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The Scholar as Startup: How Academic Entrepreneurs Use Continuous Innovation

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The Scholar as Startup: How Academic Entrepreneurs Use Continuous Innovation

1 Anyone can be an entrepreneur. You are an **academic entrepreneur**.



2 An entrepreneur manages ideas. As an **academic entrepreneur**, you manage ideas about teaching, research, service... ideas that involve any or all of your scholarly roles.



3 An entrepreneur validates the effectiveness of ideas, products, and unspoken assumptions that underlie them through controlled experimentation.



As an **academic entrepreneur**, you carry out these experiments in the classroom, on the stage, in scholarly discourse, in the lab, the conference room... all of the spaces where a scholar makes an impact.

"The Lean Startup provides a scientific approach to creating and managing startups and get a desired product to customers' hands faster. The Lean Startup method teaches you how to drive a startup-how to steer, when to turn, and when to persevere-and grow a business with maximum acceleration. It is a principled approach to new product development.

"Too many startups begin with an idea for a product that they think people want. They then spend months, sometimes years, perfecting that product without ever showing the product, even in a very rudimentary form, to the prospective customer. When they fail to reach broad uptake from customers, it is often because they never spoke to prospective customers and determined whether or not the product was interesting. When customers ultimately communicate, through their indifference, that they don't care about the idea, the startup fails."

For more information, see: Eric Ries, *The Lean Startup: How Today's Entrepreneurs Use Continuous Innovation to Create Radically Successful Businesses* (Crown Business, 2011).



4 An entrepreneur uses the Build-Measure-Learn process to decide whether to persevere or to pivot. As an **academic entrepreneur**, you:



- build products (e.g., lessons, assignments, programs, texts, creative performances, etc.) – beginning with the Minimum Viable Product (MVP) – from ideas based on clearly identified assumptions;
- measure the effectiveness of (i.e., assess) your product and the ideas behind it as well as the accuracy of your assumptions;
- learn from this experimentation and assessment and apply these lessons to a revised product, which is the subject of the next experiment;
- learn whether to persevere in developing this particular product or to pivot by changing ideas, assumptions, and/or products; and
- cycle through multiple iterations of the Build-Measure-Learn process in order to refine your product.

Build – Measure – Learn

5 As an **academic entrepreneur**, you use the lean startup method to gauge progress, set milestones, and prioritize tasks.

