

Contact: Ann McCarthy

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PRESENTATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA -  
“EDA UNIVERSITY CENTER - SUPPORTING ENTREPRENEURSHIP ACROSS IOWA”**

**Action Requested:** Receive the presentation.

**Executive Summary:** Entrepreneurship has been widely acknowledged as a key economic development strategy for communities of all sizes. However, few communities possess the capacity to encourage new startups and nurture emerging businesses in a way that achieves substantial economic growth. The University of Northern Iowa’s (UNI) Business and Community Services division was designated as an Economic Development Administration (EDA) University Center in 2013 and focuses on enhancing the support system for entrepreneurship development in six Iowa regions over a five year project period. These efforts are led by two programs within UNI, the Institute for Decision Making and the Regional Business Center.

UNI has long been recognized for its efforts to support entrepreneurship and small business growth across Iowa. For each of the past three years, high-level recognition has been received from the International Economic Development Council (IEDC) and the University Economic Development Association (UEDA). The IEDC and UEDA awards have recognized UNI programs such as Dream Big Grow Here, MyEntre.Net and the Business Concierge. The EDA University Center program is the next stage in developing and supporting entrepreneurial regions across the state.

Presenter LaDene Bowen serves as associate director of the Institute for Decision Making (IDM) at the University of Northern Iowa, a community and economic development technical assistance program. Bowen has consulted hundreds of communities in all aspects of economic development and trained more than 1,800 new professionals in economic development. The scope of Bowen’s professional involvement and leadership reaches from IDM and Iowa communities to the International Economic Development Council (IEDC), where she served on the Board of Directors for 12 years and continues to be active on IEDC advisory committees.

Beyond LaDene Bowen’s contributions to professional economic development education is her dedication to young women entering the economic development field. Bowen has personally mentored and guided more than 50 young women as they enter the profession and outlined a path to advance their careers. Bowen earned her CEcD designation in 1993 and in 2005 was recognized by IEDC as a Fellow (FM) for her outstanding service to the field of economic development.