

STUDENTS LIVING **CARDINAL, GOLD & GREEN**

Iowa State University Students had the opportunity to use their skills, extra curricular activities and majors to innovate, create and exhilarate ideas for the 2022 College-by-College Pitch Off. Seven colleges participated in this event with students pitching their ideas and business models in 90 seconds to a panel of judges for cash prizes.

Five candidates in the 2022 College-By-College Pitch Off presented innovative business models and ideas with connection to social, economic and environmental sustainability. Three of the five candidates responded and are featured in this month's issue; Chloe Grote a senior in the College of Design majoring in Industrial Design, Liliann Hatting a senior in the Ivy College of Business majoring in Marketing and Chidinma Ukoha a graduate student in Human Computer Interaction.



Photo courtesy of Chloe Grote

CHLOE GROTE FLOW (ECO-FRIENDLY TAMPONS)

Flow offers a unique connection to environmental and social sustainability - the biodegradable tampon addresses community needs by eliminating stigma and reducing waste.

When asked to explain her product vision, Grote offered, "Flow re-invents the way a tampon is disposed of by repurposing the package it comes in." The resealable compostable pouch can be implemented for the user to place the used product in the packaging to throw it in the trash in a clean hassle-free manner.

The pouch will open conversations about periods due to its branding, which will have different colors from a bright color pallet and a "period" pun on the back of each pouch. Grote explains, "Flow will ease the disposal process of

tampons all while eliminating periods as a taboo topic." Grote hopes Flow will push innovation towards all types of menstrual products.

When asked about her inspiration for Flow, Grote explained, "I realized the disposal process of tampons was cumbersome and there is no universal way to dispose of tampons. You can either flush it down the toilet and clog the septic tank or you can wrap it up in a bunch of toilet paper and throw it in the trash. Neither of these options provide a clean disposal process. I also noticed how the stigma of having to hide periods and not being able to talk about them, has led to a halt in period product innovation, especially in the tampon market. I wanted to create a product that would provide a clear way of disposal, while encouraging users not to be ashamed of their period."

Related to sustainability and having a more sustainable future, Grote noted that she views Flow as a "gateway product" for more eco-friendly period product options, "People are often hesitant to begin using products like a cup, and reside back to drug store period products, which most likely have a negative impact on the ecosystem. By providing an eco-friendly tampon option, users can start with a product they are accustomed to and gradually switch to products like cups and reusable tampon applicators."

Environmental sustainability is not the only mission for Flow. Grote explained an overarching social sustainability goal of Flow - to create product branding that increases a comfortable interaction with and open conversations about periods. "Current day tampon packaging is often gender specific and includes illustrations such as butterflies and flowers.

Tampons are also wrapped in plastic that is not supposed to create noise

such as a "crinkling" sound while in the restroom. This and terms like "discreet protection" lead users to feel the need to hide their periods when it is a totally natural and healthy process. Flow looks at the root problems for why there has been a halt in period product innovation and how it can be improved upon."

"Flow is all about innovation. Period products are often not improved upon because they are simply not talked about enough. There are very few eco-friendly period products to buy in-stores and Flow looks to serve everyone who has a period, and its innovative brand creates an inclusive culture."

To learn more about Flow, visit [Grote's portfolio website](#) or send an email to cggrote@iastate.edu.



Photo Courtesy of Liliann Hatting

LILIANN HATTING SUSTAINABLE UNIVERSAL PHONE CASE

A sustainable universal phone case offers a relevant connection to economic and environmental sustainability - through financial impact and reducing waste.

Hatting noted, "The idea that I have is a phone case that will be constructed using sustainable materials (recycled or environmentally friendly) and easily manipulated to fit multiple devices."

The inspiration for Hatting's innovative idea came from witnessing the abundance of phone cases purchased each year with the release of each

new generation of phone - and each requiring a new case. "Decent phone cases are rarely cheap, but they are a necessity - and can result in many people purchasing multiple cases each year," Hatting explained.

Satisfying consumer expectations from a phone case, with the added comfort in knowing they aren't contributing to the landfill every time a new phone is purchased, is Hatting's overall goal for her sustainable universal phone case. "Consumers can keep the same phone case for years and they won't have to worry about getting a new one, just because they need to get a new device," Hatting added.

In discussing how her idea for a sustainable universal phone case embraces innovation, Hatting responded, "My business concept embraces innovation by taking footsteps in the right direction by reducing waste from technology accessories. The pursuit of this idea means that consumers will have the choice of avoiding phone case waste instead of just contributing to it." People tend to buy phone cases without any alternative but to throw them away later. The potential volume of this waste tends to be disregarded. Not only is the case wasted but the product packaging and shipping products (bubble wrap, cardboard and plastic envelopes) are also thrown away. As well as the ability to adjust her phone case to fit different phones, Hatting's idea includes distributing the phone cases with little to no packaging waste.

In regards to living a more sustainable future, Hatting acknowledges that it is critical for consumers to make decisions to reduce their carbon footprint, no matter how small these choices seem to be. Hatting feels her idea is an example of "one small step that consumers could take toward a more sustainable lifestyle and future."

At this time, Hatting's sustainable universal phone case is still a business concept and has not been developed into a prototype. To follow Hatting's vision for a sustainable universal phone case, [visit her website](#).



Photo Courtesy of Chidianma Ukoha

CHIDINMA UKOHA LIFE FIT (VIRTUAL FIT SHOPPING)

Life Fit offers an all-encompassing connection to social, economic and environmental sustainability- benefiting community, financial impact and reducing waste.

Ukoha's pitch, Life Fit, is an app downloadable on all devices, in which consumers can go on to the app, pick a piece of clothing they are interested in, then use the virtual reality feature to "try on the product and ensure the perfect fit - before purchasing. Ukoha's platform would complete the "try on" process similar to filters on Instagram or SnapChat; however, covering your body. The "filter", as it covers, will take measurements of the selected part of the body - where a piece of clothing will be worn. The buyer's unique measurements will be recorded and sent with their clothing order in order to ensure the perfect fit and product - the first time.

With each product being made to a specific body type the production process will not be done in bulk, and instead made to order. Production through a "make to fit" process rather than bulk, requires less material, packaging and natural resources in making products, as well as reducing carbon emissions and wasted time in returning items that don't fit. Through Life Fit, each product will be created only when measurement information is received by the designer. Instead of creating a mass production of all the pieces in different sizes, to achieve a "good enough" fit, each product satisfies a unique and customized fit.

The inspiration for Ukoha's innovation came from her observing her mother, from a young age, as she worked many hours altering and perfecting clothing to fit for customers. Ukoha explained, "My mom makes clothes for people and has to spend a lot of time with each customer... which is very time consuming and often ends in waste. I wanted to create a solution that limited waste while creating products specific to each individual."

Ukoha's next goal for Life Fit is to create a working version of the app. Ukoha is excited to connect with others who are passionate about sustainability in the fashion industry and interested in the integration of virtual reality. Ukoha believes her idea will be beneficial to anyone buying products online - removing the need to return items since every purchase is custom created. She is excited to see her app applied to multiple products and utilized by a number of designers - offering a personalized service and providing opportunities to wear different brands.

Life Fit is still in the early phases of production. To connect with Ukoha and learn more about her vision, email her at kalu@iastate.edu.

From personal care and personal fit to ensuring low impact communication, these three students exemplified innovation toward a sustainable future. Congratulations to Chloe, Liliann and Chidinma and everyone who participated in this year's event and all of the impressive winners!

Recordings of the [first](#) and [second](#) half of the College-By-College Pitch Off finale, as well as the [presentation of winners](#), can be found on the Iowa State Entrepreneurship Facebook page.