

Speaker 64: I'd like to introduce Mr. Brian Ellerman, who is a founding executive director of FORGE at the University of Arizona. He'll tell us a little bit about FORGE and what some of the unique things that they're attempting to do with the school.

Brian Ellerman: Yeah. I would love to. Thank you everyone for having me. Is that okay? The speaking, is that okay? Okay. Thank you so much for having me here today. It's an honor to speak with all of you about some of the work that we're doing and I hope it inspires some additional thoughts by the end.

So air quote on FORGE, FORGE was first of many acronyms. In this case it stands for "Finding Opportunities and Resources to Grow Entrepreneurs." I like to say that the most important word in that is entrepreneur. You'll notice it's not entrepreneurship, this isn't an academic unit, we don't offer degrees, we're not teaching classes on entrepreneurship. We're really about the individual. And the word entrepreneur from our point of view has kind of taken its own meaning in culture. People often, when you say, "Entrepreneur", they picture start up founder, some type of unicorn, all of these buzzwords. And we're trying to change that perception and get it back to the original meaning which is really just about critical thinking, problem solving, future orientation or psychological resilience. How do you build that capacity to whether you can foresee it or whether you can simply adapt to it?

And so we like to focus on what we call the three C's, campus, community and capital. And when you really get down to it, that's kind of what's at the heart of just about everything, at least as far as the University is concerned. So on the campus side it's, how do we cultivate that entrepreneur while thinking of all students? And to be clear, we don't restrict ourselves to University of Arizona students. We work with career and technical education districts, high school students, we work with community colleges. We're very closely partnered with Pima Community College here in Tuscon, but also with Arizona Western, Yuma, Maricopa, Gateway. Really from the point of view that the earlier we can reach students and in cultivating that thinking, the better. Community, this is based on the brain drain that we see happen throughout, certainly, in our experience. We spend all of this time and energy educating and inspiring this new thinking in our students and if we ignore the communities that they come from, we are guaranteeing that they will go somewhere else.

I've watched it happen. Literally our own students, the ones who've been appointed by FORGE, who when I said, "How many of you would stay local?" almost no one raised their hand. And then I said to them, "Why?" they said "Well, I have to go to California. I have to go to New York because that's where the kinds of companies involved in things are." We've got to figure out how to show students that there are opportunities right here in our region. And then capital, now this is both financial and social but in my experience working with startup companies, they're in need of one of those two things, or sometimes both. Either, I need access to somebody who has expertise that I don't have on my team, but who can advise me and helps me with my growth. Or, I need

access to money because we're doing okay on our own but with an infusion of capital we can grow faster than we could by ourselves.

And so, everything that sort of sits behind what FORGE is and does, is founded on those three C's and trying as much as we can to connect those. Next slide, please. So in the next three slides, I'll touch on, in more depth, those three C's because they're actually organizational units. So the first we call Student Venture Pathways and as you can see from the slide, we are looking at a different set of programs and activities for students to find their own path. It is quite literally a student venture or adventure pathway, sometimes the student just reaches it by taking a really basic online class. Venturing 101 is a set of nine modules, each one is three to four hours tops and many are even shorter than that. It is completely free, it is completely online and it is actually hosted on our community server, so anyone in the community can also enroll and take these.

And they go through the really fundamental parts of the entrepreneur and first of all asking the person, "What's your own tolerance for risk? How do you deal with failure? If you failed at something, how would you feel about it?" So that the individual can begin with a self understanding and assessment. And then, "What is a problem? How do you properly scope that problem? What kind of solution do you have to the problem?" And then ultimately, "Is there a market where the solution is found?" The world is sort of filled with lots of really great ideas, but not a lot of marketing for those ideas. This helps to bring those pieces together and then adds in components like intellectual property, business formation. Should you be an LLC, a C corp? What are the right paths forward? And then we have some specialized narratives, so, for example, we've explored biomedical entrepreneurship and the fact that when you go there, you're dealing with a regulatory pathway. You're also dealing with ethical considerations that wouldn't necessarily apply if it was just a ride-sharing app.

We also do a series of what we call, Playshops. We like to say that a workshop is for work, these are shops for play. And we really try to get the students to organize around a central theme. We've done Playshops on resilience, for example. What does the word resilience mean to you? What are some examples? How do you see it? And in so doing, and it's a fun experience, we've had incredible success to where, quite honestly, our facilitator for this is oversubscribed and she's essentially booked through the end of the school year for the Playshops. I want to share similar but now sort of peer based feedback and connections. And I already mentioned the biomedical entrepreneur but we've actually extended, through donation from philanthropy I should say, we were able to support scholarships for three students. This effectively pays their entire tuition and fees for the coming year and they get to work on a biomedical startup concept that they were judged by and that we had 18 students apply, narrowed it down to these three.

And so this coming summer, they will be working under the guidance of two dedicated mentors in residence on that concept. And then, the best part is, if you're really in to pay it forward, you then employ those students in the fall as

entrepreneurs in residence to be able to help us do the same thing for the next year, and then in turn they become the mentors to that program. And then office hours, we have multiple locations across campus with different areas of focus. We have Resilience FORGE in the NR2 building, we have Steam FORGE in the electrical and aero engineering, we have Consumer FORGE over in our retail school. And we're going to be opening a Data FORGE in our major space [inaudible 04:32:22]. So each time, we're trying to create areas of interaction where we can bring experts and students who are interested in that particular topic, together. Next slide, please.

So, that was part one, student venture and the campus. The second is community, so FORGE Communities. FORGE at Roy Place is our flagship. You'll see it in different photos throughout, it's an almost 100-year-old building in downtown Tuscan. It's almost at the zero-zero mark of downtown, it really helps serve as the epicenter and hub for connection to the community in Tuscan. It also is where we can run a number of community based programs, which I'll definitely talk more about, that's what the majority of my presentation is about. We also try to activate the space, we do a series called Thursdays at FORGE, which has had a rotating set of schedules and topics. Again, I'll touch on those. And then Native FORGE is a program which I think you might have heard a little bit about from Levi Esguerra.

Speaker 64: Tomorrow.

Brian Ellerman: Oh, that's tomorrow? Well, you haven't heard about it yet. Yeah, so Levi and I are both Co-PIs. It's an EDA University Center, undergrad. So we are the University Center for the State of Arizona and Native FORGE is taking a lot of these pieces and figuring out how to bring it to our tribal partners. Arizona has 22 federally recognized tribes. We stood up a program that takes our Venturing 101 curriculum, that takes our mentoring, and then it takes, I think, it's a great degree of going directly to the tribe and asking them what they need, and what is going to help them the most, and then developing out that set of additional programs and services. And so our first cohort has been to the San Carlos Apache Tribe. We will be, actually, putting it out for applications either later this week or early next week, for the next cohort of tribes to participate.

One of the things that I love about this program is that it's upscalable, reproducible and sensible. Meaning, we built this foundation so every additional dollar that we can find to dedicate to it means we can reach more tribes. It's something which I'm already talking with our Vice President for Black Student Engagement, as well as our Vice President for Hispanic Serving Institutions, on how we can expand Native FORGE into a BIPOC college program. And then it's also the kind of thing that I've had several universities in other states reach out and say, "How do we do the same thing? We want to do an import program here." It's not a magical formula, it just takes doing certain things. What do I have left? Oh, our mentors in residence. Our mentors in residence play really a critical role for us. So we have a team of 10 dedicated mentors, all with extensive industry backgrounds. But rather than completely focus them just on

FORGE and working for what we do, I actually only employ them about four hours a week because I want them to stay actively engaged in industry, and keeping their skills sharp.

I don't mean to sound biased, but sometimes you run into mentor programs where people have been out of industry for a while. And while that's initially good, at some point it stops being helpful to the people you're trying to mentor. So we want to keep our mentors active and qualified. And that's the other piece of Native FORGE. And so, if we take the Venturing 101 from our student side and we take our mentoring in mentors in residence, we actually treat our tribal entrepreneurs as if they were in our accelerator program. Next slide. And we mean that they get the same kind of mentoring that a technology stratosphere startup might get. And not to suggest that our mentors are going in and saying, "Why haven't you gone out to VCs yet?" They are doing that but they're getting that caliber of mentoring around the businesses that they're trying to get started, many of those within their own tribal communities. Yeah. So here we are. I'll end that slide, I've said those words, didn't I?

So, FORGE Ahead is then the third part. And this is where we take in a limited number of companies as a part of our dedicated accelerator program. For FORGE Ahead you have that residency at FORGE, which is a one-year residency and during that time they have access, obviously to me, they have access to the 10 mentors in residence. They have use of the space that we have, either downtown or up in Phoenix, depending on where they're based. And a big part of it, as I mentioned, is that access to capital. Very often they approach us because they have tried and failed to get in front of, say, Asian groups for venture capitalists. And they say, "What am I doing wrong?" And so we work our way through what's your pitch look like, what's your author look like? And really get them down to that fundamental value especially for investments. And I will absolutely confess, in some ways this is why you're getting that strategist sort of advantage that we have. Which is I love this area, I love working with startups in that early stage of vesting.

I won't go into every bullet, but just as you see from it, we have a very broad range of experts on the veterans and that's very important. So that that way, you're not limiting this to, "Oh, it's only going to be the sustainable startups. So don't talk to us about, "A lifestyle business." or a nonprofit. We have both of those at our accelerator as well. One that I'm very proud of is called AZ Luminaria and they are 100% non-profit focused, looking at local news as the conduit to civic engagement, which is just a beautiful concept. And there is no monetization, literally they're there because the local newspapers have cut all of these services. But in turn, they're out there hiring journalists in these different areas, having them write the stories that are important to those communities and then being able to show how that's getting people talking and engaged with what's going on. Next slide, please.

So unfortunately, Erica is not here to talk about this project. This is where I really wanted Erica because she actually served on the Tucson City of

Gastronomy Board and was very instrumental in both this program and the direction it's supposed to go. So, we launched, as part of our Thursdays at FORGE, one Thursday every month we bring in the Tuscon City of Gastronomy to talk about the business and heritage events. And hopefully when Erica gets here, she'll be able to respond to questions about that because I really want you to hear it from her and what it is she's looking to have this program do. What you can see in the slides are some of the various topics and speakers that we've already had thus far and we've got an entire year planned in advance for the program. So, we will bookmark this slide and come back to it. Next slide, please.

So, the gentleman on the left is Levi Esguerra, that's who you'll be meeting tomorrow, apparently. And the gentleman on the right is Raphael Papilla. Raphael is now, I think he has a new title, he is the Director of Tribal Community Connections at Local First Arizona, and also one of our mentors in residence and he serves as the lead for the Native FORGE program. Raphael came to us with 20 plus years of experience working with the tribes in the United States, so he's absolutely probably one of the authorities on this topic. And as such, he is part of what helps our outreach to be more authentic because it's someone who knows exactly what the challenges have been for small business formation, for entrepreneurship on tribal lands. And he's walked in those shoes, he's actually launched several businesses of his own.

And so in going out to the tribes as a part of Native FORGE, he also knows how to work engagement and development operatives and sort of how the tribe balances first, right. Because every tribe is a little bit different in terms of its governance and the relationships that the governance has with the people that follow their guidance. I already gave you the overview of the other pieces, so we can go to the next slide.

Speaker 64: If I may, we invite Erica to show-

Brian Ellerman: Sure.

Speaker 64: She's sitting in the audience.

Speaker 65: Erica? You go to the relevant slide then?

Brian Ellerman: Yeah, why don't we go back to this slide? I think that we've been through about two slide. Erica, can you come up here?

Erica: Absolutely.

Brian Ellerman: I wanted to invite you to speak to the, see this is going to be exciting because I know how near and dear it is to you.

Erica: It truly is.

Brian Ellerman: So, Erica Vetnik is FORGE's marketing and communications manager.

Speaker 64: Hi, Erica. I'm glad we could meet.

Erica: Hi. Thank you. So yes, I am the marketing and communication manager for FORGE. I'm also a board member for the Tucson UNESCO City of Gastronomy, which is international knowledge sharing about food practices here in Tucson. We were the first North American city gastronomy to pitch up. Just a really amazing cultural heritage of agriculture and food production. And it is exciting to see FORGE do this work that's for that community. So, this year we launched a program specifically to help food entrepreneurs. It's a really, really challenging area to be in, for a lot of reasons. And FORGE has a lot of resources involved. So, this event in partnership with the Tucson City of Gastronomy, is called The Business of Heritage Foods.

And it is really focusing on, what works well here, working with what crops, what particular ingredients are [inaudible 04:43:47] or plants with zodiac needs that work well here, and working with businesses who then share lessons on it. How have we been really successful in the marketplace? It's just simply been by assessing and communicating those things. So there are national brands that establish food are relatively bleak compared to heritage ingredients that buying food brand or future production about how to do that. And so as a part of the series we have Roadside Sherry's desert harvester speech, she sells naturally and critically care products she actually grows directly in her land that she owns and products are sold nationwide. We've had Steven [inaudible 04:44:34] which is the only [inaudible 04:44:39] Tuscan probably speak about how basic supermarket things are. [inaudible 04:44:46] are doing amazing work [inaudible 04:44:49] as well as cappuccino and packaging things [inaudible 04:44:57] for general agriculture.

So, these have been really incredible events that we can support, we can help them, set them free, just hearing really inspiring stories and also best practices. They're all industry experts and just very gracious of them to share their knowledge about what they've done, what they've done about the definitely the bumps and pitfall along the road and [inaudible 04:45:27].

Speaker 64: Thank you for that. [inaudible 04:45:39].

Speaker 66: Can I inject a question right there?

Erica: Yes.

Speaker 66: So did any of the startups pick up knowledge of the USDA, or the rural development plans, or programs in order to get started or just help them? Especially with Moodside.

Erica: I don't know for specifics. I know that Owen Boss has been really involved in building it, what sort of instructions are out there because [inaudible 04:46:05] agriculture community and we also had our own step on the board we work for, so what are the landscaping assumptions but we looked at them all.

Speaker 66: That was my next questions, how you market this and if there is in fact partnership. And it seems like there's a lot of programs available to the native tribe.

Brian Ellerman: And so historically, as far as USDA grant programs are concerned, within our FORGE at Roy Place, we have Startup Tucson, a nonprofit entrepreneurship motivation, I know that they have made requests for USDA grants. One for the farmers market, and the other, I can't remember if it's the Rise competition or something else where they [inaudible 04:47:04] their area gardening as well as some of the business programs that they offer. Since you asked, we are looking at the Rise budding opportunity as a mechanism for a FORGE member to engage those communities in essentially sort of the creation of an accelerator type there in the community, as well as some of the workforce related compartments.

Speaker 66: I was also thinking like in rural development and just like that invaluable and it grants that individual companies standby. So that's what I was heading towards, are they the inside of these individual company brands or loans or any about that line, so.

Brian Ellerman: We've also partnered with [inaudible 04:48:15].

Erica: We have a partner and they have a lot of specific rural development programs in Tuscan, a lot of it's there, the resources as well that they operate internally on their network across the state, especially rural companies.

Speaker 64: I think we have time for question and answers after the presentation.

Brian Ellerman: Absolutely. Thank you. Absolutely. All right. Now let's go back to where we were, I think it's two slides, maybe three slides. Yeah, that'd be great. So, just to kind of recap exactly what it is some things that we often get asked, "What parts go into it?" Obviously skills involved [inaudible 04:48:45]. Those that are listed there are the actual modules in our Venturing 101, which means that every participant in the FORGE program has access to those modules. To the free one as well as mentors you can ask a question and follow up. We host an annual conference at our FORGE Roy Place location, that will be in November. We intentionally tie that into another major festival that takes place called Tech West, which is an impact festival that focuses a lot around startups and investors. So we bring the Native FORGE participants in at the exact moment we have all of these investors and startups in town. They can go and see the pitch competition, they can go meet mentors or investors, it's a lot of them.

And so as the Native FORGE program grows, that just means that many more people getting into those buildings at that particular moment.

Speaker 66: Is there a fee for them to be involved?

Brian Ellerman: None. None whatsoever. In fact, in a sense, they get something which is on the technology, so every participant in Native FORGE... And it's not a, just to be clear, when we select a tribe, then the next step is, we ask the tribe to nominate 5 entrepreneurs. So in other words, we don't want to be picking who the entrepreneurs are. We want them to say, "These are the people we think are invested in our community, that would benefit the most." And hopefully represent the broadest range from maybe relatively young to older entrepreneur, early stage to later stage company, et cetera. And then each of those participants get a laptop and a cellular hotspot so that if there were technological obstacles, that helps to address them. Except, we've also discovered that sometimes the technological obstacle is, "I've never owned technology." So then we would incorporate it in the assistance piece of training on how to use the internet, or how to use Microsoft Office and other tools. Because nothing like saying, "Then just use this online curriculum." And someone says, "How do I get into that online curriculum?"

So we're really building from the building blocks up, in terms of what they get. And then as I mentioned before, the donation packages. So they have access to biweekly mentoring with a pair of our 10 mentors in residence, who as I mentioned come from a broad variety of type. Next slide. And these are our entrepreneurs. One of the other things we really want to try to do is to center the discussion on them and their businesses and what they need. So, BJ is one of my favorites in the program, BJ does these custom handcrafted quilts, often using both traditional materials, but also recycled or upcycled materials. And is one of those perfect examples of the entrepreneur that has such a great product, but they can't keep up with the demand. And also, in my opinion, and what we've talked about is, isn't charging enough. "But it only cost me this much to make." That's not how you figure out what to ask.

You figure out a price by what is the market going to pay you because then that allows him to go buy more of his supplies and other things. So each of these entrepreneurs, like I said, we have the regular mentoring sessions plus Raphael goes out and visits with them at least once a month, sometimes twice a month, to work with them and then go to our other office. Next slide, please. And then I think we're closing in on the end of the presentation. I know that our Yuma location has a very extensive backdrop with USDA. And we've done a lot of work both out there in ad tech and in another state. So, FORGE at Yuma is also a real thing. We are in the process of renovating a space for drop in mentoring. Right now we're using the academic center itself but by the end of this summer we'll have the new office renovated to do drop in mentoring for students and community. As well as having Randy Nelson, who is formerly the director of Yuma, as we can see. He's our mentor in residence, so he has extensive connections to many of the businesses out there.



We're also very close by to the Organ of Quechan tribe and their economic development, Al Pruitt. We work a lot with Al and they're in the process of setting up [inaudible 04:53:47]. And also, in that same plaza where the academic center and FORGE are, will soon be a personal science inspect wellness students lab. This is something that Tonya Hodges has put together and will be an additional opportunity for us to take especially groups who very often, if you're thinking about wellness, foods or nutritional sciences, you make not be thinking about entirely. So we like to come in and be able to show them some of the opportunities. [inaudible 04:54:22] or just as incorporated into other, larger organizations.

Also, where this is, is directly across the street from Arizona Western NAUAST. And in fact, I was just out there three weeks ago to be a judge, in a border entrepreneur challenge competition that has students from Mexico and from Yuma all participating together largely on the climate and [inaudible 04:54:51]. Okay. Next slide, please. And Erica and I call this the world-famous QR code. We incorporate this into everything we do because with that code you can get access to a list of all of the programs that we offer, sign up for our newsletter, stay in touch with all of the activities that we have going on, and so on. And also to talk with all of us. And so with that, we're now on to the question and answer.

Speaker 67: Thank you. I guess you'll be here tomorrow? Is that correct?

Brian Ellerman: No. Levi will be here tomorrow.

Speaker 67: It's the same program.

Brian Ellerman: So, Levi is our Senior Vice President for Native American Advancement.

Speaker 67: Oh, okay.

Brian Ellerman: So he and I are Co-PIs on the EDA program but yeah, separate topic.

Speaker 67: I have two questions. If we could try those.

Brian Ellerman: Sure.

Speaker 67: One, how do recruit the participants in the program? And my second question, I have a lot of questions.

Brian Ellerman: Okay.

Speaker 67: The second question I'm going to ask right now, is how do you fund this?

Brian Ellerman: Okay.

Speaker 67: So it's like, it's a program.

Brian Ellerman: Now are you asking specifically, it's really important, or more broadly?

Speaker 67: More broad.

Brian Ellerman: Okay. So, it comes through a number of different channels and that why it's important to have a marketing and communications person. Because we use social media, we use a lot of on campus promotion, especially with our activities. We have 15 or 16 students that all work for FORGE in different capacities, on different projects and programs. Our mentor group largely came, initially, through my network, having worked in the industry for so long. And then with word of mouth and other things we've been [inaudible 04:56:53]. Our team is fairly small. We keep it lean and mean and I think that probably then leads into your second question about the funding part. So we receive some central funding from RII, which is my current organization. So I report that that's [inaudible 04:57:17]. And we get core funding for a couple of us, and then everything else is paid for through philanthropy, grants. We don't charge for our curriculum, so we really don't take much. We don't take anything in terms of tuition dollars. So it's very much a startup mentality how we operate, that you get that seed funding, and then you figure out how to grow responsibly.

Speaker 69: How tied in are you? You mentioned maker programs.

Speaker 68: Yeah.

Speaker 69: How tied in to you are those?

Speaker 68: Very, we have one in our building. Yeah. We have the Launch Lab, which Startup Tucson operates. They got that through an EDA SPRINT grant, and now we're looking at ways to be able to parlay that into both from a campus perspective, students and prototyping, and then from a community perspective. We see a lot of demand from community entrepreneurs who need a place to be able to make the idea that they have, and we have in this space both the 3D printing, laser cutting, and a lot of other components, as well as a studio where you can take your prototype and create an advertisement, or a marketing campaign for it.

That said, I think we've heard from some of our community partners, especially in rural areas, about the interest in maker spaces. My own experience from working in industry is that I always tell them proceed cautiously because there's a significant outlay at the beginning, and then you have a skill gap that you need to [inaudible 04:59:06] address. And the day that you've got someone properly trained to use everything is the day that they've got a better job offer somewhere else, and so you've got to figure out how to make it paid for and supported in the community that it's servicing. And then that's been a key for us.

Speaker 69: Thank you.

Speaker 70: Perry. Jr. I have four questions to [inaudible 04:59:31]. Can you share what your annual budget is for your program? Yeah, just in general. You don't have to get into specific [inaudible 04:59:43], to operate such a program like this.

Speaker 68: So we operate on just shy of \$2 million.

Speaker 70: Okay. And you say quite a percentage of that come mostly from philanthropy and [inaudible 04:59:55].

Speaker 68: Yeah.

Speaker 70: Okay. The second question goes back to your membership program. You mentioned that you were a mentor, you want people to still have their foot in the industry. So that means you don't hire people that are retired [inaudible 05:00:09].

Speaker 68: I mean, it's not hard and fast [inaudible 05:00:13]. So for example, our lead mentor had a 30-year career at 3M, but was actually a senior scientist there who was responsible for inventing the product that you all have used as every college student. So someone like that we absolutely wanted to bring in and he's incredibly active at staying engaged. But most of our other mentors are employed in other things.

Speaker 70: [inaudible 05:00:41]. Okay. Third question is, is your program open to everybody across the state or just people in Tucson area or ...?

Speaker 68: I mean, our mission because we are the land and grant institution, our mission is to serve every community for the university operating [inaudible 05:00:59], but yeah.

Speaker 70: I'm sorry, then the last question.

Speaker 68: Go ahead.

Speaker 70: The last question was back to the native program. Now you mentioned that you get recommendations from the tribe themselves. Now I'm assuming though that there are some minimum requirements that you all have that those particular people that recommend had to have [inaudible 05:01:16].

Speaker 68: Yeah, no, and I think there was kind of another underlying other question that I think had been raised which is how do you go about this and reaching out to the tribes.

Speaker 70: Right.

Speaker 68: And so that's a really important [inaudible 05:01:30]. Raphael spends an inordinate amount of time engaging each of the tribes both at the governance level as well as economic development level just to gauge what is your understanding, willingness, interests, et cetera. Then there's sort of a sub [inaudible 05:01:50] from which you start to work through and you say, "Okay, here's what your task is going to be if you're selected, it's going to be finding these five entrepreneurs. Can you think of five right now, or is this going to take some time?" And then once we do make the determination, it's highly [inaudible 05:02:05], walk them through. If you've got eight people in mind, how do we get in to five? Here are some things to consider when you are selecting [inaudible 05:02:14].

Speaker 70: Thank you.

Speaker 71: I think we'll have to cut it off because we're running out of time and I think I have [inaudible 05:02:22] and would like to get you to comment briefly before this committee, how do you see this committee could potentially help us with minority because our focus is on-

Speaker 68: So it's a great question because I honestly am sitting there asking myself, "Do I want to ask [inaudible 05:02:48]?" I already touched on briefly, which is that the model that we've chosen with creative work, it's absolutely extensive. You can think about it more broadly [inaudible 05:02:56], and because in each base you would have to be able to center it on what are the unique challenges in there that we want to bring experts and resources to try to progress? In other words, I'm not saying that we build data [inaudible 05:03:11] therefore we have this whole problem, but we have the template and the blueprint for how you would go about this.

Speaker 71: So funding for native [inaudible 05:03:23] would be one of your priorities?

Speaker 68: I think so, yes. Especially because the EDA University Center, it's not that large relatively speaking. It's about a hundred thousand dollars a year. That gets us one tribe a year. And the pieces I described too. But what I think is fair to say is that if you take every additional dollar, it actually becomes a multiplier to where we could very easily see more tribes a year and reach all, well, there are 22 tribes. I'm a realist. Let's say it's 20 tribes. There's almost certainly going to be some that say not me, I got my own thing, whatever, right? And so I think funding for that would absolutely be something that I think [inaudible 05:04:05] look at it. I'm also interested, you know, I've worked very closely with Lehman Benson, the vice president of Black student engagement at the university on how do we develop the next generation of Blacks who have not been [inaudible 05:04:18], especially thinking about investing and thinking about industry and innovation as it's applied to new businesses. The reality is the paths have changed in terms of being able to invest.

It used to be you had to have a million dollars, you had to make so much [inaudible 05:04:38] year et cetera to be an accredited investor. Now it's just

about sophistication. If you learn the tools that go into due diligence and understanding it, you can become an accredited investor that way, which means people who come from highly disadvantaged backgrounds can still be accredited investors sitting in a room hearing the same things, which then means they have the opportunity to help bring funding to their communities and helping that next generation of entrepreneur who are probably [inaudible 05:05:08].

Speaker 71: We need to continue this [inaudible 05:05:15].

Speaker 72: So one of our initiatives is bringing the next generation of agriculture, and I feel like you just hit the nail on the head talking about that and the biggest gap for our youth is just access to land. Because just like everything else, the land prices [inaudible 05:05:28] so we can't get the next generation in agriculture. And that's why I was thinking this could be an opportunity to help that next generation gap kind of become entrepreneurs in an industry like agriculture that is so highly difficult sometimes [inaudible 05:05:48]. So I just wanted to make that kind of [inaudible 05:05:52]. That's the one thing we can.

Speaker 71: But we have another [inaudible 05:05:56] senior vice president [inaudible 05:06:02].

Speaker 68: It will be quite interesting [inaudible 05:06:05] in terms of developing our programs. I think tomorrow's talk is going to be also with trend and they're going to talk more about the modern extension and that side, but I [inaudible 05:06:17] the opportunity to come back [inaudible 05:06:20] follow up on our program.

Speaker 71: Well, thank you.