

URL: <https://stvp.stanford.edu/clips/advantages-of-all-sectors>

Former U.S. Undersecretary for Energy Dr. Kristina Johnson articulates the advantages of various sectors to make impact on critical issues and to drive innovation. Interviewer Dr. Tina Seelig also provides background on the Epicenter, the National Center for Engineering Pathways to Innovation, that seeks to bring entrepreneurship and innovation skills into undergraduate engineering education.



Transcript

You know, I think that - and I'm glad I didn't go to my slides, because this is much more fun and interactive.. But I think that it requires everyone.. And I'll tell you why I say that.. It requires each sector.. So each sector has an advantage.. In some sense the government has funding, an opportunity to move the needle.. But you have a congress that appropriates as well as does policy and appropriates working with the executive branch.. And I think that one thing that we don't appreciate is the power that each one of us has to influence in a very positive way their representatives in Washington.. They do listen to you.. They do respond to their constituents..

And so I would really recommend everybody to be very active in letting their voice be heard.. Then I think about the University and I think you've got an army of talented, bright, enthusiastic individuals who have one other thing going for them and that is they don't know that they can't do anything.. I mean let me put that in positive - they didn't failed yet.. I love undergraduate students because they'll try and take on - I mean it's sort of like the old saying, what would you do if you knew you wouldn't fail? You'd try and solve our energy problems, you'd try and solve the climate change, you'd take on great things and students have taken on great, great projects and been very successful.. So one of the things that - I wanted to be part of the advisory board for FB because I thought that this is the right place to engineer pathways innovation to solve important problems.. So, let me give you a little background on that.... Okay.. ...we just got a National Science Foundation grant to transform engineering education across the United States, to make undergraduate engineers at all these engineering schools more innovative than entrepreneurial.. And Kristina Johnson have to be on our Advisory Board, so we are very appreciative of that and really look forward to getting your input and guidance as we move forward.. We just launched a couple of months ago..

Yeah, and the last piece is what companies allow you to do, especially if you're running them, which is hopeful - helpful, I mean, maybe hopeful too, is really the - you can be an all entrepreneur because you're really unfettered just by your ability to convince people that adopting your technology, your approach, your process will help them.. And so it's very, very simple.. I mean how many of you heard of Dean Kamen? Okay, so fabulous national resource, been very innovative, did the Segway, did the - I think the kidney dialysis machine and portable insulin pump.. Here's what he said to me, I said 'Dean, how do you generate business, how do you figure all these things out?' And he goes 'it's really simple, I sit down with the doctor and I say, 'what's your problem?' And I thought 'oh wow.' 'And then he told me my problem and then I solve it.' So those - that's a lot of freedom, as long as you can get someone to pay for it..