

Dear EQV:

I'm eager to thank you for my summer experience that your generosity has afforded me. To sum up my experience in a phrase: life-changing.

This past June, I packed my bags for New York City to participate in the Breaker Project, a program whose mission is to drive social innovation and alternative learning by mobilizing interdisciplinary teams of young creative collaborators to help solve pressing social problems. It was not your typical internship, but it was quite the experience. My supervisor, TED fellow Juliette LaMontagne, led the breaker team on a three-month design boot camp dealing explicitly with the challenge "Technology for Civic Engagement." After weeks of research, design iteration, and meetings with prominent social entrepreneurs and designers, the team pitched three products to a crowd that included representatives from Google Creative Labs, Doblin/Monitor, and AOL QLABs.

The project that I worked on specifically, Need-A-Deed, received tremendous feedback and interest. The Breaker team and I are currently continuing prototyping and we're hoping to launch the app by the end of December. It's exciting to know that I have my foot in the door in the field of design and social entrepreneurship.

This grant allowed me to pursue a summer experience that would have otherwise been impossible. I lack the financial resources to work as an unpaid intern and have other worried about failing behind my peers who have had those opportunities. With this experience behind me, I now have the connections that will allow me to land a paid internship position in the future. This summer was a critical step in my career and I am so thankful to have been afforded the opportunity.

So, to all the members of EQV, thanks for allowing me to pursue my dreams without tremendous financial burden.

Best,

Carlos Sanchez

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Carlos Alfonzo Sanchez III (2014)

I'm a Studio Art major with a concentration in Graphic Design. My interest in the major stemmed from early exposure to photography. After sometime spent working primarily in photo, I tried Graphic Design and have yet to turn back. I love visual design theory and problem solving. Primarily, I'm interested in the pragmatism of design versus fine art.

The summer grant allowed me to work for The Breaker Project in New York City. My official title was a "breaker." The program is unusual in that it is not quite an internship but an alternative learning model that guides aspiring, college-aged

social entrepreneurs through the process of creating a startup from scratch. The nature of the Breaker Project was collaborative and multidisciplinary. While each of the 11 participants stepped up when their field of expertise was called upon, everyone participated in each step of the process to a given extent. The program was divided into three phases: Research, Iteration and Pitching. During the research phase, we went out into the field to conduct research on the topic we were given "Technology for Civic Engagement." I met with Javier De La Torre of Vizzuality, a data visualization company, and Marissa Shrum of Mother, an advertising agency, in addition to conducting street interviews to gauge levels of civic participation. The group reconvened to sort through the research and identify problem areas in the use of civic engagement in technology, focusing specifically on the Millennial demographic. The group as a whole met with representatives from design consultancy agencies like Frog Design and IDEO to help throughout the process.

In the following phase of iteration, we started brainstorming product ideas based on the identified problem areas under the guidance of Tom Uglow of Google Creative Labs. What started out as a total of 100 problem ideas was eventually nailed down to three, each geared towards getting communities to engage more intimately with each other and their local government. We then set out on another round of research to test the potential viability, functionality, and feasibility of all three products. Upon completion of the research, the group decided to continue developing prototypes of all three products. The first was Need-A-Deed, a mobile and web-based application that crowd-sources funding to fix localized problems that affect entire communities. The second was PowerUp, a themed program intended to engage high school students in volunteerism through the use of the "Superhero" aesthetic and a digital bracelet that logs volunteer hours. The third was Cirkut which closes the circle on community interactions with crowd-sourced event-driven media content, in order to help people engage with and collaborate in positively shaping the identity of their neighborhoods.

We then committed to a single product and were told to continue iterating and prototyping. Our goal was to have a functional prototype by pitch night, where we would present the products to potential investors and the mentors we had interacted with throughout the entire process. I committed to Need-A-Deed with three other Breaker participants. As a designer, this is where my expertise came in. I developed a pitch deck, a splash page, and a wireframe for the product that would explain the User Interaction and Interface of the product. On August 10th, we pitched the products. Of all three presented, Need-A-Deed received positive feedback and interest from potential investors. The team plans to continue the development of the product past this summer and hopes to launch by the end of this December.

My experience this summer taught me how to utilize the content studied through courses and text at Wesleyan to create action. I've found that often our accumulated knowledge as college student is underused. The structure of the program offered

me new insight into various design methodologies that I have since applied toward personal design (both graphic and architectural) project.

The summer experience also gave me important connections. I had the opportunity to meet with anyone in the TED network, and I plan to use those connections post-Wesleyan when I'll be searching for a job. The program also gave me the confidence to pursue ventures relentlessly.