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**TCU Announces New Neeley Institute for Entrepreneurship and Innovation** – by Alex Edwards

TCU students called out, and their university answered — bringing to campus the Neeley Institute for Entrepreneurship and Innovation.

Formerly the Neeley Entrepreneurship Center, the upgrade comes from students, staff, and the community demanding more access to opportunity. In a campus-wide effort, the new institute plans to emphasize entrepreneurial endeavors and faculty research to benefit startups and small businesses.

This accelerated co-curricular focus is intended to support TCU students in any major and relevant entrepreneurship research efforts. It also hopes to be a strong partnership with Dallas-Fort Worth economic drivers of entrepreneurship and small business.

A renowned leader in the entrepreneur education space, Rodney D’Souza will serve as the new director of the updated institute.

“At the student level, entrepreneurship lives all across campus. The institute is designed to intentionally empower students from every school on TCU’s campus to discover, build on, and achieve their entrepreneurial dreams,” D’Souza told *Dallas Innovates*. “Our award-winning co-curricular programs and strong entrepreneurship curriculum provide students with the mindset, knowledge, and resources to be successful.”

Most recently, D’Souza was the Fifth Third Bank Endowed Professor of Entrepreneurship and director of the Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship at Northern Kentucky University. Also a business owner and angel fund manager, according to a release, D’Souza has developed undergraduate courses on various topics, like: entrepreneurial mindset, opportunity recognition, idea valuation, new venture creation, new venture management, and business plan writing.

D’Souza says he has a passionate, experienced team—including Brad Hancock, Keith Hmieleski, Matt Smilor, and Cindy James—to usher in the next chapter of innovation and entrepreneurship at TCU. He hopes to build on past success, keeping the reputation as a top-ranked entity.

“In our community and beyond, we intend to grow our relationships with community partners by continuing to engage our students with companies and organizations such as the Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce and TECH Fort Worth, as well as involving faculty in cross-campus research projects focused on entrepreneurship and small business,” he says.

The Neeley Center launched in 1999, garnering a fast reputation as a catalyst for students to achieve their dreams of becoming business owners. From 2012-2017, the school was ranked in the top 25 U.S. Undergraduate Schools for Entrepreneurship in *Entrepreneur* magazine.

The new institute will continue to run already successful programs established by the original Neeley Center, including:

**Richards Barrentine Values and Ventures Competition:** A global annual competition for undergraduate college students to visit TCU for the chance to win funding for conscious capitalism ventures.

**Bill Shaddock Venture Capital Fund:** Each year, TCU students review their peers' business plans for potential cash grants of up to \$20,000 in funding.

**Elevator Pitch Competition:** TCU students pitch their business ideas to a judge's panel to possibly earn cash prizes.

**Entrepreneurial Intern Scholars Program:** An internship program in which students are paired with TECH Fort Worth business owners.

**Jane and Pat Bolin Innovation Forum:** In this free annual event, national leaders who have transformed their industry or field are invited to the TCU campus.

**Entrepreneurship Club at TCU:** This club, open to any major, brings successful entrepreneurs to campus, organizes road trips, supports student businesses, and coordinates a mentor program.

To learn more about the program, see events, or get involved, [visit here](#).