

Syracuse University Launches Nation's First Academic Center for the Creator Economy

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Syracuse University today announced the launch of its new Center for the Creator Economy, the first academic center of its kind on a U.S. college campus. A joint venture between the Martin J. Whitman School of

Management and the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications, the center will position the University at the forefront of research, education and thought leadership within the rapidly expanding creator-driven economic landscape.



Syracuse University logo

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Mike Haynie

“The creator economy represents one of the most significant cultural and commercial transformations of our time,” says Mike Haynie, vice chancellor for strategic initiatives and innovation and executive dean of the Whitman School. “With this bold new center, Syracuse is seizing the opportunity to lead—not follow—in preparing students to thrive at the intersection of creativity, commerce and digital innovation. Today’s college students are more entrepreneurial than ever before, driven to build personal brands that not only generate income but also give them the freedom to be their own boss, set their own hours and shape their own professional potential.”

A Global Shift in Work, Media and Entrepreneurship

Powered by a new class of content creators—from podcasters and streamers to influencers and digital artists—the creator economy is reshaping how ideas, products and services are marketed and monetized. Platforms like TikTok, YouTube, Instagram, Substack and Twitch now serve as engines of commerce and influence.

Goldman Sachs estimates the creator economy will approach \$500 billion by 2027, with the

global creator community growing 10 to 20% annually. Nearly half of U.S. teenagers already earn income through digital channels—an economic shift with major implications for how universities must support the entrepreneurial needs of young people.

Leading the Way in Emerging Jobs and Technology

Syracuse University is uniquely positioned to lead in this emerging field:

- Creators are entrepreneurs: Whitman's ranked entrepreneurship program provides a foundation in digital business management, monetization strategy, consumer behavior and data analytics.
- Creators are communicators: The Newhouse School offers expertise in media, content production, digital storytelling and audience development—critical in today's digital-first environment.
- Creators compete digitally: Syracuse is the nation's most digitally connected campus, with a campuswide 5G private network powered by JMA Wireless and early adoption of campuswide AI access through Anthropic's Claude for Education.

A Hub for Learning, Research, and Industry Engagement

The center will serve as a dynamic platform for:

- Teaching and learning: Undergraduate and graduate courses in creative content, audience engagement and digital strategy.
- Workshops and executive education: Experiential opportunities for students and professionals, from personal branding to influencer law.
- Speaker series and showcases: A stage for creators, social media executives and digital entrepreneurs.
- On-campus incubators and makerspaces: Mentorship and funding for student ventures.
- Research and thought leadership: Sponsoring and publishing research on creator economy trends.
- College athletics: Partnering with Syracuse Athletics and the Falk College of Sport to help student-athletes and the University compete in the changing athletics landscape.

"This center speaks directly to the aspirations of current and prospective students, many of whom already see themselves as creators, innovators and entrepreneurs," says Newhouse Dean Mark J. Lodato. "It's about meeting them where they are—and preparing them to lead in the world that's coming."

The center will be jointly overseen by the Whitman and Newhouse deans, in collaboration with the Falk College and College of Visual and Performing Arts. Syracuse will conduct a national search for an executive director, supported by faculty co-directors and a network of faculty fellows spanning the University's 13 schools and colleges. A Student Engagement Council will offer student-driven insight, while an Industry Advisory Council of creators, media executives, brand managers and investors will guide the center's vision.

A Strategic Move for the Future

This initiative reinforces Syracuse University's commitment to bold, forward-looking academic leadership. By aligning strengths in entrepreneurship, media, communications, athletics and digital infrastructure, the University is charting how higher education can prepare students for the 21st-century economy.

"The creator economy is not a passing trend—it's a generational transformation," says Alex McKelvie, interim dean of the Whitman School. "Through this center, Syracuse University is not just responding to change; we're helping shape what comes next."

Syracuse will celebrate the center's launch later this fall with on-campus events and simultaneous programming at its campuses in New York City, Los Angeles and Washington, D.C.

For more information, visit creatoreconomy.syracuse.edu.

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