

Raja Bhattacharya
1055 Cetronia Dr., Breinigsville, PA 18031
(270) 996-7268 rbchestnut@gmail.com

CAREER SUMMARY

A proven entrepreneurial leader with twenty five year experience in building, managing and growing cutting edge experiential educational programs.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

May 2017 – September 2023

Founding Director, Follett Family Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship, Northampton Community College, Bethlehem, PA, USA

Northampton Community College is a leading two year institution located in Northeastern Pennsylvania. The college is an institution of choice for the unrepresented and the minority community in eastern PA. The current endowment for the college stands at \$85 million, putting it among the top ten community college endowments nationally.

Upon assuming the position I worked with senior leadership to successfully complete the construction of a \$6 million Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship and lead the development of a long term strategic plan for the center. The center includes a 7,800 square foot state of the art maker space.

Key Accomplishments

- Recruited and led key faculty and staff in developing a vision, mission and core values for the Center. Served on President's Executive Council.
- Established a 15 member External Advisory Board consisting of leaders from business, non-profits, education and the venture capital world.
- Partnered with Institutional Advancement in raising \$2.4 million to support 50 scholarships annually in entrepreneurship education and experiential learning opportunities.
- Designed and launched a 28 weeks 5 credits Start-Up Boot Camp experiential learning opportunity for students, the first of its kind among community colleges nationwide. The boot camp has 6 weeks of Design Thinking built into it and is sponsored by the National Association for Community College Entrepreneurship (NACCE).
- Partnered with Academic Affairs in designing and approving a three credit course in Entrepreneurial Mindset and Design Thinking that any Northampton student can take as an elective. This offering has also been expanded to dual enrollment students for area high schools.
- Partnered with Exploratory Studies in designing an 11 credit specialized diploma in Innovation & Design Thinking. The diploma will launch in fall 2024 and has a 2 credit internship built into it.
- Established a week long on-campus Entrepreneur in Residence program targeting business and non-profit leaders from Lehigh Valley, PA.
- Established a faculty and staff development program in Entrepreneurial Mindset and Design Thinking. To date 75 faculty and staff have successfully completed the program.
- Established a volunteer mentoring program for student and community start-ups. To date 20 Lehigh Valley community leaders are actively engaged in the program.
- Launched a virtual 14 weeks Small Business Management & Entrepreneurship certificate program focused on Product Development, Customer Discovery, Financing and Intellectual

Property.

- Established a strategic partnership with the Service Core of Retired Executives (SCORE), Lehigh Valley. Through them 50 three hour workshops in small business, start-ups and non-profits are offered annually for a minimum fee.
- Brought 1 Million Cups, a Kauffman Foundation initiative to enhance the entrepreneurial ecosystem of Lehigh Valley. To date 200 plus local entrepreneurs have shared their story through the Lehigh Valley 1 Million Cups and nationally the Lehigh Valley chapter consistently ranks in the top 25 percent in weekly attendance.
- Provided key insights in granting 15-20, \$15,000 grants as seed funding to Lehigh Valley startups through the Keystone Innovation Tax Credit Zones.
- Facilitated the launching of a 4 weeks training program in Entrepreneurial Mindset and Personal Finance with Catalyst 4 targeting individuals with criminal and substance abuse background. The mission of Catalyst 4 is to assist individuals with difficult background find living wage employment.

January 2015 – December 2016

Founding Director, Steven & Barbara Fishman Center for Entrepreneurship, Columbia College, Columbia, MO, USA

Columbia College (CC) is a four years liberal arts institution founded in 1851 with thirty six nationwide campuses across the United States including key military installations. The college has an enrollment of twenty five thousand undergraduate and graduate students. The current endowment for Columbia College stands at \$158 million.

Upon assuming the position as the Fishman Center Director, within the first 90 days I oversaw the development of a strategic plan. The plan was approved by internal management and the advisory board for the center.

Key Accomplishments

- Grew undergraduate entrepreneurship enrollment by 300% through expansion at campuses located in Rolla (MO), St. Louis (MO), Jeff City (MO), Lake Ozark (MO), Fort Leonard Wood (MO), Orlando (FL), Salt Lake City (UT), and Illinois.
- Grew the Center endowment and other gifts to \$400,000 thru close collaboration with the development office.
- Established a two weeks high school summer entrepreneurship resident camp.
- Established college innovation week and grew the annual student business pitch competition awards to \$10,000 with winners representing the college at regional and national competitions.
- Established Fishman Faculty Fellowships to support faculty innovation.
- Established a robust mentoring network for students consisting of alums and community leaders.
- Helped initiate the re-design of the undergraduate entrepreneurship offering.
- Implemented a robust internship program for student entrepreneurs with local start-ups thru close collaboration with the Grossnickle Career Services.

August 2006 – November 2014

Founder & President, Kumarirugs.com, Bowling Green, KY, USA

Kumarirugs was a designer and distributor of high end handmade area rugs from Nepal in North America. The company was a pioneer in exporting U.S. harvested Alpaca fibers to Nepal for custom production, an initiative supported by the Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development. The company

was certified by Rugmark, an international non-profit committed to fighting illegal child labor.

Key Accomplishments

- Oversaw the development and implementation of a 5-year strategic plan.
- Successfully raised \$500,000 in seed capital and \$450,000 in bank financing.
- Developed key accounts such as; Niemen Marcus, Bloomingdales, Surya Rugs, Smyrna Trading, Snowmass Alpacas, Amazon, and Sprintz Furniture showrooms.
- Incorporated a new web based technology and social media to facilitate design rendering by the end consumers, expedite sales, and streamline orders.
- Increased annual sales by more than 50% each year and reduced overhead by 25%.
- Finalized sourcing agreement with 5 leading manufacturers from Nepal and 1 from India including pricing, terms, logistics, and market exclusivity.
- Coordinated and represented Kumari Rugs in major shows such as, the High Point International Home Furnishing Market, Atlanta International Area Rug Show, Snowmass Alpacas private show, and the Las Vegas Area Rug Show.
- Lead internal teams to evaluate and analyze present and future industry trends and provide recommendations to manufacturers and other key stakeholders.
- Organized a delegation of leading carpet manufacturers and government officials from Nepal to North America.
- Established key distributing agreements in Montreal, Canada and Milan, Italy.
- Provided 4 fold returns to early investors upon exit.

July 2012 – July 31st, 2014

Executive in Residence, Center for Entrepreneurship, Gordon Ford College of Business, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, KY, USA

Western Kentucky University is a leading public research university located in Bowling Green, KY with an enrollment of 33,500 students. The current endowment for the university stands at \$209 million.

Key Accomplishments

- Developed and taught key undergraduate and graduate courses in the Entrepreneurship major with primary emphasis in Strategic Management, International Entrepreneurship, Small Business Management, Social Entrepreneurship, Sustainability, Sales and Venture creation.
- Facilitated an undergraduate and graduate business plan competition in spring 2013 and 2014.
- Mentored 20 student start-ups with 4 receiving angel financing.
- Collaborated with the WKU Center for Research and Development (part of Kentucky Innovation Network) in creating an entrepreneurial eco-system in Bowling Green, Kentucky. As a part of this program, INNOPLEX, a student business incubator was established inside the WKU Center for Research and Development. Placed 15 student startups inside INNOPLEX.
- Partnered with institutional advancement in raising \$100,000 for program development.
- Served in 2 student start-up boards.

July 1998 – June 2006

Faculty and Director, Center for Entrepreneurship, Gordon Ford College of Business, Western Kentucky University (WKU), Bowling Green, KY, USA

Key Accomplishments

- Taught Basic Computer Literacy, Principal of Management, Innovation and Entrepreneurship to over 1,000 undergraduate students.

- Co-managed US Department of Education grants totaling USD 500,000 and USD 10,000 from Kentucky Science and Technology Corporation as principal investigator.
- Co-founded the Office of Global Business in 2000 with a staff of 7. The office was instrumental in promoting and facilitating International Business understanding among external stakeholders through training, research, and hands on practical experiences.
- Co-founded the Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation in 2004. The Center was the first of its kind at WKU promoting entrepreneurial thinking and behavior among students.
- Established a student and faculty exchange program with Kathmandu University, Nepal. As part of this initiative, assisted Kathmandu University start an Executive MBA program. The program has become a leader in its field in Nepal.

January 1995 – June 1998

Financial & Sales Analyst, Bandy Bedding Inc., Bowling Green, KY, USA

Bandy Bedding was a regional mattress manufacturer specializing in hospital beds and custom mattresses. The company was founded by Mary Bandy in 1987 with \$5,000 from her personal retirement account. By 1997, the company's sales exceeded \$5 million.

Key Accomplishments

- Reported directly to the President.
- Compiled and prepared annual sales forecast, quarterly financial statements, return on assets, and annual budget for senior management to make strategic operational and investment decisions on a monthly basis.
- Designed financial modeling for store managers to project sales in company owned and operated retail stores located in Bowling Green, Louisville, and Owensboro, Kentucky.

NATIONAL & REGIONAL OUTREACH

- *Lead Organizer*, Lehigh Valley 1 Million Cups (Kauffman Foundation), Bethlehem, PA (January 2019 – Present)
- *Referee*, Lehigh Valley Social Impact Projects (Lehigh University), Bethlehem, PA (February 2022 – Present)
- *Lead Faculty Facilitator*, IREX Global Solutions Program (Northampton Community College), Bethlehem, PA (2019)
- *Faculty*, West Virginia Governor's School for Entrepreneurship, Marshall University, Huntington, WV (July 2016)
- *Mentor and Faculty Coach*, Governor's School for Entrepreneurship, Kentucky Science and Technology Corporation (KSTC), Lexington, KY (March 2013 – July 2014)
- *Founding Member*, Global Automotive Conference, Bowling Green, KY (April 2000)

EDUCATION

Entrepreneurship Fellowship, University of Kentucky – College of Agriculture, Lexington, KY, USA (2009 – 2011)

Faculty Development in International Business, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC, USA (Summer 2002)

Master of Business Administration (MBA), Gordon Ford College of Business, Western Kentucky University (WKU), Bowling Green, KY, USA (1996-1998)

*Bachelor of Science in Economics and Information Systems, Cumberland College,
Williamsburg, KY, USA (1990-1994)*

CERTIFICATIONS

- Certified Entrepreneurial Mindset facilitator
- Certified Design Thinking facilitator

BOARD REPRESENTATION

- Catalyst 4, Bethlehem, PA, USA (2022 – Present)
- Manodharma Foundation, Iowa City, IA, USA (2019 – Present)
- Keystone Innovation Zone, Bethlehem, PA, USA (2017- 2023)
- Chair, Board of Directors, Indo-Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, South-Central Kentucky, USA (2010 – 2014)

LANGUAGES

- Fluent in English, Hindi, and Nepali.

PROFESSIONAL REFERENCES

Dr. Mark Erickson
President Emeritus
Northampton Community College
mhe091@lehigh.edu
(937) 244-6336

Steve Follett
Former Chairman & CEO
Follett Corporation
stevenfollett@gmail.com
(610) 533-3780

Peter Luethi
Co-Founder, LaCompagnie
luethipeter@yahoo.com
(201) 657-3370

Lauren Loeffler
Vice President, Community Education
Northampton Community College
lloeffler@northampton.edu
(215) 514-8473

Dr. Cathie Given
Associate Dean, Academic Affairs
Northampton Community College
cgiven@northampton.edu
(610) 248-2183