**Ohio Northern University’s Journey to I & E**

College has for far too long been viewed as the “great 4 year wait” until success professionally begins, leaving the expectations for undergraduates to be channeled to wait until after graduation to innovate and create within their fields of study. For many undergraduate students the college experience has become a cycle of monotony with strict guidelines and standards that associates traditional learning with no window for creativity to shine through. But why should undergraduates be limited to expectation for the future instead of being given the resources/tools to do extraordinary feats right now.

Across the board, if the focus of educational institutions remains on teaching students to find the answers they are guided to find, then the beauty that is human ingenuity and the natural evolution process of human thought and curiosity will be stifled. Instead, we must give students the opportunity to seek and investigate the answers to problems that have yet to be found. This generation has certainly proven to be passionate and creative in music, art, entertainment and much more, but it is time for this generation to rise and be recognized as thinkers and innovators for change. We must modify our current campus ecosystem to be a campus of discovery for answers to problems that affect our world collegiately, locally, and internationally.

Currently the ONU campus has been doing an excellent job of introducing innovation and entrepreneurship, with the school’s membership to KEEN and the recently established entrepreneurship program, opportunity has certainly increased. KEEN or better known as the Kern Entrepreneurship Education Network is a true collective effort of universities that are focused on preparing students to be entrepreneurial and innovative in engineering and technology. The KEEN Network provides Ohio Northern University grants which are used to sponsor events like the KEEN Challenge and the Polar Elevator Pitch competition, as well as, the entrepreneurship program. While these exciting new resources and opportunities are available, there is still a gap of communication and multidisciplinary collaboration between colleges. The campus is filled with smart students with innovative ideas, groundbreaking research, and revolutionary information yet the chances of hearing about these opportunities are tucked away within the silos of the individual colleges. While there has been some collaboration in capstones and certain courses, collaboration and communication should be at a much greater level than what is occurring right now.

We are a university that is well known for an excellent education and focus in undergraduate research. However, we are missing unity in interweaving education and research throughout the whole university. Multidisciplinary collaboration is the key to unlocking a level of progress that can be seen in many large companies, many companies that we will one day be working for. The time is now, to open the channels of academia, as a unified university with collaborative colleges, instead of being independent colleges linked together only by physical proximity.