

## Alta Resources, UW Oshkosh College of Business partner in Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation

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<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/33326/alta-resources-pledges-funding-resources-to-uw-oshkosh-college-of-business-center-for-entrepreneurship-and-innovation/>

The next social-media tycoon or manufacturing innovator may very well be a University of Wisconsin Oshkosh student.

To encourage aspiring students to chase their career- and business-development dreams, Neenah-based Alta Resources is pledging funding support to UW Oshkosh, which will enable budding entrepreneurs to launch their new-business ventures.

UW Oshkosh announced an agreement with Alta Resources on April 30, which will support the UW Oshkosh Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation; the Center will become the Alta Resources Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation (CEI).

At UW Oshkosh, the Alta Resources CEI is housed within the College of Business Small Business Development Center (SBDC).

“This is a natural fit, as Alta Resources is an entrepreneurial company. We were founded in the spirit of entrepreneurship, so to be able to extend that same opportunity to tomorrow’s business leaders is a tremendous privilege,” said Jim Beré, chairman and chief executive officer at Alta Resources. “We are excited about becoming the naming sponsor of the Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, together with its leaders and partners, to further progress students’ business aspirations.”

### **In the news...**

The Alta Resources CEI is on a mission to inspire, educate and develop entrepreneurial leaders through world-class education, cutting-edge research and applied preparation, mentorship and public recognition.

“Alta Resources’ tremendous support will connect our students to successful practices, entrepreneurs and business owners like never before,” said Colleen Merrill, director of SBDC and executive director of Alta Resources CEI at UW Oshkosh. “They will be able to better develop business ideas and launch companies in our region and state. We see our collaborative efforts helping create new, cutting-edge businesses and jobs, right in our backyard. Students of all disciplines and majors will learn and grow; as they benefit, so, too, will our economy.”

Alta Resources is a leading provider of customer management business process outsourcing for global, Fortune 500 companies in various industries, particularly consumer-packaged goods, healthcare and insurance and entertainment. Beyond its financial donation, Alta Resources’ leaders will provide

mentorship and networking opportunities for students at UW Oshkosh.

Lisa Schulze, vice president of human resources at Alta Resources, said collaboration between UW Oshkosh and Alta Resources is long-standing. Over the years, Alta Resources has hired many UW Oshkosh alumni and students, helping keep UW Oshkosh graduates in the New North region. This collaboration furthers Alta Resources' commitment to UW Oshkosh and serves to create awareness of Alta Resources as a great place to build a career, Schulze said.

“Supporting this new program is fitting because it gives students access to real-world business experience, as well as the leadership and skills development necessary in today’s business landscape. Ultimately, this is about fostering the opportunity for students to pursue their ideas and, in doing so, to learn and grow,” Schulze said.

### **Public-private collaboration makes entrepreneurial hub on UW Oshkosh campus a reality**

The Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) is additionally providing a \$97,000 grant to the Alta Resources CEI; WEDC joins with several other New North-based companies in supplying funding and expertise.

Reed Hall, secretary and CEO of WEDC, said the partnership is a model for the type of public-private initiatives necessary to catalyze communities, the region and the state to create new jobs and spur economic growth.

“This initiative is a great example of how the business community, the University and the state can work together to take the ideas and innovations developed at UW Oshkosh out of the classrooms and labs, and transform them into businesses that will ultimately generate more jobs for the region,” Hall said.

J.J. Keller, Faith Technologies and Jay Manufacturing have also pledged financial and mentoring support to UW Oshkosh for the Alta Resources CEI.

### **How the Alta Resources CEI works**

Merrill said the Alta Resources CEI’s first cohort of students is made up of 12 teams, consisting of students from various colleges and disciplines throughout UW Oshkosh. Participating students are at several different phases of their educational journeys and are pursuing an array of majors.

“The Alta Resources CEI is accessible to all students on the UW Oshkosh campus who want to start, grow or develop a business,” Merrill said. “We have received such a favorable response and welcome reception that interest is already growing to extend the program to other campuses.”

Student-entrepreneurs involved with the Alta Resources CEI are given several UW Oshkosh resources to successfully launch and run their business ideas, depending on the stage of development they are at with those ideas. The benefits include the following: desk space in the SBDC for one year; mentorship and advisement from SBDC counselors; one-on-one support and guidance from College of Business faculty and staff, as well as local and regional business executives; and access to all other resources within the Alta Resources CEI.

“The goal really is to help students learn the process?to have students understand business development so they can validate and test their ideas before investing time or money into them,” Merrill said.

“Additionally, we’re trying to create an entrepreneur-business community, which will serve as an outlet for learning for our students.”

Merrill said student-entrepreneurs at any stage of their business plans or launches are encouraged to apply for and utilize the program. While many of the resources via the Alta Resources CEI are already available to UW Oshkosh students, the second cohort will formally begin in spring 2015.

Learn more:

- [PHOTO GALLERY: Alta Resources Center for Entrepreneurship an Innovation unveling](#)
- [Alta Resources Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation](#)
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