34.3
3. Impossible	0
TOTAL	100

This question had the intention of illustrating the students' perception of the chances of becoming entrepreneurs.

Entrepreneurs in Argentina don't really have a positive image. That is why we mentioned the need to legitimize the entrepreneurial career. It is important to promote successful local ventures so that society in general, and particularly students, can relate and identify themselves with those entrepreneurs (See Table 10).

Table 10. What is your opinion of entrepreneurs?²¹ (N=34)

	1	2	3	4	5
Entrepreneurs are dynamic individuals	23	9	2	0	0
Entrepreneurs invest money	3	10	15	3	2
Entrepreneurs talk to their employees	13	19	2	0	0
Entrepreneurs contribute to the economic development of the country	18	14	1	0	1
Entrepreneurs are capable of assuming risk and tolerate it.	20	14	0	0	0
Entrepreneurs are well trained professionals	2	6	20	3	3
Entrepreneurs know about organizations	0	8	21	2	3
Entrepreneurs are highly motivated individuals	28	6	0	0	0
Entrepreneurs are innovators	12	14	6	1	1
Entrepreneurs create employment	15	16	3	0	0
Entrepreneurs have financial and management skills	6	11	11	3	3
Entrepreneurs earn a lot of money	0	6	22	2	4
Entrepreneurs are honest individuals	0	5	12	2	15
Entrepreneurs have an accurate sense of social justice	1	4	13	3	13
Entrepreneurs have a good entrepreneurial vision	14	17	1	1	1

²¹ Scale: 1 (strongly agree), 2 (agree), 3 (disagree), 4 (strongly disagree), 5 (don't know).

Table 11. Timeframe for creating a venture of your own.

	%
Immediately alter graduation	26.3
In the next 5 years alter graduation	56.0
Alter the first 5 years from graduation	14.7
Not interested	3.0
TOTAL	100

Regarding the students' initiative to create their own ventures, we found that around 70% would rather wait a few years after graduation. The reason being, they want to have working experience before starting their own enterprises.

CONCLUSIONS

- According to Baume (1992), who defines entrepreneurship as a process in which the individual characteristics of the entrepreneur interact with the environment that gave its origin, there is a need to modify the status quo of the educational system in order to encourage the development of an entrepreneurial spirit; especially in countries like Argentina. One of the many challenges remaining is the redesign of the educational system given the extensive evidence of a positive relationship between entrepreneurial education and the probability of success of new ventures; and the demand for Universities capable of responding to the need of the changing environment. However, the situation is promising because of the number of public and private universities that have been introducing entrepreneurship related courses in the past decade.
- There is a growing demand for entrepreneurship related courses and activities in Universities, as shown by the growing number of new courses that are being offered every year. In the case of San Andrés University, the amount of students choosing courses from the academic track of the entrepreneurship program has been constantly increasing year after year.
- Most Universities in Argentina have focused on courses, seminars, research programs and incubators, targeting potential entrepreneurs and students with a venture idea. Although little efforts and resources are allocated to the education about entrepreneurship.
- Regarding the models and teaching methods used, there is no general agreement on the best ways to handle entrepreneurship education. This is why it becomes interesting and important to report and share experiences like the one of the Karel Steuer Chair in Entrepreneurship at San Andrés University.
- The development of entrepreneurial skills since the very first year in college has a strong impact and motivates students to continue in that focus of study through their learning process. The case of the Karel Steuer Chair in Entrepreneurship shows the growing percentage of students in senior years have a record of choosing and attending elective courses on entrepreneurship.
- Contrary to the rest of the universities of the country, San Andrés has an integrated academic program on entrepreneurship. Consequently, undergraduate students from every orientation have the possibility of developing their entrepreneurial potential.
- There is no doubt about the potential progress and future development of this discipline at every level of university education in Argentina.

- This research has described the pioneering experience of an academic project in constant evolution. Future studies may try to assess the impact of the academic track's courses in the skills and entrepreneurial aptitudes of students, and on their interest on this field of study.

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