

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Lauren Harper
DigCampSC@gmail.com
704-222-3421

Darla Moore School of Business professor, MBA student partner to launch teen social innovation camp

COLUMBIA, S.C. (June 7, 2016) – An innovation camp for middle school and high school-aged students will be held August 8-12 at USC's Darla Moore School of Business (DMSB).

DIG Camp, which stands for design, innovate and grow, aims to expose students to hands-on projects through which they can create and test viable businesses, products or services. Run as an innovation tournament, the winning team will receive a small amount of seed money to launch their product in addition to other scholarship prizes.

The camp is the inspiration of Tiye Gordon, an MBA student at DMSB with a concentration in international business, entrepreneurship and innovation, and Dr. Joel Wooten, assistant professor of management science.

"With the increased connectivity of the internet in our lives and the resulting explosion of data, access to technology and its influence in today's business landscape can help the youth of today be the leaders of tomorrow," said Gordon.

Gordon is the founder and president of Teen V.O.I.C.E, Inc. - a 501(c)3 organization that provides youth of color with safe spaces, technology training and opportunity to strengthen their voices and aid in developing purpose, passion and power. The camp is under the umbrella of events and programming done by the organization.

As a model for the camp, Wooten's "Innovation and Design" course at USC uses innovation tournaments in the classroom to help students learn how to deal with uncertainty in solving problems. Wooten will lead and instruct students with principles from his course throughout the duration of the camp.

"One of the things business school students are increasingly asking for is access to innovation classes and content," said Wooten. "This camp takes those same ideas and introduces them to the next generation of inventors and problem solvers - I'm incredibly excited about it."

The camp's focus in its inaugural year is social innovation as it relates to helping communities. Among other skills, students will gain experience in problem-solving and creating solutions for innovation hurdles in a fun and interactive setting.

Students ages 13-17 are eligible for the camp. Registration is free, but donations are preferable. Students interested in registering can do so through the camp's Eventbrite page.

Innovation camps specifically for youth of color are especially integral.

Silicon Valley, while seen as the hub of innovation, does not currently reflect the diversity our country harbors. Its demographic statistics are disconcerting:

- Less than 20 percent of tech employees are female
- Under-represented minorities (blacks, Latinos) in tech number in the single-digit percentages
- Women in senior leadership roles make up 15 percent to 30 percent of the companies reporting, but for blacks and Latinos, it's back to the single digits
- Women make up less than 8 percent of investment decision makers in venture capital firms
- Less than 1 percent of venture capitalists (VCs) are black
- 1.3 percent of VCs are Hispanic
- 3 percent of funding goes to women-led startups; 1 percent to black founders

For more information and for sponsorship or volunteer opportunities, visit digcamp.weebly.com or email digcampsc@gmail.com.

About DIG Camp:

DIG Camp is an innovation camp for middle school and high school-aged students. Hosted at the University of South Carolina's Darla Moore School of Business, its goal is to expose students to a week of fun, hands-on projects that stretch their imaginations and capabilities. The camp runs as an innovation tournament during which students will create and test viable businesses, products and services. The focus for 2016 is on social innovation and helping communities. Students will gain experience in problem-solving and creating solutions for innovation hurdles in a fun and interactive setting.

About Teen V.O.I.C.E., Inc.:

Teen V.O.I.C.E., Inc. is dedicated to providing youth of color with safe spaces, technology training and opportunity to strengthen their voices and aid in developing purpose, passion and power.

###