Improve the State Department through Design Thinking

Project Title	Improve the State Department through Design Thinking
Project Summary	Become a critical member of a new high-profile team launching the State Department Design Lab. The goal of the Lab is to help each of the State Department's systems, platforms and processes work as smoothly and efficiently as possible by applying human centered design to how each one impacts employe
Country	United States

Project Description

The Chief Information Officer (CIO) of the State Department has enthusiastically supported the creation of the Lab and team to improve the myriad digital process, communications and knowledge management challenges facing one of the world's most globally dispersed organizations. The countries where we don't have people on the ground can be counted on one hand (with fingers to spare!). The opportunities this team will address are as diverse as the organization and will include senior leadership.

Be a key part of the team to solve the wicked problems facing the launch and work of the Design Lab. Your fellow team members will reflect the diversity of the State Department. How can the Lab generate design solutions that best address strategic and organizational issues? How can the Lab shape strategy and weave together insights and recommendations into a clear actionable plan? How do we monitor, measure and display impact? How do we convince bright, skeptical colleagues of the value of design thinking? How do we prioritize projects? Are there components of our work for which we can create a DIY guide? What should our internal, customer-focused intranet look like? How do we create an intake funnel that is not bureaucratic or overly process laden? What are a tiered series of design thinking activities the Lab can offer, from quick, introductory exercises to extended, deep-dives? How do we prevent "success-failure" whereby demand for our service outstrips our ability to deliver? How can the Lab's impact scale exponentially, when human and capital resources scale linearly?

Launching a new institution provides opportunities to develop and demonstrate many skills. We will work with you to identify tasks and projects that both taps into your interests and abilities and allows you to demonstrate work meaningful to prospective employers. Initially, you will continue development of 1) The Design Lab Handbook, which will explicate, support, and guide the work of staff members who manage the Design Lab's services, equipment, and day-to-day operations; and, 2) The Facilitator's Toolkit, which articulates the methods, tools, and processes that HCD practitioners may employ for Design Lab projects.

The ideal candidate would be a lateral thinker who is comfortable with ambiguity and who has or can build a network of human centered design practitioners and experts (including fellow students and professors).

Required Skills or Interests

Skill(s)

Design thinking

Additional Information

What is the best way to land your dream job out of college? Having already done what your dream employer is looking for in a new hire. And what do employers most look for in a new employee? Competencies they don't already have in-house. Employers know how to do what they are already doing, but something new often leads to gnashing of teeth and fitful sleep. In the startup world, big companies sometimes tackle new challenges through talent acquisitions via acqui-hires. They buy a startup, not for the product or service, but for the talent, often paying over a million dollars per start up employee that joins the acquiring company. That's a lot to spend to hire someone to solve a problem!

So, how do you gain eye-catching skills while still in college? By joining a greenfield initiative through the VSFS that taps into your unique knowledge of human centered design together with your network of fellow students and professors. Showing that you have helped successfully launch a high-profile initiative in the oldest cabinet agency in the U.S. government will get your prospective dream employer's attention.

Language Requirements

None