Growing Prosperity in the First State
Delaware State University Extension and University of Delaware Extension
Innovation Skill Building Experience

February 26-27, 2020
Overview

The Delaware State University (DSU) Extension and University of Delaware (UDEL) Extension Innovation Skill Building Experience (ISBE) occurred on February 26-27, 2020 in the Design Thinking Laboratory on the DSU campus in Dover, DE. There were 23 participants made up of educators, agents, specialists, administrators and community members who worked together in 6 teams.

Two of the Impact Collaborative facilitators, Jennifer Volk (UDEL) and Talysha Lingham (DSU), had positive experiences at their facilitator training in January 2019 and brought the idea for hosting a joint institutional ISBE home to Delaware as well as incorporating the ISBE Innovation Level into their fall joint institutional conference.

Intended Outcomes

1. Develop program planning skills that incorporate innovation and design thinking
2. Increase our capacity to develop and deliver innovative programs and delivery methods that meet the needs of existing and future clientele
3. Develop plans to collaboratively identify and address emerging issues key to building a prosperous First State resulting in meaningful impact at the local and state levels
4. Teams will have an identified path forward, tangible take-aways, and/or action plans for implementing next steps
Design Elements

The design team, referenced below, established the intended outcomes and evaluation indicators for the learning experience, recruited teams that would work together during the conference, and helped design the format, working agenda and slide deck.

DSU/UDEL Design Team

- Quadia Ameen (DSU)
- Sarah Bercaw (UD)
- Donna Brown (DSU)
- Troy Darden (DSU)
- Talaysha Lingham (DSU), ISBE Facilitator
- Michelle Rodgers (UDEL)
- Jennifer Volk (UDEL), ISBE Facilitator
- Michelle Wolfred (UDEL)
- Molly Immendorf (eXtension), ISBE Facilitator
- Annie Jones (eXtension), ISBE Facilitator

Highlights of the DSU/UDEL design included their Extension Leadership were committed to supporting the innovative team ideas that resulted from the conference. Donna Brown was present and
participated in many activities on both days of the event. Unexpected circumstances prevented Michelle Rodgers from participating on Day 1, but she was able to join as a judge via Zoom to see the team pitches on Day 2. They also committed to supporting the progress of some of the teams by selecting and awarding monetary and other support for teams to complete their work. Other design firsts were three teams that had community members, including 4-H youth leaders who made up the majority of one of the teams from UDEL. The location afforded an extra dose of creativity since the walls were all white boards. A new twist on sharing the ideas generated included 1-min pitches to each other during a timed Gallery Walk that helped teams prepare for their 3-min pitches in front of guest judges from both DSU and UDEL Leadership. Throughout the event, teams were able to ideate, innovate, share, and learn.

Teams

Delaware Oasis Team

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quadia</th>
<th>Ameen</th>
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<tr>
<td>Beverly</td>
<td>Banks</td>
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<td>Carolyn</td>
<td>Grier</td>
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<td>Thomas</td>
<td>Harmon III</td>
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<td>Mauricio</td>
<td>Vargas</td>
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The Transformers

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<td>Lekha</td>
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<td>Dean</td>
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The Pod

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<th>Blake</th>
<th>Moore</th>
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<td>Dan</td>
<td>Severson</td>
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<td>Katie</td>
<td>Young</td>
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The F.A.R.M.

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<th>Maria</th>
<th>Pippidis</th>
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<td>Maryann</td>
<td>Reed</td>
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<td>Laurie</td>
<td>Wolinski</td>
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4-H Tech Team

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<th>Caroline</th>
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<td>Emma</td>
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<td>Jenny</td>
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Prevention Through Extension

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<th>Jackie</th>
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<td>Lindsay</td>
<td>Hughes</td>
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<td>Karen</td>
<td>Johnston</td>
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Awarding Innovation

At the end of the second day, teams were asked to provide a three-minute pitch of their team idea. These pitches were evaluated by a four-member panel of DSU and UDEL Leadership. The panel of judges scored each of the six teams using the following criteria:

- Compelling
- Unique
- Meeting a need
- Organizational fit
- Clear ask
- Innovative solution

Judges:
Dyremple Marsh, Dean, 1890 Administrator, Research Director, Delaware State University

Donna Brown, Associate Dean for Extension, Delaware State University

Mark Rieger, Dean, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of Delaware

Michelle Rodgers, Associate Dean and Director, University of Delaware Extension
Delaware Oasis Team

Canvas

A food desert train-the-trainer experience for professionals working in human services that educates and highlights the challenges faced by those living in food deserts enabling participants to disseminate information to their clients about the ability to purchase healthy foods unlike processed and pre-packaged foods.

Award: $2,000
The Transformers
An Extension application for Delawareans that allows convenient access to all DSU Extension programs enabling greater impact and improved quality of life unlike traditional implementation methods.

Award: $3,500
The Pod Canvas

A Delaware Extension podcast for citizens of the state that provides access to unbiased, science-based university knowledge enabling open, respectful conversation on local topics unlike (anything done before!)

Award: $5,000
The F.A.R.M. Canvas

An educational module for young farm family members that creates awareness about Farm Succession Planning, introduces tools to enable their involvement in the planning unlike traditional programs that are geared towards older generations!

Award: $2,000
4-H Tech Team

A STEAM program for youth ages 5-19 that introduces science, technology, engineering, arts and math experiences in out of school time enabling youth to explore options unlike traditional classroom programs.

Award: $4,000
Prevention Through Extension

Canvas

A prevention speakers bureau for communities across the state of individuals that are willing to share their life-changing stories related to substance use + abuse enabling youth and adults to learn from first-hand experiences unlike textbook knowledge.

Award: $2,000
Evaluation results (~n 20; 87% response rate)

1. Did you develop program planning skills that incorporate innovation and design thinking?
20 responses

2. Did you increase your capacity to develop and deliver innovative programs and delivery methods that meet the needs of existing and future clientele?
20 responses
3. Did you develop plans to collaboratively identify and address emerging issues that are key to building a prosperous First State resulting in meaningful impact at the local and state levels?

- 20 responses

4. Do you and/or your team have an identified path forward, tangible take-aways and/or action plans for implementing next steps?

- 20 responses

Which institution do you represent?
- Delaware State University - 8
- University of Delaware - 12

5. What is your team name? (optional)

- 17 respondents shared their team name
6. In many instances, teams came together for the first time for the purpose of this event. How do you expect your team to proceed following the event?

20 responses

- 60%: It was great to work with my teammates during the event, but I doubt that I/we will continue to work together as a team...
- 15%: We developed some great ideas at the event and we will stay connected in the short-term as an ad hoc group.
- 25%: I can see many of my teammates staying together to further develop our...
- 5%: Our team is committed to carrying this project forward and achieving project...

7. I will recommend the Impact Collaborative Innovation Skill-Building Experience event to others.

20 responses

- 100%: Yes
- 0%: No
9. What was your biggest take-away from the Innovation Skill Building Experience? (16 responses)

- Five of the respondents commented on planning a project, program, or event:
  - “Learning the ins-and-outs of planning a project.”
  - “I like this approach-especially for newer extension employees. It is not only good program planning model but also illustrates excellent adult Ed and community development processes”
  - “Steps to developing an idea into an actual program that can be implemented.”
- Four of the respondents commented on specific ISBE tools/methods/process:
  - “Planning and questioning ideas. Especially from folks outside of the team.”
  - “Listen to questions without answering to help further develop idea”
  - “It was fun and creative to help build our ideas”
- Three of the respondents commented on storytelling/pitches:
  - “Have a clear vision to be able to pitch to supporters and partners.”
  - “Liked the 1 min walks to find out about everyone’s idea and watching everyone’s 3 minute presentations.”
- Three of the respondents commented on teamwork:
  - “Identifying a problem, creatively working as a team to include all skills, talents, and knowledge to elevate as best we can to help those in need.”
  - “Working passionately as a team yield the best outcome”
11. If no, or other, what would have improved your experience? (5 responses)

- Two respondents referred to *timing*.
  - “More prep time for 3min pitches. We did ours on breaks all morning.”
  - “An extra day would’ve been nice and extra time to present. Maybe 5 mins instead of 3 mins”

- “Perhaps team do [more preparation] prior meeting.”
- “More outside groups involved”
- “Ideation”
13. Do you have any additional thoughts, comments, feedback or shout-outs to someone/something you’d like to share? If so, please share below. (34 responses)

- 2 respondents shared comments about fellow participants and teams.
  - “Work on projects that all come to pass and are successful”
  - “It was great to interact with people from all the different teams and a lot of great ideas were shared. I plan to reach out to some of these folks for other projects.”

- 4 respondents made generally positive comments.
  - “Great workshop. Everything was excellent.”
  - “This is one of the best workshops I have attended. Good planning and motivated people.”
  - “This was absolutely amazing, informative, and fun. Thank you!!!”

- 5 respondents expressed gratitude.
  - “Appreciate the opportunity to be involved”
  - “Thank you!!”
Conclusion

Several factors contributed to making this a successful Innovation Skill Building Experience.

1. Positive and supportive design team - From the beginning of our work together, the design team had a positive and optimistic outlook for this Innovation Skill-Building Experience. The energy of the design team was contagious to all participants as well. The location, the room set-up, and additional whimsical fidget items all contributed to the atmosphere and success as well.

2. Participants who stayed engaged and active throughout and then went the “extra mile” to prepare and present their pitches. Despite what is often a challenging 2-day event both physically and mentally, the participants’ energy never flagged.

3. Involved, supportive and encouraging Extension Leadership Team from both institutions.

4. Involvement of community members: a SNAP-Ed intern, a local representative of USDA, and three 4-H youths.

5. Facilitators - Finally, and certainly not least, the care, commitment and expertise of the facilitators who made this a successful experience.