

Subject: [at]AC March 2016 | Student startups, alumni events, spring break volunteers and more!
(Preview)

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To: Jake Stanley



New entrepreneurial course expands students' horizons



Student teams collaborate on prototyping a new product.

Are the buzzwords of business startups part of your everyday vocabulary? Do you speak of unicorns, VC, or hackathons?* If you don't know all those terms in the context of new business ventures, you're not alone. But aspiring Austin College entrepreneurs now have the opportunity to move beyond jargon to concepts of creating a new business, from idea to design/prototype to funding. The first-time offering of "Product Lab" is being taught by entrepreneur-in-residence Tom Buttine '07 during Spring Term 2016. Eleven students are engaged in a collaborative and creative interdisciplinary environment to successfully apply the "idea-to-launch" product lifecycle in just three months. Students presented their initial product concepts to potential users from the expected target market; the class participants now are prototyping based on user feedback. Next, each team will create a user-centric campaign such as crowdfunding or box subscription to raise funds for rapid product development and release. Students who successfully fund their product idea will receive additional mentoring over the summer to move the concept to initial production.

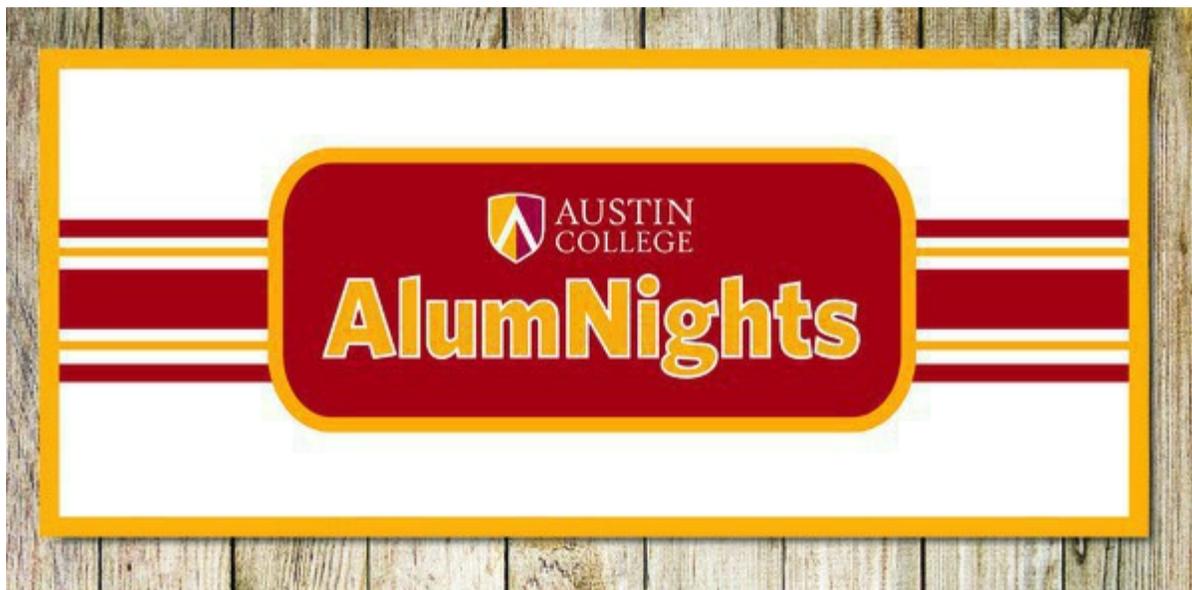
"This is a fun and challenging class," says Buttine, who spent the second half of 2015 in Washington DC and Europe, engaging with local entrepreneurial systems. "No experience was needed to enroll in Product Lab, but the course moves at a fast pace that requires significant focus and commitment to reach each stage of product development."

The course is made possible through a grant from the Morris Foundation of Fort Worth. More opportunities for student entrepreneurs are currently on the chalkboard, says Dr. David Griffith, Morris Chair of Entrepreneurship and Dean of Social Sciences. "Entrepreneurship is a growing field of study, and Austin College is pursuing several community partnerships that will nurture innovation both on and off campus," he says. Stay tuned for more news on the topic, including special programming at upcoming [AlumNight events](#). Fans also can follow class activities on the [Product Lab Facebook page](#).

*For the intellectually curious:

- . Unicorn=a startup company with initial valuation above \$1 billion
- . VC=Venture Capital, i.e. early-stage funding in a startup company from angel investors
- . Hackathon=an event at which computer developers collaborate intensely to create new software

It's AlumNight season in Texas



Join your fellow 'Roos in coming weeks for an inside look at Product Lab and meet some of the students from the spring 2016 class. Five AlumNight events will feature students and their early-stage concepts, as they give their product pitch and explain their funding campaigns. You can see the roadshow, so to speak, in

these locations:

- . **March 10th - Austin**, 6-8 p.m., Water Trough Bar @ the Lone Star Court
- . **April 1st - Sherman**, 5-7 p.m., 903 Brewers
- . **April 6th - Dallas**, 6-8 p.m., British Beverage Company
- . April dates for **Houston** and **Fort Worth** to be announced

Email invitations should be coming soon to your inbox, and more information and registration links are available on the [AlumNights webpage](#) before each event. We hope to see you there!

Group headed to Alternative Spring Break



Last year's ASB team volunteered in New Orleans.

The Austin College Service Station is sending 35 students and sponsors to Ferncliff Presbyterian Conference Center outside of Little Rock, Ark., during spring break week, March 7-11. There, the team will assemble kits for Presbyterian Disaster Relief. These kits are sent all over the nation-and in some cases internationally-to provide help to disaster stricken areas. The team will swing a few hammers as well, doing construction work at Ferncliff Center, which serves as an area hub for environmental education and activism. The team will be housed in the Eco-Lodge, a building made from recycled materials.

'Roo volunteers also will work with Heifer International, an international organization that empowers families in need to become self-reliant and economically stable through the gift of livestock and training in environmentally sound agriculture. Jacob Huston '16, Service Station board member, says the overall theme of the week is sustainability. "We hope to encourage participants to think about environmental issues through service within a context of education and awareness," he says.

Photos of the group's activities will be posted on the [ASB webpage](#). You can see photos from past trips there as well.

Spotlight on 'Roo Accolades

Congratulations to **Austin College President Marjorie Hass, Ph.D.**, on her appointment as chair of the Board of Directors of the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (NAICU) in February. Hass leads a list of four new officers and 14 new members who assumed their responsibilities on the 40+-member Board of Directors at the close of the NAICU annual meeting in Washington, D.C.

NAICU serves as the unified national voice of private nonprofit higher education, addressing critical issues of federal higher education policy and actively encouraging support of association priorities and initiatives. Members serve three-year terms, while officers hold their positions for one year.

Tickets going fast for GO! Forum in Dallas



Don't miss out! Tickets for the GO! Forum at the Perot Museum of Nature & Science in Dallas on March 22 are going fast. Pulitzer Prize-winning journalists Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn will be honored as co-recipients of the 2016 Austin College Posey Leadership Award in recognition of their global efforts to address issues including human trafficking, poverty, and gender-based violence. To order your tickets now, please go to the [GO! Forum Registration Page](#). If you have any questions please contact Trish Jennings, tjennings@austincollege.edu



- **Spring Break** officially begins on Monday, March 7, and classes will resume on March 14.
- The **2016 Austin College Scholarship Conference** is scheduled for March 18-19. Over 100 students were selected to present their work in the sciences, arts, and humanities during the [two-day event](#).
- On March 19, **Community Series** presents the first-ever Young Soloists Concerto Concert with the Greater Texoma Orchestra. Tickets can be purchased [online](#) for the 7:30 p.m. concert in Wynne Chapel.
- The **2016 Posey Leadership Convocation** will take place on March 22, 11 a.m., in Wynne Chapel. Featuring Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn, the one-hour lecture is free and open to the public.
- The annual **Will Mann Richardson Lectures** will be held March 24 in IDEA Center, Room 127, featuring Dr. Frederick Slabach, president of Texas Wesleyan University, and Dr. Michael Sorrell, president of Paul Quinn

College.

- **Austin College Theatre** will present *Black Comedy* on March 24-26.

For more information on news and events of Austin College, follow us on social media.



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