

Designing Towards a BIPOC Inclusive Minor in Innovation and Design

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ABSTRACT

During my time with the GID Lab, I worked on a project aimed at exploring how the new Minor in Innovation and Design can create a hospitable environment for BIPOC students.

Similar to many of the GID Lab projects, this study uses design-thinking methods and Design Justice Network principles. Our team started with a “How Might We” exercise to help us understand how to approach the problem and brainstorm solutions. After our meeting, I decided to draft a project plan. This project plan would be a chance for us to visualize the project beyond Fall quarter 2020. This project plan serves to help us ask the right questions, understand the project scope, and identify gaps/missed areas. Another benefit is to design solutions that can be iterated and maintained throughout all quarters and years through different teams of future GID awardees and stakeholders.

To undertake this project, it’s important to ask the right questions to navigate the intricacies of the topic. My recommendations are to conduct more user research to understand what the students need, track the progress of this project and it’s efficiency, find new ways to optimize, and document each discovery so we can keep the work going. It is also very important to find allies and utilize other communities that are doing similar work (instead of starting from scratch). This is just the beginning stage of this project. This project is meant to be continued indefinitely to ensure that the Minor in Innovation and design is inclusive and hospitable to BIPOC students.

Tools:



INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The Problem

BIPOC students are disproportionately marginalized in higher education. This is also visible in design education.

- The term “BIPOC” (as opposed to “people of color,”) emphasizes that:
 - Systemic racism continues to oppress Black and Indigenous people in ways other people of color may not necessarily experience.
 - People of color face varying types of discrimination and prejudice.

Project Vision & Goals

- Implementing the [Design Justice Network](#) principles to build/co-design a hospitable minor in Innovation and Design. Successful solutions will eliminate barriers/pain points of BIPOC students so they can thrive in the minor.
- Being transparent about our work and progress.
- Ongoing accountability (continuing the work). Students of color are always going to need advocacy and support. We need to be able to maintain this project throughout all quarters. However, it’s important to set small goals and deadlines to track progress.

How & Why I got involved

Chris Sim encouraged me to apply to the GID Lab award. Seeing Chris’s team, [Black Youth Design Initiative](#) at UW Seattle tackle this issue was inspirational. I myself have faced bias in the classroom like many others I know.

Therefore I want to thank Chris for inspiring and empowering me to join the GID Lab. It has been an awesome experience and I have grown so much that quarter. Also, thank you to Dr. McMillin, Krissy, Kalyn, Faith, and Lan for being awesome! I couldn’t have asked for a more supportive team!

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Through this research, I found 2 organizations that tackle similar topics and could be useful resources. The first one is Inneract Project and the second one is UWT’s Center for Equity and Inclusion. I did background research on the minor through carefully reading it’s official website so that we can understand how BIPOC students can be better supported in each aspect of their journey. The minor consists of: application to the minor, attending classes, complete assignments, extra curricular activities, and career prep students may choose to explore. My recommendations are to do more user research to understand what the students need, track the progress of this project and it’s efficiency, find new ways to optimize, and document each discovery so we can keep the work going. It is also very important to find allies and utilize other communities that are doing similar work (instead of starting from scratch). This is just the beginning stage of this project. This project is meant to be continued indefinitely to ensure that the Minor in Innovation and design is inclusive and hospitable to BIPOC students.

PROPOSED SOLUTION/RECOMMENDATIONS

I recommend conducting more user research to understand what the students need, tracking the progress of this project and it’s efficiency, finding new ways to optimize, and documenting each discovery so we can keep the work going. It is also crucial to find allies and utilize other communities that are doing similar work (instead of starting from scratch). This is just the beginning stage of this project. This project is meant to be continued indefinitely to ensure that the Minor in Innovation and design is inclusive and hospitable to BIPOC students.

How Might We find and promote aspects of design that will interest BIPOC students?

How Might We [create a safe and diverse environment for BIPOC students to learn about Innovation and Design] ?

How Might We [empower BIPOC students to join the minor and feel comfortable to stay (as active members)] ?
[create a system that welcomes all ?]
[Engage students in important discussions/conversations that may be uncomfortable?]

METHOD(S)

It’s important to ask the right questions to navigate the intricacies of the topic. We need to ask questions that will help us understand the issue, understand the minor, understand the students, and find applicable UX methodologies for the project.

Understand the Issue

To understand the issue, we need to ask these questions:

- What are the current conversations around inclusion design and higher education?
- Are there external organizations and communities doing similar work?
- Are there internal communities (within UW) doing similar work?

Understand the Minor in Innovation and Design

It’s important to do background research on the minor thoroughly so we can understand the user journey.

- What does the minor it consist of?
- How can BIPOC students be better supported in each aspect of their journey?
- Who are the Stakeholders?

Understand the Students

It’s important to understand our users and proceed with this project with Culturally sensitive UX methods.

- Who are the students?
- What barriers are they facing?
- UX methods
- How might we implement culturally sensitive methods for each stage?

CONCLUSIONS

BIPOC students are disproportionately marginalized in higher education. This project explores how the new Minor in Innovation and Design can create a hospitable environment for BIPOC students. I believe it is important to first understand the topic, the minor, and the students so we understand what obstacles BIPOC students are facing within the Minor in Innovation and Design.

REFERENCES

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