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INNOVATE-DESIGN-ENGAGE AT TACOMA.EDU
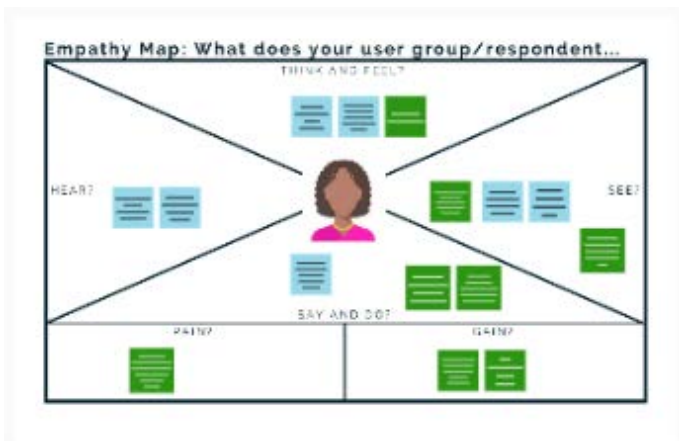
DESIGNING FOR INCLUSION WITH THE CITY OF TACOMA

Ben Thurgood, Assistant HR Director over Continuous Improvement, Training & Org Development at the City of Tacoma

We were thrilled when Chancellor Pagano and Associate Vice Chancellor Dr. Divya McMillin approached the City of Tacoma about a potential project with the Global Innovation and Design (GID) Lab. The City is committed to doing the deep work it takes to become an anti-racist organization and to do our part to create a community where people of all races, ethnicities, genders, ages, religions, and other attributes feel welcome and can thrive. That's a big mission and the City of Tacoma has a lot of energy for the work, but it wasn't easy figuring out just where to begin.

The City Council directed the City Manager to pursue a number of improvements as outlined in Resolution 40622, including the transformation of all existing policies and programs. As we were scoping out our engagement with the GID Lab, Dr. McMillin and Program Administrator Krissy Kimura worked closely with us to identify a right-sized problem to tackle at the beginning of our journey into systems transformation. We concluded that it would be best to prepare for the larger work ahead by firming up a foundational culture of diversity and inclusion within the organization. We are

WHAT'S INSIDE

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INNOVATE TACOMA: A snapshot

Workshop participants created empathy maps using Mural during Workshop 1 on September 2, 2020

better able to serve our community when employees of all backgrounds are involved in the process of driving change.

While social distancing prevented us from having the full, in-person experience of a design workshop, we were absolutely thrilled with the hospitality and polish of our virtual experience! The GID Lab team put together a well thought-out and carefully designed workshop using the online tool, Mural. Workshop participants were able to dive right into the tool and have

Designing for inclusion contd.

productive conversations despite the constraints of meeting virtually.

We also appreciated the outside perspective to keep us moving. When you're talking about your own culture and employee experience, it can be easy to get caught up in the details and emotion of your own experiences. The intentional bias toward action was a bit uncomfortable for a few of our participants, but Dr. McMillin and Krissy assured them that it was a normal part of the process and helped them to embrace that tension.

And isn't that what design is all about? Leaning into action and embracing the tension of the perspective you've gained of your customer's experience and the reality of current conditions and very real constraints?

With minimal investment of workshop time and without forming a massive committee governed by Robert's rules, we were able to come up with a handful of solutions that we get to run and experiment with. One message I heard clearly in our workshops is that for our employees, it isn't what our policies or stated values say that matter, it's the actions that determine their experience.

What we do is who we are. This workshop propelled us to identify and quickly take action to be the kind of organization we want, and our employees need us, to be.

We look forward to future partnership with the GID Lab and we hope to partake of those promised pastries when we return to in-person workshops!

Prototype of a two-tiered hiring system to reduce bias in hiring created during Workshop 2 on September 4, 2020

MEET OUR FALL 2020 GID AWARDEES

AYDA KEDIRKHAN,
COMMUNICATION MAJOR

"I applied to the GID award to learn about how design thinking can be used to amplify the voices of often marginalized communities. I want to co-create nurturing and inclusive experiences that are going to better serve my community."

FAITH KIM, WRITING STUDIES: TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION MAJOR

"I wanted to join the GID Lab because they work hard to improve our campus and community. I hope to learn more about design thinking and teamwork."

WE WELCOME YOUR IDEAS AND INVITE YOU TO GET INVOLVED IN OUR COMMUNITY PROJECTS! PLEASE CLICK THE LINK BELOW TO INNOVATE WITH US!

KALYN JONES, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND WRITING STUDIES MAJOR

"I wanted to join the GID Lab to gain experience in design thinking and to apply what I've learned in my usability courses."

DIVERSITY IN DESIGN AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

Black Youth Design Initiative, UW student group

The University of Washington's tri-campus initiatives to improve diversity within its design-related divisions has made strides in the last couple of years. However, despite the small steps that have been made to improve diversity in the area, there is still much to be done when it comes to increasing the visibility of Black and Indigenous people of color (BIPOC) students within the design academia space.

Four students from the Human-Centered Design & Engineering department in UW Seattle decided to start the Black Youth Design Initiative project. Their mission is to listen to the stories of BIPOC design students and understand the various underlying factors contributing to the lack of representation in the UW's numerous design divisions. The team intends to leverage the participatory action research method to co-develop a program focused on helping Black and Indigenous K-12 students in Washington state and beyond pursue design as a career and join the UW's design community.

This past summer, the team focused on research. In addition to conducting a literary review, they ran interview studies with current Black design students at the UW and faculty members from various departments. According to many student stories, BIPOC design students felt isolated in the space. To quote one of the students that was interviewed, "Sometimes it's pretty hard being in a class where no one looks like you, which made it difficult for me to ask for help." Furthermore, BIPOC students lack support systems inside and outside of the classroom. Support systems that BIPOC students need range from mentorship opportunities to mental health resources to acknowledgment by their instructors and peers. Financial-related barriers are also another hurdle for many BIPOC students (read the July IDEATE issue on UWT's Financial Wellness design pilot). To quote another interviewee, "At high school, we didn't have a lot of funding. We did not have computer classes, much less design classes. We didn't even have enough funds for sports."

As indicated by the findings, the team found some interesting and critical intersectional data that is just the tip of the iceberg. The insights will influence their project's consequent steps in the Fall. The details were shared with the educators at the UW and the GID Lab to help inform next steps in creating a more inclusive environment for current and future BIPOC design students.

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For more updates and resources on the GID Lab, innovation, design thinking, and more -- follow our Twitter account and join the conversation!

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Email at globalid@uw.edu

INNOVATE TACOMA: UPDATE

In our July issue of IDEATE, we launched our **Innovate Tacoma** series to spark creative problem solving and deliver innovations through the pandemic. We started the series with UW Tacoma Student Affairs and in September wrapped up our work with the City of Tacoma. Below are updates on our current projects.

United Way of Pierce County/Resilient Pierce County
In collaboration with United Way of Pierce County and the Resilient Pierce County team, the GID Lab team is working to reimagine current access to health and human services in light of the pandemic to better support communities in Tacoma.
Throughout the month of September, we conducted three focus groups and nine interviews with 15 participants total. Based on the data gathered, we developed personas - fictional characterizations drawn from research data - to summarize our findings and place the focus on the people most affected. We are currently in the middle of our series of design thinking workshops with the Resilient Pierce County (RPC) team with a focus on developing prototypes for further iteration at the November 10, 2020 From Poverty to Possibilities Summit.

South Sound Together
The goal of this project, spearheaded by South Sound Together leadership, is to increase the number of young people who aspire to civic leadership in the South Sound to ensure our region has engaged and diverse leaders. In coordination with Pacific Lutheran University, the GID Lab will be hosting a series of two design thinking workshops for UW Tacoma students at the end of October to address the following bias-to-action:
How might we increase the number of young people who aspire to civic leadership in the South Sound?

Students--we want your voices in the *South Sound Together Civic Engagement by Design* project! Please read the flyer below and rsvp to participate!