

Matthew Smilor
Director, Arnold Center for Entrepreneurship
Adjunct Instructor

PROFESSIONAL ADDRESS

Stephen F. Austin State University
Nelson Rusche College of Business
1936 North Street, SFA Box 13004
Nacogdoches, TX 75962
Office telephone: 936-468-4027
Arnold Center office: 936-468-4024
email: matthew.smilor@sfasu.edu

EDUCATION

Ed.D., Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, TX, anticipated Fall 2028

EMBA, Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, TX, Fall 2014

BA, Sociology, University of Colorado at Boulder, Spring 2002

MLP (Master Leaders Program), Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, TX, Summer 2020

Professional Experience

Founding Director, Arnold Center for Entrepreneurship

Stephen F. Austin State University; 2022-present

The Greg Arnold Center for Entrepreneurship, or ACE, is designed to inspire, nurture, and attract entrepreneurship across campus and in the community. It enables new collaboration among a variety of academic disciplines as well as new avenues for partnerships with businesses and industry throughout the state

- **Build** and establish the Arnold Center for Entrepreneurship as the entrepreneurial catalyst for East Texas.
- **Lead**, plan, and coordinate co-curricular entrepreneurial programming for the Rusche College of Business students and alumni.
- **Increase** enrollment in entrepreneurial offerings across SFA's campus through educational, experiential, and innovative programming.
- **Develop** a community small business and resource hub further leading to business growth, retention, and economic development for the East Texas region.
- **Advise**, mentor, and counsel students, entrepreneurs, and small business owners.

Director, Values and Ventures Program

Texas Christian University; 2015-2023

#1 Ranked undergraduate national venture competition for students around the world to pitch plans for for-profit enterprises that impact society in meaningful ways. 50 finalist universities from around the world compete each year for over \$500,000 in cash and awards.

- **Grew**, the program from mid-level regional competition to the #1 Ranked undergraduate business plan competition in the United States and the Top Program in the World for university-affiliated startups and the #2 ranked program for all competitions including MBA level competitions.
- **Executed**, planned, and led logistics for TCU's flagship undergraduate venture competition leading it to become the nation's largest solely undergraduate competition.
- **Fundraised** \$100,000+ annually for operational support and endowment growth of the program
- **Promoted** and networked entrepreneurial activities and events, locally, regionally, and nationally. Recognized as an industry expert.
- **Mentored**, advised, and counseled students, entrepreneurs, and small business owners.

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

- Adjunct Professor, Management and Marketing Department, Rusche College of Business, Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, TX, 2023-present
 - MGMT 1399, Entrepreneurial Leadership: *Understanding the entrepreneurial mindset of a leader*
 - Entrepreneurial leadership is designed to provide students with a foundational understanding of the principles, strategies, and skills necessary to succeed as leaders in the dynamic world of entrepreneurship. This course introduces principles and techniques of creativity as resources for the development of an entrepreneurial mindset and demonstrates how students can use those skills to identify and analyze opportunities, communicate and work effectively with teams, and better understand what being an entrepreneurial leader is in a variety of careers, companies, and organizations.
 - MGMT 3390, Principles of Entrepreneurship: *Building the foundation for entrepreneurial pursuits*
 - Students in this course learn the basic framework of entrepreneurship and the entrepreneurial process. They develop skills for identifying new opportunities and ideas and then develop and test business models using minimal viable products through customer validation. Throughout the course, students are pushed and encouraged to explore, examine, and evaluate their entrepreneurial capacity.
 - MGMT 4364, Entrepreneurial Field Studies: *Using strategic tools to analyze opportunities*
 - In this course, students focus on key entrepreneurial themes that they have learned and apply them using strategic tools to real-world scenarios. It focuses on exploring how an entrepreneurial mindset can help envision the possible (and impossible) and then provides students with the knowledge, skills, know-how, and courage to do something about it.
- Course Facilitator, YU Global, Yeshiva University, New York, NY 2023-present
 - Principles of Economics and Financial Literacy
 - This comprehensive economics course explores the principles of the United States free market economy within a global context, emphasizing both individual financial responsibility and broader economic understanding. Students develop essential personal finance skills while gaining insight into how markets, businesses, and government policies shape their economic environment
 - The Successful Entrepreneur
 - This immersive certificate program is meticulously crafted for visionary entrepreneurs, offering a deep dive into the strategic integration of AI within various

business facets. It equips participants with the knowledge to leverage AI's potential, fostering innovation, optimizing operations, and cultivating a competitive edge.

- Mastering the Art of Sales
 - This certificate course aims to equip individuals with the skills, strategies, and knowledge necessary to excel in the dynamic and competitive field of sales. Whether they are new to sales or looking to enhance their existing sales skills, this course provides them with the tools to effectively engage customers, close deals, and drive revenue growth. Through a combination of theoretical insights, practical exercises, and real-world case studies, participants develop a deep understanding of sales techniques, customer psychology, and relationship-building strategies.
- Foundations of Human Resources
 - This foundational course prepares early career HR professionals or those seeking to enter the field of HR with the skills required to effectively administer ethical human resource functions and responsibilities.
- Aspiring CFOs
 - This course helps learners develop a keen understanding of the functions of the CFO as a strategic leader through the lenses of planning, operations, information, risk management and financing.
- Adjunct Professor, Entrepreneurship and Innovation Department, M.J. Neeley School of Business, Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, TX, 2021- 2023
 - ENTR 20970, Special Topics in Entrepreneurship, *The Entrepreneurial Journey*
 - In this course, students focused on key entrepreneurial themes as they look to go on an entrepreneurial journey and discover new insights about themselves, better understand their unique talents and gifts, and enhances their skills as leaders and entrepreneurs.

ADVISING AND MENTORING EXPERIENCE

- CREATE powered by Shaddock Seed Fund
 - Assisted in the development and provided organizational support for the program from its infancy in 2015 to where it is now as the 11th-ranked competition and program in the US.
- Collegiate Entrepreneurs Club at TCU
 - Served as staff/faculty advisor to one of the largest clubs on campus and one of the largest CEO national chapters.
- Entrepreneurship Intern Scholars Program
 - Helped to coordinate the program and assist in placing Neeley and other TCU students in entrepreneurship internships in the Fort Worth community. The program places 10-12 student internships each fall, spring, and summer. These internships have allowed students to gain valuable first-hand experience in what being an entrepreneur entails.
- Entrepreneurship Mentorship Program
 - Facilitated matching 10-20 students annually with entrepreneurship mentors.

BUSINESS EXPERIENCE

- Trinity Knot Solutions; Small Business and Startup Consulting
 - On an ongoing basis, have consulted with, advised, and recommended strategies to

entrepreneurs, small businesses, and startups within the Fort Worth community. In the process, evaluated over 50 companies for feasibility, viability, and opportunities for growth.

- Spectrum; Project Management
 - Led a nationwide customer service initiative to update and streamline Charter's call centers, managing multiple capital projects exceeding \$8 million. Directed a team of eight project managers, overseeing projects from inception to completion while ensuring they were delivered under budget and ahead of schedule, achieving an average savings of 20%. Improved financial forecasting models, enhancing oversight and accountability.
- Tiffany Greens Golf Resort; Operations and Logistics
 - Led day-to-day operations of a country club and resort, overseeing all non-golf activities and managing a team of over 30 staff. Directed strategic initiatives, financial accountability for a \$2 million budget, and operational improvements. Enhanced hiring processes, achieving a 96% retention rate, and increased overall sales by 25% while reducing expenses through proactive marketing and vendor negotiations. Developed a self-sustaining catering and restaurant operation that supported the club's broader financial success.

HONORS AND AWARDS

Exceptional Activities in Entrepreneurship Across Disciplines, Global Consortium of Entrepreneurship Centers, Fall 2025

This award honors a center dedicated to creating, advancing, and enabling entrepreneurship education opportunities to multiple audiences and units across campus. Winner displays a multidisciplinary approach, measured impact across campus, and diversity of partners and stakeholders

USASBE Ray Smilor Volunteer of the Year, United States Associations for Small Business and Entrepreneurship 2025
Presented annually to individual who has provided "exceptional service" to USASBE over the last year.

Model Emerging Program Award Top 3, United States Association for Small Business and Entrepreneurship, Winter 2024 and 2025

The USASBE Model Emerging Program Award recognizes colleges and universities for their efforts in developing nascent entrepreneurship programs that demonstrate outstanding progress towards becoming comprehensive, bold, and innovative educational programs with early records of student impact

Outstanding Contributions to Venture Creation Winner, Values and Ventures Program, Global Consortium of Entrepreneurship Centers, Fall 2020

This award recognizes the top program in the world that creatively supports the process of launching and accelerating university-affiliated startups.

Bobby J. Bizzel Award for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, Southwest Business Deans' Association, Summer 2017

The Bobby G. Bizzell Innovative Achievement Award recognizes business programs and individuals who have demonstrated innovation and excellence in student programming. The award focuses on aspects such as curriculum design, teaching, program development, outreach, and administration.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

"How a Solo Founder Could be a Unicorn." Global Consortium of Entrepreneurship Centers Annual Conference, October 2025.

“Conference Hall to Statewide Impact: How GCEC inspired TUNIE’s 17-year legacy of Collaboration in Texas.” Global Consortium of Entrepreneurship Centers Annual Conference, October 2025.

“Engaging with Entrepreneurship Centers, Institutes and Communities” Panel Discussion, Doctorial Consortium, United States Association for Small Business and Entrepreneurship Annual Conference, February 2025.

“Sports Entrepreneurship: More than just NIL” Panel Discussion, United States Association for Small Business and Entrepreneurship Annual Conference, February 2025.

“Developing off-ramps for graduates and recent alumni: Perspectives from faculty and directors” Panel Discussion, United States Association for Small Business and Entrepreneurship Annual Conference, February 2025.

“Empowering Tomorrow's Entrepreneurs through CTE and Summer Camps” Panel Discussion, Global consortium of Entrepreneurship Centers Annual Conference, November 2024.

“Access to Finance & Funding” Panel Discussion, Governor’s Small Business Summit, June 2024.

“Empowering Entrepreneurs: Utilizing university-based resources for community engagement,” IMPACT Annual Conference, February 2024.

“Awards Panel | Model Emerging Entrepreneurship Program Award,” United States Association for Small Business and Entrepreneurship Annual Conference, January 2024.

“Empowering Entrepreneurs: University-Based Business Accelerators and Community Engagement,” Texas Downtown Association Annual Conference, October 2023.

“The New Era of Student Venture Competitions,” Global Consortium for Entrepreneurship Centers Annual Conference, October 2022.

“Unveiling of the Top University Competitions and panel discussion,” Times of Entrepreneurship, Challenges Met, Opportunities Ahead Conference, January 2022.

“Financial Implications of a Pandemic,” Texas University Network of Innovation and Entrepreneurship Conference, November 2020.

“Reshaping Entrepreneurship Education in a Virtual Environment,” Texas University Network of Innovation and Entrepreneurship Conference, October 2020.

“Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Entrepreneurship,” Texas University Network of Innovation and Entrepreneurship Conference, September 2020.

“Creating Win-Win Relationships between Centers/Institutes and Student Entrepreneurship Clubs,” Global Consortium for Entrepreneurship Centers Annual Conference, September 2019.

“Effectively Using and Leveraging Your Business Plan,” The Collegiate Entrepreneurs’ Organization, National Conference, November 2018.

“Networking Preparation, Competition Congruency, and the Ultimate PDC Competition,” Phi Kappa Psi Professional Development Conference, September 2018.

“Entrepreneurship Competitions & Managing Multi-Semester Projects,” Global Consortium for Entrepreneurship Centers Annual Conference, October 2017.

“Personal Brand Development and Strategies for Success,” Phi Kappa Psi Professional Development Conference, September 2017.

“Entrepreneurship Competitions: What Works Well, What Doesn’t and Where Are They Headed,” Global Consortium for Entrepreneurship Centers Annual Conference, September 2016.

PODCASTS and PUBLICATIONS

Spann, Jeremy, host. “Why You Don't Need the Next Big Business Idea,” Winning Strategies Playbook, 28 Dec. 2021 <https://player.captivate.fm/episode/2ddd3be4-055e-4dd2-b04c-72ca7b2ae4e9>.

“Undergraduate Business Competitions,” published on *TrustedPeer Entrepreneurship*, 2018.

Saltsman, Greg, host. “Generation Z Entrepreneurs – How they think about business and what you should know.” Directionally Correct, 21 Aug. 2018 <https://directionallycorrect.libsyn.com/generation-z-entrepreneurs-how-they-think-about-business-and-what-you-shoud-know>.

COMMUNITY SERVICE IN SUPPORT OF PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES

Faculty Advisor

Society for Entrepreneurial Advancement, SFA 2023-Present

Zeta Beta Tau, SFA 2024-Present

The Entrepreneurship Club, TCU 2015-2023

Collegiate Entrepreneurs Organization (CEO)

Board of Directors, 2022-present.

Global Elevator Pitch Competition Facilitator, Emcee and Moderator, 2018, 2019, 2021, 2022.

United States Association for Small Business and Entrepreneurship (USASBE)

Board of Directors, 2025-Present

Governance Committee, 2024-Present

Global Conference Planning Commission, 2021-2024.

Conference Track Chair, Programing 2025 Annual Conference

Texas University Network for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (TUNIE)

Board of Directors, 2015-Present.

Annual Conference Host 2020 and 2024

AccelerateDFW Board of Directors

Executive Committee, 2016-February 2023.

Rising Tide Initiative

Board of Directors, 2016-Present.

The Principled Entrepreneurship Institute

Advisory Board, 2019-Present.

Catalyst Partners

Advisory Board Chairman, 2015-Present.

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

- Global Consortium of Entrepreneurship Centers
- United States Association for Small Business and Entrepreneurship
- International Council for Small Business
- International Business Innovation Association
- Texas University Network of Innovation and Entrepreneurship

PERSONAL PROSPECTIVE

- **Proud Father** of two amazing daughters Natalie (14) and Samantha (8)
- **Avid Flyfisher** who loves being on the water casting for rainbows, browns and cutthroats