Preparing Our Future in Innovation & Technology

High school students from the Kenton County Academies of Innovation and Technology Informatics came together for a two-day workshop on NKU’s campus for several days in September to learn about entrepreneurship and how the idea generation process allows them to see opportunities where others see problems.

‘NKU Jumpstart’ is a workshop series designed to introduce local high school students to critical aspects of the entrepreneurial process - topics include creativity, communication, design thinking, idea generation, understanding the customer and pitching a business idea. The workshops provide students with a hands-on approach to understanding these concepts through the facilitation of members of the Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (CIE), part of the Haile/US Bank College of Business.

“We had the pleasure of bringing our freshman, sophomore and junior Computer Science/Informatics Scholars to participate in Jumpstart last week,” says Amanda Lewis, an instructor from Kenton County Academies of Innovation & Technology. “As a teacher, this program is perfectly designed to teach our students the basics of being an entrepreneur and developing an entrepreneurial mindset.”

Some of the activities during the September workshop included designing chairs using modeling clay, followed by pivoting their designs to meet the needs of a specific customer. The students were challenged to think creatively on what customers need and how to deliver a product that satisfies that need.

The final event at the workshop was a presentation by the students to leaders from US Bank, Dan Groneck and Craig Carlson, as well as students in the entrepreneurship program at NKU. The students worked in teams to prepare a two-minute pitch on a business idea they generated earlier that morning.

The students were also afforded the opportunity to take a tour of Griffin Hall, the NKU campus, and learn about college life by dining at Norse Commons.

As part of their academy, these students will be presenting concepts for websites, apps, or games in December at NKU and will work throughout the spring semester to prepare a working prototype and presentation to pitch to judges in May. The students will combine the skills and experience they are obtaining during their Academy education at Kenton County with the tools they learned during the NKU Jumpstart program.

“The students really enjoyed the two day workshops and overall experience,” says Amanda. “We are so happy and grateful to have a relationship with NKU in order to work together to prepare our students for an outstanding future!”

“I walked in not knowing what to expect and left with the understanding of how important entrepreneurship is to my community and my future. The workshops made me realize the importance of listening to your customer, collaborating with your team and being able to think critically.”

Trent Honaker

“The program was an amazing experience! From learning how to identify your target audience to the feedback our team received for our presentation from the judges was incredible. Thank you for making this experience possible for me and my peers.”

Savanna Woltenberg

To find out how your school can be involved, please contact the CIE at 859.572.5931 or visit our website at http://ei.nku.edu