FY20 UTO Highlights

Table of Contents

Welcome to the New American University Technology Office

What does it take to support a community of more than 100,000 during a global pandemic?

This past year found us addressing questions we didn't know would exist in our lifetime. In a period of mandated physical and social distance, the boundless digital realm became our medium for authentic connections. Over the course of five months, the University Technology Office has enabled engaging learning experiences to persist -- and thrive -- in a new modality. We have created a next normal.

UTO family members have worked diligently to close the digital equity gap by providing thousands of laptops and hotspots; to train 3,000 faculty on key instructional tools; to keep the digital campus secure during particularly uncertain times; to build communities of support and uncover the silver linings across ASU -- and then amplify the voices of empowered students, faculty and staff far and wide.

While we suddenly had to shift our means of operating and supporting our community, it was apparent these changes were an expression of what UTO and ASU had been doing for years: leveraging the latest technology to deliver 21st century learning experiences. We have done so while continually reflecting on our culture and each of us becoming empowered stewards of it.

These 2020 UTO Highlights reflect the most pivotal moments in which our organization helped ASU make concrete strides in service of exemplifying the New American University -- a reconceptualization of the university comprehensive knowledge enterprise dedicated to the simultaneous pursuit of excellence, broad access to quality education and meaningful societal impact. Our strategic goals for FY20 were guided by these ideals.

Towards the mission of the New American University, the UTO solidified five arcs this year that focus on these impacts:

Learner Success: Empowering all learners through inclusive strategies and solutions that bolster achievement

Social + Economic Impact: Fostering culture and solutions to improve the wellbeing and mobility of our communities -- and world

Enterprise Experience: Accelerating capacity through operational optimization to foster extraordinary experiences across all ASU enterprises

Next-Gen Solutions: Architecting cutting-edge practices in research, security, data and learning

Visionary Leadership: Shaping the future through entrepreneurial thinking, empathy and community engagement to embrace tomorrow's opportunities

As we continue to align the disruptive potential of technology to enable and catalyze the New American University, the culture we foster, the work we do, the partnerships we form -- and the stories we tell -- is first and foremost about meeting human need and shaping a better world together.

In a Time of Need, ASU's Remote Resilience Shone Through

Featured stories: Remote Resilience: Stories of Success; Birds of a Feather Flock Together for Remote Ornithology Field Trips; ASU Professor Creates Lab at Home to Support Healthcare Workers; UTO Gives Back, Takes 'Girls Who Code' Online; Conscious Collaborative Leadership - Caring for each other and our culture in a time of crisis; Into the Unknown: Parents' Journeys in a Remote Modality

UTO's Fiscal Year 2020 came to be, in some ways, defined by its final three months. With the global transition to remote modalities in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, ASU's day-to-day operations suddenly looked very different. Even though it was, and continues to be, a challenging time in all walks of life, ASU's community members demonstrated their remarkable innovation and remote resilience.

For example, Senior Lecturer Christina Carrasquilla leveraged Zoom and Slack to make the immediate change as transparent and informative as possible. "So far, transitioning to remote teaching has been seamless and my students have found it enjoyable," she said within just two days of ASU's announcement of a remote modality. When she revisited the subject a few weeks later, Carrasquilla reported that student engagement actually increased with the move to remote learning. And now, months later, she says, "When ASU suddenly had to shift to new ways of teaching and learning, I was surprised by the remote resilience displayed by my colleagues and students. In hindsight, I'm really proud of how the whole ASU community came together to work within a very turbulent time."

Students also conducted remote ornithology (bird-watching) trips, a faculty member gave their full, detailed thoughts on the state of teaching and learning; and UTO gave back by pivoting their Girls Who Code sponsorship to be as inclusive as before. These were just some of the more than 30 Remote Resilience stories that came to define the close of the year.

And after months of operating in this mode, ASU is looking to the future and a hybrid approach to immersive learning.

Previously published stories:

Remote Resilience: Stories of Success

As ASU continues to monitor COVID-19, the university has transitioned from in-person teaching and learning to remote options. In this challenging time, however, the collective innovation of ASU faculty and staff has demonstrated remarkable adaptability. As a method of celebrating the good during uncertain developments, the University Technology Office is gathering success stories of "remote resilience" from the ASU community. The situation globally and across the country is changing daily, but we also plan to share these stories to keep pace.

For example, Senior Lecturer Christina Carrasquilla found the use of Zoom, ASU's video conferencing tool, for two of her classes to be smooth and enjoyable. Carrasquilla teaches Graphic Information Technology for the Fulton School of Engineering -- online as well as on-campus classes. "My experience teaching online was very helpful in switching to remote teaching," she said. "So far, transitioning to remote teaching has been seamless and my students have found it enjoyable."

And students embraced the technology, using Zoom functionalities like breakout rooms

and shared screens for a full educational experience. "A student even messaged me on Slack [ASU's instant messaging tool] later to say she really enjoyed the class via Zoom, it was fun," Carrasquilla said. Carrasquilla's framing of the class as equivalent to the in-person experience, including the "raised hands" and chat features of Zoom, marks a significant achievement by one of our faculty amid all of the changes at ASU.

But Carrasquilla isn't alone; and our "Remote Resilience" series will continue to showcase faculty innovation and success in this transition for the foreseeable future. Watch this space and follow UTO on LinkedIn and Twitter for more updates.

Birds of a Feather Flock Together for Remote Ornithology Field Trips

Becoming resilient during a transition to remote instruction requires improvisation in the classroom. It emphasizes a level of creativity, collaboration and critical thinking skills that allows both instructor and students to fully assimilate to a new platform of learning. It's important, however, to still acknowledge the fundamental concepts being taught in the classroom.

For Associate Professor Heather Bateman, from the College of Integrative Sciences and Arts and Global Institute of Sustainability, taking a collaborative and agile approach with her Applied Ornithology class was easier than anticipated. When Bateman's class first transitioned to online instruction, she was excited to see her students quickly embracing remote learning tools. "Students were more engaged by using the chat feature," she said. Like a duck to water, they were able to more smoothly adjust to their new learning environment.

Students were also creative when it came to the challenge of figuring out how to transition their scheduled birding field trips over to a virtual experience. After brainstorming together in class, they came up with many great ideas, Bateman explained. Some included recording bird songs in their neighborhood for the class to identify, looking up the IBA (important bird areas) around them that they could visit (while still following social distancing), and making observations from real-life bird cameras from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

But what was really successful in engaging the class remotely was the use of a discussion board where students could post pictures and videos of backyard birds they observed around them. Students were given "neighborhood birding" assignments and were asked to post their local sightings.

"They are having a really fun experience and some students say they have really looked forward to the class during this stressful time," Bateman said. Graduate student Jennifer Flores, noted how smooth the transition went for the class. "Dr. Bateman is doing a really great job of keeping the student engaged and connected while we transitioned to online learning," Flores explained. "Everyone has been posting their birding field trips on the discussion board and it is great to see everyone's bird sightings."

Overall, members of the Applied Ornithology class came together like birds of a feather to take the birding experience to the next level and create a successful classroom experience, demonstrating another creative solution with Remote Resilience.

ASU Professor Creates Lab at Home to Support Healthcare Workers

Michael Kozicki, Professor of Electrical Engineering at the School of Electrical, Computer and Energy Engineering, took the initiative to help out in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. With decades of experience in microcontamination management, Kozicki went above and beyond, building a lab at home to create systems for ozone reconditioning of N95 masks and other surgical gear, allowing healthcare workers to make their surgical and personal clothing safe and reuse hard-to-find critical items. "I'm currently working with a team of genuine student geniuses from Luminosity Labs and the results are looking very good indeed," Kozicki said, and shared more information on his innovative and helpful work.

I returned from a business trip to the UK in March just as the US was sliding into shutdown and I was struck by the rising wave of panic and despondency, especially among our healthcare workers. I started looking for ways that I could help and was put on an ASU working group that was interfacing with Banner's innovation team. I realized that I could apply my 40 years of semiconductor industry experience, and my expertise in microcontamination management in particular, to help with infection control issues.

I started by looking at ozone gas as a sterilizing agent. Since access to facilities on campus was getting more and more difficult due to the lockdown, I decided to set up an ozone characterization lab at my home. I borrowed equipment from the ASU NanoFab, the MacroTechnology Works; and environmental engineering professor Matt Fraser, but was having difficulty finding an ozone generator as they were flying off the shelves (I think many people around the country had the same idea as me)!

Fortunately, I connected with a very talented student team at Luminosity Labs who also had an interest in using ozone to sterilize medical and personal items and had a beautiful low-cost ozone generator designed and built. I helped them characterize this generator and we used it to treat a number of different masks. I also set up a very basic home test facility to assess the particle trapping efficiency of the masks after ozone treatment to make sure they weren't being damaged by the gas (we also sent masks for a more detailed analysis to Professor Pierre Herkes of Molecular Sciences).

I've since started using my particle testing set-up to examine different commonly available materials for general use masks for Banner to make sure that they filter airborne particles at least as well as the "real" surgical masks that are now in such short supply. The results of that study will influence which materials will be recommended for use in masks made for staff and visitors in hospitals. It has been kinda crazy doing all this stuff and still teaching and keeping up my ongoing research but I actually feel like I'm doing something meaningful and that makes me feel good!

Kozicki's incredible work is just one, although certainly meaningful, facet of ASU's ongoing contribution to the response against COVID-19. The resourcefulness and humanity of our university faculty members is on display in spades with his at-home project.

UTO Gives Back, Takes 'Girls Who Code' Online

Can you make a better pizza with technology? This seemingly simple question has been the focus of a Girls Who Code club sponsored by the University Technology Office. Third-, fourth- and fifth-graders, as part of the national organization that aims to increase the number of women working in computer science, are strategizing about how to use technology to engineer solutions for everyday challenges. This question was the outcome of the 2019 ASU IT professional event Empower, and was posed to the group by ASU Chief Information Officer Lev Gonick at ASU Poly Prep STEM Academy.

As the host for Girls Who Code at ASU Preparatory Academy, members of the UTO Giving Back team volunteer their expertise and enthusiasm to nurture young technologists, building confidence along with coding skills. The UTO Giving Back team hosts or facilitates community aid and community building events every week, fulfilling ASU's mission to be socially embedded within and beyond the university.

These Girls Who Code have moved their work online to follow physical distancing guidelines necessitated by the spread of COVID-19. Supported through the volunteers of UTO Giving Back, the coders are tackling several projects and learning valuable professional skills.

Bonnie LeBlanc, UTO Director of Enterprise Solutions, and Sandra Johnson, UTO Special Advisor, helped start the UTO support of the Girls Who Code program in 2019. The program is run like a club; facilitators ask guiding questions and the coders create the solutions. "Sometimes it brings a tear to my eyes," Johnson said. "It's amazing to work with kids who are excited about coding. They want to code. They want a project."

For these students, the online sessions are all about the code. The in-person group discussions were replaced with an agile "stand up" process that breaks complex work into brief, yet productive, gatherings. Each coder provides an update on their progress, describes any difficulties and outlines their plans. The facilitators teach coding basics and share short tutorials about how to improve coding skills, and the coders work independently or in teams. In their next meeting, the coders will meet Arizona State Representative Isela Blanc, who will discuss the topics of women in politics and bravery.

Johnson and the team of UTO Giving Back facilitators meet regularly with the coders and teach them real-world project management and business analysis skills. "The kids see the role models -- we are all women in technology -- and we talk about it with them," Johnson said. "The facilitators contribute our understanding of what it's like to work on a project."

The "build a better pizza" team is tackling their project from multiple angles. A fourth-grade coder decided that a survey was necessary for data collection. She's building one to study if technology can produce a pizza that surpasses the flavor and presentation of a human-made product; if people would purchase pizzas from a vending machine or made by a robot; and how to customize a pizza using a phone app. The coders will investigate data analysis, robotics and software development, plus employ their new project management skills, to find answers to the pizza challenge.

Pizza is not the only need that calls for a technology solution. Other third-through-fifth-grade projects include creating solutions for homeless people in Arizona, designing an online racetrack, building avatars, finding lost pets and gaming.

The sixth- and seventh-grade Girls Who Code are learning hypertext markup language (HTML) to build a website that teaches American Sign Language. Their project was featured at an Arizona Department of Education conference and highlights the need to teach STEM skills to girls. Johnson said, "They are learning to be brave. This is about stepping outside of their comfort zone and going for it."

Girls Who Code is on a mission to close the gender gap in technology and to change the image of what a programmer looks like and does. The Girls Who Code organization aims to build the largest pipeline of female engineers in the U.S. Girls' participation in computer science drops dramatically between the ages of 13-17. The organization and its army of volunteers provide learning opportunities, a clear path to careers in technology; and a network of peers and role models committed to the success of Girls Who Code alumni.

Girls Who Code also provides free Girls Who Code at Home activities.

Conscious Collaborative Leadership - Caring for each other and our culture in a time of crisis

Oh my. This is going to cause a planetary amygdala hijack. That was my first thought when I heard about a novel coronavirus (COVID-19) beginning to spread around the world. We know that when perceived danger presents itself, we tend to fight, flee or freeze. Imagine that on a global scale. What could this mean for the University Technology Office (UTO) and all of ASU?

My second thought was, What is mine to do? The answer came quickly. Start with yourself. Breathe. Be present. You will know what to do.

By the next day, I had a sense of direction and two places to start:

Initiate a twice weekly Mindful Minutes session on Zoom.

Activate the capacity of the Culture Weavers community of practice and the Culture Ripples design team.

Both of these steps would require conscious, collaborative leadership.

What does leadership look like in times of crisis?

Let's begin this inquiry with the assumption that we are all leaders. What does being a leader mean to you? If you set a positive example, you are a leader. If you step up first, you are a leader. If you influence others, you are a leader. If you take responsibility for the well-being of the whole, you are a leader. If you walk your talk, you are a leader.

If we believe that every person is leading in one way or another, then how can we encourage, literally give courage to leadership that is guided by shared values and principles, the most ubiquitous of which is to treat others as you wish to be treated? Persistent, reliable modeling of desired leadership behavior is easier said than done. We all exhibit unflattering behaviors at times -- like when we act out our emotions rather than naming them and owning them. Our inner anxiety can lead to demanding and controlling behavior. Our unconscious sense of inferiority can result in berating others. Our lifelong conditioning that the only way to be powerful is to be on top can engender command and control behavior.

Ideally, when we've treated others in a way that we would not want to be treated, we catch ourselves in the act, genuinely apologize and then do our inner work to reduce the chances of repeating the transgression.

Fortunately, we also have positive behavioral habits, which we've been practicing for a life-time. Please and thank you; after you; what do you need; and how can I help?

At UTO, we also have our Positive Core and Leadership Principles as shared guidance. In our latest Culture Check-in, 77% of all survey respondents report that the Positive Core almost always or often guides their behavior.

Wise leaders encourage self-organized leadership, inviting everyone to bring their skills, talents and heart to the party. We all know leaders and remember that we are all leaders who embody the principles they live by because they have decided to be guided by something greater than their egos and they have practiced these behaviors enough that they have become second nature.

Mindful and heartful behavior is especially important in times of crisis. We all know people who are struggling and suffering as a result of COVID-19. Therefore, we need to consciously call forth understanding, compassion and a willingness to see both the shadows and the light in this situation.

Perhaps the only thing that could wake us up as a species, is something that can impact literally everyone on the planet.

What is ours to do at UTO?

Mindful Minutes

On Tuesdays and Thursdays at noon, anyone who cares to can participate in Fifteen Mindful Minutes, focused on a five-minute mindfulness practice, such as yoga breathing and stretching, guided meditation; and journaling and a collegial check-in in breakout groups with the opportunity to document best practices for responding to our rapidly shifting reality. Participants have shared the stresses and benefits they have been experiencing and the personal practices that have helped. During the check-out at the end of the Mindful Minutes sessions, participants have commented that they feel much calmer, more centered and less hijacked by their brain's limbic system. At this writing, nearly one fourth of all UTO employees have zoomed in.

Culture Weavers Community of Practice

As UTO's Chief Culture Officer, I am dedicated to co-creating the conditions for appreciation, collaboration, innovation and transformation to thrive at the UTO and beyond. This mission has been

embraced by members of our UTO Culture Weavers Community of Practice, who have been meeting bi-weekly for over a year to learn about, practice and disseminate models, methods and practices for co-developing a thriving culture. We are guided by our Positive Core Values and inspired by Culture Weaver's vision: "UTO is a trusting and energized work family where everyone feels valued, differences are embraced; and collaboration organically arises at UTO and beyond."

Culture Weavers come from all over UTO, across functional areas and positional levels. Focused on embracing diversity, alignment with our Positive Core, invigorating and valuing our UTO family and culture operations, Culture Weavers have taken foundational cultural practices back to their own teams, hosted social gatherings, sponsored invigorating initiatives, offered interactive learning opportunities; and developed KPIs to measure their impact. The popular Certificates of Appreciation have been integrated into Slack to make it easy for anyone at UTO to send an appreciative shout-out to a colleague. When someone has received this acknowledgment of the ways they have demonstrated our core values, they are asked to "Pay it Forkward" to weave appreciation more widely.

Once we all began working from home and therefore hosting our Culture Weaver meetings exclusively on Zoom, we felt grateful for our year's worth of practicing silence, check-in, mindfulness, learning; and rapid prototyping. The high level of collegial trust and support has enabled the Culture Weavers to be authentic and transparent about what their life has really been like as a result of working and often parenting from home. This community of practice has become a calm and mindful center for UTO.

Culture Ripples Design Team

Inspired by the success of Culture Weavers, a pan-ASU group of IT professionals and culture wonks has just finished co-creating the vision and design for culture work to expand across ASU. Culture Ripples met the first full day of working from home. Our foundational practices for culture transformation served us well. We virtually set the context, built our container for the work ahead, and reflected on what we had learned and committed to. Using a combination of Google Slide, Google Docs and the Zoom chat, we experienced enthusiastic engagement, which resulted in actionable next steps.

The Culture Ripples Design Team envisions:

ASU intentionally builds a collaborative and transparent culture, which ripples out from the heart of the ASU IT community, transforming the technical and relational architectures necessary for democratized learning and living.

Culture Ripples decided on four strategic priorities for their work in FY21:

First Steps

Mindful Minutes, Culture Weavers and Culture Ripples are all prototypes that could extend into the future, or not. One thing has become clear, we must be mindful of our attachments and do our best to open to all possibilities.

Conscious Collaborative Leadership

Every problem has a gift for you in its hands. - Richard Bach

What is this gift that COVID-19 is holding in its hands? Think back to New Year's Eve of 2019, when the first case of a pneumonia of unknown cause was reported in Wuhan China. As we were making our new year's resolutions most of us couldn't have imagined the world as we know it now. With months of physical distancing ahead of us and no way to see into the future, we have the opportunity to suspend our judgments, our predictions, our certainty about what we think we know and turn to each other, to the collective wisdom and to the larger field of intelligence. We are being invited to enter a state of deep inquiry.

What does it mean to live a meaningful life during a crisis?

What is possible now?

What is the world calling for?

What is mine to do?

What might we achieve if we embody conscious collaborative leadership?

Into the Unknown: Parents' Journeys in a Remote Modality

At 6 a.m., the alarm clock rings. Suddenly, the rush of the day is ahead and the thought of having to juggle numerous responsibilities strikes. Fortunately, the commute downstairs to start work is a quicker one than before and gives ample time to be productive before my most important job, being a mother, begins.

Being a parent during a pandemic has been an interesting experience, to say the least. No two stories are the same, yet the common thread seems to weave into the experience each of us is balancing. At the start of the pandemic, colleagues were brought together by these similar experiences in a Slack channel dedicated to the triumphs and tribulations of remote working with children. This community has been an uplifting place to go when you need to speak with others who know exactly what you are experiencing.

Parents from across the ASU enterprise have come together to celebrate the ups and help with the downs of this unprecedented time. Here are first-hand stories of what it's like to run a household, be a teacher, a chef and balance your ASU life at the same time.

DANIELLE B STEELE, AGILE ITERATION MANAGER, UTO STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION OFFICE: 1-YEAR-OLD AT HOME

Spending my third trimester while working from home with my husband and our nearly 1.5-year old daughter during this pandemic has been a blessing in disguise. Yes, it's been exhausting, scary; and challenging, but in the same day or even the same hour, it has also been incredibly joyful, rewarding and humbling. The adjustment took a few weeks, but with our partnership and the support of our respective workplaces, we've finally found a rhythm that works for us -- until the baby arrives! Thankfully, we know we'll make the best of our situation then, too.

JENNIFER GREENBERG, EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATION SUPPORT, UTO ADMIN: 7-YEAR-OLD AT HOME

My day starts off early with a large mug of coffee; sitting in silence on the outside patio while birds chirp and wind-chimes knell all around. This is literally the only reflective hour I will have for the day. Then, with the might of buzzing bees, I'm met with the full force of sounds of my home. The barking dog, an overconfident news anchor on an unattended television, the sound of my husband's shaver and a hungry 7-year-old tugging at my shirt.

I quickly scan the commitments of our pieced-together Outlook calendar, which holds the day's commitments of my work meetings, my husband's work meetings, classroom Zoom sessions, my school assignments, their school assignments, virtual play-dates, reminders to check in on parents, reminders to stand or eat. Scheduled time for silent reading and to feed the dog. Scheduled time to put in an online grocery order, grade school work and to work on that project deadline. Scheduled time to fit in unscheduled time. It's time for my 8 a.m. meeting.

ERIN MORROW, EVENT COORDINATOR, UTO CREATIVE + COMMUNICATIONS: 12- AND 15-YEAR-OLDS AT HOME

I have older kids, 12- and 15-years-old. They are great about starting their school day at 8 a.m., attending their Zoom classes and working on assignments all morning without fail. Around lunchtime, the questions on the assignments they didn't understand or the need to tell someone what they have done so far start rolling in. It can be difficult to provide the focus and knowledge they need from me at this time. I am doing my best to remember high school math and edit the most recent history paper, but I am also needed to finish my own papers and assignments.

Once we make it past that hurdle, they are looking for something to do when the classwork is over and there are still way too many hours left in the day (there are only so many times you can watch Friends). While we are finding small ways to keep connected, help the community, be

creative and not get on each other's nerves, the days are long and are very draining. It is hard but I am proud of how we are handling it as a team, and in a strange new twist we are closer than before. We are counting down the days until we can go to museums, have game nights and go on vacation!

MARISSA AKINS, PROJECT MANAGER ASSOCIATE, MARY LOU FULTON TEACHERS COLLEGE: 6- AND 10-YEAR-OLDS AT HOME

I can tell you that quarantine has many phases. Some days I'm ready to go and some days I want to hit rewind and just start over. My family is fortunate because more often than not, we have good days at home. I wake before everyone at 5:10 a.m. to work out, shower; and start my workday around 7. My husband and kids wake around 8:30 and soon after is my first "break" from one job to start another. We make breakfast, clean up and get ready for school. It's very important for us to maintain our routine even if we have a late start every day!

My kindergartner works on worksheets, interactive Google Slides, crafts and reading, all of which need help from me or my husband, while my 4th grader works quite independently on grade-level math and reading. We take up other subjects with an app called Adventure Academy, as needed. While I work in the new makeshift dining room office, and my husband in our actual office, we're making it work day by day. Feeling fortunate for health, cuddly evenings on the couch and lots of home-cooked meals (oh, and those dishes!), we're hanging in there! While I don't know what normal looks like in the future, I'm trying to make the best of the time we have now.

From babies to teenagers, and everyone else in between, it's powerful to know we are all in this together as a community. Finding ways to help our colleagues during this time has been important for us all. Having a supportive family, friends and bosses who allow flexibility when the pressures of the world seem overwhelming has been invaluable.

Please join us on the ASU-wide #remote-working-live-parenting Slack channel. It's a great way to connect and share the ups and downs of our new way of life. This community is here to support you through resources, bringing you stories to make you smile or just to share a friendly hello with others.

Community Engagement Inspires Innovation

Featured stories: UTO Collaborates on Game-Changing Ideas at Engage 2019, ASU Receives First Place Price at Arizona's First-ever Robo Hackathon

Community Engagement was a prominent focus for the University Technology Office in Fiscal Year 2020. With over 32 events, UTO Family members had numerous opportunities to connect, learn and grow. We had a smart city summit, dipped into a threat hunting workshop, listened during the Technology in the Public Interest Speaker Series, watched in amazement at the Robo Hackathon; and participated in so much more.

Celebration defined UTO's annual Engage event. Everyone came together to celebrate our previous successes; and look forward to the future. The day was focused on 12 big ideas, submitted by UTO employees, for UTO's first idea hackathon. Whether they invigorated UTO and ASU culture, developed future technologies, refined the tools we use every day; or broadened the scope of our work to impact the places and communities ASU touches, Engage's big ideas demonstrated the creativity and drive of the UTO family.

One of UTO's flagship events, the Smart Region Summit, took place in November 2019. As the conclusion to a whole week of "Smart" events, this summit saw higher education, government; and industry partners come together with ASU and UTO not only to further develop what our Smart Region looks like, but also to apply the ideas proposed there across the country and globe.

November was a busy month for UTO. We also took first place in Arizona's first-ever Robo Hackathon! Seven schools participated in this Hackathon, and when the three-day event was done, an ASU team received the top prize. Students worked with artificial intelligence robots to accomplish a number of tasks, scored on components of assembly and programming.

UTO's community engagement efforts broadened exponentially in the past year, as demonstrated by the unique audiences served by just the events illustrated here, let alone the others, big and small, that furthered connection and innovation.

Previously published stories:

UTO Collaborates on Game-Changing Ideas at Engage 2019

"Collaboration" was among the watchwords during Engage 2019, UTO's Internal IT Professional Development Event. On Thursday, August 15, the UTO family gathered for a day of productivity and fun, strengthening partnerships and forming new ones while developing innovations together. Engage 2019, held at Dave & Buster's, focused on opening new modes and channels of communication as we worked on 12 big ideas, submitted by UTO employees, for UTO's first idea hackathon.

As CIO Lev Gonick put it, another watchword of the day was "celebratory." UTO celebrated our impressive accomplishments and their connection to our annual goals. In fact, each of the 12 big ideas brought to the day represented at least one of those key goals, if not more. As part of their initial pitches to entice participants to work on their concepts, the idea originators and their co-facilitators passionately delivered reasons why their proposals could form into projects that fuel those goals and UTO's vision for advancing the New American University.

Breaking Down Silos

Some key themes emerged from Engage. Many of the ideas involved breaking down silos, most notably the winning one for the day. Titled "Collaborative Work Space for IT Scripters, Code Ninjas and HTML Geeks," the concept rested on the premise that a digital storage option is necessary for university-wide programmers to access. There's no need for solutions to be redundantly created across ASU, and individuals and teams sharing their resources and work with everyone would make many processes and developments more efficient.

Idea originator and ServiceNow developer Chelsey Ingersoll proposed the collaborative work space. "When all you have is an idea, getting the attention of the right people to make it happen can feel insurmountable," Chelsey said. "Engage gave this little idea the attention of nearly everyone within UTO. This idea now has the attention of an entire organization; and can leverage that mind share to deliver something awesome." Since the idea was selected by the UTO community as the winner of the prize package, real resources and time will now be devoted to it.

As mentioned, the winning idea represented the key goal of breaking down silos. But in a larger sense, it represented a sense of open collaboration. Engage's hackathon brought leadership figures into direct and equal contact across the 12 working groups, and UTO's collective voice decided the direction of a new project.

Another exciting aspect of a more open culture was that the 11 other big ideas not selected during the final prize pitches still will be in consideration for UTO going forward. New Slack channels were created to continue the conversations and work.

The "Generating Culture Ripples" idea, for example, was centered on elevating a conscious, collaborative culture for all ASU IT professionals. And the "Crowdsource/Work Priority" idea takes collaboration outside of UTO; this idea's thesis was that the best and most transparent way to determine UTO's priorities is through a crowdsourced approach, addressing the needs of students, faculty and staff.

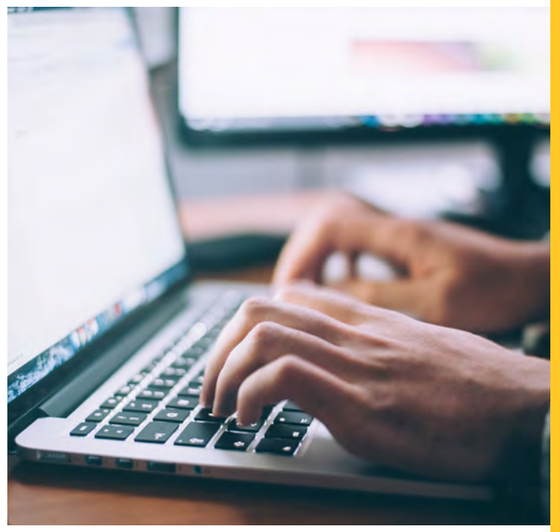
Focusing more on internal growth, on the other hand, the layout and design aspirations of the next open space for UTO HQ in the University Services Building was also a big topic for "Co-Design the Next Working Space at USB" as we explore how best to collaborate and innovate.

Developing New Technology

Of course, in a tech-focused organization, several big ideas were more technical. "Design of a Realistic DevSecOps Model," for example, picked up steam as a cross-disciplinary method of fusing culture, project management practices; and technical tools to establish more effective approaches.

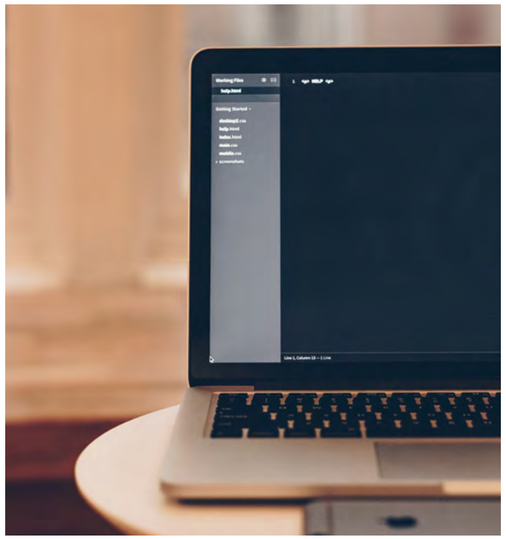
For the "Creating a Data Mindset Among All of UTO" idea, the collection, organization and storage of data in all that we do is crucial to creating a data mindset among all of UTO, another hot topic of discussion at Engage.

Further, a "User-friendly AWS Cost Calculator" for customers across the university was almost fully designed in just a few short hours at the event.



Serving ASU...

Speaking of user-friendly, a couple other ideas were about making it easier for everyone to more effectively do their jobs and access ASU resources. One group developed an idea for a "Service Web Chart" that leverages various platforms to connect UTO employees that could be needed for assistance on a project, but aren't necessarily known personally to those working on said project. And another, "Utilize a Cloud Identity Provider for Authentication on macOS Devices," addressed the need for a single sign-on solution for macOS devices, as Windows users have been able to do.



...and Beyond

Some ideas also took UTO's impact beyond ASU staff -- and even students. "Preparing ASU for the NextGen Network" has the potential to impact people within ten miles of an ASU campus. Additionally, UTO's "Green Weavers" are trying to lessen the negative impact on our environment with creative solutions to e-waste. Finally, a "UTO Student Worker Digital Credential Pilot," potentially in partnership with local, national; and global industries, could enrich and empower a new segment of the workforce.

Whether they invigorated UTO and ASU culture, developed future technologies, refined the tools we use every day, or broadened the scope of our work to impact the places and communities ASU touches, Engage's big ideas demonstrated the creativity and drive of the UTO family. They represented our underlying beliefs, assumptions; and values, which were all...engaged (!) and challenged in interesting ways. We look forward to Engage 2020 and all future events where UTO and the ASU IT community work together to evolve the ASU experience.

ASU Receives First Place Prize at Arizona's First-ever Robo Hackathon

Seven schools participated in Arizona's First-ever Robo Hackathon last weekend; and when the three-day event was done, an ASU team received the top prize. Students worked with artificial intelligence robots to accomplish a number of tasks, scored on components of assembly and programming.

From a conversation with reporter Grace Lieberman for ASU's State Press, UTO's Deputy Chief Information Officer John Rome spoke to the rigorous nature of hackathons. "You're going to have to overcome all these obstacles," he said, noting that hackathons serve as valuable experiences that could be attractive to future employers.

ASU's Learning Experience Shifts to Serve Student Needs

Featured stories: Faculty Inspire Innovative Communication through Slack; ASU Digital Credentials Summit Finds New Ways to Empower Lifelong Learning

ASU and UTO embodied remote resilience when suddenly put into "emergency mode" with COVID-19. But the technology groundwork laid by UTO, which enabled the ASU community's remote resilience, was in full effect in the months (and years!) leading up to the sudden changes everyone experienced. And as students return to campus whether in-person or digitally, the ASU learning experience is being enhanced by technology.

The thoughtfulness of faculty in making their classes inclusive can be demonstrated by three instructors in particular. Matt Sopha, Prescott Perez-Fox and Alexandra Mehlhase were early adopters of ASU's real-time communication tool, Slack. With it, they went beyond one-way communication to foster interactive learning and deeper collaboration. As Sopha puts it, he sees Slack as an extension of the "digital classroom."

Now, more than ever, that sense of "space" in the digital classroom is essential. UTO's Learning Experience team has been working to make that a reality, with virtual and augmented reality-enabled classrooms. In the meantime, outfitting classrooms with cutting-edge technology, making the interface between in-person students and their virtual peers as seamless as possible, is a focal point in enriching the learning experience at ASU.

Development of new institution- and industry-wide ways to recognize accomplishments is also the focus of ASU's Learning Futures Collaboratory (LFC). In May, the ASU Digital Credentials Summit brought together more than 250 instructors, learners and workers from across the university to bring new ideas on how to implement digital credentials.

Digital credentials are a transparent and verifiable way to connect learners, educational providers and employers to represent the full depth and breadth of an individual's collective educational and life experiences, and they can offer qualifications that may exist outside the scope of a traditional degree program.

"Our role has been to achieve learner success through improving digital fluency campus-wide in next generation learning environments," says Dan Munnerley, Co-Executive Director of the LFC. "And we've launched a series of pilots across the university with an eye towards scaling and best practices," adds Heather Haseley, fellow LFC Co-Executive Director. That eye has resulted in 60 courses across seven units implementing some form of digital credentials into their structure, beginning an exciting process to make learning more accessible to everyone.

Previously published stories:

Faculty Inspire Innovative Communication through Slack

Especially in a time of physical distance and all-remote teaching, learning and working, effective communication is crucial. The global pandemic has also put a spotlight on the tools that can support deeper connections at a distance. Faculty embracing a technology like Slack, the real-time collaboration tool available university-wide, embodies the innovative ASU spirit. Instructors including Matt Sopha, Prescott Perez-Fox and Alexandra Mehlhase aren't just using Slack as another means to share information with students; they're using it to enrich learning experiences.

"Slack is for people to come together, create a workspace and get work done," Sopha, Clinical Assistant Professor at the W.P. Carey School of Business, says. When he uses the word "workspace," he's not talking generally, but technically. Slack utilizes separate groups of course peers, faculty groups and staff departments to keep conversations going, and within those workspaces, separate channels dedicated to specific topics of conversation further clarify the work to be done.

Online classes are unique in that students are often living in a variety of time zones, Perez-Fox, Lecturer at The Polytechnic School, points out. "But if you give them a simple tool that they can have as a universal way to communicate, everything will become streamlined and become more consistent." And Slack seems to open up students' willingness to ask questions, Mehlhase says, with answers often given in group DMs (Direct Messages) or channels to help serve the collective class rather than one individual at a time; Mehlhase is a lecturer at the School of Computing, Informatics and Decision Systems Engineering.

Slack isn't just transposing typical email conversations to another platform, either. It's opening up instructors' availability, and, in turn, welcoming those questions. "It doesn't mean being available 24/7," Mehlhase says, but enough to give students a reason to be on Slack.

Sopha took to Slack as an early adopter, spinning up Slack as the "digital classroom." For online learning, it can recreate the idea of a "group huddle" or regular in-person meetings. "They're building little communities within the courses and within the degree programs, on their own, on an ad-hoc basis," Sopha says. "I'm genuinely amazed by that."

These instructors and others at ASU are enabling spaces where students can innovate with a sense of agency. “My teaching assistant and grader are also in there helping guide them and sometimes we’re pushing them for more, and we’ll say ‘hey, you’re onto something’ and keep the conversation going,” Perez-Fox says. He, along with Mehlhase and Sopha, have also taken the charge to find other platforms and technologies to expand the Slack experience.

“Over time, as we’ve added more tools and integrations into Slack, it’s gotten even better,” Sopha says. “Accommodating younger people, digital natives and Gen Z is meeting them where they live, and is not a disruption of the educational model as much as it is an evolution of the educational model.”

The adoption of Slack by these faculty members is a foremost example of the changing drivers of engagement, a capitalization on ever-shifting technology to refine and update traditional pedagogy in the digital age and classroom.

ASU Digital Credentials Summit Finds New Ways to Empower Lifelong Learning

The empowerment of learners at all stages of life is taking on new shapes. To further that change and connect faculty, more than 250 instructors, learners and workers from across the university came together for the ASU Digital Credentials Summit, hosted by the Learning Futures Collaboratory (LFC). This Summit, held in hour-and-a-half sessions across five days, was dedicated to the further development of digital credentials, a transparent and verifiable way to connect learners, educational providers and employers to represent the full depth and breadth of an individual’s collective educational and life experiences.

Digital credentials go beyond your typical certification or time-intensive degree that sometimes; don’t capture the true qualifications of a learner. In the new model illustrated by the LFC, a qualified credential issuer determines the required tasks for a smaller-scale, though no less important, achievement. These small units can be combined or “stacked” to provide a picture of an individual’s personal learning journey.

Part of the process of digital credential development is installing widespread use and access, one of the key focal points of the Digital Credential Summit. With each of the five days dedicated to specific topics, hosted by experts in the field, that goal was brought one step closer.

Day 1 - Where We’ve Been and Where We’re Going

Representatives from more than ten ASU departments and colleges connected on the first day of the ASU Digital Credential Summit to lay the groundwork for the rest of the week. ASU CIO Lev Gonick first celebrated the incredible work done for initiating digital credentials as a foremost priority. “It’s taking significant effort to congeal 60 projects, and I want to recognize that,” he said.

Then, a three-pronged approach in proliferating digital credentials was identified. First, a rollout in the academic and learning enterprises must be achieved, and while developing a system, or taxonomy, to classify the credentials. Then, those credentials can be connected to future workforce needs. In support of this plan, Kim Merritt, Managing Director for the Learning Enterprise, presented how stackable digital credentials will be used to help all members of the ASU community build coherent, life-long learning journeys through the new Learning Enterprise at ASU.

The session concluded with a micro-presentation from Vice Provost for Academic Innovation and Student Attainment Sukhwant Jhaj, which fittingly included conversation about the micro-courses that can make up a new form of career certificate. By the end of the day, attendees were excited to learn more over the course of the week. One participant wrote, “I’m a newbie in the area, so I’m most excited to learn ‘What are digital credentials and how do they all work?’”

Day 2 - Digital Credential Overview

The biggest questions were asked in earnest on Day 2:

What is a digital credential?

How does this all work?

Who can issue?

Who should issue?

The first two were answered by Allison Hall, Director of Learning Experience Transformation at UTO, and Katrina Fogelson, Instructional Designer at the College of Health Solutions. Then, ASU Libraries E-Learning and Instruction Division Head Lisa Kammerlocher and

Manager of Herberger Online Learning Toby Vaughn Kidd took on the topic of issuing. Discussion turned to what digital credential participants wished was on their transcript when starting their careers, which included leadership and other communication skills which aren't always recognized in traditional credentials.

Day 3 - Credentialing Skills and Experiences

Meredith Toth, Assistant Dean at the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College, and Tim McKean, Instructional Designer for Herberger Online, also asked big questions for their presentation on Day 3. What should be credentialed, how that decision is made and who benefits from it guided their discussion.

Hall was joined by Co-Executive Directors of the LFC, Heather Haseley and Dan Munnerley, to connect lifelong skills with credentials, mapping out a framework that will give learners the agency to demonstrate their competency. In a swap of the previous day's question, attendees spoke to the skills they wish they could credential for their learners. The term "21st Century Skills" was in use, recognizing the essential, foundational skills that learners need and employers want.

Day 4 - Digital Credential Pilots

Three pairs of presenters defined the theme of Day 4: how different ASU units have planned their own use of digital credentials. Kammerlocher and Libraries peer Julie Allen, Instructional Designer, demonstrated the promotion of learning with co-curricular credentials.

Katrina Fogelson and Mark Fogelson, College of Health Solutions Senior Instructional Designers, followed the single thread to tie learning pathways to program outcomes. And McKean, along with EdPlus Assistant Director of Quality Assurance Kody Stimpson, shared their respective takes on the professional development of faculty; faculty are also lifelong learners, of course. Pilot administrators and other participants discussed the means to qualify credentials, and some creative solutions were discussions and conferences, webinar and training participation, as well as short self-assessments.

Day 5 - University Connections

The final day of the ASU Digital Credential Summit was intended to keep the conversation going, and presenters shared the collaborations that will keep digital credential development a focal point in the new age of digital learning.

Hall, Haseley, Kidd and Munnerley, along with Director of Herberger Online Learning Rowan de Faria and College of Health Solutions Clinical Associate Professor C.R. Macchi, shared the power of "Xplor" to serve as an AI-powered, unified portal for a lifelong learning journey. Michelle Watt, Product Manager of the Trusted Learner Network, explained how the TLN's use of blockchain to store credentials and empower learner agency connected to the themes of the entire Digital Credential Summit. And Concentric Sky Founder and CEO Wayne Skipper illustrated his company's Badgr software as a key tool in empowering institutions to issue digital credentials, and by extension, empower students to share their achievements.

Every day of the ASU Digital Credential Summit was capped off with passionate and insightful discussion prompted by the presentations. General conversation about the nature of a digital credential expanded into the definitions of criteria for qualified issuers. The framework for how to connect lifelong skills to credentials was then outlined, creating an agency for learners by which they can take the reins to demonstrate their competency.

Foundational knowledge and frameworks were not just theoretical, either, because pilot programs are already underway at ASU. The collaboration is happening outside the University as well; for example, ASU is working with Concentric Sky and its Badgr software to establish a digital credentialed future.

The ASU Digital Credential Summit represented a true university-wide collaboration and an exciting development in the promotion of increased student agency. "I'm most excited about the potential benefits for students and the energy across ASU than can make it happen!" an attendee shared at the end.

Join the the #lfc-digital-credential Slack channel to keep up with the conversation and go to LFC.asu.edu to sign up for the digital credentials workstream to help craft the future of digital credentials at ASU.

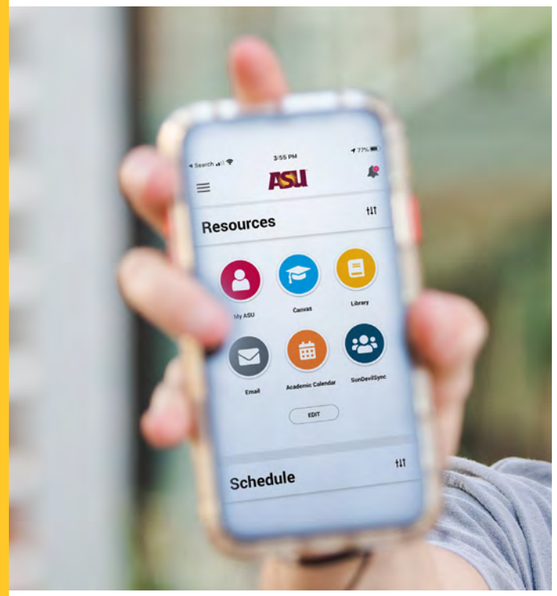
UTO Works to Build a More Connected World

Featured story: Smart Region Summit Flagship Event Concludes Week of Plans to Connect Campuses, Cities and Beyond

Future-focused, values-driven, innovative – these qualities are what define ASU's University Technology Office. But it's not just about creating a better experience for the students, faculty and staff at Arizona State University (although that is always the priority). It's about creating social and economic impact – fostering culture and solutions to improve the wellbeing and mobility of our community and the world – that positively influence the local community, our country and our world.

UTO's data and cloud innovations do just that, with the Smart Region Summit serving as an event that embodied the progress made over the past year.

"I love the spirit of UTO 2.1 to bring out our collective creativity, and, to me, Smart Cities and IoT initiatives exemplifies that behavior," said Chris Richardson, Deputy Chief Information Officer Development, Mobility; and Smart Cities at Arizona State University's University Technology Office. "As we look for opportunities to drive innovation with the intent to best serve the university and its communities, our next-gen solutions have fostered entrepreneurial thinking and community engagement. This year, we have made significant strides with our Blue Light initiatives, new partnerships with Cox and T-Mobile have begun to blossom, the ASU Mobile App and so much more."



The Smart Region Summit Flagship Event gave higher education, government and industry partners the space and time to push boundaries to develop innovative, creative technology solutions that will make the ASU campus – and the world – a better place. Key partnerships with Alteryx, bringing its effective data analytics platform to bear for an edge on driving social impact, and Cox, launching the Cox Connected Environments Collaboratory at ASU to incubate ideas for a smart region ecosystem, are an outgrowth of the principles and innovations happening within UTO's data and cloud spaces.

"The Smart Region Summit exceeded our expectations of community involvement and engagement from industry leaders, giving us further runway to advance our smart cities and IoT initiatives," Richardson said.

The work accomplished at the Smart Region Summit represented the confluence of many new ideas and the culmination of hard work from the first half of fiscal year 2020, which have already manifested in demonstrable results by the end of the second half.

Previously published stories:

Smart Region Summit Flagship Event Concludes Week of Plans to Connect Campuses, Cities and Beyond

Imagine navigating campus using a 3D map, or learning using virtual and augmented reality in the classrooms of the future. Imagine decongested traffic; and aid being brought to the distressed homeless population of Phoenix. These are all possibilities of leveraging devices connected to the internet for ASU's Smart Region initiative, an effort to bring everyday life into the future.

As the conclusion to a whole week of "Smart" events, last Friday's Smart Region Summit Flagship Event saw higher education, government; and industry partners come together with ASU and UTO not only to further develop what our Smart Region looks like, but also to apply the ideas proposed there across the country and globe.

The day was framed by major strategic partnership announcements, introduced by ASU's University City Exchange Executive Director Duke Reiter and Dr. Morgan Olsen, Executive Vice President, Treasurer and Chief Financial Officer at ASU. "These new partnerships open up a lot of opportunities for us, expanding the reach and promise of the Smart Region initiative," Reiter said.

Alteryx and ASU are teaming up to use the former's data analytics platform to effectively leverage data to solve the challenges of developing a smart region. This partnership, shared in person by Alteryx CEO Dean Stoecker, will give students, faculty, and staff members an edge on tackling real-world business issues and driving social impact.

Further, Cox and ASU announced their plan to launch the Cox Connected Environments Collaboratory at ASU, an incubation space that will cultivate a smart region ecosystem. Cox Communications Executive Vice President and Chief Strategy Officer Sujata Gosalia spoke to the need for a consistent, powerful network on campus and beyond to really capitalize on the promise of the Smart Region initiative. Students, faculty; and staff members will develop IoT solutions to problems facing the optimization of buildings for sustainability, provide new

learning experiences in virtual and augmented reality, overhaul transportation infrastructure and more.

These announcements signal a huge commitment to the improvement of the experience of ASU community members and beyond. They are part of a large effort, indicated by a collaboration with Sprint last month, to bring 5G, the Curiosity IoT Network; and a whole new degree program for IoT development, detailed by Sprint Senior Vice President of Internet of Things Ivo Rook at the Flagship Event.

Deep conversations were started by Global Futures Group chairman Jerry Hultin, who gave context for the nature of smart initiatives around the world, and The Smart Enough City author Ben Green. "The broad message of my work and my book is that there are a lot of different ways to think about this [building smart cities]," Green said.

One way of thinking differently about this is bringing connection to underserved communities; a Digital Equity panel brought consideration of rural and tribal needs. Meanwhile, leaders on the Leading Smart City Practices panel recommended approaches for devising strategies and implementing change. The Connective, the Greater Phoenix

Smart Region Consortium instated at the Flagship Event, addressed the challenges and opportunities for bringing Phoenix into the future. ASU CIO Lev Gonick said The Connective was the big idea of the day. "[This is] the first major regional effort in the United States to engage communities across the Valley in co-designing and co-investing in our smart and connected futures," he said.

A lot of information was shared with and by attendees at the Smart Region Summit, but ultimately, it was their collaboration that held the most promise for moving the needle. Participants broke into groups to make actionable plans for topics like bringing broadband/fiber to rural communities by way of increased

investment in infrastructure. Another group looked at increasing mobility in congested urban environments using LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging), which can map 3D environments and provide useful data for transportation overhaul projects.

Sustainability, recycling/waste management and water conservation efforts also benefit from enhanced sensors and predictive maintenance algorithms that can allow facility management services to fix a problem before it even arises and wastes precious resources.

Thursday also saw the convening of the Smart Campus Innovation Day. It was part of an impressive roster of 19 events, such as an introduction to the “secret weapon” on the “War on Waste” and the Chandler Autonomous Vehicle Symposium.

Enhancing the safety and wellbeing of students and constituents, the ethical use of data, inclusivity, digital equity and driving sustainable results were the big themes of the day. While the Flagship Event was an exclamation point on a full week of conversations and collaborative strategizing, it is only the jumping off point for the new, actionable ideas generated there.

ShapingEDU: Shaping the Education of Tomorrow, Today

Although this year was filled with unexpected circumstances and challenging times, that didn’t stop ASU’s ShapingEDU from creating innovative, forward-thinking experiences for its community of Dreamers, Doers; and Drivers. ShapingEDU was able to offer its community many immersive ways to engage, collaborate, learn and explore with the learners of the future and their success always at the forefront.

Featured story:
2020 Unconference:
Collaboration + Adaptation

The highlight of ShapingEDU's efforts was the ASU ShapingEDU Unconference, a flexible, community-driven co-creation (read: no agenda) held March 11-13, 2020, with the goal of creating actionable outputs and setting the priorities for the ShapingEDU community in the coming year.

While the timing of the event was less than ideal (with the unfolding of COVID-19), ShapingEDU organizers pivoted as needed, changing from the planned in-person format to a hybrid in-person and online modality, and then, to a fully online experience for the final day.

"The ShapingEDU Unconference is designed to be value-led, action-oriented and community-driven, which enabled us to successfully shift the event from in-person to hybrid to online on the fly," said Laura Geringer, ShapingEDU Community Manager and an organizer of the Unconference. "The mediums and tools of collaboration changed but our shared priorities and community -- the heart of ShapingEDU -- remained the same."

The result? An inclusive, collaborative space for visionary leaders and education changemakers to unite – no matter where they were -- and brainstorm on the education of tomorrow while levering digital collaboration tools of today.

"Without missing a beat, this remarkable group kept co-creating together – we weren't going to lose the opportunity!" said Karina Branson of Conversketch.

Previously published stories:

2020 Unconference: Collaboration + Adaptation

The ASU ShapingEDU Unconference is the one time each year when community members gather in person to dream, do and drive the future of learning in the digital age. With no fixed program, this Unconference is all about flexible, community-driven co-creation. This year, we took it one step further: pivoting in-the-moment from the planned in-person format to a hybrid in-person + online modality and then to a fully online experience for the final day. As the situation and protocol around the global pandemic unfolded in real-time, we had to keep pace and quickly pivot.

The annual Unconference convenes educators, students, technologists, leaders and industry partners to design actionable outputs and set the priorities for the ShapingEDU community in the coming year. This work is guided by our 10 Actions -- guiding priorities for community work -- and this year's event theme: The Intersection of Technology and Humanity. This theme proved to be especially timely as we adapted in the face of the unfolding COVID-19, leveraging digital collaboration tools to facilitate human- and learner-centric conversation.

The 2020 Unconference coincided with growing global awareness around the then-emerging COVID-19 situation. Students were largely still in school or on spring break. Some companies and organizations were beginning to restrict travel. Institutions, including ASU, were actively designing education continuity plans. ShapingEDU initially proceeded with plans for an in-person event, but a couple of days before the Unconference, we rapidly reimagined the Unconference as a hybrid in-person and online experience to allow those who could not travel to participate.

As always, the collaborative work of the Unconference began ahead of time with a pre-activity. This year, community members submitted questions that they would like to ask students. A selection of these questions were carried forward to the Unconference Student Panel, viewable online by remote attendees (watch the recording). Inspired by this panel, participants self-selected into joint online and in-person working sessions around the topics that resonated with their experience and energy.

“My colleague Kim Flintoff (working from Australia) and I...co-facilitated a session that extended from our room in Tempe all the way to Kim’s home on the other side of the world—and also drew in a couple of other onsite facilitators and a few online participants into the same highly productive completely blended session.” - Paul Signorelli, Paul Signorelli & Associates Blog

Working sessions merged and reimagined themselves on the fly. With the support of graphic facilitation by Karina Branson and Laura Geringer; and online collaboration tools, each group focused their topic and explored action-oriented responses. At the end of the day, online and in-person Dreamer-Doer-Drivers reconveneded in plenary to share their progress.

Over the course of the day, community members devoted themselves to this collaborative work while, as appropriate, staying current on the unfolding COVID-19 situation and their institution’s continuity work. The incredible fluidity between present and future, the interplay between continuity response and driving innovation; and the humanity with which participants approached collaboration led to a unique and powerful atmosphere. Taking into account new information -- and with the health and safety of participants in mind -- ShapingEDU pivoted to an all-online modality for the final day of the Unconference.

“Without missing a beat, this remarkable group kept co-creating together – we weren’t going to lose the opportunity!” - Karina Branson, Conversketch Blog

Friday morning Arizona Time, U.S., participants from around the globe gathered online to recommend actionable priorities for ShapingEDU in the coming year. Using Zoom breakout rooms, working sessions reconvened to build on the previous day’s work and center around a core output to recommend. The 2020 Unconference concluded with a virtual Town Hall where participants shared their outputs and celebrated the incredible collaboration, flexibility; and passion of the ShapingEDU community.

Recommended Outputs:

• A toolkit with strategies and guidelines to help meet the basic human needs of students and provide tools for peer mentoring

• A 3-faceted vision of higher education purposes, strategies for vision-led action and alignment and a series of challenges to foster systems thinking about education futures

• A toolkit for storytelling and student agency in XR

• A pitch for a new university, The Institute for Advanced Play, and a case study of the antifragile design and community thinking process used to design it

• Storybank: an online resource to humanizing learning + teaching practice by sharing lived experiences

• A student-owned document/ manifesto describing what students need and expect from higher education

• Version 2 of a webpage about collecting, protecting and leveraging student data for student benefit

The ShapingEDU Community is currently voting on the outputs to collectively prioritize over the next year. In addition to these recommendations, the Unconference inspired a new cohort of community leaders including returning and first-time ShapingEDU Mayors who will lead changemaking efforts in the coming year.

ShapingEDU is incredibly grateful to our Unconference Co-Conveners for their support and leadership.

Data Reflects UTO's Remote Achievements

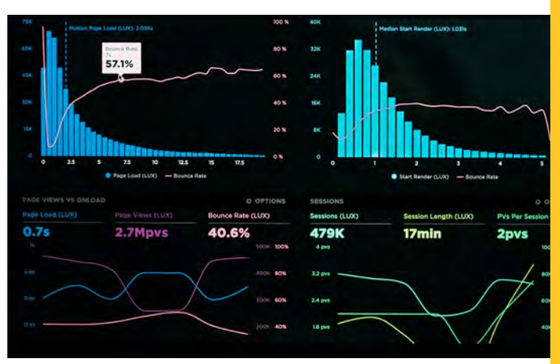
The monumental shift to remote work for both students and faculty demonstrated how the ASU community not only rises to face new challenges, but traverses them victoriously. With 5,000-plus courses and 55,000-plus on-campus students, the transition to fully online work was a herculean task.

Laptops delivered: 1,699

Hotspots delivered: 667

Number of faculty trained on Canvas, Zoom and Slack: 3,200+

Experience Center calls handled about COVID-19 and the remote modality: 30,426



Zoom sessions (classes, meetings, webinars): 569,934
"I am generally an anxious presenter, so presenting online through Zoom helped me feel more at ease than I might have with an in-person presentation." - Kathleen Casey, senior Kinesiology student

Course workspaces in Slack: 2,446

Slack daily messages: 186,000
"It's instrumental in helping us build the sense of belonging for our admitted students." - Casey Thomas, Associate Director of Digital Engagement and Public Relations of Admission Services

Slack active daily users: 20,642
"Our Slack community has been an uplifting place to go when you need to speak with others who know exactly what you are experiencing." - Corinna Busciglio Kamilli, University Technology Office Senior Communications Specialist

Number of endpoint systems protected from next gen anti-malware: 23,376

Total number of funded projects for Learning Futures Collaboratory: 5
Including an ASU-wide digital credentials project and the development of Xplor for immersive learning.

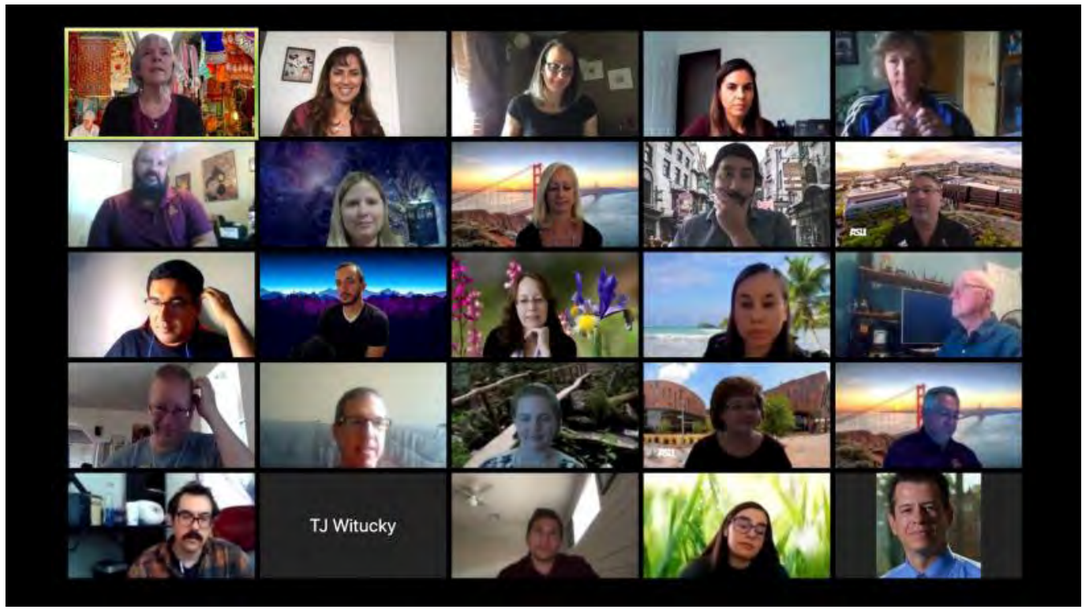
"UTO Gives Back" to the community: 28 events / 180 participants

UTO-produced events and participants: 6 events / 1,529 participants

UTO website unique visits: 590, 215

Humble Heroes

Featured story: Information Security Team Supports Arizona Coronavirus Response



Behind every exceptional university -- like Arizona State University -- there are exceptional people. UTO is full of unsung heroes -- Problem-Solvers, Jumper-Inners, Quiet Leaders, Cheerleaders and Champions, Agile and Flexible Doers and Attitude Winners. These team members embody the best of UTO in their everyday work.

UTO Humble Heroes, a series that began in June 2020, features the people who help UTO succeed. These exceptional team members solve problems, provide support and help the entire ASU community.

The Humble Heroes profiled so far are making a difference in the ASU community and beyond. Brett Woods returned to serve in the Arizona National Guard, Paul Alvarado and Mike Sharkey designed dashboards to support Success Coaches, and the entire Governance, Policy and Information Security team came together in a united front of culture change. In doing so, they all turned the challenges of COVID-19 into opportunities for growth.

"As we've been practicing our Positive Core values of being relational, authentic, visionary and empowered, we are fulfilling our promise to strategically innovate and model operational excellence," said Christine Whitney Sanchez, Chief Culture Officer of ASU's University Technology Office. "The Humble Heroes project aligns wholeheartedly with our values, recognizing those who go above and beyond by weaving organizational culture with Digital Transformation to produce Community Delight."

Congratulations to these Humble Heroes and our UTO family for all that they do!

Previously published stories:

Information Security Team Supports Arizona Coronavirus Response

"I definitely brewed a couple cups of coffee before starting to read the 2000+ emails and heading straight into our morning meetings!" said Brett Woods, an Information Security Associate with the Governance, Policy and Information Security (GPIS) team. Brett recently returned from almost two months of active duty with the Arizona National Guard as part of the state's COVID-19 response.

On March 19th, Governor Ducey activated the Arizona National Guard. The mission, according to the Department of Emergency and Military Affairs, was "to surge logistical capacity to grocery stores and food banks around the state in order to make resources accessible to our communities with the greatest need." Woods' unit was part of this response, sparking rapid adjustment on the Information Security team to serve the ASU community in his absence. "Literally, one day I'm there and then one day I'm just gone, and there was definitely a lot of work that I kind of placed on my team," Woods recalls.

During this time, Woods focused on supporting the distribution of food and essential resources -- restocking shelves and supporting grocery stores faced with both an increased demand and added complexities to their processes (masks, sanitation, etc.). “We were really there to help out,” Woods explained, “we pretty much worked from the time the grocery store closed to the time it opened.”

His work also included supporting food pantries around Arizona as demand skyrocketed. For example, a food pantry in Phoenix that regularly fed 400-500 families each day ramped up to feeding about 1500 families daily. Woods also was quick to recognize the service of employees and volunteers at stores and food banks. “It was inspiring, knowing that there are people that just kept working through it and volunteers that are risking themselves.”

The Information Security team was incredibly supportive and quickly pivoted to continue to protect ASU from security threats and enable Woods to focus on his work with the National Guard. “Everyone stepped up and filled the void when he was gone,” shared Tom Castellano, Lead Architect & Senior Director Of Cybersecurity Strategy and Assurance, “that was another big attestation of how our [GPIS] team operates -- they step up where any other individuals need help.”

TJ Witucky, Director of the Security Operations Center and Woods’ supervisor, explained that both staff and student workers took on new or expanded responsibilities. For example, students took a much larger role in creating the weekly Executive Brief which informs leaders across ASU about security efforts, threats and news.

This flexibility and agility is key to the success of a team focused on security incident prevention and response, and the experience of pivoting in Woods’ absence has illuminated opportunities to further strengthen these capabilities. This situation “has really galvanized the need for that cross-training ability,” Witucky explained,” to have the cross-functional team so we can have people jump in on any particular subject or topic whenever necessary.”

In his National Guard service and day-to-day work at ASU, Woods embodies a dedication to community, customer delight and service. “He’ll jump in and help whenever you need someone to help with anything on the team,” Castellano shared.

As Woods explained, “I just have the mindset of, if there’s a task it has to get done, and if I’m the first person who reads it, I’m putting my name down.” Woods’ National Guard service this spring also necessitated postponing some of his coursework for a computer engineering degree.

When nominated as a UTO Humble Hero, Woods was quick to recognize his colleagues who took on additional responsibilities in his absence: Alyssa Goldstein, Robert Kamilli, Kevin Lough, Sean Reichert and TJ Witucky.

“UTO and the National Guard are benefiting from each other. Brett brought the mentality of GPIS and UTO, where everyone is working together and being open and inclusive, to his work with the National Guard,” Christine Whitney Sanchez, UTO’s Chief Culture Officer, shared. “As he returns to his role at UTO, he appreciates the leadership and community building skills he practiced in his role with the National Guard. With the ramifications of COVID-19 and the protests that have erupted in Arizona, Brett can be called back into service at any time.”

Congratulations and many thanks to these UTO Humble Heroes!

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