

https://www.bgdailynews.com/news/wku-to-host-imagination-incubator/article_18554745-2fec-5391-a656-736b6aadf12f.html

WKU to host 'Imagination Incubator'

By JAKE MOORE intern@bgdailynews.com

Jun 1, 2022

Western Kentucky University’s Potter College of Arts and Letters and the university’s Innovation Campus will team up with the University of Southern California for a “Civic Imagination Incubator.”

The program, which launches in September, will tap into the “civic imagination” to conceptualize what a better world could look like.

The eight-month program will take participants through the processes of planning, prototyping, devising participatory strategies and exploring funding possibilities for their projects. Monthly meetings and sessions with guests and advisers are part of the course.



“The city of Bowling Green is rapidly growing not only in population, but in diversity of thought,” Terrance Brown, dean of Potter College, said in a news release. “Our ability to be proactive in bridging gaps in civic, cultural and economic development will give us a stronger foundation upon which to build.”

The incubator will be hosted virtually with in-person kickoff and closing events.

Henry Jenkins, provost professor of communication, journalism, cinematic arts and education at USC Annenberg and one of the primary researchers of the Civic Imagination Project, said civic imagination allows people to imagine a better world before setting about to create it.

“If you want to build a better world, you have to imagine it first,” Jenkins said.

Jenkins said civic imagination and politics are at odds. He said the imagination fuels social and cultural connections, but politics is the “space of contestation” – a partisan space where power is at play, preventing unity.

It is because of this, Jenkins said, that the civic imagination is needed in our world more than ever.

“It used to be, elections end and we’d put it aside,” Jenkins said. “Joe the plumber is a Republican, I’m a Democrat, but he’s still my plumber and neighbor. Now, campaigns

don't end, we don't accept election results, laws are passed and then immediately repealed. Politics is burning down the civic infrastructure.”

Jenkins said people have always turned to culture to fuel civic imagination, which in turn inspires change and progress. The founding fathers looked to the Greeks and classic philosophers, and those philosophers looked to religious texts and histories.

Join us June 2nd at Bowling Green Ballpark for the 5th Annual

Kentucky SUPER PREPS

DAILY NEWS Transstate Health Center

Special Guest: Adam Nuse
VP of Business Operations for the Tennessee Titans

Tony Rose
WKMG Radio Personality and Stuff the Bus Founder

Kentucky Super Preps recognizes outstanding student-athletes from 14 area high schools!

Jase Pinerola
Red Center Health VP Physical Rehabilitation

Admission is free!
Join us June 2 at 6 pm
Bowling Green Ballpark
or watch on Facebook Live

PACK THE PARK
to celebrate these amazing Student-Athletes!

Worst Habit That Har

It defies common sense, yet 77% doing this daily.

“Humans have always tapped into culture to fuel civic engagement,” Jenkins said. “It can seed and spark the imagination.”

Participants will learn the “by any media necessary” approach to facing problems, which involves taking advantage of any form of media possible to bring about change.

“Take the kids from the Parkland (Fla.) shooting; they went on CNN, they spoke with the president, they marched in Washington,” Jenkins said. “They used digital media, they made T-shirts. Any media they had access to.”

The partnership between USC, Potter College and WKU’s Innovation Campus came about due to a web of relationships. In 2017, a Civic Imagination Project workshop came to Bowling Green, challenging participants to imagine what Kentucky may look like in the year 2040.

Inspired by the workshop, Sam Ford went on to create the nonprofit Accelerate Kentucky, which he now helms as executive director. Jenkins was Ford’s graduate mentor, and Ford’s wife, Amanda, is a WKU graduate who works with USC.

The workshop served as the “Genesis point” of ultimately bringing the incubator to Bowling Green, with Accelerate Kentucky facilitating the partnership between USC and WKU.

“The relationships run deep,” Ford said.

Nominations for the first incubator cohort, which is to be composed of “five creatives,” are open to “excited, team-oriented fellows” who live in West Virginia, Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and Alabama.

Ford said the project is looking for creators who have interest in cross-platform storytelling. The goal is to connect the participants with one another, and hopefully with the city of Bowling Green and the WKU community.

– To nominate someone for the cohort, contact Sam Ford at samuel.ford@wku.edu. The five creatives will be picked by June.