

Contact: Diana Gonzalez

**REQUEST FOR A CENTER NAME CHANGE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA:
FROM UNI REGIONAL BUSINESS CENTER TO
UNI CENTER FOR BUSINESS GROWTH AND INNOVATION**

Action Requested: Consider recommending approval of the request by the University of Northern Iowa to change the name of the UNI Regional Business Center to the UNI Center for Business Growth and Innovation.

Executive Summary: The proposed center name change will align the Center's activities and objectives with a more appropriate title. This request has been reviewed by the Board Office and is recommended for approval. This request addresses the Board of Regents Strategic Plan priority to pursue "educational excellence and impact" and Goal #8 – "Iowa's public universities and special schools shall be increasingly efficient and effective."

Background:

- ◇ **Description of Center.** The UNI Regional Business Center (RBC) is a program of Business and Community Services, a division of the College of Business Administration. It serves entrepreneurs and small business owners throughout the state of Iowa and hosts the following programs:
 - ⇒ **UNI Business Incubation Services.** Two business incubators are located on the UNI campus, the Innovation Incubator and Purple Cat CoWork. Tenants are provided fee-based professional space and a comprehensive array of market research services, business guidance, administrative support, financial management software, student support, and educational/networking opportunities. More than 60 businesses have graduated from UNI business incubators.
 - ⇒ **UNI Small Business Development Center.** This is one of 15 regional centers in Iowa dedicated to providing quality technical assistance and training to business owners across a nine county region in eastern Iowa, including Black Hawk, Bremer, Butler, Buchanan, Chickasaw, Fayette, Grundy, Howard, and Tama counties. The UNI SBDC serves an average of 300 business owners each year with technical assistance and business training at low or no cost.
 - ⇒ **MyEntre.Net** This statewide entrepreneurship support system consists of an online community for Iowa small business owners together with resources to help Iowa communities support entrepreneurial development. It has engaged approximately 14,000 small business owners online at www.myentre.net and serves communities statewide with entrepreneurship economic development training, collaborative networking events, and shared technology resources. Some of the technical resources include the Dream Big Grow Here contest, twice monthly webinars, the Business Concierge, and a comprehensive resource guide for Iowa startups. In partnership with the Iowa Economic Development Authority, the MyEntre.Net database and staff expertise have been expanded into IASourceLink.com, one of the most comprehensive information resources for entrepreneurs in the nation.

- ⇒ Advance Iowa. This is Iowa's economic gardening program with a focus on second stage companies with 10-100 employees that seek extensive technical assistance to realize growth. The concept of economic gardening is to grow your own jobs in a community or region.¹

- ◇ Reason for proposed name change. The Regional Business Center identifies needs within the small business community and offers programs that support both the individual business owner and the overall entrepreneurial ecosystem. Starting as a regional center for the Small Business Development Center, the RBC has enjoyed exceptional growth and expansion beyond the Cedar Valley; it now serves as an asset within the state and throughout the country to continue to build, grow, and promote entrepreneurship and business development. The current name does not adequately reflect the expanded purpose and mission of the center.

- ◇ Consistency with College and institutional mission. The RBC mission is to serve the needs of the communities and businesses in Iowa and beyond, while providing experiential learning and entrepreneurial opportunities for students which is consistent with the mission of the College of Business Administration and the university. The Center employs the intellectual strength, practical knowledge and business expertise of faculty members, professional staff, and students to advance academic and managerial productivity while enabling economic and entrepreneurial innovation in Iowa. The proposed name change reflects the outreach and service intent of the Center's mission.

- ◇ Effect on students. Approximately six students serve the Center each year through paid internships. The proposed name change will be positive for the students when they apply for positions that require relevant business and entrepreneurial experiences by more appropriately reflecting the nature of their internships.

- ◇ Effect on resources. Approximately \$2,000 will be needed to change signage, update marketing materials, websites, stationery, and business cards. The Center will promote the name change through press releases, a press conference, and social media.

- ◇ Date of implementation. The proposed name change will become effective upon approval by the Board of Regents.

¹ www.advanceiowa.com.