

Student Startup Support System (S4)

REPORT:

Working for GTU S4 EXTENSION CENTERS

in all the

25 GTU Innovation Sankuls

by using the experience of

NEN (National Entrepreneurship Network)

GTU has decided to help the Colleges set up S4 Extension Centers across 25 GTU Innovation Sankuls to make it easy for the students to have access to the facilities, provided by S4. More than 20 campuses are in take off mode to set up GIC S4 extension centers by now. For more than a month, the central expert team of S4 is working to help these S4 Extension Centers in designing their activity charts, policies and implementation process. NEN has come forward to support S4 in capacity building of the S4 Extension Centers. At an early stage meeting with Ms. Marlina Ramchandran, Network Manager-Entrepreneur Support of NEN made a presentation to Dr. Akshai Aggarwal, VC GTU, Mr. Hiranmay Mahanta, MD Techpedia.in, S4 team and others. At the end of the meeting, it was decided to organize a one day long capacity building session on 12th October 2013 at GTU, Chandkheda campus.

The primary target of this workshop was to create awareness about possible roadmaps of providing support to the young start-ups through S4 Extension Centers. The participants were from different colleges comprising Principals, Assistant Professors, Associate Professors, Lecturers, CAO and TPOs. The day began with an introductory lecture by Dr. Akshai Aggarwal, Hon'ble VC. He emphasized on setting up a culture of entrepreneurship and role of faculties who were directly connected with students. He shared that institutes need to create an environment where creativity and innovation is not hampered. He also asked participants to fully engross themselves with a student's new ideas, if they wanted to help the young person.

Ms. Marlina, in the next session, gave an eye ball's view of processes to develop campus student start up ecosystem. In an interactive workshop mode, she emphasized on creating integrated systems within a campus and for bringing in all stakeholders together to create S4 Extension Centers. She emphasized on creating concrete roadmap of activities and processes for every S4 Extension Center for the next 3 years rather than running it in adhoc manner.

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Adding more to this, Mr.Hiranmay Mahanta, MD Techpedia and Mr.Yash Saxena, founder Openfuel also presented learning from the earlier attempts at S4 and how the journey has taken shape so far. The story of various activities like Entre Week-end, S4-S4 and Boot camp were presented. The participants appreciated the fact that such efforts could also be translated at the S4 Extension Centers.



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While the NEN expert stressed on the cultural aspects of the Start-up ecosystem, she also presented detailed process and structural changes required within the academic system to make it a launch pad for student start-ups. The co-creation session organized by the experts were extremely encouraging. The Principals and the faculty members from various S4 Extension Centers participated in the debate to develop futuristic policies and action agenda for S4, keeping students as the central focus.

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There was an interesting quick group action based session. Groups were formed from amongst participants with the help of Ms. Marlina and Ms. Purva Ojha and different tasks were given, based on the present situation of colleges based on different aspects of entrepreneurship value chain. Each group came up with new and innovative ideas to crack the present problems pertaining to the challenges of incubation centers at early stage with the help of local/national state policies like TBI, DSTU etc. This exercise helped each college to work with other ones in a team and led to co-creating S4 extension center policies. It was great to see different S4 extension center officials, working jointly for making futuristic action agenda, policies and execution processes.

At the end of the day Hon'ble VC, GTU interacted with all participants to understand various needs to promote start up culture within the academic system. Many faculties from different colleges gave their feedback on present policies and strategies. He assured that some significant policy interventions will certainly be brought in to move towards a sustainable new system, which could promote students to kick start their student start-up. Mr. Hiranmay Mahanta and Ms.Purva Ojha moderated the sessions with active participation from principals from different Engineering campuses.

GTU Innovation Council will arrange a series of such capacity building workshops for S4 Extension Centers GTU will bring in the best experts from across the country. The S4 Extension Center Coordinators were advised to form a student coordinators team to take these action agendas to ground level. The S4 Extension Centers at 25 GTU Innovation Sankuls will develop lateral linkages among one another and build upon their complementary strengths. This will be India's 1st distributed start up supporting ecosystem keeping students as the central focus. S4 is bringing in local start ups, matured entrepreneurs , investors, academic researchers, industry chambers and policy makers to give best possible handholding support to each student start-up initiated by any of the S4 Extension Centers.

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Entrepreneurship Program Analysis Exercise during the workshop

This survey form was divided in three parts covering the entrepreneurship value chain .

- Foundation Development- Inspire And Engage level
- Pipeline Development- Create Level
- Working with Entrepreneurs- Support level

Each level had minimum of 6 to 7 questions to which 18 participants from different colleges answered. The crux of each level answered is stated below.

- Foundation Development- Inspire And Engage level

We all know that the S4 Extension Centres have begun their activities recently. Each college has started doing some or other activities like, Guest lecture, Help in making Business plan , Start-up Factory week, Demo days, Regular meeting with Faculty coordinators etc. According to those present, they have on average 4-5 faculties who are involved in conducting such kind of activities.

- Pipeline Development- Create Level

According to NEN, in this stage, the S4 Extension Centre at a College should start working. But almost at every College, they have a few faculties and students, who due to their self-motivation, are part of entrepreneurship development. However no courses in entrepreneurship are offered as a part of engineering studies. The mentoring/internship program unit is still under development stage at colleges.

- Working with Entrepreneurs- Support level

Colleges are not offering executive education programs for entrepreneurs. They do offer some workshops for development of start-ups. On an average, they also don't have mentors dedicated for particular start-ups.