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CARNEGIE MELLON  
UNIVERSITY

# Dah-Varsity League Playbook

Policy Innovation Lab: Public Interest  
Technology

CLIENT

ToyzSteam  
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# About Dah-Varsity Headquarters

Our founders are a father and son duo with an engineering, creative, and entrepreneurial background.

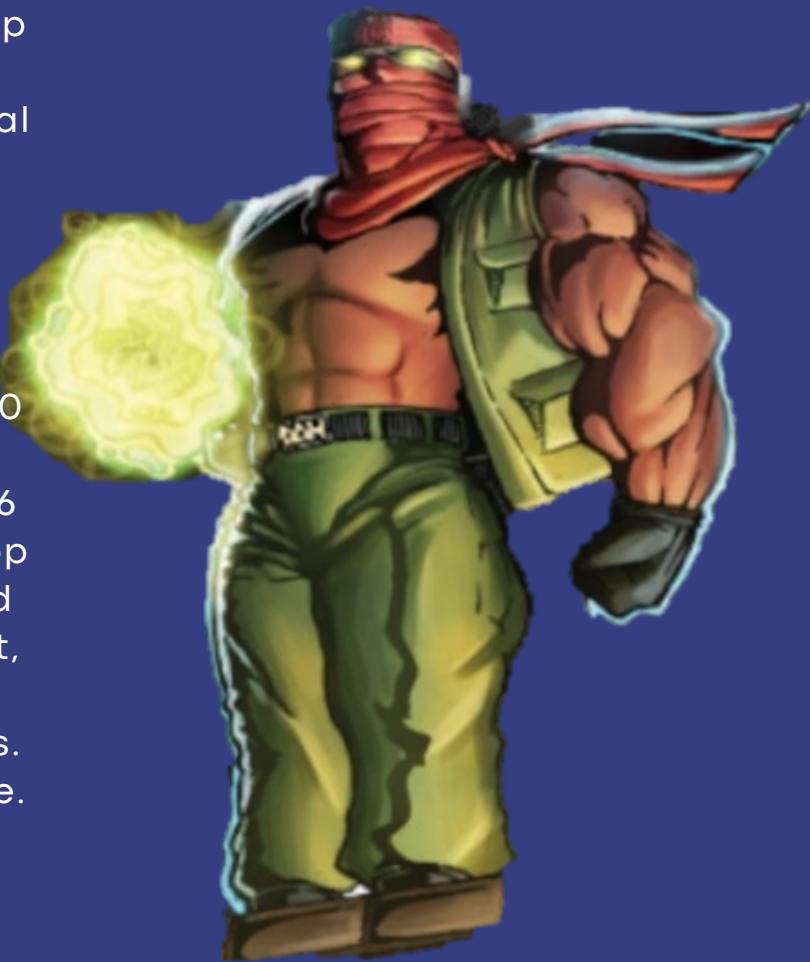
**DAMOLA IDOWU (CEO)**—Serial Hip Hop Entrepreneur, Artist, & Journalist.

Enrolled full-time studying Mechanical Engineering and Economics at Syracuse University at 16. He won

Engineering Design Competition At Howard University at 18. Created Superhero Rap at 19 with Da Great Deity Dah. Products will reach over 30 countries across 5 continents with over 1 million plays on YouTube. At 26 pioneered the intersection of Hip-hop and Business with Owners Illustrated Magazine going on tour with 50 Cent,

Jay-Z and Beyonce. Coining and trademarking the term Hustlenomics. It will reach over 20,000 points of sale.

He created the Hip-Hop and technology magazine Toyz at 31.



**WOLE IDOWU (CTO)**— Carnegie Mellon University Electrical and Computer Engineering Grad with 2 Minors In Business at Age 20. Thiel 20 Under 20 Finalist, CNBC Documentary 20 Under 20 Transforming Tomorrow, and High School Graduate at 15. EA Games Employee at 18. He is also a current software engineer.

# Origins of the Dah-Varsity League

## Problem Statement

- How do we improve the access to STEAM education for marginalized communities?
- How do we scale the effort ?
- How do we collect data to track the impact of community engagements for ToyzSteam?
- How do we create pathways for mentorship for students? How can we engage students?

## How Might We ....

Provide a platform to access near-peer mentorship and tutoring and identify communities which need this access to develop a pipeline of diverse talent in STEAM whilst capturing data.



# Hear it from the Dah-Varsity Universe

"We are only around for so long, and everyone's dream and goal is to have a better future for the next generation. There is going to be some day, we are going to be old, the ones we have invested in are the ones who are going to be in charge."

"Many of them are eventually graduating from high school, but they don't have the basic skills the twenty-first century requires and if we don't do something to address that, you know, fundamental deficit, then we're not going to solve the problem, right?"

"If we don't have any representation, if we're not showing these opportunities on a broader scale, it seems less likely or less important. As a black man, I see rapping, NBA, etc. I didn't have STEAM/STEM people who I could look to or ask questions about."

"I think that [mentorship] is so important, honestly. On every level, you really see that having near-peer mentors is very effective for students if they can see someone who's a few years older than them. If you bring an example of somebody who is similar to you and you put it in front, you're more likely to feel motivated."

# Inhabitants of Dah-Varsity Universe

## Students of Color



### About George

George is enrolled at a public school in Pittsburgh and is interested in higher education. He comes from a marginalized community in Pittsburgh. He aspires to graduate high school and be something in life.

#### Behaviors:

- Attends after school sessions for additional help
- Tutor has been assigned

#### Attitudes:

- Fearful of losing opportunity
- Self doubts himself

#### Why:

- Underrepresented at school
- Lack of motivation from community
- Recognizes differences in opportunities for him and other more privileged students
- Fearful of the system

#### Needs:

- Graduate with a 3.5 GPA minimum
- Gain admission to a college or university
- Build a network to fall back on and seek guidance and inspiration from

#### Challenges:

- Struggles with classes due to weak foundational education
- Social network in higher education is limited due to the lack of representation
- University admissions feel intimidating and alienating

#### Goals:

- Pursue a degree from a top university
- Seek mentors and community to guide him along this process

### HOW MIGHT WE HELP?

HMW provide a platform to access near peer mentorship and tutoring?

## Community Ambassador



### About Mel

Mel is a third year undergraduate student studying computer science at Carnegie Mellon University. She has been able to attain her goals through consistent mentorship from her parent. She wants to make a difference in the community but also wants to save enough money for graduate school.

#### Behaviors:

- Always in search of ways to give back to people
- Passionate about teaching students hence has opted to be a teacher's assistant.

#### Attitudes:

- Hard working
- self-driven

#### Why:

- Believes in helping people operate at their potential
- Wants to give back to the community
- Wants to develop personal growth and unique development stories

#### Needs:

- Graduate with a 3.8 GPA minimum
- Find a job after graduation which contributes towards the society

#### Challenges:

- Hectic university schedules
- Free time spent looking for internships

#### Goals:

- Work for a renowned consulting firm
- Become a senior consultant 5 years
- Pursue a public policy degree

### HOW MIGHT WE HELP?

HMW provide a platform to access communities which need near peer mentorship and tutoring?

## Employer



### About Sarah

Sarah is a woman in Tech in the Silicon Valley. She has been in the company for the past 5 years and has been consistently hiring software engineers. Her company aims to maintain a diverse workforce.

#### Behaviors:

- Advocates for a diverse workforce
- Recruits for internship and graduate programs

#### Attitudes:

- Self motivated
- Perseverant

#### Why:

- Believes that a diverse workforce adds to better and more innovative problem solving
- DEI is important for the company's reputation

#### Needs:

- Ensure the work culture is diverse and inclusive
- Merit based culture

#### Challenges:

- Difficult to find high caliber student of color in proficient in STEAM Fields
- Lack of direct access to BIPOC community
- As woman in Tech, faces barriers to progress up the corporate ladder

#### Goals:

- Increase the diversity in hiring pool for the year
- Advance in her career through promotion
- Ensure employees have the skillsets and training to progress in their careers

### HOW MIGHT WE HELP?

HMW provide a pipeline of diverse talent in Tech?

# Dah-Varsity Mission: Mentorship

In building and running an effective mentorship platform, it is integral to keep in mind the following 5 pillar framework:

- Design
- Attract
- Connect
- Guide
- Measure



Adapted from: <https://chronus.com/>



# Superhuman Powers: Why Join the Dah-Varsity League?

Be a Change  
Catalyst

Be a Diversity  
Champion

Be a STEAM  
Ambassador

Be a  
Community  
Leader

# What's your Superhero Character?



Superhero aka Mentor

## Roles & Responsibilites

1. Commit to 5-10 hours over 5 weeks
2. Review college application essays or provide extra tutoring
3. Share your superhero journey with your rookies, inspiring them!
4. Fill out monthly evaluations on you and your rookies progress.

\*\*Students earn 3-credits or semester stipend for being a superhero

Sidekick

Sidekick aka Mentee

## Roles & Responsibilites

1. Attend all rookie training sessions with your superhero
2. Map your journey to becoming a superhero too!
3. Fill out monthly evaluations on your experience



# Dah-Varsity League : Mission Plan

For SuperHeros



Launch program at CMU  
& UPitt



Students apply on Dah-  
Varsity App Portal



Toyzsteam collects data



Launch in Marginalised  
Communities



Students apply on Dah-  
Varsity App Portal



Toyzsteam collects data

The Crossover: Match  
Superhero & Sidekick on  
**Chronus**



## Tips

- Hire a project resource
- Conduct Campus drive for launch of the program

# Reboot Mission: Participant Evaluation

## Feedback built in the App

### The Superhero

1. How do you feel about the program? Choose the emoticon most suitable.



2. What is going well?

3. What is not going well?

4. How is the Rookie's performance?

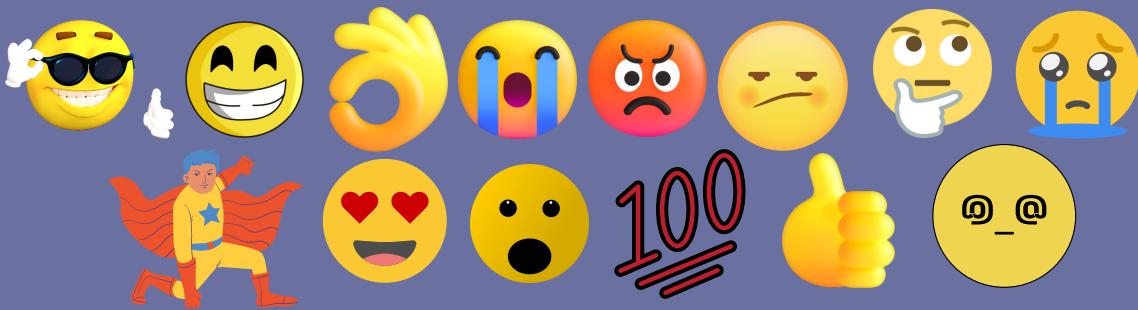


# Reboot Mission: Participant Evaluation

Feedback built in the App

## The Sidekick

1. How do you feel about the program? Choose the emoticon most suitable.



2. What is going well?

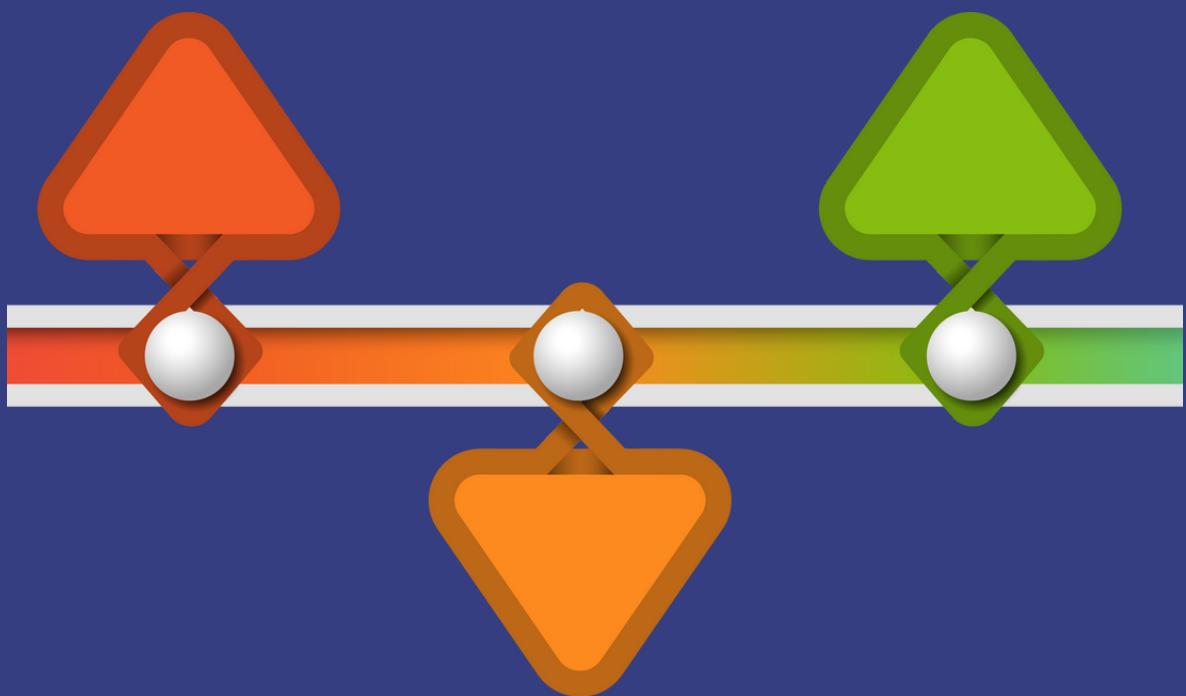
3. What is not going well?



# Mission Timeline

1.Launch program in schools & Colleges: 2nd week of January on Martin Luther King Day

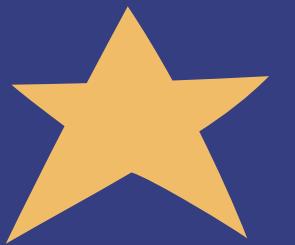
3.Run program for 6 - 12 months



2. The Crossover: Match Superhero & Sidekick:  
4th Week of February



# Mission Targets



Reach out to 300+ students



Receive applications from 50+ students



Inaugural class of 10 superheroes and 20 rookies



Select inaugural class of 10 superheroes and 20 Sidekicks



Track program completion rate and outcomes for all students



# Dah-Varsity Success Metrics

Number of successful superheros

Number of successful sidekicks

Number of school partners

User Engagement

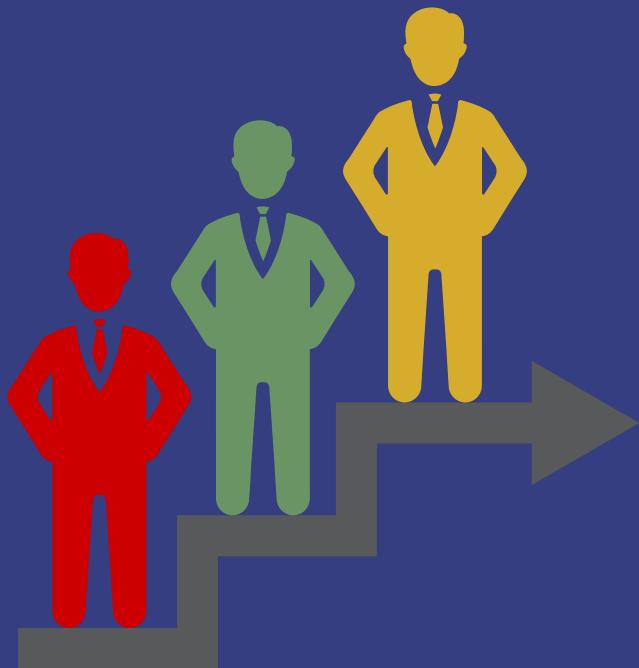


# Dah-Varsity Mission Impact

Admission Rate to College

Job/Internship Recruitment

Est. Income to Community



# Dah-Varsity League: The Recruit

December 2023: Hire Recruitment Coordinator



Jan 2023: Launch Recruitment after MLK Day with campus drives at local schools and universities



February 2023: Reach out to 300 potential superheroes and sidekicks, targeting 50 new app sign-up's



February 2023: Select inaugural class of superheroes and sidekicks, with a minimum of 30 total participants



May 2023: Evaluate outreach and retention for program. Make necessary changes and launch outreach for summer demo program.

# Dah-Varsity League: Days of Future

January 2023: Pilot Dah-Varsity League in Pittsburgh



May 2023: Analyze data from participants. Connect with other potential educational partners.



June 2024: Launch Summer Demo in Pittsburgh and DC. Continue gathering data from college seniors.



Fall 2023: Launch Dah-Varsity League widely for STEAM mentorship connections.



2024 onwards: Continue program based on feedback and data. Measure longer term impact on communities.

# Dah-Varsity: Mission 2.0 Unlocked

Way Forward for TOYZSTEAM:

- Interview High School students to test the prototype - we were unable to incorporate them in our research as they were less than 18 years of age. Hence, would be great to test the prototype and idea with the target audience
- Devise a scoring mechanism to capture the efforts and progress of Sidekicks, heroes, and superheroes
- Test the Third-party App (Chronus) for verify integration with existing Dah-Varsity App
- Hire a project resource through Handshake to manage the project end to end
- Design a standardised launch poster for Mentors and Mentees can be floated in Schools and Universities via career offices



# Consultants



Name: Nahal Abdul Ghaffar  
Role: Project Manager



Name: Oravee Smithiphol  
Role: Policy Specialist



Name: Meher Dhaliwal  
Role: User Researcher

# Open Source Initiative

This Source Code Form is subject to the terms of the Mozilla Public License, v. 2.0. If a copy of the MPL was not distributed with this file, You can obtain one at <https://mozilla.org/MPL/2.0/>.

Link: <https://github.com/NahalG/Policy-Innovation-Lab->

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