



# **An Evaluation of the Kentucky Entrepreneurial Coaches Institute: Insights and Recommendations**

**Final Report for Class I**

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**Evaluation Team:**

**Deborah Markley, RUPRI Center for Rural Entrepreneurship**

**John Gruidl, Western Illinois University**

**Ted Bradshaw, University of California - Davis**

**James Calvin, Johns Hopkins University**

For questions about this report, please contact Deborah Markley, RUPRI Center for Rural Entrepreneurship, [dmarkley@nc.rr.com](mailto:dmarkley@nc.rr.com), 919-932-7762.

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## Executive Summary

Established in 2003 by the University of Kentucky with funding from the Kentucky Agricultural Development Board, the goal of the Kentucky Entrepreneurial Coaches Institute is to develop a cadre of trained volunteer leaders within the northeastern Kentucky region who become part of the region's entrepreneurial support infrastructure. Program objectives that guided the design and implementation of the training curriculum include:

- Community leaders will develop the skills required to be effective coaches for entrepreneurs.
- A support network of entrepreneurial fellows in the region will develop out of the institute.
- Entrepreneurial fellows will form alliances with existing support providers in the region.
- Entrepreneurial fellows will promote entrepreneurship within the broader community.
- Entrepreneurial fellows will develop and maintain relationships with entrepreneurs in the region.
- Entrepreneurial fellows will build a strong entrepreneurial support structure and entrepreneurial culture that stimulate entrepreneurs to start new businesses and expand existing businesses in the region.

An external evaluation team developed a multi-layered evaluation framework for the KECI including participation in seminars, daily seminar session evaluations, journaling by the coaching fellows, in-person and group interviews, and records of coaching and community activities. This evaluation framework differs from other evaluations typically used in programs like this in that it is an ongoing evaluation that looks at the process as well as the outcomes and evaluation input allowed refinement of the evaluation instruments and data collection. Each component of the evaluation framework provided some insight into the success of the program in meeting its objectives.

While definitive evaluation of the impact of KECI Class I fellows will come at the end of their commitment to the program, the external evaluation team has concluded that the program is off to an impressive start. The training is excellent and the fellows are well-prepared to be effective coaches and entrepreneurial leaders in the region. A very impressive network of fellows is emerging with a strong sense of mission and mutual support. Alliances with other resource providers are being created, although it will take time to establish the role of the fellows in the entrepreneurial support system. Many exciting community projects are underway or have been completed with the mini-grant programs. These projects should have an impact on expanding the knowledge and support for entrepreneurship on the local level. Finally, fellows are engaging entrepreneurs in the vital work of building and expanding businesses.

There was no expectation that the major quantitative benefits of the training would be recorded while the training was ongoing, but the results are impressive concerning the

fellows' ability to apply their training for immediate benefit in developing an entrepreneurial culture in Kentucky. The quantitative assessment of their accomplishments suggests that the fellows were actively involved in building their own skills and, in turn, using them to create a culture of entrepreneurship in Eastern Kentucky. Fellows had contact with 1,162 entrepreneurs or potential entrepreneurs, providing information about the coaching process and helping to increase awareness of the benefit of entrepreneurship in Kentucky. The fellows actually recruited and entered into a coaching relationship with 115 entrepreneurs in the region. This outreach was significant given the fact that fellows were still in training and they had to build their networks to identify entrepreneurs that might be candidates for coaching.

This is a significant contribution to entrepreneurship development in Kentucky when put in context. Up to this point, resources for entrepreneurs in the region involved an extensive network of small business offices and innovation centers, as well as other programs, but there was no resource to help entrepreneurs integrate their use of the various services. The KECI program, in one year, reached 115 entrepreneurs who engaged in a process to develop new business skills and capacity. The capacity of the fellows to continue developing additional coaching contacts is of course unknown, but there is very strong evidence that the program has achieved its goal of proving that coaching resources can be made available effectively to entrepreneurs and that entrepreneurs will use the coaching services when appropriate.

In addition, the fellows developed significant partnerships with other service providers in the region, referring a total of 55 entrepreneurs to service providers and having 12 entrepreneurs referred to them. These service providers became strong partners because the KCEI fellows were out in the community making presentations and becoming known as a resource for these service providers, rather than competitors. The number of presentations is impressive: the fellows made 416 informal presentations and 88 formal presentations in their communities. The large number of these contacts took entrepreneurship from a hidden topic and made it a visible and frequently discussed topic in Eastern Kentucky.

A unique feature of the training curriculum was the study tour of Scotland. A key goal was to learn from the entrepreneurial successes in Scotland and apply some of the "lessons learned" to strengthen policy, youth programs, and global connections among businesses in northeastern Kentucky. The overall evaluation of the fellows was that the tour was valuable, best described as a "chance in a lifetime". If there was one overwhelming conclusion from the evaluations, it is that the fellows saw that people in an even more rural and isolated environment were succeeding through entrepreneurship, and that this inspired them to pursue entrepreneurial opportunities even more vigorously when they returned home.

Several recommendations for program improvement were identified by the evaluation team after considerable discussion with Class I fellows:

- The SuperCoaching™ seminar should occur sooner in the curriculum so that fellows understand the basics of coaching early on. There was also interest in

- having the material tailored to the types of entrepreneurs found in rural Kentucky and providing opportunities for follow-up seminars/training to help enhance the coaching skills of the fellows.
- The content of the curriculum was relevant and helped build necessary skills on the part of the fellows. Some effort should be directed to providing more hands-on learning opportunities for the fellows throughout the training.
  - As the first class of fellows in a new and innovative publicly-supported program, expectations were high regarding what these newly trained leaders would bring to their region. While these expectations also came with a great deal of support for the work of the fellows, it is important to recognize the long-term nature of the changes being promoted through KECI and to judge the success of the program through a broad range of both quantitative and qualitative outcome measures as was done throughout this report.
  - The long-term impact of KECI on the northeast Kentucky region will depend to a large extent on continued efforts by the fellows to use their coaching skills to support entrepreneurs and to use their leadership skills to promote an entrepreneurial culture. As the fellows graduate and begin their work in the region, they will likely need community-level, “hands-on” support, both technical and personal. Building the capacity of the KECI project team to provide ongoing support may be essential to the long-term success of the program. One way of building this capacity would be to establish a new project position, a circuit-rider who provides technical and personal support to fellows as they expand their entrepreneurial coaching and their work on community projects.

The KECI is an innovative program that may well prove to be a model for the nation. Findings based on Class I are that program effectiveness and operations are excellent. The recommendations from the fellows and the evaluation team provide an opportunity for “continuous improvement” of the program and should contribute to the productive evolution of this exciting program.

## Introduction

The Kentucky Entrepreneurial Coaches Institute (KECI) was established in 2003 by the University of Kentucky with funding from the Kentucky Agricultural Development Board. The KECI recruits and trains volunteer leaders from a 19-county region in northeastern Kentucky in leadership and entrepreneurial coaching. The volunteer leaders, now called coaches or fellows, apply these skills in coaching entrepreneurs who wish to start or expand a business. Furthermore, the fellows also work on community projects that increase the knowledge of, and support for, entrepreneurship.

This report is the final evaluation report for the first class of fellows whose term of service extends from September 2004 to November 2007. At the time of this report, the fellows still have a remaining service commitment, but have “graduated” from the training portion of the program. The evaluation examines the effectiveness and impact of the program on the fellows, the participating entrepreneurs and communities. In particular, the evaluation team was asked to assess progress toward the following program objectives:

- Community leaders will develop the skills required to be effective coaches for entrepreneurs.
- A support network of entrepreneurial fellows in the region will develop out of the institute.
- Entrepreneurial fellows will form alliances with existing support providers in the region.
- Entrepreneurial fellows will promote entrepreneurship within the broader community.
- Entrepreneurial fellows will develop and maintain relationships with entrepreneurs in the region.
- Entrepreneurial fellows will build a strong entrepreneurial support structure and entrepreneurial culture that stimulate entrepreneurs to start new businesses and expand existing businesses in the region.

As well as considering effectiveness and outcomes, the evaluation considers the process through which the institute selects and trains fellows and supports their endeavors. The evaluation provides recommendations for program enhancement with the intent of contributing to the evolution and continuous improvement of the program.

The evaluation team consists of four individuals who are not affiliated with the program, the University of Kentucky, or the Kentucky Agricultural Development Board and can therefore serve as outside, neutral observers. Each individual on the evaluation team has extensive experience in entrepreneurship, leadership, and/or community and economic development (see Appendix F).

## **Background on the KECI Project**

Kentucky took a distinctive approach to the problem of assisting tobacco farmers who would suffer economically as the tobacco quotas were eliminated. They strategically set aside a portion of the funds from the Master Tobacco Settlement to help communities in tobacco-dependent regions adjust to changes in the tobacco sector and encourage agricultural diversification. The Kentucky Agricultural Development Board was created in 2000 with a mission to invest in “innovative proposals that increase net farm income and effect tobacco farmers, tobacco-impacted communities and agriculture across the state by stimulating markets for Kentucky agricultural products, finding new ways to add value to Kentucky agricultural products, and exploring new opportunities for Kentucky farms” (<http://agpolicy.ky.gov/board/index.shtml>). One of the projects supported by the Board was a research study into the state of entrepreneurship in northeastern Kentucky – a 19-county region that includes the most tobacco-dependent counties in the state (Scorsone, Werner, Powers and Somov, December 2003).

Through analysis of secondary data and information collected in regional focus groups, the research team provided an overview of the region’s economic development prospects. What the team discovered was a region challenged by changes in both the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors of the economy. Traditional manufacturing jobs were being lost at a rate greater than both state and national averages at the same time that tobacco quotas and revenues were declining. The decline in two of the more important sectors in the regional economy created a sense of urgency about identifying and implementing new economic development strategies within the region. Entrepreneurship development was identified as an important catalyst for such a strategy.

The research team went on to identify elements of an entrepreneurship development strategy including: entrepreneurial facilitation, technical assistance, financial capital availability and market access. They concluded that Kentucky in general and this region in particular were missing one critical piece of the entrepreneurial support infrastructure related to entrepreneurial facilitation or coaching. As a result, the research team proposed the creation of the Kentucky Entrepreneurial Coaches Institute (KECI) to recruit and train volunteer leaders to become coaches and facilitators of entrepreneurial development in the northeastern Kentucky region. In 2003, the Kentucky Agricultural Development Board provided the resources to create KECI and train the first two classes of fellows in the region.

## **About the KECI**

The concept behind the KECI is that volunteers with a strong connection and commitment to a region can be trained to be coaches for entrepreneurs, both potential and existing, in their communities. A KECI Entrepreneurial Coach is a volunteer citizen leader who acquires skills through learning and application to facilitate entrepreneurial behaviors and linkages to help foster new economic activity in a county or region. The coach’s role in working with entrepreneurs is very specific – he is not a service provider in the traditional sense of providing financial, marketing or other types of business

assistance. Rather she is a good listener, providing guidance and encouragement to the entrepreneur while at the same time being certain that the entrepreneur is doing the hard work of starting (or discovering whether to start) a business.

The goal of the KECI is to develop a cadre of trained volunteer leaders within the northeastern Kentucky region who become part of the region's entrepreneurial support infrastructure. Underlying the project are a number of objectives that guided the KECI project team<sup>1</sup> in the design and implementation of the training curriculum:

- Community leaders will develop the skills required to be effective coaches for entrepreneurs.
- A support network of entrepreneurial fellows in the region will develop out of the institute.
- Entrepreneurial fellows will form alliances with existing support providers in the region.
- Entrepreneurial fellows will promote entrepreneurship within the broader community.
- Entrepreneurial fellows will develop and maintain relationships with entrepreneurs in the region.
- Entrepreneurial fellows will build a strong entrepreneurial support structure and entrepreneurial culture that stimulate entrepreneurs to start new businesses and expand existing businesses in the region.

The project's success in accomplishing these objectives is the subject of the evaluation being undertaken by the evaluation team.

The KECI is structured as a 16-month program for classes of 30 community leaders from the northeastern Kentucky region. Each fellow selected for the program receives a fellowship covering the costs of a series of nine seminars (2-3 day sessions). Eight seminars are held within the region and one seminar provides an opportunity for international travel to learn about entrepreneurship development in a different cultural setting. Each fellow commits to spending at least 50 hours a year following completion of the seminar training for two years working with entrepreneurs or communities in their part of the region and to participating in alumni events organized by the university.

In the first year of the program, the curriculum was organized into the following seminars:

- Seminar 1 (September 2004) – The Promise of Entrepreneurship
- Seminar 2 (October 2004) – The Promise of Entrepreneurship in Practice (field trip to Ohio-based Appalachian Center for Economic Networks)
- Seminars 3 and 4 (November 2004) – Supercoaching™ the Entrepreneur
- Seminar 5 (January 2005) – Building Entrepreneurial Capacity
- Seminar 6 (February 2005) – New Markets and Mini-Grant Development

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<sup>1</sup> The project team is Dr. Ronald J. Hustedde, Director, Dr. Larry Jones, Co-Director, and Tammy Werner, Coordinator, the University of Kentucky.

- Seminar 7 (May 2005) – Policy Conference and Mini-Grant Presentations/Awards
- Seminar 8 (September 2005) – Entrepreneurship in Rural Scotland
- Seminar 9 (November 2005) – Graduation

Based on input received from the Class I coaching fellows, the curriculum for the second class in the program was modified in terms of the sequencing of topics as well as some changes to content. Specifically, the seminars on how to coach (i.e., the Supercoaching seminars) occurred earlier in the program for the Class II fellows to help the fellows discover early on what coaching is all about. However, the relative merits of this restructuring will be considered during the evaluation of the second KECI class.

### **Evaluation Framework and Approach**

The evaluation team developed a multi-layered evaluation framework for the KECI including:

- Participation in seminars and travel
- Daily seminar session evaluations
- Journaling by the coaching fellows
- In-person and group interviews with coaching fellows
- Fellows' records of coaching and community activities

This evaluation framework differs from other evaluations typically used in programs like this in two ways. First, it is an ongoing evaluation that looks at the process as well as the outcomes. The relatively large evaluation team of four experts in entrepreneurship and rural development was able to work with the KECI leadership to continuously brainstorm how to incorporate feedback from the ongoing evaluation into the ongoing design of the program, and to utilize this feedback to shape the program for the second class of fellows. Moreover, the ongoing evaluation input allowed refinement of the evaluation instruments and data collection.

Each component of the evaluation framework has provided some insight into the success of the program in meeting its objectives and a means of describing the outcomes of the program. The individual components of the evaluation are discussed below.

#### **Participation in seminars and travel**

Members of the evaluation team participated in four seminars during the first year of the project: the introductory seminar, the Supercoaching™ seminar, the policy/mini grant seminar, and the international trip to Scotland. The entire team also participated in the final seminar, conducting one-on-one interviews with entrepreneurial fellows and administering an end of class evaluation during that seminar.

### **Daily Seminar Session Evaluations**

The end of seminar evaluations were designed to measure, for each day's session, the usefulness of content, the effectiveness of presentation, the most useful part of the session for them as they train to become a coach and community leader, and any changes they would make to the session. These evaluations provided two things. One, the evaluations provided a quantitative measure of how relevant the content of each session was for the fellows and how well the material was communicated to them. Two, they provided feedback to the project team regarding changes that may be required as the curriculum is revised for future classes.

In addition, a final curriculum evaluation was completed during the final seminar. This tool provided an opportunity for the fellows to reflect on the specific skills they had acquired through the entire process of KECI seminars. (Appendix A includes this final evaluation.)

### **Journaling by Coaching Fellows**

The KECI is a leadership program to develop entrepreneurial coaching leaders in the region. As such, the evaluation team felt it was important to capture the "journey" of the fellows – their challenges, struggles and joys along the way. To capture these observations efficiently, each evaluation team member was assigned a cohort of 8-9 coaching fellows who completed an email journal following the first five seminars.<sup>2</sup> The same questions were posed after each seminar (see Appendix B):

- What are you learning from the seminars that you think will be valuable to you as an Entrepreneurial Coach in your community?
- Have you discovered any opportunities to apply these entrepreneurial coaching strategies in your community? Have you made any plans or taken any specific actions to apply your skills to these opportunities (discuss both the positive and challenging aspects of your experience)?
- Please reflect on your journey to become an Entrepreneurial Coach. What aspects of this process are working well and what are not? How do you feel about your experience – both joys and frustrations?

### **In-person Interviews**

The evaluation team members met with their coaching cohorts in small groups in November 2004 and May 2005 to discuss the challenges faced by the fellows, improvements that could be made to the program and the best things about the program. Further one-on-one interviews were conducted during the trip to Scotland and the final graduation seminar (see Appendix C for final seminar interview questions).

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<sup>2</sup> The evaluation team stopped using the journaling after seminar 5 because of difficulty getting responses from the coaching fellows. An alternative method of getting information about each fellow's journey was used during the trip to Scotland and the final seminar – one-on-one interviews with each fellow. For Class II, the journaling will be completed during those seminars in which members of the evaluation team participate as well as during the international trip and the final seminar.

### **Fellows' Records of Coaching and Community Activities**

Fellows were asked to maintain records measuring the extent to which the fellows form alliances with other support providers, promote entrepreneurship within the community, and develop and maintain relationships with entrepreneurs in their community. The fellows were asked to maintain a record of contacts made over time as a way to map the network created by the fellows. To capture this quantitative information, the evaluators conducted individual interviews, using a data sheet (see Appendix D), during the Scotland trip and the final seminar to collect such metrics as the number of entrepreneurs contacted, the number coached, the number of community presentations made, the number of referrals to service providers, etc.

### **Selecting the Entrepreneurial Fellows**

The process for selecting entrepreneurial fellows began as early as 2003 during the research project that generated the idea for KECI. The research included focus groups in each of the 19 counties in the target region and meetings with each of the county agricultural development councils. Participants in these meetings included local elected officials, economic development leaders, entrepreneurs and others who had insight on the climate for entrepreneurship in the region. As part of this process, each agricultural development council was asked to take a vote regarding their support for the project and to agree to nominate at least one Fellow for KECI. All 19 councils supported the project and agreed to participate in the nomination process.

The formal recruitment process ran from April to June 2004, once the curriculum was developed, and was designed by the project team in conjunction with two agricultural communications faculty from the University of Kentucky. The recruitment process included:

- Distribution of over 4,500 color brochures about the program through local chambers, extension agents and other local organizations.
- Presentations about the program to extension agents, chamber groups and other local organizations.
- Individual recruitment packets sent to state, county and city elected officials and to extension agents, county agricultural development council chairs, economic development leaders and other group leaders.
- Personal recruitment by an extension staff person (and eastern Kentucky native) over a six-month period – included visits with all judge-executives, extension agents, and economic development leaders as well as newspaper articles.
- Public radio announcements and interview with KECI director.
- Workshop on *Revitalizing the Economy of NE Kentucky: Beyond Tobacco Dependency* with keynote speech by Ernesto Sirolli and public announcement about KECI.
- Launch of a website with downloadable nomination materials and program information.
- Personal calls, emails, and letters from KECI director and other team members.

The recruitment process resulted in over 80 nominations and 52 completed applications. From this pool, a selection committee of the Agricultural Development Board chose the 30 fellows for the program. Interviews were conducted with each of the 52 applicants in July 2004. After an orientation to KECI by the project director, each applicant was interviewed for about 30 minutes. Applicants were permitted to bring family members or friends as support for their interview and about half chose to do so.

In considering the applicants, the Agricultural Development Board and the project team were looking for individuals who had the following characteristics:

- Commitment to attend all nine seminars, including the international trip, and to complete all homework assignments between seminars.
- Enthusiasm for learning about rural entrepreneurship.
- Willingness to donate 50 hours per year to the local community or region for two years following graduation.
- Commitment to helping the region move beyond tobacco-dependency and belief that this change can happen.
- Leadership experience in the community.
- Ideally, experience in finance, marketing, product development, education, or leadership of a nonprofit, especially those who have started businesses with or without success in the past.
- Brings a fresh perspective to KECI.
- Ability and willingness to work in teams and with community groups

The selection committee was also asked to choose a class that represented the diversity of the region, specifically in terms of age, gender (evenly divided), race, occupational and educational background and leadership experience. In addition, about half the class should be engaged in agriculture or an ag-related organization to be certain that the issue of tobacco dependency was addressed. Each of the 19 counties was to have at least one fellow, if suitable candidates were found. Using these guidelines, the committee selected 30 fellows and a waiting list of other candidates. Only one fellow declined to participate due to health reasons and another from the waiting list was added.<sup>3</sup>

The selection process resulted in a committed and relatively diverse group of coaching fellows. The presence of entrepreneurs among the fellows strengthened the class as they brought real world insights to the seminars. The agricultural background of many of the fellows kept agri-entrepreneurship issues on the table throughout the seminars. Several fellows indicated that it was very helpful to have another fellow in the county for mutual support and joint efforts. Therefore, for future cohorts of fellows, it might be helpful to try to identify two fellows from each county, if possible, to strengthen support and capacity for the program.

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<sup>3</sup> The program began with 30 coaches in September 2004 but two fellows dropped out of the program in February 2005 for health-related reasons.

## **Outcomes of the Kentucky Entrepreneurial Coaches Institute Class I**

The original intent of the KECI program was to address six broad and interrelated goals and the evaluation strove to put in context the measurable outcomes with the longer term and more subjective purposes of the program. The evaluation addressed each of these goals:

- Community leaders will develop the skills required to be effective coaches for entrepreneurs.
- A support network of entrepreneurial fellows in the region will develop out of the institute.
- Entrepreneurial fellows will form alliances with existing support providers in the region.
- Entrepreneurial fellows will promote entrepreneurship within the broader community.
- Entrepreneurial fellows will develop and maintain relationships with entrepreneurs in the region.
- Entrepreneurial fellows will build a strong entrepreneurial support structure and entrepreneurial culture that stimulate entrepreneurs to start new businesses and expand existing businesses in the region.

What have we learned from the fellows? Drawing primarily on the journaling, one-on-one interviews and small group sessions with the fellows, the evaluation team has gained insights from the fellows that enable us to address the objectives for the project. The quantitative information collected from the fellows provides a picture of their ability to assist entrepreneurs in creating new businesses and in building the network of support infrastructure in the region.

### **Quantitative Outcomes of Fellows' Activities**

At the last session and on the study tour, the evaluation team collected data on the accomplishments of each coach during their sixteen month training period. There was no expectation that the major benefits of the training would be recorded while the training was ongoing, but the results are impressive concerning the fellows' ability to apply their training for immediate benefit in developing an entrepreneurial culture in Kentucky. The quantitative assessment of their accomplishments is summarized in Table 1. It should be noted that these data are the most easily measured and suggestive of the evaluative metrics collected and do not capture all of the activities of the fellows.

The results of this quantitative evaluation suggest that the fellows were actively involved in building their own skills and, in turn, using them to create a culture of entrepreneurship in Eastern Kentucky. The numbers are impressive. Fellows had contact with 1162 entrepreneurs or potential entrepreneurs, providing information about the coaching process and helping to increase awareness of the benefit of entrepreneurship in Kentucky. Over 500 of these contacts were in small groups and there were 166 meetings between the fellows and persons interested in learning more about partnering with an

entrepreneurial coach – an average of six personal contacts with entrepreneurs for each coach. This outreach was significant given the fact that fellows were still in training and they had to build their networks to identify entrepreneurs that might be candidates for coaching.

**Table 1. KECI Class I – Connecting with the Region**

Metric	Total – All Fellows	Average	Minimum	Maximum
Number of contacts with entrepreneurs	1162 (562*)	20*	1	300+
Number of initial meetings with entrepreneurs	166	6	0	40
Number of entrepreneurs coached	115	4	0**	19
Number of entrepreneurs referred to Service Providers	55	2	0	12
Number of entrepreneurs referred by Service Providers	12	--	--	--
Number of meetings with Service Providers	115	4	0	30
Number of informal presentations in the community	416	15	0	100
Number of formal presentations in the community	88	3	0	10

\* Excludes two fellows who had 300+ contacts through a conference.

\*\* One fellow had 5 coaching possibilities but had not yet begun the coaching process when these metrics were collected.

The fellows actually recruited and entered into a coaching relationship with 115 entrepreneurs in the region. This is a significant contribution to entrepreneurship development in Kentucky when put in context. Up to this point, resources for entrepreneurs in the region involved an extensive network of small business offices and

innovation centers, as well as other programs, but there was no resource to help entrepreneurs integrate their use of the various services. The KECI program, in one year, reached 115 entrepreneurs who engaged in a process to develop new business skills and capacity. The capacity of the fellows to continue developing additional coaching contacts is of course unknown, but there is very strong evidence that the program has achieved its goal of proving that coaching resources can be made available effectively to entrepreneurs and that entrepreneurs will use the coaching services when appropriate.

In addition, Table 1 identifies the partnerships developed between the fellows and other service providers in the region. A total of 55 entrepreneurs were referred to service providers in the area, and 12 entrepreneurs were in turn referred to fellows by the service providers. These service providers include small business centers, innovation centers, chambers of commerce, university and college training programs, and other regional resources. The reason that these service providers became strong partners is because the KCEI fellows were out in the community making presentations and becoming known as a resource for these service providers, rather than competitors. The number of presentations is impressive: the fellows made 416 informal presentations and 88 formal presentations in their communities. The typical informal presentation was a meeting or interview with a county judge, a chamber of commerce president, leaders of a business association, or a meeting with the economic development agency in their county. Formal meetings included presentations to county boards or conferences, as well as monthly meetings of various organizations. The large number of these contacts took entrepreneurship from a hidden topic and made it a visible and frequently discussed topic in Eastern Kentucky as will be shown in the sections that follow.

The coaching experience was generally positive according to reports from the fellows, though all discovered that the process of helping an entrepreneur start a business is a long road and few fellows were able to see the results of their work during their training. Table 2 shows the outcome of the coaching experience for the 115 coaching experiences that were reported. At the end of coaching about half of those coached – 60 – reported that they were in business or in the process of starting a business. Some of these persons were already in business but felt that they were not doing as well as they wished or they needed to expand or transform their business. A total of 15 of these businesses approached a financial institution for capital and 9 businesses reported that they increased their employment while being coached. Another 15 maintained their business, usually informally reporting increasing success in terms of product or marketing, and often profitability.

Coaching successfully led to other outcomes which are valuable in the community context. Nine entrepreneurs who started coaching decided not to start their business either because it was not feasible or because the time was not right for them. This should be considered as a success because the individuals involved saved their personal time and often significant investment of personal wealth that might otherwise have been wasted. An additional 33 entrepreneurs were referred to other service providers who had more specific means of providing assistance, which is a desirable and expected outcome of the coaching process. Interestingly, 27 entrepreneurs dropped out of coaching. In exploring

the reasons for this, the conclusion is that there are many reasons entrepreneurs drop out but they are mainly for personal or professional reasons, such as a sick spouse or a new opportunity working for someone else.

**Table 2. KECI Class I – Coaching Outcomes**

Entrepreneurs who...	Total – All Fellows
<b>Dropped out of coaching</b>	27
<b>Were in the process of starting up or had started up a business</b>	60
<b>Decided not to start a business</b>	9
<b>Approached a financial institution for capital</b>	15
<b>Increased employment</b>	9
<b>Maintained their business</b>	15
<b>Were referred to other service providers for assistance</b>	33

We caution that the quantitative results of the KECI program should not be over-interpreted because they are only the tip of an iceberg. The facts that the fellows made contact with over 1000 entrepreneurs, coached 115, and made 416 informal presentations in their communities are the relevant indicators that the program is creating both a cohort of exceptionally trained and dedicated civic leaders who have new skills and capacity to transform the culture of their region, and that these leaders are effectively transforming community resources and institutions into a powerful network of professional service providers that can provide assistance well beyond what volunteers can do. In just 16 months, these 28 KECI fellows created a groundswell of positive energy for entrepreneurship that simply was not present in this part of Kentucky before.

### **Developing Coaching Skills to Support Entrepreneurship**

The KECI seminars were designed to provide the fellows with the skills needed to effectively coach entrepreneurs in their communities. There is clear evidence that the fellows have developed the fundamental skills to be effective coaches. There was general consensus that the Supercoaching™ workshop was the most useful in giving fellows the specific coaching skills they need to work effectively with entrepreneurs. After the coaching seminars, there seemed to be a shift in the fellows' attitudes from one of "what have I gotten myself into" to one of "I've learned more than I could have imagined when I started the program."

The fellows generally report that they have built up their skill and knowledge levels over the course of the seminars and that they feel confident in their abilities to coach entrepreneurs. Specifically, the fellows recognize now that the ultimate responsibility for business success rests with the entrepreneur and that their role is to "ask relevant questions and perhaps steer the entrepreneur in the direction that will best suit his/her needs." A number of comments from the fellows testify to this enhanced capacity:

- "The content has empowered us and we can now overcome stumbling blocks in our communities."
- "There are two or three defining moments in a career and this is one of them for me."

- “This was our best experience to date. I actually got to work through some step by step procedures that you could use in coaching. I feel more comfortable with the process.”
- “I am also feeling more confident working one on one with entrepreneurs. I have also been more comfortable with the Socratic method of asking questions, rather than being the ‘expert’ all the time.”

During the one-on-one interviews at the final seminar, the fellows were asked to identify the most valuable thing they learned from the KECI process. Overwhelmingly, the fellows identified an expanded skill set as the most valuable outcome. Specifically, they identified the coaching and networking tools they acquired, the increased understanding of resources available throughout their region and the state to assist entrepreneurs, and the ability to use appreciative inquiry to see the potential, and to help others see the potential, in their communities.

The enhanced skill set for fellows is confirmed by the final curriculum evaluation completed by the fellows during the final seminar. The results of that quantitative assessment are included later in this report.

### **Building a Support Network of Fellows in the Region**

Another objective of KECI was to create a network of trained volunteer fellows in the northeast Kentucky region that would become a permanent part of the entrepreneurial support infrastructure in the region. One of the more powerful observations the evaluation team has made is the strength of the coaching network that has developed through the program. The fellows view themselves as a network, both for support and exchange of information. As one Fellow described, “the greatest satisfaction is that I feel that I have made some great contacts to expand my network and to be able to help my entrepreneurial clients.” And, from another Fellow, “I have realized that I am not alone. I have all the other fellows to network with. I think we will not only be coaching people but also coaching each other.”

It is clear from observing the fellows that there is a strong sense of rapport, support, and trust within the group. The fellows themselves describe their colleagues in glowing terms, such as:

- “Great group of people, close-knit.”
- “Powerhouse of coaches and great resource for communities.”
- “Lifelong friends and valuable regional working partners.”

The fellows are joining together for many activities, such as meeting with existing support providers, sharing information and expertise through a listserv, and collaborating on joint community projects. Fellows report that when they face a difficulty or need advice, they feel confident that one of their colleagues will assist them. Indeed, one of the most important long-range outcomes of this project may be this strong supportive network of community leaders that are dedicated to improving their region.

### **Forming Alliances with Support Providers**

While the network created among the KECI fellows is strong, the fellows are also forming alliances with existing support providers. The networking seminar that introduced them to support providers in the region and provided them with training in networking to aid them in forming partnerships with providers was cited as valuable by many fellows. This seminar helped them realize “the power of networks because one person cannot do it all” and that “no individual is an island, understanding needs and forming alliances based on skills and resources is crucial.” Fellows have reported making visits to Innovation Centers, Small Business Development Centers, tourism associations, local banks, and other agencies.

As expected, it has taken some time for the fellows’ identity and role as fellows to be understood by service providers. As described earlier, the fellows made many presentations in their communities and developed new collaborations and awareness among the existing service providers. The most important and frequent service providers now in the network of entrepreneurship of the KECI project are listed in Table 3. This process of networking with existing service providers such as small business development centers, bankers, and economic development organizations has not always been easy. Fellows reported encountering resistance from service providers who viewed them as entering their “turf”. Fellows have begun to overcome this resistance by meeting with service providers and explaining their distinct role which likely will lead to increasing the number of clients for the service providers. The process of alliance building takes time but it is clear that fellows are actively networking with service providers in their region.

### **Promoting Entrepreneurship within the Broader Community**

Fellows are actively working in their communities to promote entrepreneurship. Examples of their activities include starting a small business association, teaching a course for prospective entrepreneurs, presenting workshops to the chamber of commerce, leading a county-wide visioning program, talking with youth in the local schools, conducting information sessions about KECI within the community, and writing articles for the local newspaper. Table 3 also shows the types of community organizations and media outlets that were contacted by the first class of fellows. This resource for informing the community is essential for building a stronger entrepreneurial culture in the region.

Perhaps the best example of promoting entrepreneurship within the broader community is the mini-grant process. The mini-grant projects had three primary purposes – to stimulate an entrepreneur-friendly climate in the region, to build regional cooperation and move beyond “county line” mentalities, and to learn leadership by doing. Each fellow was given access to up to \$1,000 in mini-grant funds. The fellows organized themselves into teams (2-5 fellows) to develop proposed regional projects. Each team was expected to identify a 25% match, either cash or in-kind, for the project. Then, each team had to present the project concept to the other fellows, address any questions or concerns about the project and gain approval from at least 75% of the fellows in order to proceed with the project. This process yielded benefits to the teams as the other fellows identified

opportunities for collaboration and resources and generally provided useful feedback on the projects.

**Table 3. KECI Class I – Networking Experience**

Categories	Organizations/Individuals
<b>Service Providers</b>	Bankers Innovation Centers Extension agents Small Business Development Centers Chambers of Commerce Main Street Programs Universities and community colleges Economic development organizations (public and non-profit) Sector specific organizations, e.g., arts councils
<b>Community Organizations/Individuals</b>	Elected officials Civic organizations, e.g., Rotary, Kiwanis Tourism groups Chambers of Commerce Boards of Education School students Women's Garden Club Quilters' Guild Universities and community colleges
<b>Media</b>	Newspaper articles (primary outlet for fellows) Internet blog Radio spots TV spots Public Service Announcements

The approved projects represented a diverse set of entrepreneurship-related activities in the region:

- Developing eco/agri-tourism businesses on farms
- Organizing a wood shims product development contest
- Creating an innovation center at a local technical college
- Starting a Youth Entrepreneurial Program (YEP) in the local high school
- Creating a student-run business at the local Technology Center
- Organizing a public relations/community education campaign to increase awareness and knowledge of entrepreneurship

The projects had a diverse set of outcomes as well. Appendix E describes in more detail the mini-grant projects that were developed and implemented by the Class I fellows. However, several issues related to the mini-grant process overall were raised by the fellows:

- Some of the mini-grants were used to develop programs or approaches that might be adapted by other fellows in the region. The fellows expressed the need for help in developing a means of sharing these models so that they can be readily adapted and used by other fellows. For example, the YEP process should be written up and shared with fellows who might want to employ the model in their local area.
- It is important that the fellows choose projects of an appropriate scale for the mini-grant process. One of the projects, creation of an innovation center, proved to be too large a project, and to require too much time, to produce outcomes within the time frame of the mini-grant project.
- The project team might consider providing support to the mini-grant process in two ways. One, there may be technical assistance needs that arise during the mini-grant process that cannot be met by the fellows. For example, the mini-grant project to establish the student-run business at the local technical college determined that the students needed some exposure to entrepreneurship before getting involved with running a business. The project team could provide access to resources related to existing youth entrepreneurship curriculum in this case. Two, several mini-grant projects have the potential to achieve longer term impact in the region through their continuation. For example, the mini-grant team focused on agri-tourism is actively pursuing Appalachian Regional Commission and foundation grant funds to further develop their seven-county collaborative model. The project team could meet with each of the teams to determine the level of interest and potential for institutionalizing the mini-grant initiatives in some way.

As a final way of assessing the fellows' ability to promote entrepreneurship within the broader community, the fellows were asked to identify the most important thing they bring to the region as a result of their participation in KECI. Three themes emerged. The fellows bring knowledge of resources that exist both inside and outside of the region and an understanding of how to connect with those resources – the networking skills that are so important to creating a supportive environment for entrepreneurs. The fellows also bring a new skill set to the region – the ability to coach and encourage entrepreneurs, something that early research identified as missing from the region. Finally, the fellows bring deep affection for the region and its people and a strong commitment to providing the leadership needed to increase awareness of the importance of entrepreneurship and to work toward the entrepreneurial development of the region.

### **Developing and Maintaining Relationships with Entrepreneurs**

A fellow's primary responsibility is to develop and maintain a relationship with entrepreneurs in his/her community. In the early stages of the program, the fellows had varying experiences in generating "demand" for their services. Some fellows faced too much demand from entrepreneurs – more than they could accommodate. Others reported that locating entrepreneurs was their greatest challenge. Some communities may have a more closed and rigid approach to economic development and may not welcome this new approach. As one fellow stated early on, "I have currently scheduled three group informational presentations to spread the word about KECI in the next three weeks and I hope it will result in more individuals to coach." Hence, for some fellows, it took time to

build up the community awareness and support so that entrepreneurs would be comfortable working with them.

All of the fellows are actively engaged in the process of coaching but the results vary from coach to coach. Each fellow was expected to actively coach at least one entrepreneur by the final seminar. Table 2 (presented earlier in this report) describes the coaching outcomes for the Class I fellows as a whole. Of the entrepreneurs who were coached by the KECI fellows, 60 were either in the process of starting or had started a business. Another nine had decided after coaching not to start a business – considered a successful outcome by most service providers. The entrepreneurs who were coached were having some success in building their businesses – 15 approached a financial institution for capital, nine increased employment, and 15 maintained their business. The fellows also showed a continued commitment to networking, referring 33 of their coaching clients to other service providers.

A fair number of entrepreneurs, 27, dropped out of the coaching process. This number requires some clarification. As part of the coaching process, the entrepreneur must complete a set of assignments (homework) before they can move forward with coaching. This requirement insures that the entrepreneur is fully committed to doing the hard work of building a business and that the coach is supporting, not directing, the entrepreneur's activities. The drop out rate may reflect the needs and attitude of the entrepreneur rather than the capacity of the coach – the entrepreneur may not be ready to commit to the coaching process or may have a specific need that requires business assistance but not coaching.

Of the two main activities of the fellows, coaching entrepreneurs and building a supportive community, each fellow tended to focus more on one activity or the other, based on skills, interest and position within the community. Some fellows coached numerous entrepreneurs, as many as 19, while others were extremely active in building support within the community for entrepreneurship through such activities as community presentations and camps for youth entrepreneurs.

### **Building a Strong Entrepreneurial Support Structure and Entrepreneurial Culture**

The discussion above suggests that the KECI fellows are building a stronger entrepreneurial support structure and entrepreneurial culture in the region. The fellows have acquired a set of coaching and networking skills that is allowing them to fill a gap – facilitation or coaching of entrepreneurs – identified in the research that provided the background for this project. And, the fellows are actively coaching entrepreneurs within the region. The fellows are also networking with other elements of the support structure, service providers and community-based organizations.

The key question is whether this network of skilled, volunteer leaders and entrepreneurial fellows will become a permanent part of the region's support infrastructure. To gain some insight into this issue, the fellows were asked where they see themselves, as a coach, in the future (up to three years). Almost all of the fellows expect to be coaching or otherwise actively engaged in their communities over the next three years. Most indicated

they expect to be directly involved with entrepreneurs. A few of the fellows have recognized that they have more to contribute to the region by working toward local and state policy change that supports entrepreneurship as opposed to working one-on-one with entrepreneurs. However, these fellows would continue to refer entrepreneurs to other fellows in the region.

As a further measure of the fellows' ability to influence the long-term future of the region, six of the Class I fellows are seeking political office – five are running for county magistrate positions in Bracken, Harrison, Lewis and Mason (two) counties and one is running for the Kentucky House District #71.

### **Assessment of the Value of the Study Tour to Scotland**

A unique feature of the training curriculum was the study tour of Scotland that the fellows participated in from September 5 – 19, 2005. Because of the special character and expense of this trip, it merits a separate assessment in this report. A key goal was to learn from the entrepreneurial successes in Scotland and apply some of the “lessons learned” to strengthen policy, youth programs, and global connections among businesses in northeastern Kentucky.

The study tour included visits with local entrepreneurs, community leaders, and policymakers, particularly those in the more remote, rural parts of Scotland. For example, fellows visited with small successful companies in wind energy, salmon farming, equestrian business, furniture making, tapestries, and jewelry and clothing design. Some businesses were oriented toward local customers. However, most are successful in serving global markets in spite of their isolation. Youth entrepreneurship was also a focus of the tour, with visits to the Prince Scottish Youth Business Trust, WildDay, and the Lochinver Youth Project, three successful youth entrepreneurship programs.

Staff from the country's two main economic development organizations (Scottish Enterprises and Highlands and Islands Enterprises) explained economic development approaches, particularly those that encourage entrepreneurship. The days were full and active with learning occurring in formal seminar settings, but also through informal contacts, such as dinner conversations, with local entrepreneurs and community leaders.

Our assessment is based on written evaluation forms completed by the fellows for each day of the tour and an overall evaluation completed at the end of the trip. Furthermore, the final interviews with fellows at the November 2005 graduation also gathered their feedback on the Scotland trip. This information gives us a good sense of the learning that occurred. However, understanding how the fellows apply this learning to northeastern Kentucky would require further follow-up with fellows in their home communities.

#### **General Assessment by Fellows**

The overall evaluation of the fellows was that the tour was valuable, best described as a “chance in a lifetime”. They appreciated the cultural differences and could see the

benefit of visiting a foreign culture that is even more rural and isolated than Kentucky. Each coach found value in different presentations and visits. What is interesting is that those individual presentations or visits that were disliked by some fellows were nearly balanced by other fellows who thought it a highlight of that particular day.

If there was one overwhelming conclusion from the evaluations, it is that the fellows saw that people in an even more rural and isolated environment were succeeding through entrepreneurship, and that this inspired them to pursue entrepreneurial opportunities even more vigorously when they returned home. One fellow commented, “If you have the knowledge and the passion, you can do it, no matter how far out your place is.” Other fellows’ comments:

- Once in a life time experience.
- Will never forget all we’ve seen, people and businesses we met, and all the time we shared.
- A very special trip for me. Entire trip was amazing.
- Immersing KECI fellows in a different culture was a real eye-opener and a real plus.
- Great experience – I’ve been changed.
- Overall trip was wonderful and the chance of a lifetime. Absolutely incredible!
- Insights from trip will help us come up with new ideas, or just to believe in our communities enough to reach for the top.

Some of the highlights included the chance to learn about youth programs and to meet youth entrepreneurs. The crofters were especially interesting to the fellows because of their agricultural economy, isolation, and tenacity. Fellows learned a lot from the agriculture and craft entrepreneurs that were visited, but in addition some high technology and tourism ventures proved exemplary. There were many similarities between the kinds of entrepreneurial businesses that succeed in Scotland and the fellows’ experience in Kentucky, and this made the trip relevant. They were less interested in the differences and similarities between the support institutions and associated programs in Scotland and in Kentucky.

The fellows took this tour very seriously. The overwhelming sense from the evaluations was that they wanted more reflection and learning rather than less. Several fellows wanted more debriefing and evening reflection sessions. They quibbled over the means of the presentations and their ability to absorb the material presented, but there was no questioning the trip’s goal of understanding what entrepreneurs were doing in Scotland.

A final benefit that was mentioned by fellows in the evaluations was the extent to which the fellows learned from each other and became a closer-knit group. One coach said at a session that “there are no more secrets” among the fellows, and it was obvious that the extensive time they spent together increased their group cohesion.

The numerical results from the evaluation forms also indicate the high value that the fellows assigned to the trip, as indicated in Table 4. The overall score for the content of the trip was 4.5 on a 5-point scale with 5 being the highest (excellent).

**Table 4. Summary Information from the Scotland Study Tour Evaluations**

Day of the Tour	Usefulness of Learning Content*	Effectiveness of Presentation*
1 & 2	3.14	3.07
3	3.86	3.70
4	3.65	3.52
5	3.96	3.76
7	3.67	3.56
8	4.08	4.29
9	4.38	4.54
Overall	4.50	4.14

\*Average rating on a 1-5 scale where 1 is poor and 5 is excellent.

### **Recommendations for improvement**

The fellows had suggestions for improving future trips. Two suggestions seem particularly noteworthy. First, the fellows wanted fewer Power Point presentations and more interaction, perhaps in smaller groups. They complained about being in lectures, sitting too long, and not having interaction. They wanted to meet early in the tour with some of the fellows who are working in Scotland, and consistently preferred meeting entrepreneurs to policy wonks. Consistently, they liked being in smaller groups with resource people.

Second, fellows felt that the trip was over-scheduled and would have liked more time for personal matters. The pressure of being late caused a lot of stress, and the fellows disliked having too many places to be each day, with long days, late dinners, and no lag time in case of delay. Throughout the tour the fellows wanted free time (especially at the start of the tour when there was almost none) to take care of personal matters such as banking, post office, phone calls, shopping, and personal health.

### **Results from End of Seminar Evaluations**

The insights shared above are supported by the end of seminar evaluations. These evaluations suggest that the fellows felt the content and presentation of material were appropriate for their goal of becoming entrepreneurial fellows. Table 5 provides summary information for the evaluations of seminars 2 and 5. Table 6 provides summary information for seminars 3 and 4 that used a different end of seminar evaluation supplied by the Supercoaching™ instructors.<sup>4</sup> The seminar evaluation ratings for the Supercoaching workshops were most striking, in excess of 9 in nearly all categories on a

<sup>4</sup> Because of the special nature of seminars 6 and 7, no end of seminar evaluations were completed.

scale of 1 to 10 where 10 is outstanding. In general, these evaluations suggest that the content and structure of the KECI seminars was useful and has given the fellows the skills and information needed to become entrepreneurial fellows in their communities.

**Table 5. Summary Information from End of Seminar Evaluations:  
Seminars 2 and 5**

Seminar: Session	Usefulness of Learning Content*	Effectiveness of Presentation*	Most Useful Part for Becoming a Coach
<b>Seminar 2:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Sharing homework – interviews from home communities</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Visit to ACEnet</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Appreciative Inquiry</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Visit to SBDC</b></li> </ul>	       	       	<i>Learning we all face similar challenges. Seeing how ACEnet developed and was able to help many be successful. A positive way to gain feedback from my community. To learn other places and types of sources to contact.</i>
<b>Seminar 5:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Networking and roundtables with support providers</b></li> </ul>	       	       	<i>Meeting the network of service providers as a group. The greatest impact...is allowing them to interact with us as a group...they left with a good impression of the fellows.</i>

\*Average rating on a 1-5 scale where 1 is poor and 5 is excellent.

To further document the perceived change in the knowledge and skills of the entrepreneurial fellows as a result of their participation in KECI, a final curriculum evaluation was completed with the fellows at the November 2005 seminar. The fellows were asked to rank, across 10 skill or topic areas, their level of knowledge or skill before their participation in the institute and currently, as well as the usefulness of these skills for their ongoing work:

1. Ability to use appreciative inquiry and/or asset mapping with community groups
2. Ability to make the case for entrepreneurship in your community
3. Ability to speak effectively to community groups about entrepreneurship
4. Ability to effectively coach entrepreneurs
5. Ability to develop a general networking plan
6. Ability to network with service providers
7. Ability to tap into sector-specific networks (e.g., agri-tourism, telecomm, etc.) to help entrepreneurs in your region
8. Ability to develop a plan for building entrepreneurial communities in your region
9. Ability to understand and learn from the experience of other countries or places in the U.S.
10. Ability to communicate effectively with the media

**Table 6. Summary Information from End of Seminar Evaluations:  
Seminars 3 and 4**

Evaluation Category	Average Rating (scale of 1-10 with 10 being highest)
<b>Workshop materials and handouts</b>	9.1
<b>Facilities</b>	7.8
<b>Coaches</b>	9.6
<b>Coaches' Organization</b>	9.3
<b>Coaches' Preparation</b>	9.4
<b>Coaches' Knowledge</b>	9.6
<b>Usefulness for your work</b>	9.2
<b>Overall rating</b>	9.4
<b>Comments on value of Supercoaching™ workshop</b>	<p><i>This has changed my whole way of thinking.</i></p> <p><i>This is one of the best workshops I have attended in 28 years of my career.</i></p> <p><i>Outstanding workshop that will really make you think about what you want to do and it will empower you to succeed.</i></p> <p><i>You will leave the workshop a newer, smarter person.</i></p> <p><i>FANTASTIC!</i></p> <p><i>Great toolbox to assist entrepreneurs.</i></p> <p><i>This is a great tool to take back to your community and be able to expand it forever.</i></p>

The following observations are based on the results of this evaluation activity (see Charts 1-3):

- Across all skill or topic areas, at least 70% of the fellows ranked their skill level as 3 or lower before their participation in KECI. After KECI, 80% or more of the fellows ranked their skill levels as 4 or 5 across the board.
- Four areas showed dramatic change over the course of the institute. Over 60% of the fellows ranked their ability to use appreciative inquiry and/or asset mapping with community groups as 1 prior to KECI and over 90% ranked this skill as 4 or 5 after KECI. Over 60% ranked their ability to effectively coach entrepreneurs as 1 prior to the institute and over 80% ranked this skill as 4 or 5 after the program. Over 40% of fellows ranked their ability to tap into sector-specific networks to help entrepreneurs as 1 before KECI and almost 90% ranked this skill as 4 or 5 after the institute. And, finally, close to 50% of fellows

ranked their ability to develop a plan for building entrepreneurial communities as 1 prior to the institute and 80% ranked this skill as 4 or 5 after KECI.

- In terms of usefulness to their work, the fellows ranked all of the skill or topic areas as being very useful, with between 85% and 95% of fellows ranking as 4 or 5 every topic area.
- The value of the international experience included in KECI was affirmed through the final evaluations. While 30% of the fellows ranked their ability to understand and learn from the experience of other countries or places in the U.S. as 4 prior to the institute, 95% ranked this topic as 4 or 5 after the Scotland trip.

These results suggest that KECI is succeeding in building the skills of the volunteers to be effective fellows, to enhance the entrepreneurial support infrastructure in the region through their networking abilities, and to help promote entrepreneurship in the wider community. In summary, KECI has succeeded in meeting the objectives of the program.

## **Recommendations**

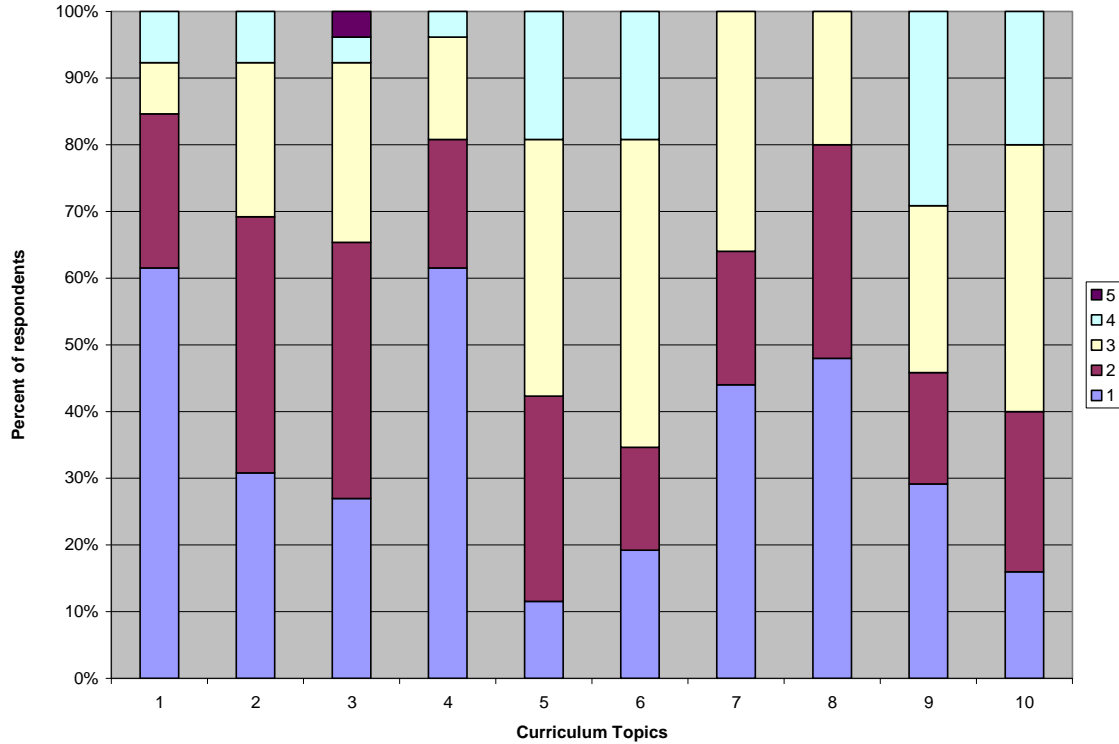
Several recommendations are suggested by the results of the evaluation of KECI Class I. These recommendations fall into four general categories: coaching skills, overall curriculum, expectations, and support for fellows. Specific ideas from the fellows that were shared with the evaluation and project teams in May 2005 and November 2005 are included in Table 7.

### **Coaching Skills**

Most fellows expressed a clear desire to have the Supercoaching™ seminars occur earlier in the program. These seminars provided fellows with the skills needed to become fellows and, given the pace at which they were expected to begin interacting with entrepreneurs in their communities, the fellows felt they needed to build the skills sooner in the program. Similar concerns were expressed regarding the networking and media relations seminars. Many fellows suggested that they needed to learn early in the program what other resources were available to entrepreneurs so that they could be more effective resources in their communities. And, the issue of how to raise awareness about KECI in the region was a recurring issue for the fellows that might be addressed through earlier exposure to media relations topics and ideas.

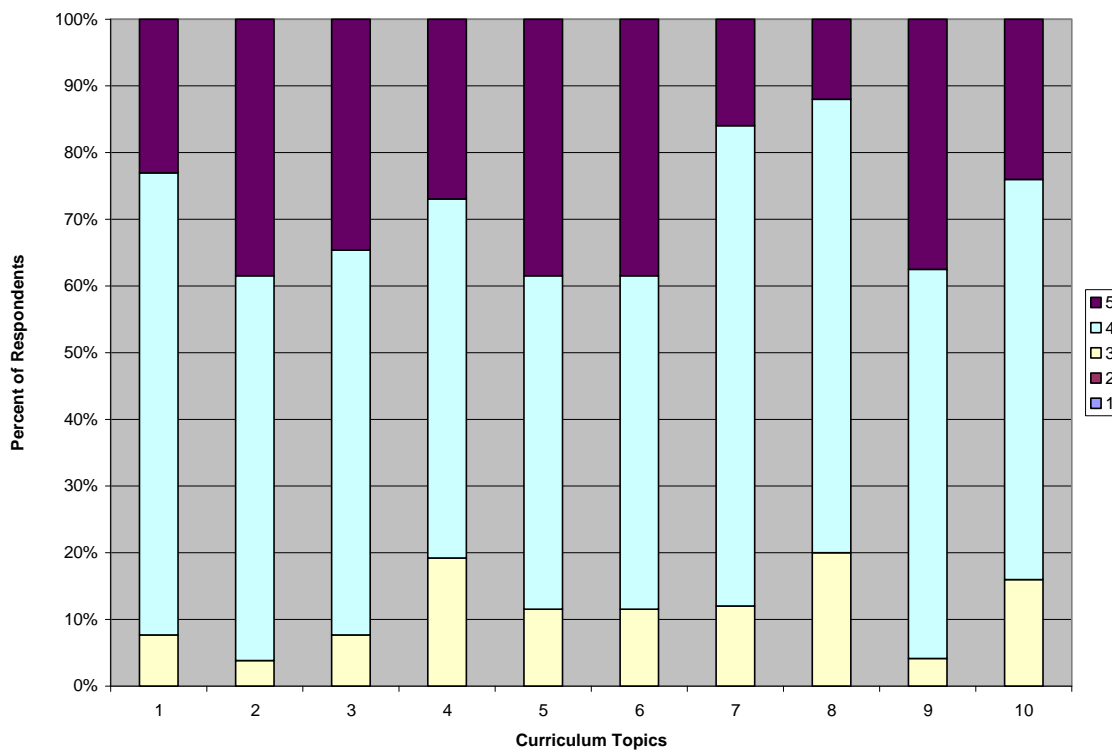
In addition, the fellows felt they needed a simple, step-by-step guide to coaching that they could have at their fingertips as they coached entrepreneurs. A number of fellows were actively using a set of questions developed by one of the fellows, based on what she learned in the coaching seminars. This guide could be reproduced for all of the fellows in the program. The fellows also expressed interest in having a follow-up seminar on coaching skills later in the program. This session would give the fellows an opportunity to apply further what they had learned and to share ideas for becoming more effective fellows, such as the guide, with each other.

**Chart 1. KECI Class I Final Curriculum Evaluation: Knowledge or Skills before the Institute (Scale: 1=lowest and 5=highest)**



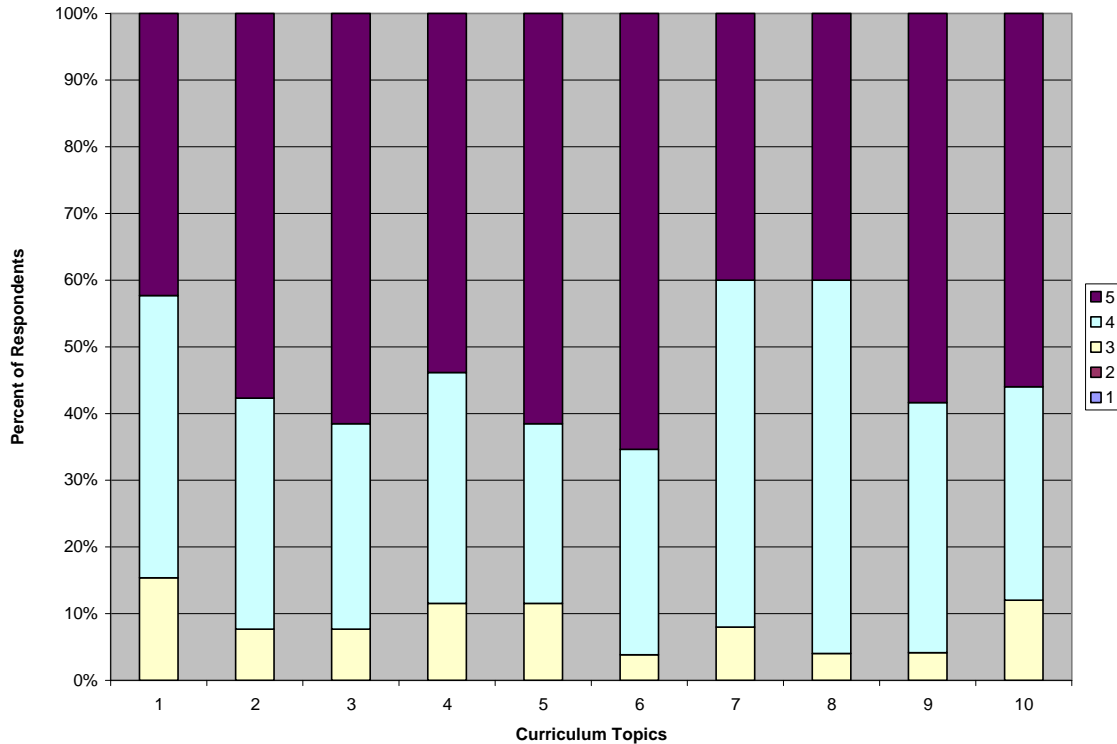
- Topic 1. Ability to use appreciative inquiry and/or asset mapping with community groups
- Topic 2. Ability to make the case for entrepreneurship in your community
- Topic 3. Ability to speak effectively to community groups about entrepreneurship
- Topic 4. Ability to effectively coach entrepreneurs
- Topic 5. Ability to develop a general networking plan
- Topic 6. Ability to network with service providers
- Topic 7. Ability to tap into sector-specific networks (e.g., agri-tourism, telecomm, etc.) to help entrepreneurs in your region
- Topic 8. Ability to develop a plan for building entrepreneurial communities in your region
- Topic 9. Ability to understand and learn from the experience of other countries or places in the U.S.
- Topic 10. Ability to communicate effectively with the media

**Chart 2. KECI Class I Final Curriculum Evaluation: Current Knowledge or Skills (Scale: 1=lowest and 5=highest)**



- Topic 1. Ability to use appreciative inquiry and/or asset mapping with community groups
- Topic 2. Ability to make the case for entrepreneurship in your community
- Topic 3. Ability to speak effectively to community groups about entrepreneurship
- Topic 4. Ability to effectively coach entrepreneurs
- Topic 5. Ability to develop a general networking plan
- Topic 6. Ability to network with service providers
- Topic 7. Ability to tap into sector-specific networks (e.g., agri-tourism, telecomm, etc.) to help entrepreneurs in your region
- Topic 8. Ability to develop a plan for building entrepreneurial communities in your region
- Topic 9. Ability to understand and learn from the experience of other countries or places in the U.S.
- Topic 10. Ability to communicate effectively with the media

**Chart 3. KECI Class I Final Curriculum Evaluation: Usefulness to your Work (Scale: 1=lowest and 5=highest)**



- Topic 1. Ability to use appreciative inquiry and/or asset mapping with community groups
- Topic 2. Ability to make the case for entrepreneurship in your community
- Topic 3. Ability to speak effectively to community groups about entrepreneurship
- Topic 4. Ability to effectively coach entrepreneurs
- Topic 5. Ability to develop a general networking plan
- Topic 6. Ability to network with service providers
- Topic 7. Ability to tap into sector-specific networks (e.g., agri-tourism, telecomm, etc.) to help entrepreneurs in your region
- Topic 8. Ability to develop a plan for building entrepreneurial communities in your region
- Topic 9. Ability to understand and learn from the experience of other countries or places in the U.S.
- Topic 10. Ability to communicate effectively with the media

While the fellows generally were very positive about the skills learned through the coaching seminars, there was also concern expressed that the seminars should have been more tailored to the type of entrepreneurs they are likely to find in rural Kentucky – less high tech and more microentrepreneurs, artisans, agri-entrepreneurs, etc. The project team should consider how those seminars might be better tailored to Kentucky and explore the possibility of having someone from Kentucky become trained to deliver, and thus customize, the Supercoaching™ curriculum.

**Overall Curriculum**

In addition to suggested changes in the scheduling of seminars, the fellows suggested that the curriculum be designed to take into account a diversity of learning styles. The

curriculum should balance “lecture” presentations with more hands-on applications of material. The project team might consider greater use of role playing as a means of helping the fellows practice their coaching and other techniques. Another suggestion coming from many fellows was to involve the current class of fellows in teaching during the second year of the KECI program. Using the fellows as resources for new fellows would be a valuable tool for KECI. In addition, such an approach would help to build the network of fellows in the region to include both KECI alumni and current fellows. It is important that the interaction between classes be designed to reduce rivalry between the classes and to facilitate networking among the fellows in the region.

### **Expectations**

Early in the program, many fellows expressed concern that they would not be able to live up to the expectations of the program. The weight of expectations was evident in the responses of many fellows to the journal questions following the first two seminars. A sampling of these comments includes:

- “I am, however, concerned that the expectations of us as individual fellows are greater than what was presented at the beginning. I feel that the selection committee chose some very good people – ones that are dedicated to their communities and ones that go above and beyond the call of duty, but we are volunteers and have many other irons in the fire.”
- “The challenging part for me has been trying to understand what is expected, are we going to have all of the information and knowledge to do commendable work?”
- “Some days I think about the tremendous opportunity to shape the future of my community, other days I wonder what in the world I have gotten myself into!”

These comments reflect concerns early in the training process. As described above, the fellows’ views on the seminars changed over time as they developed the skill sets needed to coach and learned about other resources available in the region to help them support entrepreneurs. However, it is also clear that there is an opportunity to reduce the initial anxiety level of the fellows by establishing clear expectations about the coaching experience from the very first seminar. Having representatives from the current class describe their journeys might be a useful way of setting the appropriate tone for the fellows early on in the process. Another possibility would be to use role playing during the first seminar to depict the coaching experience. This type of demonstration would help the fellows quickly understand the nature of the coaching relationship and might help put into perspective the expectations placed on them as participants in the program.

At the same time, it is important to continue to emphasize to the fellows (current class and future classes) the value of KECI in the eyes of Kentucky policymakers. Members of the Agricultural Development Board, through their investment in the program, are demonstrating their commitment to and support of entrepreneurship development in the region and the important role that the KECI fellows play in that process. State and local policy makers who addressed the Class I fellows throughout the program emphasized the high expectations they had for the program’s ability to help change the entrepreneurial

**Table 7. Challenges for Fellows, Improvements to Program and Best Aspects of KECI**

Challenges for the Fellows	Improvements to the Program	Best Thing about the Program
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finding entrepreneurs to coach (or finding too many)</li> <li>• Finding the time to coach and not feeling guilty about not having time</li> <li>• Nobody knows fellows are out there; need more publicity. Who are the fellows?</li> <li>• People drop out or do not follow through</li> <li>• Difficult to create community environment – getting rid of sacred cows</li> <li>• Turf issues with SBDC and agri-tourism</li> <li>• Need for cheat sheet on coaching questions</li> <li>• Concern about long-term obligation required of fellows</li> <li>• Dealing with entrepreneurs with limited education levels</li> <li>• Collective effort needed to get elected and non-elected leaders working together</li> <li>• KECI web page has not been updated</li> <li>• Still a man's world – challenging to get men to come to women for help</li> <li>• Need follow up on Supercoaching™</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Step-by-step guide to coaching with real practical instructions; revise coaching seminars to better reflect region's entrepreneurs (less high tech)</li> <li>• Create Supercoaching™ follow up - could sit in on next class; have some refresher role playing later in program</li> <li>• Bring Supercoaching™, networking, media relations earlier in program</li> <li>• Set realistic expectations in terms of time and scope of work</li> <li>• Need two fellows per county to create support</li> <li>• Open up sessions to involve more people and contacts</li> <li>• Involve first cohort of fellows in training/facilitation of second cohort</li> <li>• Less theory and more hands on exercises during the sessions – role playing to develop skills</li> <li>• Create system for disseminating materials they produce</li> <li>• Seminars are too intense – no time to catch up on work</li> <li>• Next group of fellows will benefit from groundwork these fellows are plowing – environment in communities will be different</li> <li>• Need more interaction with state officials to build awareness of KECI</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal interaction with a great group of fellows – friendship, bonding, power of the collective</li> <li>• Information has benefited them in running their own businesses</li> <li>• Inspiring to be with these fellows</li> <li>• Two-three defining moments in a career and this is one of them</li> <li>• Being in group has developed their confidence; empowered them</li> <li>• Really liked the Supercoaching™ – provided with real, new skills</li> <li>• Networking skills were great</li> <li>• Could never have gathered this information on their own – unique learning experience</li> <li>• Responded to input and need for longer breaks!</li> <li>• Changed their way of thinking</li> <li>• Motivating</li> <li>• Helping to break down silos of service providers</li> <li>• Doing the right things to benefit our counties and communities</li> </ul>

culture in the region and referred to KECI as a cutting edge approach to encouraging entrepreneurship that was being watched as a potential model for other parts of rural America.

### **Support for the Fellows**

The long-term impact of KECI on the northeast Kentucky region will depend to a large extent on continued efforts by the fellows to use their coaching skills to support entrepreneurs in the region. Although the training of the fellows has been excellent by all accounts, it is also important, in our view, for project staff to provide community-level, “hands-on” support, both technical and personal, to fellows as they graduate and begin their coaching work. While the project team is very supportive of fellows, they simply may not have the time to provide the field visits that are required. Furthermore, given the scheduling of KECI classes, it will be difficult for the current project team to provide continued technical and personal support to one class of fellows once a new class is underway. Building the capacity of the KECI project team to provide ongoing support may be essential to the long-term success of the program.

One way of building this capacity would be to establish a new project position, a circuit-rider who provides technical and personal support to fellows as they expand their entrepreneurial coaching and their work on community projects. This position presumably would be funded by grant funds at least initially. The individual would establish a presence in the communities by the project staff and provide the individualized attention that fellows might desire. The circuit rider could also help to facilitate a fellows’ network, stimulate use of the listserv that facilitates communication among fellows, engaging the first class of fellows as mentors/teachers and allies, etc. An important function of this person would be to provide a connection between fellows in the two classes so that their activities within the regional are complementary.

However, it is important that this support be provided in a way that does not encourage dependency on the University of Kentucky. The circuit rider’s role would be to provide initial support to insure that the investment in the fellows and their network becomes a permanent part of the region’s entrepreneurial support infrastructure and that it is firmly embedded in and supported by the communities and the region. One suggestion would be to enlist a KECI alumnus to serve as Fellows’ Network Coordinator, on a permanent or rotating basis. This role would keep responsibility for energizing the network in the region, with the fellows. Just as the most effective entrepreneurial networks are “by entrepreneurs, for entrepreneurs,” the Fellows’ Network should be “by fellows, for fellows.”

## **Conclusions**

This final evaluation report for Class I of the Kentucky Entrepreneurial Coaches Institute has outlined the evaluation approach employed to assess the impact, outcomes, and process of KECI. The evaluation approach used information from end-of-seminar evaluations, journaling by the fellows, in-person interviews with fellows and analysis of data collected from each fellow. Furthermore, members of the evaluation team attended

four seminars and had many discussions, both in small groups and individually, with the fellows and project team.

The evaluation examines progress toward a set of program objectives:

- Community leaders will develop the skills required to be effective coaches for entrepreneurs.
- A support network of entrepreneurial fellows in the region will develop out of the institute.
- Entrepreneurial fellows will form alliances with existing support providers in the region.
- Entrepreneurial fellows will promote entrepreneurship within the broader community.
- Entrepreneurial fellows will develop and maintain relationships with entrepreneurs in the region.
- Entrepreneurial fellows will build a strong entrepreneurial support structure and entrepreneurial culture that stimulate entrepreneurs to start new businesses and expand existing businesses in the region.

Definitive evaluation of the impact of KECI Class I fellows will come at the end of their commitment to the program. Will the fellows continue to work with entrepreneurs and their communities to build a stronger, more supportive culture for entrepreneurship? All indications are that the KECI is off to an impressive start with Class I. There seems to be no doubt that the training is excellent and that fellows are well-prepared to be effective fellows. A very impressive network of fellows is emerging with a strong sense of mission and mutual support. Alliances with other resource providers are being created, although it will take time to establish the role of the fellows in the entrepreneurial support system. Many exciting community projects are underway or have been completed with the mini-grant programs. These projects should have an impact on expanding the knowledge and support for entrepreneurship on the local level. Finally, fellows are engaging entrepreneurs in the vital work of building and expanding businesses.

The KECI is an innovative program that may well prove to be a model for the nation. Our findings based on Class I are that program effectiveness and operations are excellent. The recommendations from the fellows and the evaluation team provide an opportunity for “continuous improvement” of the program and should contribute to the productive evolution of this exciting program.

## References

Scorsone, Eric, Tammy Marvin Werner, Kathleen Powers and Rita Somov. *The State of Entrepreneurship in Northeastern Kentucky: Current Trends, Best Practices, and Policy Implications*. Department of Agricultural Economics and Department of Community and Leadership Development, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky, December 2003.

## Appendix A

### KECI Curriculum Evaluation

**Instructions:** We want to know how much you feel you learned about the various topics covered over the course of the 15-month institute. In the first column below, rate your level of knowledge and skill on each item **before** the institute. In the second column, rate your **current** level of knowledge and skill on each item. In the third column, please rate how **useful** you feel that content will be to your work as a coach. (5 = Highest Level of Knowledge or Skill or Most useful to your work)

	Knowledge or skill before KECI	Current knowledge or skill	Usefulness to your work
Ability to use appreciative inquiry and/or asset mapping with community groups	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Ability to make the case for entrepreneurship in your community	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Ability to speak effectively to community groups about entrepreneurship	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Ability to effectively coach entrepreneurs	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Ability to develop a general networking plan	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Ability to network with service providers	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

Ability to tap into sector-specific networks (e.g., agri-tourism, telecomm, etc.) to help entrepreneurs in your region

1 2 3 4 5      1 2 3 4 5      1 2 3 4 5

Ability to develop a plan for building entrepreneurial communities in your region

1 2 3 4 5      1 2 3 4 5      1 2 3 4 5

Ability to understand and learn from the experience of other countries or places in the U.S.

1 2 3 4 5      1 2 3 4 5      1 2 3 4 5

Ability to communicate effectively with the media

1 2 3 4 5      1 2 3 4 5      1 2 3 4 5

What would you like to tell the leadership team that would help them in developing the curriculum for future entrepreneurial coaching institutes?



## Appendix C

### One-on-One Meetings with Fellows November 2005 Seminar

1. Briefly describe what the value of the Scotland trip was:
  - To you personally
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - To you as an entrepreneurial coach
  
2. To give us some final feedback on the coaching program, complete the following:
  - The most valuable thing I learned from the KECI process was...
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - The most important thing I bring to my region because of this experience is...
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - If I could make one change to the program it would be...
  
3. Where do you see yourself, as a coach, in:
  - 6 months
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - 1 year
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - 3 years
  
4. Review the metrics data sheet and update numbers (see separate sheet).

## Appendix D

### Evaluation Data Sheet

Information collected through one-on-one contacts with Fellows

Coach Name \_\_\_\_\_

Assigned Evaluator \_\_\_\_\_

Dates information gathered \_\_\_\_\_

Metric	Number
<b>Entrepreneurs in general:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ # of contacts (calls made to entrepreneurs, entrepreneurs who called the coach)</li> <li>▪ # of entrepreneurs with whom an initial meeting held</li> <li>▪ # of entrepreneurs coached (entrepreneurs who came back for more than one session)</li> <li>▪ # of entrepreneurs referred to other service providers (prior to coaching)</li> <li>▪ Other, please specify</li> </ul>	
<b>Coaching clients (those entrepreneurs who were actively coached):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ # who dropped out of coaching unexpectedly</li> <li>▪ # who are still in the process of organizing their new enterprise</li> <li>▪ # who decided to go into business</li> <li>▪ # who decided not to go into business</li> <li>▪ # who approached a financial institution with a loan application</li> <li>▪ # who increased employment</li> <li>▪ # who maintained the business</li> <li>▪ # referred to other service providers (after coaching)</li> <li>▪ Other, please specify</li> </ul>	
<b>Brief profile of each entrepreneur coached:</b>	

<p><b>Community:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ # of meetings with community groups, agencies, organizations (more informal)</li> <li>▪ List the organizations</li>   <li>▪ # of presentations to community groups, agencies, organizations (more formal)</li> <li>▪ List the organizations</li>   <li>▪ # of newspaper articles, radio programs or other media coverage about entrepreneurs or coaching</li> <li>▪ # of community-based programs about entrepreneurship developed</li> <li>▪ List the programs and briefly describe</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Service providers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of meetings with other service providers (such as SBDC, Innovation Centers, etc)</li> <li>• Which service providers did you meet with? (Please list)</li>   <li>• Please list service providers to whom you referred entrepreneurs</li>   <li>• # of entrepreneurs referred to you by service providers</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Other outcomes achieved (Please explain)</b></p>	

## Appendix E

### Summary of the Mini-Grant Projects

#### **Team 1. New Opportunities on the Farm (Gwenda Adkins, Lynn Baker, Kay Boggs, Teresa Brown, Don Davis, Paula Franke, Anthony Lawson)**

This team organized a mini-conference emphasizing alternative crops and agritourism. The goal was to educate local farmers, landowners, elected and appointed officials about the opportunities with alternative crops and agritourism-related businesses. The conference was held in the fall of 2005, with 66 participants. The evaluation results were positive, with 67% of respondents indicating that the forum was excellent and 94% indicating that they would be in favor of having another conference in the region. One important outcome of the mini-grant process is that seven county judges are now working together to strengthen the economy through alternative crops and agritourism. They are seeking support for a full-time agritourism person to work in the multi-county region. The group has put together funding proposals seeking both foundation and Appalachian Regional Commission support for their efforts. In the short term, they are developing a database of information on alternative crops and agritourism opportunities and resources for area farmers.

#### **Team 2. An Innovation Center for the Region (Melony Furby, Craig Miller, Annette Walters)**

This team worked to gain support for creating an Innovation Center in a six-county region (Bracken, Fleming, Lewis, Mason, Nicholas and Robertson counties) to be housed at Maysville Community and Technical College. This Innovation Center would be the starting point for entrepreneurs in the region to gain access information and assistance for their business ventures. While they did not expect to see the Center created during the span of the mini-grant project, they hoped to get local and state acceptance for the Center and a commitment by the college to house the Center. While the team was successful in communicating about the need for and opportunity presented by a Center within the region, decisions about creating more Innovation Centers are now on hold because of leadership changes at the state level. However, the team succeeded in raising awareness about the limited services for entrepreneurs within the region and an interim response has emerged – Morehead State University and Maysville Community and Technical College are now talking about how they can partner to bring the services of the SBDC (house at Morehead State) to the region.

#### **Team 3. Unbridled Business (Johnathan Gay, Larrey Riddle, Kristel Smith, Rebecca Smith, Rebecca Webb)**

The goal of this team was to create a public relations campaign to increase awareness and knowledge of entrepreneurship within the region. The vehicle they chose to facilitate this campaign was the creation of a website – [www.unbridledbusiness.com](http://www.unbridledbusiness.com). This user-friendly website offers easy to understand information for entrepreneurs and directs them

to the resources that can help them, including the KECI fellows in the entire 19-county region. The site also features stories of successful entrepreneurs in the region, a powerful tool for making the case for entrepreneurship. The team also created a series of advertisements to build awareness about the KECI fellows and the new website.

**Team 4. Harrison-Nicholas County School-Based Enterprise Project (Alyson Arthur, Avi Bear, Bob Bedford, Alex Kazunas)**

The goal of this project was to create a web-based, student run school store and to facilitate the sales and marketing of student-produced products and services. The store was established at Harrison County ATC, in partnership with the teachers and staff at the school. By November 2005, six students had established the company, tecHCo, and had assumed staff responsibilities. They had organized a product development campaign, including a competition for marketable products and services, but had not yet achieved the goal of sales. Given the enthusiasm of the students and the school, this concept appears to be a good one and there was some interest among other fellows in documenting the process so that it might be replicated in other parts of the region. A refinement of the model would include some type of entrepreneurship curriculum for students interested in organizing a school-based enterprise before they undertake the business start-up process.

**Team 5. Wood Shims Contest (Mike Jackson, Gail Lincoln, Sue Nickell)**

The goal of this project was to discover products made from wood shims that could be commercialized, becoming the basis for either home-based or mass production enterprises in the region. To achieve this goal, the team organized a Wood Shims Contest to identify potential products. The contest received 43 entries and several potential entrepreneurial opportunities emerged – a Martin county resident is making and selling jewelry made from wood shims at a museum in Paintsville; a contest winner is making garden sheds from the shims; one product, fruit baskets, has the potential to be mass produced for sale to farmers markets, produce auctions, etc.; another product, kindling bundles, has the potential to be produced and sold through state parks. The team is planning to build on the momentum created by the contest and is actively seeking a partner, such as a community college, to help incubate a business to produce the fruit baskets and the kindling bundles.

**Team 6. Youth Entrepreneurial Program (Jim Cooksey, Becky Fogle, Keith Herrin, Kim Strohmeier, Tony Watkins)**

The goal of this project was to establish at least one high school Youth Entrepreneurial Program (YEP) in each of the four counties served by the fellows on the team. The idea was to train teachers in web design and they, in turn, would train students in web design and the basics of starting a business. The project also provides an opportunity for the schools to purchase the hardware and software needed to get these school-based enterprises up and running. To date, the teachers have been trained and programs established in the schools, two schools have made requests for equipment, all of the YEP

groups have been introduced to the business community (their prospective clients) and one YEP has completed a project.

## Appendix F

### Evaluation Team Member Bios

**Deborah M. Markley** is Managing Director and Director of Research for the Rural Policy Research Institute's Center for Rural Entrepreneurship, a national research and policy center. Her focus within the Center is practice-driven research and evaluation of best models for entrepreneurship development in rural places. Prior to her work with the Center, she was the Chair of the Rural Policy Research Institute's Equity Capital Initiative and completed a national study of nontraditional venture capital institutions. Deb's research has also included case studies of entrepreneurial support organizations, evaluation of state industrial extension programs, and consideration of the impacts of changing banking markets on small business finance. She has extensive experience conducting field-based survey research projects and has conducted focus groups and interviews with rural bankers, entrepreneurs, business service providers, venture capitalists, small manufacturers, and others. Her research has been presented in academic journals, as well as to national public policy organizations and Congressional committees. Deb received her PhD. in agricultural economics from Virginia Tech in 1984 and has held faculty and research positions at the University of Tennessee, the University of Massachusetts, and Purdue University.

**John Gruidl** is a Professor in the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs at Western Illinois University. John leads outreach and research projects in rural economic development. He directs the Midwest Community Development Institute, one of only five sites in the country that provides a certification program in the field of community development. He has published in the areas of new firm formation, retail trade, and local development policy. John also teaches courses in community economic development. John has created and directed several programs in rural development. From 1994-2005, he directed the award-winning Peace Corps Fellows Program in which returned Peace Corps volunteers enter a master's degree program at Western Illinois University. As part of their graduate training, the returned Peace Corps volunteers serve 11-month internships leading community development projects in rural Illinois communities. In the early 1990s, John helped to create the MAPPING the Future of Your Community, a strategic visioning program for Illinois communities. John is active with the Community Development Society where he serves as editor of Community Development Practice. He received a Ph.D. in Agricultural and Applied Economics from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1989, with a major in the field of Community Economics.

**Ted Bradshaw** is a Professor in the Human and Community Development Department at University of California, Davis, where he teaches community and economic development, as well as serving as Chair of the Community Development Graduate Group. He received his PhD from the University of California, Berkeley, in Sociology (1972). His current research is on new local economic development strategies, the evaluation of the California Workforce Investment Act program, community development organizations, and the impact of the California energy crisis on the state economy. He has studied small business programs for several decades, most recently

with an emphasis on Entrepreneurship. He recently completed an evaluation study of the economic impact of California's 39 enterprise zones, showing that they returned to the state more tax benefits than they cost. Ted is Editor of *COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: Journal of the Community Development Society*, an academic journal that publishes articles on the theory and practice of community development. In addition he is the author of over 70 articles and reports on issues of local development, technology, and policy issues facing California.

**James R. Calvin** is currently Associate Professor of Management and Director of the Leadership Development Program (LDP) for Minority Managers at the Johns Hopkins University. He consults with Federal agencies, national and local foundations, nonprofits, and several national and international business organizations including Fannie Mae, General Electric and DaimlerChrysler. His applied leadership, management and organization practice is in the areas of executive and managerial coaching, learning for collaboration in organizations, diversity management, leadership and management development, and systemic organizational development. James conducts research in leadership and management practice, learning and culture, and global leadership and community transformation. He serves on several organization boards including the Academy of Management Membership Committee (AoM) and the Executive Board of the International Society for the Advancement of Management (SAM). James earned a B.F.A. from the Rochester Institute of Technology. His M.A. and Ph.D. (with distinction) with a concentration in phenomenology, culture and communication are from New York University.