The Social Enterprise Zoo

a discussion with

Dennis R. Young

Visiting Professor, Mandel School and Professor Emeritus, Georgia State University

September 21, 2018 12:30 – 1:30 p.m.
Dampeir Room, 2nd Floor, Kelvin Smith Library
11201 Euclid Ave

Cosponsored by the National Center on Nonprofit Enterprise and the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences

It's common to divide organizations into "for-profit," "government," and "non-profit," but standard typologies of organizations are becoming ever-less useful. For example, giant academic medical centers act a lot like for-profit enterprises, while some for-profit firms also claim to have social missions. As a result, scholars of business and of the "nonprofit sector" have begun to use another term: "social enterprises."

But what is a social enterprise? One definition says they "strive to do good and make money at the same time." Another refers to, "a revenue-generating business with primarily social objectives whose surpluses are reinvested for that purpose in the business or in the community, rather than being driven by the need to deliver profit to shareholders and owners." Why would such things exist, and what kind of ecology would support them?

To address such questions, Dennis Young, a leading scholar of the "nonprofit sector," gathered colleagues and edited a volume that uses the metaphor of a zoo to provide "A Guide for Perplexed Scholars, Entrepreneurs, Philanthropists, Leaders, Investors, and Policymakers."

What are the species of this newly-defined family; how do they behave and interact; how should the zookeepers, such as governments, deal with them? And what is the future for organizations that seek to balance social and economic success?

The Friday Public Affairs Discussion Lunch is an opportunity for students, faculty, staff, emeriti and other members of our communities to learn and question each other about public policy issues at the international, national, and local levels. Faculty and other speakers share their research and experience to get beyond the headlines and repetition in the mass media, and the wild rumors of the internet. Lunch is brown bag, but cookies and some beverages are provided by the Center for Policy Studies of the College of Arts and Sciences.

http://fridayslunch.case.edu/