Design Thinking for Innovation Workshop

The second day at Lehigh University commenced with a Design Thinking for Innovation Workshop led by Dr. Farah Vallera at the Global Union Coxe Hall. Dr. Vallera is a seasoned professional and business owner in instructional and learning design, as well as an active researcher in education and sociology. The workshop was divided into two parts. During the first part on Tuesday, July 26th, Dr. Vallera began by introducing herself and initiating an interactive group activity. The nine TRF fellows were organized into teams of three and tasked with employing the Design Thinking approach to address everyday problems. For instance, some students devised an innovative concept for enabling food delivery across countries. Based on these ideas, the fellows crafted handcrafted prototypes to visualize their concepts. The students relished this creative interaction. Subsequently, Dr. Vallera provided a concise overview of the definition of Design Thinking and elucidated the various phases of this entrepreneurial approach. The objectives of this workshop encompassed practicing empathetic strategies in design, identifying audience needs, rapid prototyping, receiving feedback, and iterating to enhance designs.

On Wednesday, July 27th, Dr. Vallera presented the TRF fellows with three distinct case studies. Each group was tasked with generating a novel innovation through the Design Thinking process. For example, one group devised an inventive idea for aiding individuals with vision impairments in feeding their pets. Each group subsequently developed a prototype, which were then presented to the other groups. Overall, this workshop provided valuable insights into the Design Thinking methodology, problem definition, and hands-on work with real-life case scenarios. The workshop significantly contributed to enhancing the entrepreneurial mindset by affording our fellows the opportunity to generate novel ideas and think creatively.

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