

# UTU Vision on Entrepreneurial University

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## On the Agenda

- The Entrepreneurial University – What and Why?
- The Entrepreneurial University – How? Case UTU
- Experiences of the Entrepreneurial University  
– Reflections from Faculty



# The Entrepreneurial University – What and why?



# Motivation for the Entrepreneurial University

- *Entrepreneurialism* has become a common ideology in Europe and elsewhere, and entrepreneurship as an engine for economic growth and employment is a largely accepted catchphrase both in research and in policy.
  - Universities are increasingly suggested to play *an enhanced role in economic competitiveness*, and they are urged to become more effective, dynamic, responsive and business-like organizations.
  - At the same time, the *prominence of knowledge, expansion of education, concurrent need for its diversification and declining public funding* are a few examples of societal changes affecting universities.

⇒ **Entrepreneurship has become visible, even prominent element in universities' activities.**

⇒ **Entrepreneurial University equals a modern university; as such, it is seen as both a goal and a characteristic of an active, receptive contemporary university.**



# Defining the Entrepreneurial University

- The concept and phenomenon of an *entrepreneurial university* was introduced over two decades ago in addressing universities' changing role and growing importance in society (e.g. Clark 1998; Etzkowitz 1998).
- The entrepreneurial university expands the role and activities of a university: the traditional tasks of teaching and research are complemented by *the third task of social and economic development*.
- Despite the burgeoned research, the concept of an entrepreneurial university remains diverse, ambiguous, and lacking a consensus definition.
- Typically, research provides functional and structural models of/for an entrepreneurial university.



# The Entrepreneurial University – How? Case UTU



# Towards an Entrepreneurial University

- Entrepreneurship has had a specific role in UTU
  - Entrepreneurship education and research, especially in the Turku School of Economics
  - Brahea Centre – *Innovation and Business Creation Study Module* (25 ECTS), e-ship courses
  - Faculty of Medicine – research commercialization, collaboration with businesses
  - Bits and pieces here and there
- 2016 Strategic commitment to entrepreneurship: an *Entrepreneurial University*
  - Objective: promote entrepreneurial thinking and activities throughout the entire university
  - Systematic mapping and review of existing activities related to entrepreneurship
  - Launch of new initiatives and activities: courses, programmes, events
  - Resource allocation, new positions
  - Organized marketing and communications: <https://www.yrittajyysyliopisto.fi/in-english/>





# Strategy 2021-2030 of UTU: Enhancing Entrepreneurship and Business Collaboration



**EDUCATION** - UTU graduates have the ability to create work for themselves and others.

- Expanding students' entrepreneurial mindset and activities. Developing both field-specific and general entrepreneurship studies.
- Increasing the personnel's competence and preparedness to offer entrepreneurial education by providing personnel training.

**RESEARCH** – UTU researchers are able to commercialize their inventions and expertise.

- Supporting the development, protection, commercialization, and utilization of research-based inventions and other innovations. Improving researchers' competence in innovation activities by providing personnel training in e.g. immaterial property rights and productization of expertise.

**PARTNERSHIPS** – UTU collaborates with business life to create opportunities for new innovations and their commercialization as well as business development.

- Strengthening business collaboration and increasing incentives for joint research projects with companies. Highlighting the mutual added value of corporate collaboration.



# UTU as an Entrepreneurial University – Recognition

University of Turku earned ACEEU international accreditation in 2022 as a recognition for entrepreneurial activities and societal impact. The accreditation is a sign that the university provides entrepreneurial training, supports members of the university community in entrepreneurial activities, and produces research with a high potential for commercialization.



# ACEEU Accreditation



# Experiences of the Entrepreneurial University – Reflections from Faculty

Based on my PhD thesis: *Making Sense of the Entrepreneurial University – A Social Constructionist View*  
<https://www.utupub.fi/handle/10024/153921>



# Why Study Entrepreneurial Universities?

- **The theme is a hot potato**
  - Despite the growing pressure, entrepreneurship is not considered a likely counterpart for a university; instead, the two are often seen as contrasting worlds.
- **New, more nuanced perspectives are needed**
  - Prior research has concentrated on framing the entrepreneurial university from functional and structural perspectives. It is normative and entrenched.
- **Bridging polarized discussions and focus on what is in-between**
  - Mainstream research provides either a positive and idealized or instead a sceptical picture of the entrepreneurial university.



# About the Research

- A critical stance towards the mainstream research of the entrepreneurial university.
  - The entrepreneurial university is studied from intra-organizational and individual perspectives, by giving voice to university faculty in understanding and shaping the entrepreneurial university.
- The research was conducted in the University of Turku
  - In the Finnish context, UTU has been one of the pioneers in its entrepreneurial activities and attempts.
  - UTU has a strategic commitment to entrepreneurship and it has been branded as an Entrepreneurial University.
  - Research material was gathered among six heterogeneous groups across UTU.

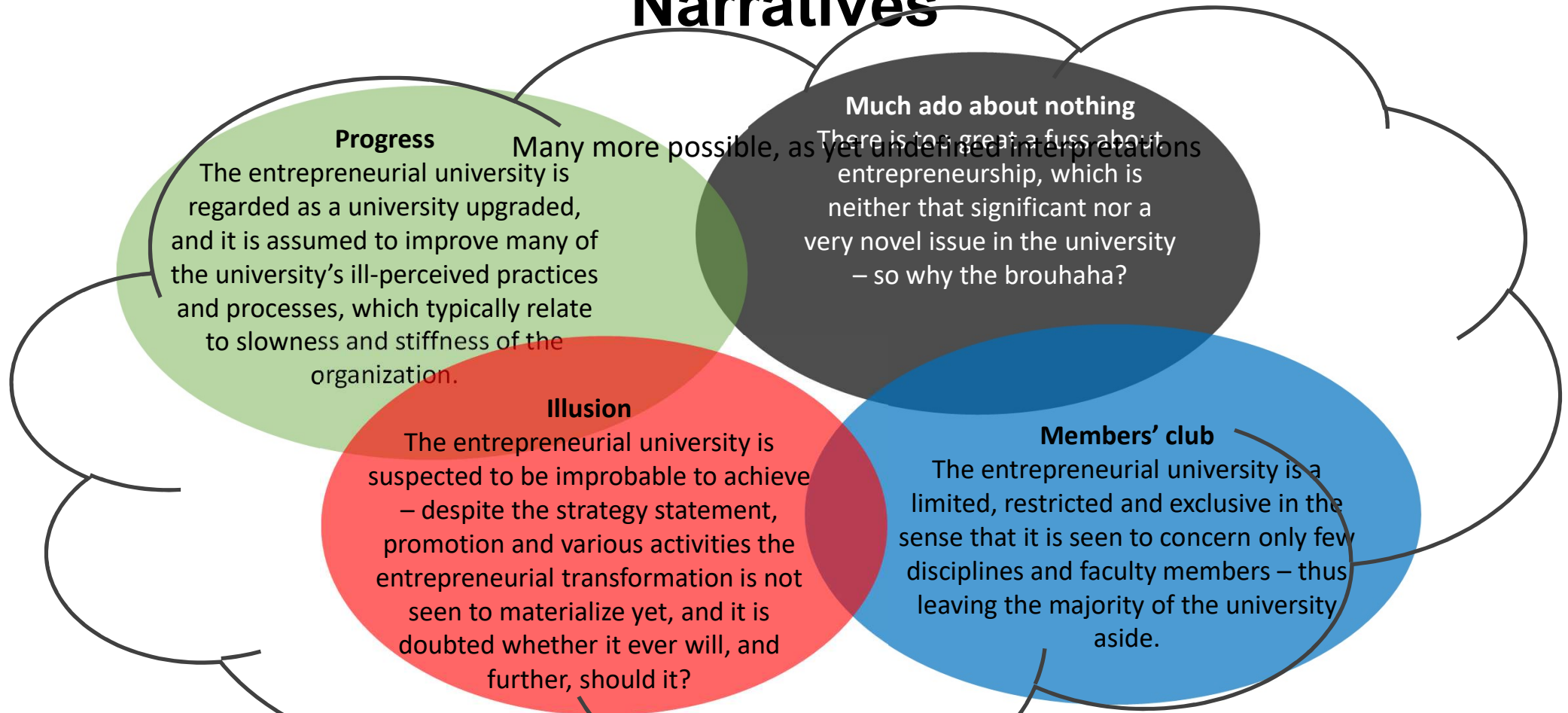


# Six Stories of Entrepreneurial University

- Each story provides an individual setting among university faculty as they discuss and negotiate entrepreneurship in the university context.
- The six stories depict varied snapshots and reflections attached to entrepreneurship across the university – and together, they provide a wider and versatile overview of the entrepreneurial university phenomenon.
- The entrepreneurial university is a complex, ambiguous and contextual phenomenon.
  - It is a rich, layered and contested field with multiple tensions.
  - It includes interpretations of *entrepreneurship, negotiation about a university, reflection on the everyday work at the university and a critical consideration of the strategic vision of the university.*



# Entrepreneurial University Narratives





# smart Observations from the Inside



- UTU's strategic commitment to entrepreneurship is recognized and generally accepted.
- There is variation whether entrepreneurship is considered conceptually relevant and meaningful in the university context, and to what extent and how it can and should be applied there.
- Issues of concern:
  - The Entrepreneurial University might be restrictive – who can join? On what grounds?
  - Will the university become merely as a manufacturer of entrepreneurs?
  - Is entrepreneurship a sidetrack? Will there be a stigma that dilutes one's academic credibility?
- Issues of opportunity:
  - Entrepreneurial elements can be a positive factor in work: a possibility to widen and diversify one's academic career.
  - Branding as an Entrepreneurial University may have potential for UTU to stand out among other universities.





# What Could Be Done More Or Better for Entrepreneurship? 1/3

- **Entrepreneurship is a versatile phenomenon** – it should be embraced!
  - Entrepreneurship cannot be compressed into one neat definition.
  - Different interpretations should be taken into account.
  - The university's entrepreneurship strategy should be wide and flexible enough to be able to include the variety of interpretations  
-> there can be many 'Entrepreneurial Universities'.



# What Could Be Done More Or Better for Entrepreneurship? 2/3

- **Let's focus on people** – university faculty are the key to the entrepreneurial transformation.
  - UTU has 'entrepreneurialized' many functions and activities: since the launch of the entrepreneurial strategy, different courses, programmes and events related to entrepreneurship have been initiated.
  - BUT university faculty have a critical and underrecognized role whether the transformation materializes and to what extent the university becomes entrepreneurial.
- **University faculty need to be engaged** and they should be **heard**.
  - 'Stories from the field' provide a perspective that is more nuanced and aligned with the internal and contextual aspects.
  - There is already a lot of entrepreneurialism across the university, but it doesn't necessarily apply to (the narrow & mainstream interpretation of) entrepreneurship.

# What Could Be Done More Or Better for Entrepreneurship? 3/3

- Entrepreneurial University is **not a determinate, axiomatic evolutionary phase** that universities automatically arrive at.
  - It is a controversial phenomenon that concerns the university at large.
  - Transformation takes time, effort and adjustment – it requires both bottom-up and top-down approaches.
  - It is important to have a meaningful, engaging and concrete roadmap for entrepreneurial transformation, and it should be an active tool.



# Thank you for your attention!

## Questions? Comments?

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