This past academic year was truly remarkable given the challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic however it also highlighted the resiliency of our faculty, staff, and students. It provided an opportunity to showcase our creativity, leadership, and the ability to pivot while giving us a chance to practice these critical skills in real-time. We seamlessly transitioned all our courses to online delivery, employed new innovative teaching tools, continued to build partnerships around the state and the country with schools and private industry, and cultivated a record-setting Gator Giving Day. Additionally, we expanded our total available square footage in preparation for adding a state-of-the-art student business incubator, pitch studio, and sophisticated prototyping and fabrication lab.

Our results this year continue to reflect the growing need for undergraduate students to enter the workplace with skills such as creativity, problem-solving, verbal communication, & multidisciplinary collaboration. Most notably, our students produced over 44 prototypes in partnership with the Palm Beach School for Autism (PBSFA) focused on creating sustainable on-site businesses that provide vocational training for PBSFA Project Next students. These innovations were showcased at our Catalyst program which was delivered completely online over the summer semesters. We sent IA students to competitive online internships all over Florida and around the country. Additionally, we graduated 146 students with the Innovation minor, and we sent IA students into the local community to share entrepreneurship and innovation basics in partnership with Junior Achievement (BizTown).

As we continue to chart a path for the coming years, we are committed to delivering a cutting-edge curriculum that provides our students with a competitive edge and skills necessary to meet the challenges of our ever-changing world. Our co-curricular programs are poised to grow and offer support as students move through our curriculum and meet their needs for skill development, resources, and mentorship while developing their innovations, start-up companies or seeking to solve one of the grand challenges of our day.

We are excited to expand on the momentum gained this year in anticipation of making the future of the IA program brighter. I invite you to read more about these accomplishments in the following pages and help us celebrate our students, faculty, and staff. I hope you enjoy learning about our many additions & endeavors over the past year.

“Once we rid ourselves of Traditional Thinking, we can get on with creating The Future”

James Bertrand – French Painter

Go Gators,

Jeff Citty, Ed.D.
Director, Innovation Academy
IA BY THE NUMBERS

1031 IA STUDENTS

773 INDIVIDUAL ADVISING SESSIONS

146 STUDENTS EARNED THE IA MINOR

10 STUDENTS PARTICIPATED IN THE UF IN MAYNOOTH STUDY ABROAD

30 STUDENTS PARTICIPATED IN "THE INNOVATION MINDSET" COURSE

67 STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES ATTENDED DISCOVER IA

44 PROTOTYPES BUILT & PITCHED

13 CO-CURRICULAR OPPORTUNITIES/EVENTS FOR IA STUDENTS

30 DIFFERENT MAJORS OFFERED

8 PARTICIPATING COLLEGES

88 INDIVIDUAL DONORS FOR THE YEAR
The IA Catalyst Innovation Challenge serves as our launching point for students to apply their innovative solutions to communities, even after its corresponding course – Creativity in Action – ends. So, what does Catalyst normally look like? Throughout the length of the course, which focuses on design thinking, students team up to develop ideas & solutions to alleviate intricate, real-world problems. Through prototypes, informational posters, and persuasive pitches, they communicate their projects at Catalyst, which showcases their solutions to the community, family, friends, faculty and fellow innovators in attendance. This year’s eighth annual IA Catalyst Challenge took place in June and August, and this year saw faculty & students pivot completely and go 100% online – the classes, the project work, the pitching practices, and the virtual competition itself.

Forty-four teams rose to the challenge by developing their prototypes to answer the guiding question, “How might we create a sustainable on-site business that provides vocational training for Palm Beach School for Autism Project Next students?” The two cohorts – Summer A (June) and Summer B (August) – strove for excellence and competed virtually against each other for six different awards with a combined online audience of over 300 guests.

The highly coveted People’s Choice winners from the Summer A cohort were Maisa Mirza, Cameron Zuck, Sara Berger, Hailey Fine, and Gi- mena Segal with “Linked With Love” – a puzzle press that showcases the artwork of students, allowing them to strengthen and develop their motor and hands-on skills. The winners from the Summer B cohort were William Bannon, Shiv Chokshi, Aashi Faldu, and Dylan Srebnick, with “SuperTize” – a multi-purpose portable hygiene tool that through its assembly and sales gives PBSFA students important vocational training.

We are very proud of our students’ hard work, especially given the unique circumstances under which we had to work this summer. They persisted and prevailed – we share this quote by baseball great Nolan Ryan, which exemplifies what our students discovered:

“Enjoying success requires the ability to adapt. Only by being open to change will you have a true opportunity to get the most from your talent.”

My corporate finance internship with The Home Depot didn’t come out of the blue – it is a dream I have had since I was in high school working as a Lot Associate pushing shopping carts. I remember my parents always encouraging me to do my best, and with that mentality I was promoted to a cashier. Through high sales and credit card applications, I was then promoted to an Appliance Sales Specialist, selling appliances, credit cards, and protection plans to our customers.

After looking at a newly opened internship online, I realized it was meant for college juniors and seniors. I applied for the internship during my second year and got a response a week later for an interview. As if the stars had aligned, I landed a finance internship with Store Operations department at the corporate headquarters.

I’ve now had the chance to interact with numerous financial leaders – including our company’s CFO. The best part is my summer project, which focuses on reforecasting the company’s wage model - impacting not only over $800 million in wage expenses but affecting the work hours of over 400,000 hourly associates in stores across the country.

Hopefully, my story of a high school teen pushing shopping carts to one day working to reforecast the company’s wages can be of use to the rising talented IA students. It’s important to search for a job/internship with a company that you can see yourself working for long-term. I started working with The Home Depot when I was 16 years old, and since then I knew we could have a long-term future together. That’s my story, and how I came to the place I am at now. My story is not finished, but I’m thrilled and humbled to see what lies ahead.
STUDENT INVOLVEMENT in Innovation Academy

**IA Ambassadors**
The Innovation Academy Student Ambassadors act as student leaders, and liaisons between IA and IA students, families, and guests.
Facebook: @IAambassadors

**LEAD by IA**
IA’s Leadership Enhancement and Development (LEAD) offers students a platform to become leaders on campus and in the general Gainesville community.
Facebook: @ufialead

**Iota Alpha**
Iota Alpha is the first innovation-focused sorority at UF that caters to IA students by following the Spring/Summer calendar incorporating traditional sisterhood elements of service, friendship, and socials.
Facebook: @iotaalphauf

**IA Health**
IA Health’s mission is to help and enrich all members of tomorrow’s healthcare by developing professionally in their respective fields.
Facebook: @UFIAHealth

**H.I.R.E. IA**
H.I.R.E. IA prepares students for their careers and expands a network of professionals from different businesses in different industries.
Facebook: @hireia

NETWORKING SNAPSHOT

**Website**
46,664 NEW VISITORS
14,738 CLICKS ON FRESHMAN ADMISSION PAGE
1,177 TOTAL FOLLOWERS (313% INCREASE)

**Instagram**
68% FEMALE
32% MALE

**Twitter**
1,761 TOTAL FOLLOWERS
15,550 TOTAL TWEET IMPRESSIONS (61.4% INCREASE)

**YouTube**
50,197 TOTAL VIDEO VIEWS (16.7% INCREASE)

ADVISING SNAPSHOT

**Top Reasons Why Students Come to IA Advisors**

- Academic Concerns/General Advising
- Prospective Freshman Inquiry
- Major Change/Exploration
- Innovation Minor

**Advising Traffic**

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**Innovation Minor Completion**

- Fall 2019: 28
- Spring 2020: 62
- Summer 2020: 56
- Total: 146

IA’s 2020 Office Expansion

Schedule your virtual tour of our newly expanded IA offices by contacting ia.communications@aa.ufl.edu!

Also learn how you can support IA, and our future “Pitching Studio” and “Business Incubator” spaces by visiting our IA Fund For Excellence page found on https://innovationacademy.ufl.edu/
Amazon, one of the most innovative companies in the world, was looking for Area Managers in various offices. When I received an email about the opportunity from the Warrington College of Business, I knew I had to apply for the position. I submitted the application quickly to avoid the risk of unexpected events popping up. Life happens and you have to be ahead of the game if you can. I had the passion and drive to fill the role, but was it enough to land me a position?

When I received an email back stating that Amazon wanted to move forward with the interview process, I was so excited they had an interest in me. I replied right away to schedule my interview in the wonderful city of Miami. During the time between the interview date and the interview email I received, I practiced interview questions and researched about the company more. As the saying goes, failing to prepare is preparing to fail.

The interview day was an amazing experience. When I arrived at the fulfillment center, I automatically introduced myself to the other candidates who were also interviewing for the same position. Once we were all ready to start the interview day, all the candidates were taken to a conference room to talk to a recruiter and ask any questions we may have. The recruiter was super helpful, informative, and transparent with us about her experience. We were given a tour of the fulfillment center. It was mind-blowing to see the efficiency of the process and managers. Once the tour was over, the interview process began. Preparing myself before going to the interview and being able to speak on my involvement really helped me answer questions to the best of my ability.

Once the interview day was over, I was able to reflect on the whole experience and be grateful for the chance to interview with Amazon in Miami. The team that welcomed me in the center helped me realize that this was a company I wanted to work for even more. A few days after the interview, I received a phone call that I got the job! I am thankful for the experiences I gained throughout my college career from both the Innovation Academy and my support system. Amazon, here I come!

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?
An IA Alumni Story by Nicole Marti

*ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS*

+ IA teamed up with ThemeWorks, Inc. for our first year design thinking projects on “How might we create an engaging and interactive educational experience for museum patrons?”
+ IA collaborated with Loss Prevention Research Council (LPRC) for spring senior design thinking projects on “How might we provide an optimal retail experience via store connectedness?” and “How might we decrease theft in self-check-out lines?”
+ IA also collaborated with LPRC for summer senior design thinking projects dealing with four COVID-19 issues in retail spaces: No/Low Contact, Front of Store/Curbside Pickup, Employee Safety, Reopening Strategies
+ IA partnered with Palm Beach School for Autism for our Catalyst design thinking projects on “How might we create a sustainable onsite business that provides vocational training for PBSFA Project Next students?”
+ IA joined forces with Autodesk (Fusion 360 parent company) for faculty development and support with student projects, as well as for two $1000 scholarships for Summer 2020 Catalyst Best Prototype award recipients

*CURRICULUM ENHANCEMENTS*

+ Core creativity courses renamed to reflect enhanced curriculum: IDS 1940 Creativity and Design Thinking for Innovation; IDS 1359 Innovation in Action
+ Seamless transition of spring 2020 curriculum to a virtual platform at the onset of COVID-19, continuing through courses in the summer and fall
+ Utilization of new technology for remote instruction: Fusion Teams (Autodesk); Google Jamboard for design thinking documentation; Zoom Webinar
+ Technical Assistants enhance the student experience through support with Fusion 360, Arduino, Adobe Illustration, laser cutting and helping students with voiceover on PowerPoint presentations and YouTube videos for team presentations
IA faculty members developed a unique partnership with PBSFA this year as part of the Catalyst summer competitions in answering, “How might we create a sustainable on-site business that provides vocational training for Palm Beach School for Autism Project Next students?”

This direct collaboration allowed students to team up to develop ideas & solutions to alleviate an intricate and very real problem facing the PBSFA’s Project Next program. This program is dedicated to empowering young adults to reach their maximum level of independence for work, life and leisure – through vocational experiences in the areas of hospitality, culinary, micro-enterprise and recreation & leisure.

IA Students were asked to ideate, prototype, iterate and pitch an innovative micro-enterprise that would enhance the Project Next students’ vocational skills, while creating a revenue stream to support the program.

The PBSFA collaboration team consisted of Ann Eisenberg, Executive Director; Abby Girton, Director of Development and Marketing; and Patrick Pierre, Director of Project Next. Three projects have been chosen to move forward into discussions as potential business ideas for PBSFA: SuperTize, Artisan Suds and Project Pet.

IA faculty use Fusion 360, and Fusion Teams as curriculum enhancements in the “Creativity and Design Thinking in Innovation” and the “Innovation in Action” courses as tools for the prototyping process. Fusion 360 is a cloud-based 3D CAD/CAM/CAE software for product design from Autodesk.

“Learning to model using Autodesk Fusion 360 gives our students marketable experience developing 3D prototypes and literacy to effectively apply this technology to future challenges,” says IA Professor Charlie Cummings. “The Autodesk Education Experiences team were instrumental in our transition from the traditional physical prototypes students have shown at Catalyst to fully rendered digital 3D models that wowed judges in our Catalyst webinar. ”

Autodesk and IA began a direct collaboration this past year that further enhances the student experience. We invited Jared Vanscoder, a program manager with the company, to help us judge our catalyst award for Best Prototype. Autodesk decided to further step up for IA students and offer the first ever cash prize to the winning teams – their gift of $5k allowed for a $1,000 cash prize to be divided among the winning team members for Summer A and Summer B events.

“IT was such a pleasure for the Autodesk Education Experiences team to work with IA students and faculty over the past few months!” said Vanscoder. “The curriculum created for these courses effectively guides students through the product design process, leading them to the development of innovative and novel solutions to real world problems. We were thrilled that the cross-disciplinary teams were able to learn and use Fusion 360 with ease, and fit perfectly into their design process. Our team is looking forward to further collaboration with the students & faculty as the program grows and serves an essential need of providing innovative and entrepreneurial skills to UF students.”

The first two projects chosen to receive the Best Prototype Prize were NEXTstep and Pops with Purpose.
Special Thanks

Our accomplishments this year would not have been possible without the generous support of our partners, and all of the Innovation Academy students and their families.

Dr. J. Kent Fuchs, President
Dr. Joseph Glover, Provost
Dr. Angela Lindner, Associate Provost, Academic Affairs
Dr. Andrew McCollough, Associate Provost, Teaching and Technology
Dr. Zina Evans, Vice President, Enrollment Management & Associate Provost

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College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Warrington College of Business
University of Florida Advancement
University of Florida International Center
IA Curriculum & Advisory Committees

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