Over the past decade, an increasing number of U.S. university presidents, including those at the University of Maryland and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, have articulated a vision of their schools as hubs of innovation and entrepreneurship. While these institutions have invested heavily in training faculty how to turn their research into patents and start-up companies, they have also called on faculty to create opportunities for all undergraduates to experience innovation and entrepreneurship in the context of their majors and throughout the general education curriculum.

This talk articulates how and why rhetoric and writing studies should engage this larger institutional force on our campuses. Innovation and entrepreneurship theory lends important insight on our methods for teaching inquiry, research, and problem-definition, but equally as important, writing studies’ theories of audience accommodation, genre, and collaborative composing can reshape entrepreneurship and innovation pedagogy. This presentation analyzes a specific approach to integrating innovation theory into writing courses and explores what we might learn from engaging our writing programs with these university-wide entrepreneurship initiatives.

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