



# Supporting the entrepreneurial potential of higher education

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## 1 Kozminski University, Poland: Developing minds for ambitious entrepreneurship and training teachers at other universities

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## Abstract



*Kozminski University (KU) is a Polish private business and law school established in 1993. It has 5,300 students and a leading position in management education in Poland as well as Central and Eastern Europe. KU offers curricular entrepreneurship education for Bachelor, Master and PhD degrees. Most offers are for BA students in Management with a Major in Entrepreneurship. While KU had been offering entrepreneurship courses since its early years, since 2004 the University has embarked on promoting ambitious entrepreneurship among students. This proved to be a fruitful direction but necessitated reshaping minds and attitudes of students and teachers, shifting their focus away from small-scale establishments to business ventures with growth ambitions. Such a shift turned out to be challenging: the pool of students with the right mindset for ambitious entrepreneurship was so far found to be limited at KU itself. However, KU established links with students from other universities in the region and country and from non-business academic disciplines in extra-curricular activities. In these activities it was particularly fruitful for the quality of business projects to mix students from various disciplines like business management, engineering, agriculture and arts. KU also initiated a programme for training entrepreneurship lecturers from other higher education institutions who in turn introduced entrepreneurship courses in 40 non-business universities in Poland. KU's experiences in entrepreneurship education and lessons learned may be particularly relevant for "catching up" higher education institutions with limited prior experience in teaching entrepreneurship. It may be important for the transferability of such experiences that a substantial part of teaching materials is already available in written form.*

## Case study fact sheet

■ Full name of the university and location:	Akademia Leona Koźmińskiego (Kozminski University)
■ Legal status:	Private higher education institution
■ Location:	Warsaw, Poland
■ Year of foundation:	1993
■ Number of students:	5,300
■ Number of employees:	Total 361, of which teaching and research staff: 211, administrative staff: 150.
■ Budget in most recent financial year:	66.8 mln PLN (15.9 mln euro 57. mln PLN (13.8 mln Euro) Financial year ending 30.09.2013
■ Academic profile:	Business and law school
■ Entrepreneurial profile:	Developing skills and attitudes of students towards ambitious forms of entrepreneurship. Disseminating know-how in teaching entrepreneurship among non-business HEIs in Poland. Initiating programmes supporting ambitious entrepreneurship in the Mazovia Region and Warsaw Metropolitan Area.
■ Activities focused in this case study:	Developing minds for ambitious entrepreneurship and interactions with other higher education institutions
■ Case contact person(s):	Prof. Jerzy Cieślak, Kozminski University

Information included in this case study is from end of year 2014 unless stated differently.



## 1.1 The university's entrepreneurial profile

### 1.1.1 The university's overall approach to entrepreneurship education

#### Key characteristics of EE at Kozminski University

The "entrepreneurial orientation" of Kozminski University (KU) is deeply rooted in its history. The university was established in Warsaw in 1993 as part of an entrepreneurial revolution in the higher education system in Poland. After the collapse of the communist system in 1989, over 350 private HEIs have been established in addition to an existing, approximately 100, public universities. KU has been offering courses about entrepreneurship since its early years. The Chair of Entrepreneurship exists since the inception of Kozminski University. KU has two specialties in entrepreneurship education (EE): firstly, focusing on ambitious entrepreneurship rather than small business. KU shifted to this focus in 2004. Secondly, KU extends this focus also to other universities in the Warsaw region, and KU plays a key role in training entrepreneurship teachers all over Poland.

#### Publicity of the Kozminski case

The case of EE at Kozminski University (KU) is well-known in Poland, particularly through KU's outreach to other universities. It may also be known in other Eastern European countries. However, Kozminski University has not yet received considerable attention in Western Europe. This is changing gradually as a result of a policy to obtain international accreditations. At the end of 2014, Kozminski University was listed among those universities worldwide which obtained the three most prestigious accreditations.<sup>1</sup>

### 1.1.2 Leadership and governance

#### Importance of government strategies

Although being a private institution, governmental strategies had profound impact on KU's operations and also on EE. Responding to governmental requirements, KU broadened its teaching and outreach programmes to be more strongly related to research and publications in international journals. This also applied to EE.

#### Importance of EE in the university's strategy

The new university was initially registered under the name Academy of Management and Entrepreneurship which reflected an orientation on training both managers of large corporations and entrepreneurs. Later the university changed its name to Kozminski University (Akademia Leona Koźmińskiego) to give credit to its patron and late Professor Leon Koźminski but also to reflect a broader scope of education offers including sociology, psychology and law.

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<sup>1</sup> From AACSB, the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, based in Tampa, Florida, US; AMBA, the Association of MBAs, based in London; and EQUIS, European Quality Improvement System, based in Brussels.



Entrepreneurship is deeply rooted in the university's culture. Although it is not specifically mentioned in the KU's mission statement, entrepreneurship is crucial in the implementation of four of six strategic programmes implemented during 2011 – 2016:

- Strengthening the position in academic **research**: Entrepreneurship and innovation has been identified as a research field where KU has a good chance to narrow the distance to leading academic institutions worldwide.
- Internationalisation and worldwide **brand reception**: KU has been recognised as a leader in entrepreneurship education in Poland, participating in various pan-European initiatives. This contributes to the international recognition of KU's brand.
- High level of **student satisfaction**: The surveys on KU students' entrepreneurial background and attitudes (most recently from 2013) showed that 50% either have family business roots or run their own firm. Therefore, for KU students it is important to obtain not only basic techniques of new venture creation but also practical knowledge on how to grow existing firms.
- Development of long-term **relationships with industry** and community: Polish higher education institutions are generally criticised for their weak ties with the business sector. By establishing such links with entrepreneurs in the Mazovia Region a region in mid-north-eastern Poland with Warsaw as its centre, KU seeks to stand at the forefront of positive changes in that respect.

### **Extent of high level commitment to implementing entrepreneurship education**

The generally favourable attitude of university leadership towards entrepreneurship is reflected in an interview given by KU rector Prof. Witold Bielecki on the occasion of ending the project "Warsaw, the Capital of Ambitious Business" (2009 – 2011): "Entrepreneurs are people who climb the hill. But after reaching the top they quickly get bored and look for another challenge. They are addicted to continuously climbing up. The role of KU is to teach our students the techniques of climbing up, particularly when the slope is steep." Bielecki specialises in information supplies and operations management, and published a book and several articles on the application of internet-based simulation games in teaching entrepreneurship.

### **Level of faculties' and units' autonomy to act and organisational implementation**

Teaching, research and extra-curricular activities in the field of entrepreneurship are subject to laws and regulations issued by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of Poland, as well as the statute and detailed regulations of the Senate and the Rector of KU. Within this framework, the KU's faculty has substantial autonomy in designing entrepreneurship courses and conducting extra-curricular activities.

## **1.1.3 Resources: people and financial capacity**

### **Human resources for entrepreneurship education**

The core staff involved in entrepreneurship education at Kozminski University is composed of six experts with diverse backgrounds. Occasionally, lecturers from other departments are invited to run specialist courses. At the same time, practitioners are often invited as guest speakers.



## Financial resources for entrepreneurship education

The delivery of the core entrepreneurship curricula is covered within the general budget of KU. Basic coaching of KU students is also undertaken by the lecturers without additional pay. When it comes to specialised training and mentoring, the entrepreneurship team is expected to demonstrate an entrepreneurial approach in seeking additional funding. During 2007 – 2014, the most important sources were EU structural funds, grants from the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, and the Polish National Science Foundation.

## 1.2 Entrepreneurship in curricula and teaching

### 1.2.1 Overview about curricular offers

The key target group in entrepreneurship education at KU are **Bachelor** of Arts (BA) students in Management who opted for a Major in Entrepreneurship. The majority of courses listed in Exhibit 1-1 are primarily offered to that group. However, many courses which are compulsory for BA Entrepreneurship Major students are also offered as electives for other BA, as well as Master of Arts (MA) students. At the **MA level** there are dedicated courses which attempt to address the interests of MA students specialising in various aspects of management, finance, economics, and administration. There is one general course for MA students dealing with macroeconomic aspects of entrepreneurship.

At **PhD level** the entrepreneurship offer includes two courses. One deals with methodological issues in researching about entrepreneurship. The second is a dedicated workshop during which students learn how to use tools and approaches developed in the field of entrepreneurship, which would make working on their PhD thesis more efficient.

*Exhibit 1-1: Overview about prominent curricular EE offers at Kozminski University*

No.	Name, degree	Objectives	Target groups	Offered since [year]	No. of participants in 2013/14
<b>Bachelor level</b>					
1	Principles of Entrepreneurship (BA)	Introducing core concept of entrepreneurship	All BA students in Management	2013	310
2	New Venture Creation (BA)	Introduction to starting own business	ENT Major* students	1995	110
3	Family Business Development (BA)	Introductory course on family business	ENT Major students	2003	110
4	Project Workshop on Family Business Development (BA)	Dedicated programme for students with family business roots	ENT Major students	2012	10
5	Regional and Local Dimensions of Entrepreneurship (BA)	Understanding local dimensions of entrepreneurship and links between entrepreneurial community and local administration	ENT Major students	2007	30
6	Entrepreneurial Networks (BA)	Exploring the networking potential for small firms	ENT Major students	2007	30



7	Sociology in Entrepreneurship (BA)	Specialized course focusing on sociological aspects of entrepreneurship	MA students (Specialization Sociology in Management)	2011	35
<b>Master level</b>					
8	New Venture Financing (BA, MA)	Identifying sources of finance for start-ups	ENT Major as well as MA students in Management and Finance	2000	40
9	International Entrepreneurship (BA, MA)	Preparing prospective entrepreneurs for going international	ENT Major as well as MA students in Management and Economics	2005	80
10	Internet-based Entrepreneurship (BA, MA)	Focus on small firms relying on Internet technologies	ENT Major as well as MA students in Management	2007	40
11	Entrepreneurial Marketing (BA, MA)	Focus on marketing techniques in young and small firms	ENT Major as well as MA students in Management	2008	40
12	Creativity and Innovativeness (BA, MA)	Workshop aimed at developing creative thinking in business	ENT Major as well as MA students in Management	2008	110
13	Entrepreneurship and New Venture Development (MA)	Basis entrepreneurship course MA level	MA students in Management who did not attend entrepreneurship courses at BA level.	1998	40
14	Entrepreneurship and Economic Development (MA)	Basic macroeconomic course on the role of entrepreneurship in economic development	MA students in Management and Economics	2011	120
15	Entrepreneur and Entrepreneurship (MA)	Introductory course on entrepreneurship	MA students in Administration	2009	20
16	Small Enterprise Consulting (MA)	Focusing on building consulting skills for small business	MA students in Management (Specialisation Management Consulting)	2009	20
<b>Doctoral level</b>					
17	Researching Entrepreneurship (PhD)	Presenting research methods and sources of data while researching small firms	PhD students in Management and Economics	2010	25
18	PhD as an Entrepreneurial Project (PhD)	Dedicated workshop on improving of writing PhD thesis with entrepreneurship tools and approaches.	PhD students in Management and Economics	2010	25

\* ENT Major – BA students in Management with Major in Entrepreneurship

Source: Kozminski University

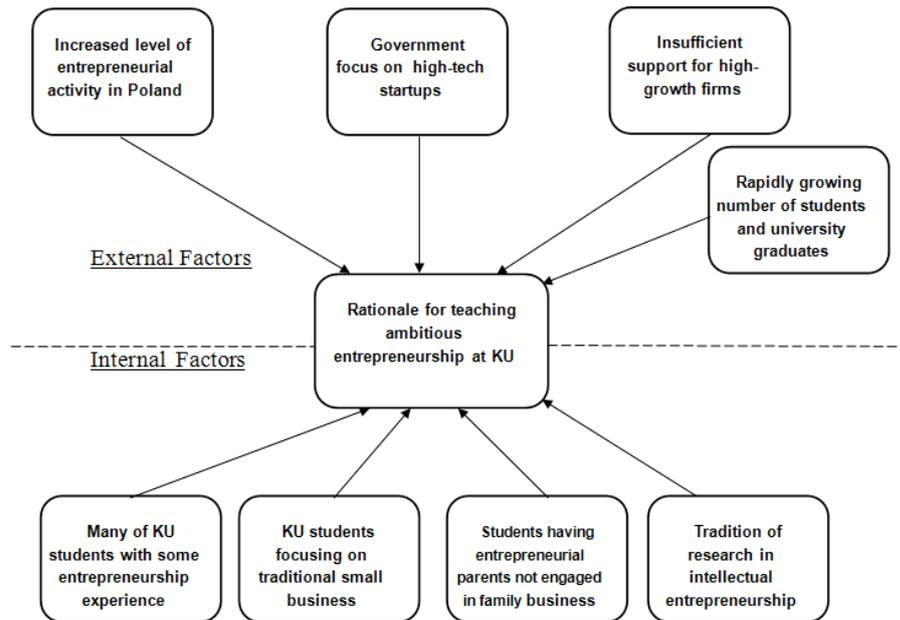


## 1.2.2 Origins and operationalisation of teaching ambitious entrepreneurship at KU

### External and internal environment

The decision to extend entrepreneurship programmes for KU students to a particular focus on ambitious business undertakings was the result of both external and internal factors, as shown in Exhibit 1-2. They are elaborated in the following descriptions.

*Exhibit 1-2: Factors leading to KU's specialisation in ambitious entrepreneurship*



Source: Kozminski University

### External factors

With regard to external factors, there was an unprecedented **growth of entrepreneurial activities in Poland after 1989** as a result of transition from the centrally planned to the market economy system. Between 1989 and 2008, the number of active business establishments increased three-fold. Consequently, the ratio of business owners as a percent of labour force has reached the levels of countries like Germany and France (Cieřlik and van Stel, 2014).

In recent years, awareness grew among the research community and policymakers that their focus should be shifted from increasing the number of start-ups to **expanding the quality component of the Polish business sector**. At the same time, there is a discussion about moving various support measures from the central to the regional or even local level. It also became clear that the traditional dichotomy of small business versus high-tech start-ups is not sufficient as it neglects a very important category of ambitious entrepreneurs who, although not necessarily depending on high profile innovations, strive for rapid growth of turnover, employment and profits. After Poland's accession to the EU, various measures were implemented to support high-tech academic entrepreneurship, including for example, science parks, technology incubators and direct financial support. At the same time, limited effort has been made to support high-growth ventures which do not necessarily rely on sophisticated technologies.



A somewhat related factor was the **rapid increase of the number of university graduates** after 1989; it quadrupled between 1989 and 2010. This positive development paved the way for shifting the economy to a knowledge-based, innovation-driven phase. The negative result was that university graduates are currently facing difficulties to find decent employment in large corporations. This in turn shifted their attention to starting own businesses as an alternative carrier path.

### Internal factors

KU students were found to have reflected these macroeconomic trends. According to a large-scale questionnaire survey in 2013 conducted by the Chair of Entrepreneurship, only half of KU students did not have any prior business experiences. The remaining half either originated from families with business traditions or ran their own business or both. However, while taking entrepreneurship courses students typically focused on traditional self-employment business opportunities without growth ambitions, thus not requiring extensive use of knowledge and skills acquired in the course of studies.

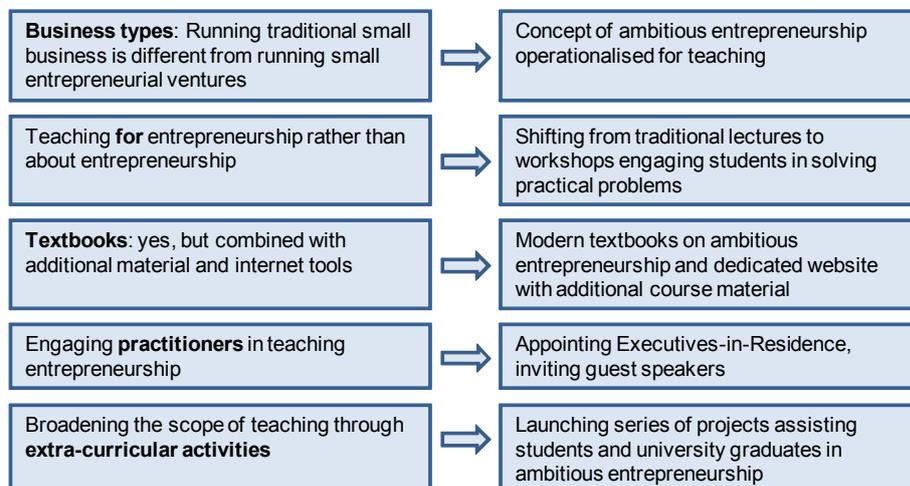
Another disquieting factor was that, although 44% of KU students originated from families with own business background, only a minority was engaged in their parents' businesses. Many students openly declared lack of interest in engaging in family business, considering employment in large corporations as a more attractive career path.

As an additional factor there is a KU tradition in research about knowledge-based entrepreneurship. Back in the 1990s, Prof. Stefan Kwiatkowski, the first Head of the Chair of Entrepreneurship, launched an international research programme in this new and promising field, resulting in a series of publications (Kwiatkowski and Edvinsson, 1999).

### Learning from international experiences

In addition to external and internal factors described in the previous section, the vast body of the accumulated international know-how and experiences in teaching entrepreneurship at the university was of crucial importance at the implementation stage. For KU as a "catching up" institution it was a natural step to tap on these resources by conducting thorough analyses of relevant experiences, particularly those of universities in the US, the UK and Scandinavia. Exhibit 1-3 explains how the study of international experiences has affected the concept of ambitious entrepreneurship teaching at KU.

*Exhibit 1-3: International experiences in teaching entrepreneurship and lessons for KU*



Source: Kozminski University



### 1.2.3 Target groups

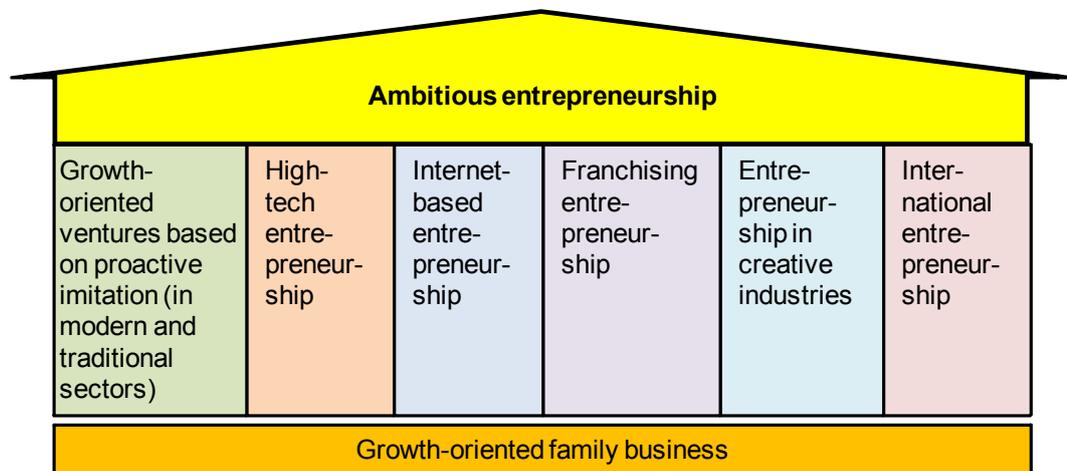
The key target group of entrepreneurship teaching at KU is BA students in Management who have chosen a Major in Entrepreneurship (see section 1.2.1 above). At the MA level, only limited entrepreneurship courses are offered. However, students can take additional courses as electives. PhD students have two specialised courses on research methods and tools.

### 1.2.4 Designing lectures and courses – basic curricular decisions

#### Objectives of EE – operationalisation of ambitious entrepreneurship for teaching

In recent years, consensus grew among entrepreneurship educators about a need to fill the gap between traditional small business and high tech entrepreneurship. Appropriate for the KU's approach is the title of a leading textbook by Katz and Green (2011), "Entrepreneurial small business". Authors of another major textbook declare that "you can be both entrepreneur and a small business owner" (Longenecker et al. 2011, p.5). In view of the lack of a widely accepted definition of ambitious entrepreneurship in academic research there was a need for a pragmatic operationalisation of this concept for entrepreneurship teaching at KU, as demonstrated in Exhibit 1-4. More specifically, KU followed a broader concept of an ambitious entrepreneur (Stam et al, 2012, p.26): An ambitious entrepreneur is someone who engages in the entrepreneurial process with the aim to create as much value as possible, which implies that KU has not focused only on high-growth or high-tech ventures.

Exhibit 1-4: Operationalisation of ambitious entrepreneurship for teaching at KU



Source: Kozminski University

The components of ambitious entrepreneurship depicted in the Exhibit are not exclusive but rather overlapping. The framework serves the designation of core and elective courses, as well as extra-curricular activities.

#### Pilot programme development

In view of the high percentage of KU students originating from families with business traditions, a dedicated pilot teaching and advisory programme was launched in 2012, named "Family Business Development". Formally it was a workshop for master students who, instead of writing a standard master thesis, prepared a detailed development plan of the business run by their parents. In addition to Prof. Jerzy Cieřlik



as workshop co-ordinator, an outside business consultant was recruited to assist students in the financial and market analysis.

Among ten students initially joining the programme, six dropped quickly. The key reason was the hesitance of their parents, small business owners, to release financial data. On the other hand the elaboration of a detailed development plan was considered by the students as more difficult and time-consuming than writing a standard master thesis. The remaining four students completed development plans and the results were encouraging. As all of their parents' businesses were small firms, development plans were the first professional financial and market analyses ever prepared. Students equipped with such documents could demonstrate to their parents the practical relevance of their knowledge accumulated in the course of study at KU.

Based on the evaluation of the results of the pilot, the consulting project "**Family Business Development**" is now being offered at the undergraduate (BA) level for students with Entrepreneurship Major. The core course "New Venture Creation" has been redesigned to focus on ambitious ventures. In addition, "Internet-based Entrepreneurship" and "International Entrepreneurship" have been included as obligatory courses whereas "Franchising" and "Entrepreneurship in Creative Sectors" became elective courses.

## Teaching methods

At the time when the ambitious entrepreneurship programme started at KU in 2004, KU EE teachers found that there was already a clear consensus among entrepreneurship educators worldwide. This consensus was that the teaching methods used should encourage active involvement of students in **solving practical problems**, which entrepreneurs are confronted with when starting a new business.

In the internet era, paper textbooks are still an important vehicle for conveying knowledge to students. However, it must be supported by additional tools and materials available electronically for students and lecturers. As a result, KU shifted from traditional lectures to workshops addressing practical issues with the use of additional didactic tools and course materials. In 2006 a modern **textbook "Ambitious Entrepreneurship"** was published in Polish (Cieślik, 2006), with subsequent editions in 2008 and 2010. Simultaneously, a **related website** was developed by the author, containing additional materials like mini-cases, videos and shortened version of the textbook in English for international students. Dedicated tools were developed in Excel for example, for evaluating business opportunities, elaborating initial business concepts and business plans, and selecting the optimal taxation regime. The website content is open to all visitors through a Creative Commons License, except some content available exclusively to entrepreneurship lecturers (e.g. PowerPoint presentations, tests, methodical notes). The exclusive content is available upon registration free of charge. The website was initially developed by Prof. J. Cieślik but with the establishment of the National Network of Academic Entrepreneurship Educators (SEIPA) (see below section 1.5) the content was moved to its current domain at SEIPA (<http://www.seipa.edu.pl>).

Kozminski University has also followed another recommendation stemming from accumulated experiences of international universities in teaching entrepreneurship, namely adding various extra curriculum activities to regular entrepreneurship courses. Specific projects and initiatives are presented in section 1.3.



## 1.2.5 Setting of entrepreneurship teaching

### Locations of EE offers

All courses for regular KU students are offered at the **KU campus in Warsaw**. Special programmes and outreach projects are also mostly offered at KU. There were various attempts to use **distant learning** which, so far, brought mixed results. With regard to training of entrepreneurship educators from other Polish universities (see 1.5.2 below) the major obstacle in conducting consultations and exchanging experiences resulted from excessive time required for travelling from distant locations. Several attempts were made to use distant learning with video-conferencing. However, this proved to be rather inefficient due to inadequate infrastructure and preference for direct contacts by the participants. At the same time, distant methods worked when providing consultations for young entrepreneurs. On implementing the Programme “Warsaw, the Capital of Ambitious Business” (see 1.3. below) an electronic platform was developed, allowing business consultants to monitor new business ventures based on core data regularly submitted by entrepreneurs online. As a result, it was sufficient to schedule face-to-face meetings only once a month.

### Timing of EE offers

Timing of entrepreneurship courses for regular KU students depends on the teaching plan adopted at university level. With respect to the extra-curricular and outreach activities, the timing depends on the availability of external funds. Sometimes this creates delays which are detrimental for efficient project implementation. For example, the experiences with the programme of training entrepreneurship educators from other Polish universities indicated the need for repeating the basic training course every second year. This is because some trained entrepreneurship educators leave the university and new staff joins. KU has been able to obtain financing from the Ministry of Science and Higher Education for the two rounds in 2007 – 2011 but could not obtain additional budget for the consecutive period.

## 1.2.6 Instructors: teachers and mentors

### EE teachers from KU

As of end-2014, the KU’s team of EE teachers consists of six experts with different fields of specialisation:

- Jerzy Cieślík, PhD, Associate Professor, Director of the Centre for Entrepreneurship, specialisation in entrepreneurship policy and ambitious entrepreneurship.
- Izabela Koładkiewicz, PhD, Associate Professor, Head of the Chair of Entrepreneurship, specialisation in family business and corporate governance.
- André van Stel, PhD, Associate Professor, specialisation in entrepreneurship and economic development as well as solo entrepreneurs.
- Svetlana Gudkova, PhD, Assistant Professor, specialisation in creativity and entrepreneurship as well as social capital and entrepreneurial networks.
- Piotr Kaczmarek-Kurczak, PhD, Assistant Professor, specialisation in entrepreneurship in creative industries, internet business, and international entrepreneurship.



- Marta Wojtyra, M.A., Teaching Assistant, specialisation in family business.

Based on international experiences of engaging practitioners in teaching entrepreneurship, Jerzy Cieřlik, former CEO and founder of Ernst & Young Poland, was appointed as full-time Professor of Entrepreneurship at Kozminski University in 2004. The scope of his duties turned out to be much broader than it would be for a typical appointment of an Entrepreneur- or Executive-in-Residence. It encompasses teaching and research but also administrative responsibilities.

Occasionally, lecturers from other departments are invited to run specialist courses.

### Guest speakers

KU frequently invites guest speakers on an ad hoc basis. There were also attempts to invite entrepreneurs as guest speakers for specific courses. Here however, the results were mixed. First, it was difficult to co-ordinate the participation of invited entrepreneurs in the regular courses due to their heavy workload. Last-minute cancellations took place. Second, the content of presentations made by entrepreneurs did not always corresponded to particular learning objectives. This latter shortcoming was partially remedied by elaborating detailed guidelines for entrepreneurship lectures on how to prepare and effectively manage the contributions of invited entrepreneurs.

## 1.2.7 Management of entrepreneurship education

### Teacher and trainer management at KU

Training of entrepreneurship educators at KU reflects, on the one hand, accumulated experiences but also some internal university regulations. When a new course is introduced, a course leader (typically professor) prepares the course materials and runs a pilot course for students in which other lecturers participate. Newly recruited teaching assistants always start with participating in a course run by an experienced lecturer. Finally, according to recently adopted university-wide regulations, Heads of Chairs are obliged to regularly inspect teaching of all staff and give their input.

### Extending ambitious entrepreneurship education to other universities

While establishing a solid base for teaching entrepreneurship at KU, several internal and external influences prompted initiatives to reach students and graduates also from other universities in Poland. The following factors were important:

- **Limited number of talented students:** Only a limited number of KU students qualify for participation in advanced extra-curricular projects. In such projects, the KU seeks to provide assistance such as training, mentoring and financial support for students to implement ambitious business projects. However, for some areas like entrepreneurship in creative sectors and technology-based entrepreneurship, many KU students were found to be simply not sufficiently equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills and talents.
- **Teaming up with other disciplines:** KU found that the key success factor in ambitious entrepreneurship is the formation of entrepreneurial teams with a diversified professional background, experiences and resources. KU is basically a business and law school. It was felt that teaming up with students in engineering, agriculture and arts studies would be beneficial.



- **Aiming for national leadership:** As part of a broader strategy, KU leaders thought that the university's competitive position could be strengthened not only through providing superior entrepreneurship education for KU students but also by becoming a widely recognised national leader in that field.
- **Using available infrastructure** played a key role. KU sought to set up a dedicated website with additional functionalities which served as an electronic platform for running entrepreneurship courses, allowing, inter alia, monitoring individual student projects. With minor adaptation this platform can be used for wider projects involving participants from other universities.
- **Interest in EE from other disciplines:** Regarding external factors, growing interest in entrepreneurship as a career path developed in Poland among students from non-business studies. Such demand increased particularly after 2005 when the increasing supply of university graduates was confronted with saturating or even declining demand for such graduates in the corporate sector.

Due to these influences KU decided to launch extra-curricular activities to reach students from other universities – see the next chapter.

## 1.3 Extra-curricular projects in entrepreneurship education

### Overview about extra-curricular EE activities at Kozminski University

In view of the KU's ambition to also offer extra-curricular projects to other Polish universities, since 2006 practically all extra-curricular activities initiated at KU have been offered to a wider audience of students and graduates from other HEIs at the local (Warsaw Municipality), regional (Mazovia Region) and national levels. A brief description of such projects is given below. Exhibit 1-5 shows an overview.

*Exhibit 1-5: Overview of extra-curricular EE activities at Kozminski University*

No.	Name	Objectives	Target group	Offered in / since	No. of participants
1	How to start your own business	Training and professional advice from business consultants	Students from the Mazovia Region	2006 - 2007	120
2	Warsaw, the Capital of Ambitious Business	Supporting the idea of ambitious entrepreneurship	Students and university graduates living in Warsaw	2009 - 2011	360
3	Entrepreneurship in Creative Industries	Entrepreneurship training for artists	Creative arts professionals in Warsaw Metropolitan Area	2009 – 2013	130
4	INNOVATOR	Supporting high technology entrepreneurship	Young university teachers and PhD students in hard sciences	2007 – 2009	50
5	Aula Polska	Informal network for exchanging business ideas	Young enthusiasts of internet businesses	From 2012 onwards	120 – 150 in each session

A key enabling factor for running extra-curricular entrepreneurship projects was the availability of EU financing of such projects after Poland's accession to the EU in 2004.



Moreover, priority in financing was given to wider-scope projects, involving broader spectrum of beneficiaries.

### **How to start your own business**

“How to start your own business” was a training and advisory programme for students in the Mazovia Region from 2006 to 2007. 120 students from 32 universities in the Mazovia Region received training and professional advice from business consultants. 25 of them started a new business, from which twelve received financial support from EU funds. This project helped to refine teaching methodologies to take into account the background and attitudes of non-business students. It also served as a testing ground for an already existing electronic platform and its capacity for running projects with a wider scope.

### **Warsaw, the Capital of Ambitious Business (2009 – 2011)**

This EU-funded project in co-operation with Warsaw Municipality attracted 360 participants receiving training and consultancy. These were students and university graduates living in Warsaw. 228 of them started new businesses and 72 received financial support. In this project the idea of ambitious entrepreneurship was put forward for the first time in Poland, as an alternative of supporting self-employment on the one hand and high-tech on the other. The focus was on ambitious projects, albeit the large number of students and university graduates in Warsaw. At the same time the project uncovered a large potential for knowledge-based entrepreneurship among professionals willing to give up secure employment in large firms and starting their own business.

### **Entrepreneurship in Creative Industries (2009 – 2013)**

“Entrepreneurship in Creative Industries” was another EU-funded project addressed to the creative arts professionals in the Warsaw Metropolitan Area. 130 artists were trained of which 100 started a new business with financial support from the EU. Again this project uncovered great demand for support of entrepreneurial activities and integrating the business community in creative sectors. This was reflected in the establishment of the Association of Creative Entrepreneurs by project participants.

### **INNOVATOR (2007 – 2009)**

INNOVATOR was a high technology entrepreneurship course for young university teachers and PhD students in natural sciences. The project was sponsored by the Polish National Science Foundation. Altogether 50 young scientists received training and professional advice in three rounds. Authors of the best projects received further financial support from the National Science Foundation. Several leading spin-off companies emerged from INNOVATOR, one currently being quoted on the Warsaw Stock Exchange. Another interesting outcome of the INNOVATOR programme was the social high-tech project named Bank Mleka (Human Milk Bank). This is a non-profit organisation offering technologically advanced storage and distribution of natural human breast milk for babies. It was initiated by a young biotechnologist, lured to entrepreneurship while participating in the INNOVATOR programme. The experience accumulated during three rounds of the INNOVATOR programme pointed to some systemic weaknesses in the education of potential academic high-tech entrepreneurs. The participants, on average approximately 30 years old, were exposed to entrepreneurial thinking for the first time. This proved to be late as at that time their minds were focused on technological aspects of the new venture. The results, i.e. the number and quality of high-tech start-ups, could



potentially have been much greater if INNOVATOR participants had received basic entrepreneurship training at the bachelor or master level.

### **Aula Polska (2012 onwards)**

Aula Polska was an informal network of young enthusiasts of internet businesses. It started as a bottom-up initiative. Young people meet twice a month, listen to presentations from more experienced peers and exchange ideas during a subsequent pizza event. Each session gathers typically 120 to 150 participants. Since 2012 Kozminski University hosts Aula sessions at its premises and provides organisational and financial support.

### **Overall initial results**

With the accumulated experiences in implementing extra-curricular entrepreneurship programmes, the organisers found that the wider formula of involving students and graduates from various universities was right. First of all it increased the quality of participating students. In fact, KU students represented less than 10% of participants. This was because in the selection process non-business students and university graduates presented better initial business concepts and were later more diligent in preparation of the fully-fledged business plans.

At the same time there is a positive “reverse demonstration effect” for KU students. An increased interest has been noted in specific courses like “Internet-based Entrepreneurship” and “Entrepreneurship in Creative Industries”. Since regular Aula Polska sessions are nowadays organised at Kozminski University premises, many KU students attend them regularly.

## **1.4 Institutional aspects of entrepreneurship education**

### **Organisational set-up and change**

The Chair of Entrepreneurship exists since the inception of Kozminski University. During the first decade (1993 – 2003) the focus was on implementing basic courses in entrepreneurship. In the second decade (2004 – 2013), attention shifted to ambitious forms of entrepreneurship in a wider context: prompting entrepreneurship development at the regional and local level, reaching to other universities, and extending the concept of entrepreneurship beyond the business sector.

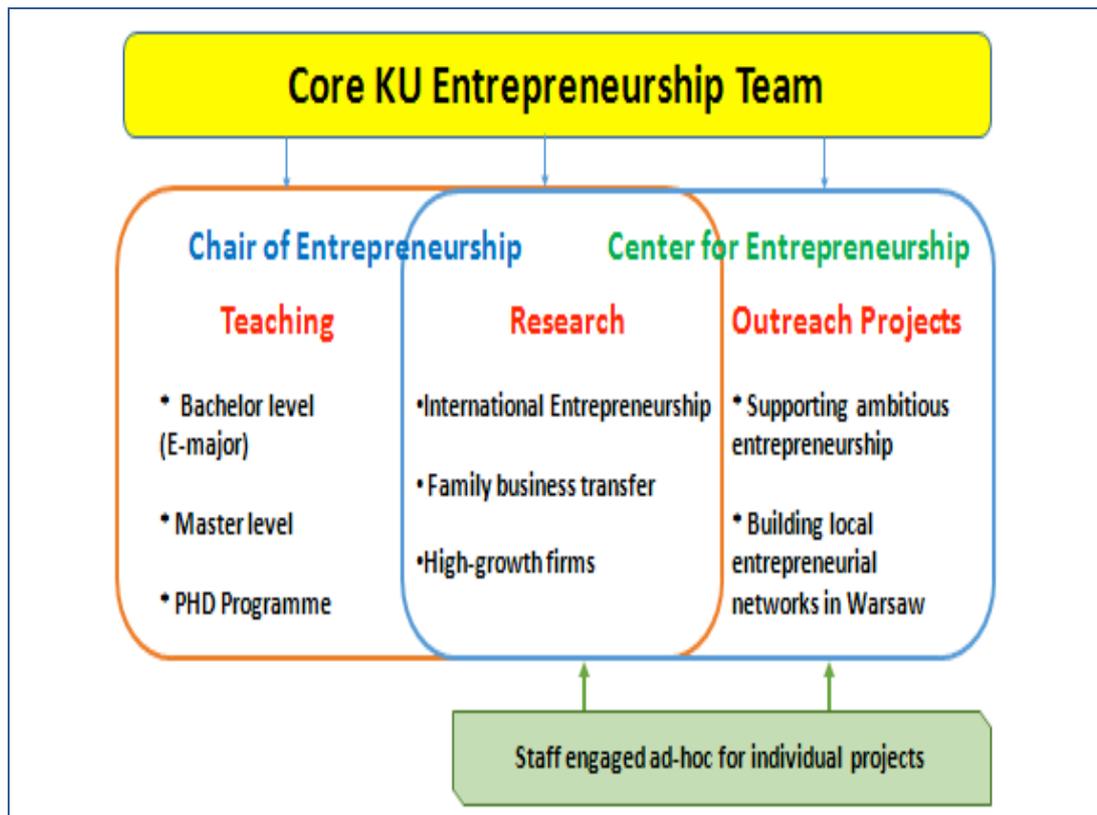
As the scope of extra-curricular activities and research in entrepreneurship expanded, in 2010 the research and outreach activities were moved to the newly established Centre for Entrepreneurship<sup>2</sup>. However, both units operate in an integrated way, under joint management, sharing both staff and premises (see Exhibit 1-6).

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<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.kozminski.edu.pl/index.php?id=5012>, last accessed 23/3/2015.



Exhibit 1-6: Organisation of entrepreneurial activities at KU



Source: Kozminski University

## Mindsets and attitudes

A significant percentage of KU students have already been exposed to entrepreneurship before attending KU, either by running an own business or due to family business traditions. Therefore, KU attempted to shape their mindsets and attitudes not towards entrepreneurship in general but to the ambitious forms of entrepreneurship. To that end, the booklet presenting the coaching and consulting offer in entrepreneurship to KU students bears the title “We support ambitious entrepreneurship”. However, shifting mindsets turned out to be challenging: as described in section 1.3, experience with extra-curricular activities showed that non-business students and graduates from other universities so far showed more promising efforts to develop ambitious enterprises than students from KU. Second, the KU entrepreneurship team refrains from coaching routine business projects. This sometimes results in negative reactions from the students.

## 1.5 Outreach to external stakeholders

### 1.5.1 Types of relationships with external stakeholders

KU's entrepreneurial orientation is deeply rooted in its history as one of the first private higher education institutions in Poland. Later on, links with external stakeholders were formalised. In 2003, the International Corporate Advisory Board was founded with the participation of leading international and Polish executives. The growing number of internship programmes is managed within the framework of long term agreements with companies and financial institutions.



According to the experiences accumulated at KU, the **opportunities for direct engagement of entrepreneurs in teaching are quite limited**. It is very difficult to go beyond the invited guest speaker formula. This is due to the formalisation of the didactic process with specific requirements for course delivery and assessment. There are national and even EU-wide regulations which must be followed in this respect. Active entrepreneurs do not feel comfortable in such an environment, not to mention the limited time that they can devote to teaching students.

KU has built a strong **Alumni Club** with regular meetings, constant communication through a website, newsletters, social media and job counselling. Each year three KU alumni with the most spectacular and successful career paths receive special awards, the "Kozminski Lions". One of the awards is given to the most successful entrepreneur.

## 1.5.2 Training educators from other Polish universities

### Lessons from international experiences

Training of entrepreneurship lecturers from other higher education institutions, particularly from non-business disciplines, was another important offspring of KU's ambitious entrepreneurship programme. The decision to launch a "training of trainers" approach was largely influenced by experiences from other countries in similar undertakings. The KU paid particular attention to national programmes for supporting venture-premiership lecturers in HEIs initiated by the UK National Council for Graduate Entrepreneurship established in 2004, later renamed to National Center for Entrepreneurship Education. Another example is the German organisation FGF (Förderkreis Gründungsforschung e.V.) which was instrumental in establishing chairs of entrepreneurship at a number of German universities. A similar approach was taken in the US in an initiative launched in 2011 to improve entrepreneurship education in 350 engineering universities across the country. A nationwide project called Epicenter is being financed by the US National Science Foundation and managed by Stanford University. It offers training for lecturers, sophisticated pedagogical tools and serves as a platform for sharing best practices.

### Situation in teaching entrepreneurship in Polish non-business universities

The reason why KU concentrates on non-business universities in training the trainers reflects an urgent need. This is because entrepreneurship courses were almost non-existent at such universities ten years ago. On the other hand, KU's initial experiences in regional extra-curricular programmes demonstrated that non-business students, once equipped with relevant knowledge and skills and being familiarised with entrepreneurial thinking, put forward much better new venture projects than their business counterparts. After 2006, when KU's core academic textbook on ambitious entrepreneurship was published and accompanied by a dedicated website, there were a number of inquiries addressed to KU to run entrepreneurship courses outside KU. Such requests could not be accommodated due to time limitations and because of a potential conflict of interest.

### "Training of trainers" projects initiated by KU during 2007 – 2011

In 2007, Kozminski University received a grant from the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education to train a first group of 20 university lecturers, preparing them for introducing basic courses in entrepreneurship at their universities. The support included:



- methodological and pedagogical tools (PowerPoint presentations, tests) available to university teachers only;
- teaching materials and tools for students available on the dedicated website – the original content has meanwhile been broadened and diversified, including videos and English language materials;
- short (two-day) “kick-off” workshops for all participating lecturers;
- ongoing support and monitoring of the implementation of the pilot course in entrepreneurship which was an obligatory requirement for all lecturers participating in the programme.

In 2008, the Ministry of Science and Higher Education provided finance to KU for training the next group of entrepreneurship educators. In addition to 20 lecturers from new universities, six pairs of lecturers from the previous group and consultants received training on the implementation of more advanced extra-curricular forms of entrepreneurship education, thus mirroring the KU's experience with such programmes.

### **Entrepreneurship lecturers participating in the programme**

During 2007 – 2011, the programme encompassed over 50 university lecturers from 40 non-business universities in Poland. The implementation of entrepreneurship courses marked a qualitative change in those universities, becoming a triggering factor for further local initiatives. At the same time it revealed certain problems and barriers:

- **Turnover of universities' lecturers:** in several cases the lecturers trained in running entrepreneurship courses left their universities, which jeopardised the continuation of such courses. This seems to be inevitable and calls for a continued effort to “replenish” lost educators. It has been estimated that in order to ensure continuity and expansion in teaching entrepreneurship at Polish universities, every second year, 20 new entrepreneurship educators need to be trained. At the end of 2014, KU was seeking funding for the next round.
- **Entrepreneurial attitude of entrepreneurship educators:** the key lesson from the “training of trainers” programme is that successfully launching entrepreneurship education strongly depends on the entrepreneurial mindset of the lecturers. This does not mean previous business experience, but rather character traits like energy, drive and enthusiasm; inspiring students and shaping their entrepreneurial minds. The KU also considers a drive to establish contacts with the business community, launching new projects and seeking finance for such initiatives as important.

Unfortunately, such entrepreneurial attitudes as described in the following box text were found to be quite rare among lecturers participating in the programme. This may call for a more sophisticated selection of the next group of entrepreneurship lecturers receiving training and support.



### **An exemplary case of shaping lecturers' entrepreneurial mindsets**

Dr Agnieszka Skala, Assistant Professor from Warsaw Polytechnic, may serve as a good example for training teachers in entrepreneurship education. In 2007 she participated in the first group of university lecturers being trained in a KU-managed project. In 2008 she introduced a basic course on Innovative Entrepreneurship in one department of the Warsaw Polytechnic. The course was a major success and was rated highly by students. In 2009 she obtained funds to initiate a large-scale project aimed at launching entrepreneurship courses in an additional 15 departments of the Warsaw Polytechnic. She co-ordinated the training of entrepreneurship lecturers thus further extending the idea of "training of trainers". In 2012, she co-founded the "Innovation Nest" (SPIN School), a nationwide initiative focusing on young promising internet start-ups. In 2013, she graduated from the prestigious Lean Launchpad Educators Program at the University of California in Berkeley, US.

Source: Kozminski University

### **Support from the leadership of participating universities**

The key enabling factor in launching entrepreneurship education was the support from the universities' leadership. In a typical environment of hard science studies, agricultural or engineering universities, the entrepreneurship subjects are being viewed as "soft", thus less important than "hard" ones representing the core of students' curricula. In order to implement entrepreneurship courses and convince the university teachers about their usefulness, a lecturer must rely on full support from the university's management. Unfortunately, in a number of institutions this was not the case. As a partial remedy in the second round of training of lecturers, the final decision about admission was conditional upon a written declaration of support from the Rector of a certain university.

### **Network of Academic Entrepreneurship Educators in Poland (SEIPA)**

The lecturers trained in KU experienced the "feeling of loneliness" while struggling to introduce entrepreneurship courses of their home universities. This experience led to the establishment of the Network of Academic Entrepreneurship Educators in Poland (SEIPA). This is an informal network composed of entrepreneurship lecturers participating in the KU-managed training programmes as well as others interested in relevant materials and methodologies, exchanging ideas, and best practices. In 2011, all teaching content was moved to the SEIPA website. KU's Prof. Jerzy Cieřlik is the co-ordinator for the SEIPA network.

## **1.6 Impact and lessons learned**

### **1.6.1 Measuring impacts of KU's entrepreneurship education approach**

When evaluating the impact of KU's EE approach regarding key lessons learned and transferability to other universities, one needs to bear in mind KU's "catching-up context". KU believes its experiences are particularly relevant for universities lagging behind in EE and intend to quickly narrow the gap with leading international education institutions in this field. In this regard, the impact of the entrepreneurship education approach taken at KU can be evaluated in four distinct, albeit interlinked areas:



- **Driving students' attention towards ambitious, growth-oriented ventures.** In its entrepreneurship courses, KU exposed students to alternatives to traditional small business thinking about entrepreneurship. Particularly, extra-curricular activities have been stressing the message to “do not think small”. The positive impact of this approach was demonstrated in a number of ways: The survival rate of businesses launched as a result of several extra-curricular projects implemented by KU as described above was much higher than the average in Poland. For example, according to a survey of firms receiving support under the programme “Warsaw, the Capital of Ambitious Business”, 72% of those firms established in 2010 were still active in 2013, whereas the average ratio for Poland in same period was 42%. Moreover, the ratio between employer- and non-employer firms was higher as well.
- **Filling the gap between small business and high-growth, high-tech ventures.** Entrepreneurship as a career option for university graduates is typically seen as a choice between traditional small business establishments and high-growth, high-tech ventures. KU's experience helped to identify a substantial “intermediate zone” where university graduates could engage in ambitious business projects which basically have an imitative character but enable students to use knowledge and skills gained in their studies.
- **Involving students and graduates from various education institutions in extra-curricular projects.** Here the KU found a clearly demonstrable impact. By limiting participation to KU students, i.e. to business students, certain projects such as supporting entrepreneurship in the creative sector would not have been possible to implement. The “reverse demonstration effect” for the KU students should not be neglected as well.
- **Promoting entrepreneurship education in non-business universities.** KU sees a direct and clearly visible impact of its efforts to promote EE at other Polish universities: 40 Polish non-business universities launched entrepreneurship courses afterwards. This impact was achieved at relatively low costs. For training 52 lecturers from 40 universities, KU received two grants from the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, totalling 461,000 PLN or 110,000 euro. Thus the average cost per university was less than 3,000 euro.

An important outcome of KU's “training of trainers” approach was the establishment of the Network of Academic Entrepreneurship Educators in Poland (SEIPA). Although it worked as a loose network at the end of 2014, it had already played an important role in integrating the community of academic entrepreneurship lecturers in Poland. This may lead to a more formalised structure in the future.

## 1.6.2 Lessons learned – success factors for launching EE

### Summary of lessons learned from this case

The know-how about EE accumulated by Kozminski University may be particularly relevant to universities with limited experience in teaching entrepreneurship. Based on the experiences accumulated since 2007, KU identified **three success factors** for launching entrepreneurship education in non-business universities: **entrepreneurial entrepreneurship educators, a network of academic entrepreneurship educators, and support from university leadership**. KU found that these factors mutually reinforce each other. The key figure in this process is an “entrepreneurial entrepreneurship



educator” who receives support from the university’s top management and is part of nationwide network.

### **Transferability to other universities**

In principle, other universities may easily adopt KU’s EE approach. There is material available that could facilitate a transfer of the approach or parts of it: KU’s experiences in teaching entrepreneurship are described in a monograph (in Polish) “Education for Academic Entrepreneurship” (Cieślik et al., 2011). There is a small booklet available promoting ambitious entrepreneurship among students, published in Polish in 2013, titled “We support Ambitious Entrepreneurship”. Various course materials, tools, and methodologies are freely available – under a Creative Commons License – on a dedicated website ([www.seipa.edu.pl](http://www.seipa.edu.pl)). Some materials are also available in English. These materials may help other universities to assess whether KU’s approach could be valuable for them.

## **References**

Research for this case study was conducted by Professor Jerzy Cieślik, Director of the Centre for Entrepreneurship at Kozminski University, on behalf of the study for supporting the entrepreneurial potential of higher education (sepHE). The author has been deeply involved and in fact managed the process of engaging Kozminski University in ambitious entrepreneurship education. Although effort has been made by the author to ensure objectivity, some personal reflection was unavoidable.

Sources and references used include desk research plus:

### **Interviews and other sources**

- Panel discussion held on 25 of July 2014 at Kozminski University premises with two entrepreneurship lecturers at Kozminski University Prof. Izabela Kołodkiewicz and Prof. Piotr Kaczmarek-Kurczak.
- Interview with Prof. Agnieszka Skala – an entrepreneurship lecturer at the Warsaw Polytechnic. The interview has been carried out on 23 July 2014 at Warsaw Polytechnic premises.
- The case study relied heavily on discussions and presentations of students and graduates participating in various extra-curricular programmes initiated by KU. Some of them have been summarised in an unpublished master thesis by M. Balicka (2009) or videotaped.
- As a background material, a large-scale questionnaire survey covering 28% of the entire population of KU students has been used. The survey has been administered on behalf of KU Chair of Entrepreneurship in May 2013.

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