USCCB CAMPUS MINISTRY INITIATIVE

OSV INSTITUTE
FOR CATHOLIC INNOVATION

IN THIS REPORT

OSVI INNOVATION TEAM

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CONSULTATIVE NARRATIVE

The 2017 United States Conference of Catholic Bishops report, *A National Study on Catholic Campus Ministry*, revealed the under-representation of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and community college systems within the national landscape of Catholic Campus Ministries. Motivated by a desire to harness the passion and creative potential of leaders serving HBCUs and community colleges, Barbara McCrabb, Assistant Director for Higher Education for the Secretariat of Catholic Education within the USCCB, collaborated with the OSV Institute for Catholic Innovation to inspire and cultivate a culture of innovation, as well as to lead and coach a corresponding design process. Thus, the Campus Ministry Innovation Initiative was formed and shepherded by the OSV Institute from August 2022 until March 2023.

The invitation to participate in the Campus Ministry Initiative was extended to a diverse group of HBCU, community college, and diocesan/archdiocesan leaders who were eager to engage in creative problem solving. The campus ministry or diocesan/archdiocesan leadership from the following entities participated:

HBCU:
- Howard University
- Texas Southern University
- Lincoln University

Community College:
- Hawkeye Community College/University of Northern Iowa
- Manchester Community College

Four Year Institution:
- University of Wisconsin-Green Bay

Diocese:
- Archdiocese of St. Louis
- Diocese of Austin
- Diocese of Birmingham
- Diocese of Charleston

**Barbara McCrabb &
Jason Deuterman**

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In the case of diocesan/archdiocesan participation, those leaders represented geographical locations with either HBCU or community college presence.

The Campus Ministry Initiative commenced with a three-day, two-night gathering in September 2022 at the Washington Retreat House in Washington, D.C. Situated on the "Catholic block" in the nation's capital, with its proximity to the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, the Catholic University of America, Howard University (one of the participating organizations), and the USCCB offices, the hosting of the event at the Washington Retreat House was a physical reminder of the potential of the Campus Ministry Innovation Initiative to have a rippling impact on how black students and community college students are served nationwide.

Group Photo Following Mass at the Washington Retreat House

The attending participants received an immersion into the ethos of Catholic Design Thinking and formed an important bond through shared stories and professional struggles. Campus ministry leaders, young adults, and diocesan staff found themselves even more greatly aligned in a shared mission to innovate for the sake of college students who were disengaged, disenfranchised, or simply unknown.

As macro trends began to surface, participants organically formed four Cohort Teams around shared problems. Those problems would later be defined as "wicked problems"—that is, problems where no prior solutions have been found or developed. Each Cohort Team would journey together over several months with a quest to develop the most innovative solutions possible to address the wicked problems that they defined. For the purposes of this report, as it will be referenced later, a Cohort Team was comprised of leaders from different campus ministries or dioceses. Each entity represented within the Initiative was then instructed to create a local Design Team to engage the design process within their own locale and report back to their Cohort Team.

Organizing Pain Points

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Following the gathering in D.C., the group of four Cohort Teams received additional formation in Catholic Design Thinking while also functioning as practitioners of the methodology. Virtual check-in calls, formation modules, and coaching supported the work of the teams.

At the onset of the Campus Ministry Innovation Initiative, the goal of the partnership with OSVi was to inspire creativity and foster a culture of innovative thinking and strategic doing in the participating entities. It is OSVi's belief that the goal was not only realized, but furthered, as Cohort Team participants, and their Design Team members back home, challenged conventional thinking and aspired to develop outside the box ideas that would ultimately facilitate meaningful encounters with those they serve. A clear roadmap was constructed for participants to take risks, more strategically recognize and discern the movement of the Holy Spirit, and ultimately pilot new ideas.

> "We talk about this being Spirit-led and Spirit-driven and I felt the Spirit there the whole time."
> -Cohort Team Member

Developing Stakeholder Maps

> "I guess you could say that I am mid-career; I am learning new skills and learning to see things through a different framework. Catholic Design Thinking answers one of my frustrations in ministry, 'How do we create something new without having an example of something before?'"
> -Cohort Team Member

> "I am awestruck at how this all came together. I didn't realize how many people want to collaborate with campus ministry."
> -Cohort Team Member

Even when the demands and schedules of campus ministry and diocesan responsibilities provided a challenge to meeting the workload of Catholic Design Thinking, groups persisted and were able to develop exciting ideas that are now ready to be tested as potential solutions for stakeholders. While varying progress was made by the individual Cohort Teams, each team is now equipped with the Catholic Design Thinking methodology and empowered to continue addressing the wicked problems before them as well as those that may surface in the future.

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PROJECT TIMELINE

MONTH	DATE	TOUCHPOINT
September 2022	27-29	Large Group In-Person Gathering at Washington Retreat House
October 2022	25	Virtual Catholic Design Thinking Module: Ethnographic Interviewing
November 2022	10	Virtual Large Group Check-in
	16	Virtual Large Group Check-in
December 2022	5	Virtual Large Group Check-in
	14	Virtual Catholic Design Thinking Module: Building Insights
January 2023	10	Virtual Large Group Check-in
	19	Virtual Large Group Check-in
February 2023	13	Virtual Catholic Design Thinking Module: Brainstorming
	15	Virtual Large Group Check-in
March 2023	15	Virtual Large Group Check-in
	20	Virtual Catholic Design Thinking Module: Prototype and Test
	23	Virtual Large Group Check-in

Introduction to the Ethos of Catholic Design Thinking

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A REVIEW OF THE METHODOLOGY EMPLOYED DURING CONSULTATION

catholic design thinking

1. DEFINE THE WICKED PROBLEM
2. OBSERVE & LISTEN WITH EMPATHY
3. BUILD INSIGHTS & TELL THE STORY
4. BRAINSTORM
5. BUILD SOMETHING
6. TEST WHAT YOU BUILD
7. REFLECT & PITCH

OSVi

DEFINE THE WICKED PROBLEM

4 Wicked Problems Identified by the Initiative

"Who does your heart break for?" This is the first question posed by Catholic Design Thinking. By endeavoring to identify the core pain points and constraints of a designated primary stakeholder, empathy is cultivated. That empathy is then used to fuel insights that will eventually drive the creation of solutions that are keenly oriented toward the core stakeholders themselves.
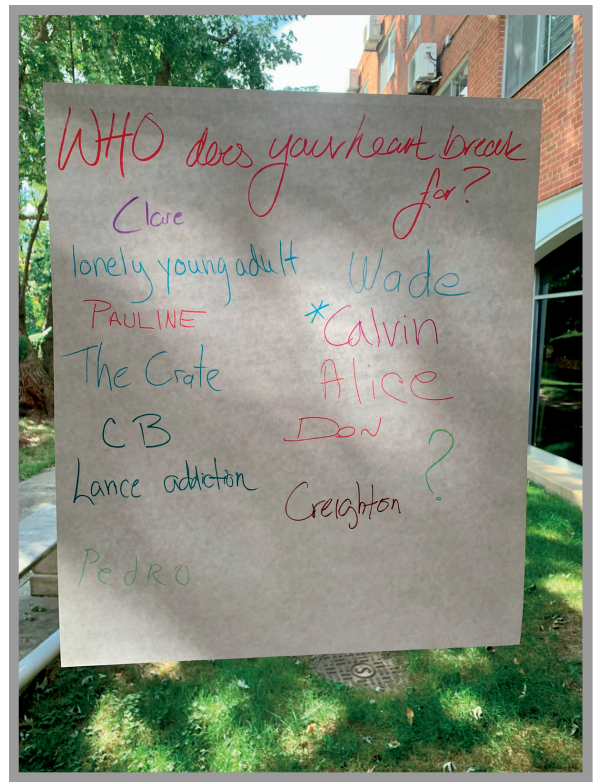
Who does your heart break for?

OBSERVE & LISTEN WITH EMPATHY

58 Hours of Interviews Conducted Between the 4 Cohort Teams

Empathy is a safeguard against assumptions. Catholic Design Thinking is dependent upon empathetic encounters with stakeholders who provide insights into the wicked problem that could not have been known otherwise.

Ethnographic interviewing was the discovery tool chosen for this project and deployed to gather data through empathetic listening. Ethnographic interviewing is the intentional study of culture in space and time through a multiplicity of one on one, hour-long interviews. Each team's interviewing pool was created by asking the Design Team members to consider the various stakeholders connected to the wicked problem.

BUILD INSIGHTS & TELL THE STORY

5 Narrative Galleries Hosted Between the 4 Cohort Teams

Determining Stakeholder Groups for Interviews

Each Design Team was encouraged to host a Narrative Gallery. The Narrative Gallery is a both a design thinking tool as well as a community experience. It achieves significant community impact and insight-building by forcing the designer to widen his or her circle of influence by inviting more stakeholders into the process of solving a wicked problem. Stakeholders are able to provide comments and perspective on what resonates most from the interview data.

For organization leaders—of which ministry leaders are no different—it can often be easier, and sometimes even preferable, to keep circles small and feedback limited. This very human impulse stems from fear of change and even desire to control the narrative. However, it is important to recall what and who is missing when thinking, either individually or within an insulated leadership team, is homogenous. Within the Body of Christ, diversity is of great value and, when leveraged to the fullest, creates a dynamic interplay of varied thinking, processes, ideas, and problem-solving. Using the Narrative Gallery tool, diverse perspectives and insights were surfaced.

Design Team members then compiled their interview and Narrative Gallery notes and insights and sent them to OSVi. With thoughtful reflection and analysis, the OSVi team compiled key insights relevant to each Cohort Team.

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Narrative Gallery
Diocese of Charleston

> "The experience was enjoyed by stakeholders. They were emotional reading the profiles; we are losing a lot of Black Catholic young adults..."
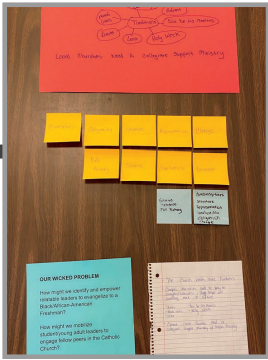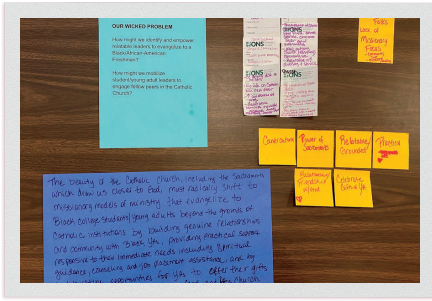> -Design Team Member

> "No one had ever given [the stakeholders] this opportunity before, so in a way, they became interviewees. They saw themselves in the stories that they read."
> -Design Team Member

Narrative Gallery
Howard University

Narrative Gallery
University of Wisconsin - Green Bay

Narrative Gallery
Texas Southern University

Narrative Gallery
Manchester Community College

> ❝
> "The insights were powerful."
> -Design Team Member

BRAINSTORM

6 Innovative Ideas (Ready to Test)
Ideated by the Cohort Teams

Motivated by the wicked problem at hand, informed by their empathetic experiences, and steered by the key insights, the Cohort Teams were faced with the challenge of identifying a solution. Over the course of many hours and hundreds of ideas, two of the Cohort Teams surfaced three ideas each that they desired to prototype and test for desirability, feasibility, and viability amongst their stakeholders.

BUILD SOMETHING & TEST WHAT YOU BUILD

After brainstorming ideas to solve the problem at hand, a time of "strategic doing" takes place. This phase of Catholic Design Thinking brings to life that which as an idea is only conceptual, animating it with stakeholders and then testing and iterating it based upon their feedback.

Because this is human-centered design, prototyping functions as an opportunity to allow end-users of a prospective solution to tell a Design Team what they like and love about an idea—and what they don't. At its core, prototyping is a process of experimentation that tests the varied elements of an idea with end users in regular intervals to validate that the solution will meet expressed needs. By inviting groups of end-users to be invested in the development and growth of an offering, the Design Team continues to gain invaluable knowledge about what stakeholders truly desire while also making them feel seen and heard. After many rounds of prototyping and testing, a solution is eventually ready to be launched widely to end-users as a Minimum Viable Offering.

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COHORT TEAM #1- MEET THE TEAM

Organization	Representative	Contact
Howard University	Fr. Robert Boxie, Chaplain assigned to Howard University Ali Mumbach, Staff member with Howard University Catholic Campus Ministry	fatherboxie@gmail.com; ali.mumbach@bison.howard.edu
Archdiocese of St. Louis	Joyce Jones, Director of the Office of Racial Harmony Stone Cook, Diocesan leader	joycejones@archstl.org; stone.cook45@gmail.com

Define the Wicked Problem

How might we mobilize student/young adult leaders
to engage fellow peers in the Catholic Church?

Both Howard University and the Archdiocese of St. Louis had a vested interest in elevating the impact of campus ministry efforts toward college students. Both entities approached the wicked problem with a start-up mentality given that previous efforts to grow and support campus ministry in their local areas were limited. While the Howard University team was focused on their localized student population, the St. Louis archdiocesan team had an expanded focus to include solutions that would impact multiple HBCU campuses, as well as black young adults in parishes across the diocese.

Observe & Listen with Empathy

An exercise in ethnographic interviewing and research analysis was crucial and impactful to the Howard University team, as well as to the student population engaged. The Howard University team conducted 13 hours of documented ethnographic interviews. Stakeholders included freshmen through senior students. The team from the Archdiocese of St. Louis was unable to provide ethnographic research to the cohort project at the time of insight analysis. However, the archdiocesan team communicated that focus group conversations took place that, in turn, affirmed the idea their individual team chose to pursue. The following insights, then, are reflective of Howard University Catholic Campus Ministry ethnography.

Build Insights & Tell the Story

1. Students feel lonely due to superficial connections and deeply desire a steadfast, consistent community.
2. Campus ministry has a duty to foster a sense of belonging that makes people feel warm and has a reputation of not being exclusive or judgmental, while holding fast to truth.
3. Student leaders should be regularly identified, trained, and mobilized to engage and receive fellow students.
4. Content should be inspiring, drawing upon Tradition, history, sacramentality, and truth, all while engaging and honoring the deeply rich and diverse culture of Black students.
5. Creating avenues for students to address misunderstandings and misconceptions will allow them to better understand themselves and their unique place in the Church, and is especially paramount for the retention of students recently engaged by the campus ministry.
6. Campus ministry can identify and leverage the stories of students deepening relationships and connecting with God that can, in turn, be shared with the wider student community to generate interest in faith activity on campus.
7. How can the campus ministry best engage other faiths and campus groups?

Brainstorm

At the time of writing this report, Howard University was finalizing arrangements to conduct their brainstorm session.

Joyce Jones

Ali Mumbach & Fr. Robert Boxie

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COHORT TEAM #2- MEET THE TEAM

Organization	Representative	Contact
University of Wisconsin, Green Bay	Sister Laura Zeltan & Becky Vankauwenberg, Assigned Campus Ministers	laurazelten@gmail.com; becky.vankauwenberg@gmail.com
Lincoln University in Jefferson City, MO	Deacon Bill Seibert, Chaplain assigned to Lincoln	seibert969@gmail.com
Manchester Community College in Manchester, CT	James Gentile, Professor and Faculty Member, Head of the Student Catholic Club	jgentile@mcc.commnet.edu; jgentile@manchestercc.edu
Austin Community Colleges, Diocese of Austin, TX	Alison Tate, Secretariat Director of Formation and Spirituality	alison-tate@austindiocese.org

Define the Wicked Problem

How might campus ministers partner with other organizations
to help our Catholic college students?

This Cohort Team had a challenge in synthesizing one wicked problem that encapsulated their various situations without being so vague that it lacked direction.

Each member of the Cohort Team held the common belief that if there was more collaboration between other organizations who cared for students and the campus ministries, the students would better benefit from campus ministry services. In establishing their campus ministry programs, the organization leaders had run into similar challenges such as: lack of access to students, struggles navigating the red tape around official school "club" status, the language of "religious" or "faith-based" organizations repelling support, understanding of services from school administration, broken continuity of involvement between high school youth ministry and college campus ministry, and understanding of needs from parish or diocesan advocates who allocated human and financial resources to the ministry.

The University of Wisconsin and Lincoln University were specifically seeking direction and support from their respective diocese, who have been undergoing transitions. They also desired connections with parishes. Manchester Community College in Connecticut has been facing a unique challenge as it unites several community college campuses into one state-wide system. The Diocese of Austin was prepared to dedicate diocesan appeal funds to creatively support campus ministry across 11 community college campuses.

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Observe & Listen with Empathy

The group collectively conducted 21 hours of interviews on 3 different campuses. Stakeholders included students, faculty administration, other leaders of faith-based clubs or campus ministries, and diocesan staff.

Build Insights & Tell the Story

1. Students are interested in a community that is defined as non-judgmental, fun, accepting, hospitable, and safe (this may or may not be a Catholic community).
2. Campus administration values faith-based organizations as far as they promote holistic student development, interfaith-exchange, and students' commitment to community within the organization.
3. A major deterrent to the fruitfulness of campus ministry is its lack of visibility both to faculty and to students.
4. Students do not necessarily express a desire to join campus ministry for the sake of growing in their relationship with Jesus.
5. Campus ministry needs to support the holistic needs of the student, rather than their spiritual needs alone.
6. For campus ministries lacking in resources, strategic collaboration with other campus groups or clubs with similar intentions (religious or not) can provide innovative avenues for connecting with students.
7. "Club structures" on campus can be administratively complicated and frequently impede a campus ministry's ability to be present to the students in the way in which they desire.
8. Campus ministries need an effective branding strategy to communicate how they can offer both what students desire and what faculty can publicly support.

Brainstorm

At the conclusion of their time working together, the Cohort Team surfaced 3 ideas to address their wicked problem:

1. A tool to facilitate empathetic conversations between students and collaborating organization leaders.
2. Campus Ministry rebranding that emphasizes a non-judgmental approach and inclusion of all persons with varying races, ethnicities, and walks of faith.
3. A care package give-away that emphasizes the holistic care of the person.

Alison Tate

James Gentile, Deacon Bill Seibert, Rochelle Seibert, & Sister Laura Zelten

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COHORT TEAM #3- MEET THE TEAM

Organization	Representative	Contact
Texas Southern University	Doris Barrow, Director of Newman Campus Ministry	tsunewman@gmail.com
Diocese of Charleston	Kathleen Merritt, Director, Office of Black Catholics & Native American Ministries Michael Gourdin, Assistant Director, Office of Black Catholics & Native American Ministries	kmerritt@charlestondiocese.org mgourdin@charlestondiocese.org

Define the Wicked Problem

How might we identify and empower relatable leaders
to evangelize to Black/African American students?

Both Texas Southern University (TSU) and the Diocese of Charleston had established campus ministry efforts prior to the beginning of this innovation project. As such, both teams were keenly aware of the need to scale their outreach and discipleship efforts if noticeable growth of their ministry efforts was to take place. At the beginning of the project, their wicked problem identified a highly-specific, underserved demographic in need of a viable solution: male Black/African American freshmen.

However, as the Cohort Team began to consider their problem and analyze the data from their ethnographic research, they discerned the need to reorient their problem toward a more pressing opportunity, resulting in the wicked problem noted at the beginning of this section.

Observe & Listen with Empathy
The Cohort Team from Texas Southern University and the Diocese of Charleston conducted a combined 24 hours of ethnographic interviews.

As with many teams, ethnography often results in redefining a wicked problem as data, research analysis, and empathetic understanding of stakeholder pain points brings clarity to the deepest need of the identified constituency. In the case of the TSU and Charleston team, while they began their work seeking a viable solution that would impact the faith lives of male Black/African American freshmen, what they found was that the impact could only be multiplied with highly engaged, effectual leaders. It was later, as insights and discernment of ethnographic data took place that a redefining of the problem occurred and ultimately allowed for a dramatic reorientation of efforts to ideate an impactful, boundary-pushing solution.

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Build Insights and Tell the Story

Each Design Team within the cohort conducted a Narrative Gallery experience. Over 7 hours of combined analysis took place in order to create the following insights.

1. For Black students to feel like the Church is responsible for their needs, they need to be empowered to be the protagonists of their own faith story.
2. The Church has a responsibility to advocate, train, and ensure diversity representation at all levels in campus ministry programs.
3. Campus ministries should provide access to practical support that responds to the immediate needs of Black college students including spiritual guidance, counseling, academic support, and job placement so that the student may be holistically accompanied and developed.
4. Current leaders and those invited into leadership should be taught how to act in a radically missionary way, with a focus on building authentic relationships.
5. Local parishes, where colleges and universities reside, should be instrumental in the support of Catholic campus ministry. They are the "proving ground" for future parishioners and have a responsibility for all souls within their boundaries.
6. Clergy and lay leadership should be taught how to embrace the "souls of Black folks" by understanding and engaging the cultural practices of young, Black students.
7. Homilies, talks, and all other forms of messaging and content should speak to the issues faced by Black students, and leaders have a responsibility to remain inviting and open as questions and commentary are put forth.

Brainstorm

At the conclusion of their time working together, the Cohort Team surfaced 3 ideas to address their wicked problem:

1. Mobile food truck and ministry experience that can be available to multiple campuses on a set cycle, designed, executed, and run by students. This experience would train students in ministry, leadership, and entrepreneurship.
2. Create a database of students with a corresponding gifts assessment that would allow campus ministry leadership to quickly identify students who would pair well with specific programs and services. This could be accomplished through a partnership with the Newman Connection or a similar service as an innovation to a service already offered.
3. Development of a Field Guide for HBCUs w/playbook, mentoring, network, ongoing training.
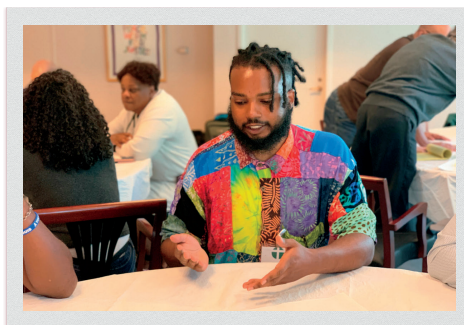
Michael Gourdin

Doris Barrow & Kathleen Merritt

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COHORT TEAM #4- MEET THE TEAM

Organization	Representative	Contact
University of Wisconsin, Green Bay	Becky Vankauwenberg, Campus Ministry Staff	becky.vankauwenberg@gmail.com
University of Northern Iowa	Paul Lee, Director of St. Stephen the Witness Catholic Campus Center	p.lee@dbqarch.org
Diocese of Birmingham	James Watts, Director of the Office of Black Catholic Ministry Alex Kubik, Director of the Office of Discipleship & Mission	jwatts@bhmdiocese.org; akubik@bhmdiocese.org

Define the Wicked Problem

How can we activate stakeholders in support of campus ministry?

When defining their wicked problem, the Cohort Team agreed that the focus and intended goal was not financial development through bolstering philanthropic activity. Rather, their shared desire was to better articulate the current needs of their campus or diocesan ministry to supporters, and in turn animate those supporters to assist in jointly advocating for and executing upon identified growth opportunities.

Observe & Listen with Empathy

Due to a variety of circumstances unforeseen at the onset of the project, the Diocese of Birmingham and the campus ministry at Hawkeye Community College/University of Northern Iowa were unable to fully engage the ethnographic discovery phase of design thinking, thus pausing the project for this team. While the Cohort Team was able to develop interview questions related to the wicked problem, only the University of Wisconsin at Green Bay submitted interviews for the team project. In late February 2023, Becky Vankauwenberg moved over to Team #2 to continue her participation alongside her Wisconsin colleague, Sr. Laura Zelten.

James Watts

Paul Lee & Becky Vankauwenberg

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THE WORK CONTINUES

OSVi recommends that Teams #2 and #3 immediately move forward with building and testing their top 3 ideas. Following the recommended pathway outlined in the Brainstorming and subsequent Build and Test modules, the Cohort Teams should first develop a Napkin Pitch (a tool that helps a Design Team succinctly articulate an idea) for each idea and solicit feedback from a variety of stakeholders based on initial reactions to the Napkin Pitch. Using that feedback and coupling it with substantial prayer, the teams can discern which (or all) of the three ideas that will move on to be storyboarded or blueprinted. Again, feedback and prayer should be seen as integral, allowing future end-users of the prospective solution to offer feedback at every level and iterative stage.

As first testable iterations of the prospective solutions are developed, Teams 2 and 3 might consider testing specific features or use cases of their prototype designs with end-users. This type of prototyping can be highly beneficial in the design of experiences as it allows the Design Team to clearly identify the likes and dislikes of the end-user. It should be remembered that testing is important for three reasons. First, while some users might agree that the identified problem is worth solving, testing verifies that there will be enough users to create a following of the experience or offering at launch and beyond. Second, on the note of the problem itself, testing is an ongoing validation that the solution solves the problem in a way that users would not only use themselves over similar experiences already available, but that they would also recommend to a friend. And finally, the third reason for testing is to find out if people will actually be willing to give of their time to not only participate, but to engage in an ongoing fashion.

OSVi recommends that Team #1 move to brainstorming as quickly as possible so as not to lose momentum from the insights recognized during the ethnographic discovery phase.

Finally, OSVi recommends that the Design Team members of Team #4 analyze and discern if now is the proper time for innovation work within their individual organizations. Due to the intensity and dedication required for innovation design to be effective and fruitful, it is recommended that a project load and workflow analysis be conducted by each organization prior to re-engaging.

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER REVIEW

To further dive into the Catholic Design Thinking process, please view the project's shared Google Folder, organized by Cohort Team. For access to the Google Drive Folder, please contact Barbara McCrabb, bmccrabb@usccb.org.