

Head: Entrepreneurial Women in Business Event Inspires Students' Growth

Subhead (if applicable): The University of Akron's College of Business hosts event to celebrate Women in Entrepreneurship Week 2021 with a panel of The University of Akron Alums.

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Writer Title: PR Class Writer

Feature Image (attached) Filename:



Caption: A photo of the panel at the Entrepreneurial Women in Business Event. Panel members from left to right Keyana Artis-Chunn Account Manager Science Services, Actalent/Entrepreneur, Courtney Gras Director, Techstars/Entrepreneur, Melanie Brunty Owner, The Farmer's Rail/ Entrepreneurs. Photo by Alyssa Alexsonshk.

Text of your story: (Question Lead)

Have you ever been in a room with someone who is extremely passionate? If so, chances are you know the feeling when a passionate person's energy starts to be contagious. A wave of excitement spreads across everyone in the room as they become deeply engaged and ready to learn.

This scenario happened at the Entrepreneurial Women in Business Event put on by The University of Akron's College of Business and Montclair State University to celebrate Women Entrepreneurship Week 2021.

The event was held on Friday, Oct. 22 from 8 to 11 a.m. in the Goodyear Classroom of the College of Business Alexander Professional Development Center and was sponsored by Fitzgerald Institute for Entrepreneurial Studies & Fisher Institute for Professional Selling.

Activities of the event included breakfast, networking, panel discussion questions, small group breakouts, and mentorship opportunities. Attendees were able to make new connections with panelist, faculty, and other students

The panel for the event was composed of three entrepreneurial women. Courtney Gras, Melanie Brunty, and Keyana Artis-Chunn are each alumnus from The University of Akron and had their own unique stories to share with the students and faculty.

Aurelia Soreel Turner, 4th year master's in accounting accelerated program, was one of the moderators for the Entrepreneurial Women in Business Event. She is also the President of the Women in Business student organization at The University of Akron that helped make the event possible.

"I think building those relationships like they talked about the whole time is what's important," Turner said, "Not networking, it is building relationships that leads you to the next thing and connects you to the next thing."

Panelist Courtney Gras is the Director at Techstars and a 2013 graduate of The University of Akron with the degree Bachelor of Science and major in Electrical Engineering. Gras shared her perspectives and why these events are important for growing minds.

"I believe these events inspire and instill confidence in students," Gras said, "Sometimes all it takes is hearing one new perspective to change somebody's career trajectory for the better."

Gras offered a glimpse into her path of becoming an entrepreneur and how The University of Akron influenced her journey.

"I'd say entrepreneurship chose me. I never thought I wanted to be an entrepreneur, but while I was studying electrical engineering, I got involved in a research project that turned into a product," Gras said, "A professor encouraged me to enter a pitch competition, and I fell in love with the startup world shortly after."

The panelists' stories had an impact on the students who attended the event. One student attendee Armani Shepherd, a Senior at The University of Akron and Psychology major, shared her inspiring takeaways from the event.

When discussing the honesty in Gras's choice to leave NASA, Shepherd said, "A lot of people would wonder why someone would leave a job like NASA, but even though the name is huge, it was not bringing her satisfaction anymore. I think that should be a topic of conversation more often, it's ok to leave if it is not bringing you joy."

Lauren Redhead, a sophomore marketing and sales double major at The University of Akron, shared how she was going to implement the lessons learned at the event into her life.

"The panelists encouraged making a to-do list or some sort of schedule to stay organized and focused on what you need/want to accomplish. The women also expressed the important of finding and maintaining a balance," Redhead said "The combination of these takeaways has already helped me as I map out what I need to do at the beginning of every day and week so that I do not get discouraged or overwhelmed with my busy schedule."

To help attendees remember important lessons from the event, action cards were given out at the end. All were encouraged to complete the cards to help guide them to take action and be resilient in their entrepreneurial journey.

Dr. Joseph Fox, Professor of Practice at The University of Akron College of Business and Management Director of the Fitzgerald Institute for Entrepreneurial Studies Department of Management was one of the faculty members who worked to put on the event.

"We should certainly put events like this on in the future, continue highlighting the success of excellent professionals and connect students with stories on how to handle adversity and be more resilient," Dr. Fox said.

The event was the first to celebrate Woman in Entrepreneurship Week held by The University of Akron, however, there is hope that it will not be the last. If this event sounded like something you would like to attend there may be future opportunities in the College of Business for personal development events.

Sidebar text (if applicable): N/A

Additional Image (attached) Filename:



Caption: Event attendees in the breakout group session. Photo by Alyssa Alexsonshk.

Additional Image (attached) Filename:



Caption: Keyana Artis-Chunn taking with event attendees in small breakout session.
Photo by Alyssa Alexsonshk.

Additional Image (attached) Filename:



Caption: Women in Business moderators at the event explaining the action cards.
Listed left to right Alyson Pekkola Vice President of Women in Business, Aurelia Soreel
Turner President of Women in Business. Photo by Alyssa Alexsonshk.

Special Requests: