

The start-up and stand-out program was overall a great one for me. I was excited and expectant at the same time, my expectations were met! I was able to learn, relearn and unlearn through the course of the entire program.

There were several lessons learned as each session was fully packed with takeaways. However, the following ones stood out for me as they will help shape and strengthen my innovative quest and entrepreneurial journey.

The Entrepreneurial Journey

The series had speakers talk about their journey, challenges faced, and how they are managing to stay afloat in the face of current realities. Each speaker emphasized the need to stay focused and connect with role models and mentors (people that have been there, done that), among other resources available within the school to help birth our ideas into something of economic or social value.

They also emphasized the need to believe in oneself. Travel the road less taken and be comfortable with being uncomfortable. These for me are key lessons that will help me personally, going forward.

The Brainstorming for Business Workshop

The brainstorming session was another area that stood out for me. I learned that technology is an enabler to aid us in solving human problems. A key take-home was the application of the scientific approach to whatever idea I had toward solving or providing an economic or social value. The Hypothesis, testing, design, and validation stages. Each of these stages is key to building a great idea, At the hypothesis stage, experimentation is quite key as we keep testing the hypothesis, it accelerates our work until with gain clarity. We experiment by surveying our segmented group, this helps to validate our idea. Depending on the results of our experiment we can either drop or run with the idea. Each experiment must also be measurable! Using the worksheet to work with was also a tool I thought was great.

The Meaningful Pitch Challenge

Lastly, the meaningful pitch challenge was the highlight of the entire program for me, it brought different skills to bear. Critical thinking, teamwork, and collaboration were skills I was glad to apply while brainstorming on my pitch with team members. Also, I had never done a pitch before, so it was something I was eagerly looking forward to.

The center for professionalism and communication was able to convey steps as to how to make a successful pitch from identifying an unmet need, to unveiling the product, value proposition, and revenue generation. I particularly learned about the five elements in a dynamic pitch. Starting strong was the first element and it was stressed that the first two sentences were always key to wowing your audience as the average attention span for humans is eight seconds!

The second is the story and script which deals with the entire narrative structure. The story should be targeted at the hero of the story which should be the idea! Our nonverbals allow us to be professional and be the authority in the space. I also learned about Synchrony - our vocals, visuals, and text must be in harmony. Speech should be audible, and pacing should be moderated throughout the pitch.

In conclusion, I will say I am much closer to being an entrepreneur than I was before the program.

