

Course 'Sustainable Entrepreneurship' by and for students of CORE and The Blue Academy

Organizing institution:

KU Leuven (Core cvba-so)

Faculty/Department/Programme/External partners:

Faculty of Engineering Technology, KU Leuven,
Postgraduate Programme in Innovation and
Entrepreneurship in Engineering
External partner: The Blue Academy

Abstract:

In the course 'Sustainable Entrepreneurship' participants are first immersed in all aspects of sustainable development and the opportunities it creates. After that, a business plan will be developed around a sustainable concept.

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http://onderwijsaanbod.kuleuven.be/2014/syllabi/v/e/DZMONDE.htm#activetab=plaatsen_in_het_onderrwijsaanbod_idp1279696.

This is a link to the course within the educational provision of KU Leuven. It will soon have a website of its own.

Description:

Around the world there is growing attention to sustainability (including at KU Leuven). The many students' associations in Leuven that are engaged in sustainability and are currently united in a consultation platform, i.e. the Leuven Student Sustainability Platform, testify to this. The city of Leuven - with Leuven Klimaatneutraal (Leuven climate-neutral) - and KU Leuven - with its new Vice-Rector of Sustainability Katlijn Malfliet - are also working to realise sustainability. In time, the idea is to have sustainability education embedded in each student's curriculum. We, the students' organisations CORE and The Blue Academy, already want to offer this in 2014-2015 to a diverse, multi-disciplinary group of enterprising young people. A course entitled 'Interdisciplinary Course on Sustainable Development' is already available at KU Leuven. However, this is still an academic course which is aimed at KU Leuven students, whereas we want to go a step further.

Practical course for and by sustainable entrepreneurs

We want to introduce a course which, apart from giving an introduction to general issues, puts sustainability into practice. During the first semester the content of the lessons will mainly focus on large themes where great improvements can still be made in terms of sustainability. We go about this in a practical manner using case studies of partner organisations, consisting of fellow students, entrepreneurs, companies and other organisations. Through the strengths and specialisations of the different partner organisations we try to realise a thematic programme which touches upon as many aspects of sustainability as possible. By the end of this semester a transition will be made to inspiring economic models to tackle these issues, namely The Circular Economy and The Blue Economy.

The second semester starts with a session on learning to brainstorm. In this part of the course the idea is for the participants to work out projects themselves in small teams, using the developed ideas. The purpose of these projects is to devise and practically implement an entrepreneurial idea that generates value by adopting a sustainable approach. In this way we want to actively encourage them to help realise sustainability. The sessions will be a bit shorter and there will be fewer cases. However, there will be more time left to work on the projects themselves. Thematically speaking, the sessions will concentrate on deepening topics which a sustainable entrepreneur should take account of. There will be a session, for instance, on ethics and the risk of greenwashing. Also, sessions will be organised on tackling problems in developing countries, on environmental law and on the best type of organisation for a starting business that wants to have an impact.

Students attending this course mainly follow the Postgraduate Programme in Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Engineering. However, this course is open to everyone, with a natural focus on students and young jobseekers, irrespective of any prior knowledge of these themes. At the end the pupils are awarded a certificate of 'sustainable entrepreneur', provided they attended most lessons and participated in a project.

Interactive project-based approach

Generally, we are not in favour of teaching in the traditional, academic way. To offer students the opportunity to think along, we want to make the course as interactive as possible. This is difficult in groups that are too large, which is why we allow only a limited number of people to register each evening. The idea is to have as many participants as possible register for the entire course. We will often give them 'homework'. Naturally, this should be useful and fun, like for instance 'convince three people of your idea'.

