DESIGNING THROUGH BARRIERS TO CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Faith Kim, Fall 2020 GID Awardee, and Staff

Led by Associate Vice Chancellor for Innovation and Global Engagement Dr. Divya McMillin and Program Administrator Krissy Kimura, the Global Innovation and Design (GID) Lab held a two-day workshop for South Sound Together’s (SST) Next Leaders Initiative. This workshop brought together student participants from the University of Washington Tacoma, Tacoma Community College, and Bates Technical College along with SST leadership to answer, “How might we increase the number of young people who aspire to civic engagement in the South Sound?”

With a wide diversity of participants, the GID Lab launched the workshop with a fun, demographic ice breaker that also introduced MURAL, our collaborative whiteboarding software. Dr. McMillin provided an overview of civic engagement, the pre-work, and the design thinking process. Participants then moved back to MURAL to review and vote on the top barriers to civic engagement.

The top five barriers identified included:
1. Imposter Syndrome
2. Over-involvement e.g., [knowing your limits, hard to navigate where to be effective]
3. Caregiver commitments [e.g., civic events coincide with other life events]
4. Lack of transportation plus external costs
5. Lack of inclusivity

Participants moved into five breakout rooms to ideate solutions to the above barriers. Ideation aims to generate radical design alternatives. The goal of...
Designing to overcome barriers to civic engagement contd.

ideation is to explore both a large quantity of ideas and a diversity among those ideas. After small group discussions, everyone came back to the larger group to share out and receive feedback. Each group identified at least five solutions, then participants voted on the top two ideas from each team. This resulted in thirteen ideas to be carried through to the second part of the workshop focused on prototyping.

On day two of the workshop, Krissy Kimura recapped the first workshop and reiterated the top ideas. The goal for the workshop was to create prototypes, then share out to the rest of the group for feedback and iteration. Prototyping is a way to get ideas and explorations out of your head and into the world in a physical form. Participants were broken up into the same breakout rooms, but each group prototyped a solution generated by a different group.

Each group prototyped their top two ideas, then shared for feedback from the wider group which was shared in the format of “I like, I wish. What if?” Final prototypes ranged from simple product innovations (e.g., a physical sticky note wall of encouragement) to process innovations (e.g., incorporating more classroom visits from civic-minded individuals like the mayor or chancellor). Other groups reimagined current platforms and products. Examples included a platform similar to GoFundMe to crowdsource community engagement activities instead of money or a repurposed city bus used for civic engagement activities to address the barrier of transportation.

Overall, the Next Leaders Initiative series of design thinking workshops were invigorating and packed with great ideas. The prototypes developed, and continued interest in next steps and desire to engage further, reflected the participants’ passion for civic engagement -- and presented an image of a hopeful future for the next leaders of the South Sound.
**GID LAB: STUDENT LED PROJECTS**

While COVID-19 prevented us from meeting in person, GID Lab awardees were highly engaged in the priorities of the lab, resulting in two exciting projects:

**Creating a more inclusive environment for Black, Indigenous, Person of Color (BIPOC) students in the Minor in Innovation and Design**

BIPOC students are disproportionately marginalized in higher education. With the launch of the Minor in Innovation and Design, the GID awardees outlined a plan to learn about barriers faced by BIPOC students across campus in order to design a more welcoming learning environment for all.

Part of this work included the creation of a survey to better understand the BIPOC student experience. If you identify as a BIPOC student and would like to participate, please visit this link: [https://forms.gle/gnuWdy69q5BzzM5n6](https://forms.gle/gnuWdy69q5BzzM5n6) The survey is open through Monday, January 4 with a chance to win a $25 gift card.

**GID Lab Instagram (@gid_lab)**

Fall awardees developed a visual and interactive social media strategy using Instagram to communicate the GID Lab story to current and future students. During finals week we launched our Instagram account and did a takeover of the @uwtacoma account. This helped us spread the word about everything GID Lab - including the Innovation and Design Minor, quarterly GID award, the GID team, and our current awardees! Follow us @gid_lab to stay connected!

**WINTER 2021 GID LAB AWARD PROJECT SPOTLIGHT: CARING FOR CAREGIVERS ONLINE (COCO)**

Dr. Weichao Yuwen, Assistant Professor, Nursing and Healthcare Leadership Program

There are over 50 million family caregivers providing unpaid care to an adult or child in the United States. Caregivers need to juggle caregiving tasks and their own work, experiencing stress, social isolation, and burnout. Poor health in workers with caregiving responsibilities directly results in lost productivity. Caring for Caregivers Online (COCO) is a platform that delivers an artificial intelligence (AI) augmented phone application providing on-demand, empathetic and tailored caregiving support. It facilitates skills building and provides access to live chat with a nurse.

The COCO team will be collaborating with the GID Lab in Winter 2021 to sponsor directed research and experiential learning opportunities for students to participate in the transdisciplinary COCO team and use design thinking principles to develop health solutions for family caregivers. Stay tuned for more updates on this exciting collaboration!
**INNOVATE TACOMA: UPDATE**

Demand for the GID Lab’s services continues to increase throughout the pandemic. Below are updates on our current projects in the Innovate Tacoma series, designed to spark creative problem solving and deliver innovations through the pandemic.

**South Sound Together: Next Leaders Initiative**

As detailed in the story on the front page of this bulletin, the GID Lab conducted a two-workshop series with South Sound Together (SST) to better understand how to increase the number of young people who aspire to civic engagement. The workshops were a success, gathering students from all over the South Sound region. The final report to SST leadership was well received and we look forward to continuing work on this project with another series of workshops to come in 2021. Stay tuned for more!

**United Way of Pierce County**

GID Lab Associate Vice Chancellor, Dr. Divya McMillin, facilitated two design thinking workshops for Resilient Pierce County in October 2020, and then a virtual design thinking workshop for 150+ participants at United Way of Pierce County’s annual From Poverty to Possibilities Summit on Tuesday, November 10. Participants’ enthusiasm and creativity were not diminished in the Zoom atmosphere. Over 30+ prototypes were generated to address the bias-to-action prompt: Through a lens of equity, trauma, and resilience, how might we reimagine our current systems to support Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE) families to overcome poverty?

We look forward to collaborating further with United Way of Pierce County to scale up and implement some of these solutions next year!

Other organizations innovating through the pandemic in this series are: the City of Tacoma, Tacoma Pierce County Chamber of Commerce, and UWT Student Transitions.

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**MINOR IN INNOVATION AND DESIGN: NOW ENROLLING FOR WINTER 2021!**

Are you interested in a career in social innovation, business, entrepreneurship or user experience research? Consider adding the Minor in Innovation and Design, which is launching in Winter 2021!

The Minor is interdisciplinary and welcomes students from all majors. The first class offered Winter quarter is TGID 320: Innovation and Design Studio. This studio class is designed as a ten week sprint that will walk students through all stages of the design process. In this case, design refers not just to technology (websites and apps) but in a broader sense to events, processes, and social issues. Students will benefit from small class sizes, real-world team projects, and feedback from design professionals.

If you’re interested in learning more, please visit our **website** or contact Krissy Kimura, Academic Advisor for the Minor in Innovation and Design at krissyk@uw.edu.