OUR THROWAWAY LIFESTYLE IS NOT SUSTAINABLE...

Humans produce over 2 BILLION tons of waste a year. For Americans, this adds up to about 4.5 pounds of waste per person a day. Everyone wants to live like us, but if they did, we’d be in big trouble because it would take at least three more Earths to support us all.

Since the mid-twentieth century, our consumer culture has given us a standard of living that is the envy of the rest of the world. Plastic made this possible by providing goods and services that were cheaper to produce so more people could afford them. But it has also led to a throwaway lifestyle where 99% of what we buy ends up in the trash within six months.

Many people think recycling has helped, but our current system is not working. China was the main buyer of the world’s plastic until they stopped taking it last year. This break in the pipeline revealed that only a fraction of what we recycle actually makes it back into the economy. As recycling piles up in communities across the country and communities look for answers to a problem many thought had been solved, it is time to rethink and reimagine the life cycle of the things we create and remake our Plastic Planet.

...SO, HOW CAN WE RETHINK, REIMAGINE, & REMAKE IT?

This Fall, the West Houston Institute invites HCC students, faculty, and staff to create innovative solutions to address the complex problems that are caused by single use plastic and the throwaway lifestyle it has helped create. Students are challenged to use the latest scientific research, cutting edge technologies, and insights across fields and industries to remix the way we live, work, and play to make it more sustainable for all of us today and for future generations:

1. Create **RECYCLABLE** systems that work
2. Design **REUSABLE** materials that retain their value over time
3. Utilize **RENEWABLE** resources to power all our activities
4. Develop a **REGenerative** economy that sustains itself
WHAT CAN I MAKE?

We need ideas at all levels of society to create real change—it will take everyone, including artists, entrepreneurs, engineers, designers, scientists, writers, and policymakers. Check out the categories below and some examples to help you get started:

**NEW PRODUCTS & SERVICES**
- Business Processes & Workflows
- Goods & Services
- Packaging & Shipping

**COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGNS**
- Branding & Marketing
- Public Awareness Campaign
- Web, Mobile & Social Media

**ARTS & CULTURAL WORKS**
- Visual & Performing Arts
- Media Arts & Technology
- Creative Writing & Storytelling

**POLICY & RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT**
- Original Research
- Scientific & Technical Writing
- Policy Making & Analysis

WHY PARTICIPATE?

Participants will work on a real-world problem with local and global consequences. In the process, you will learn valuable mindsets and skillsets around innovation, design, and entrepreneurship. You will be introduced to future mentors who are working to make an impact in Houston and beyond through special networking events. And you will have opportunities to learn how to use digital design tools like 3D printing to help you realize your creative potential in whatever you may choose to do next on your journey.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

All events are scheduled to take place the West Houston Institute’s IDEAStudio on the Alief Campus.

**SEPTEMBER 23RD 2:00PM-4:00PM**
“Escape from Plastic Planet” Kick-off Event

**OCTOBER 14TH 2:00PM-4:00PM**
Upcycling Digital Fabrication Workshop

**NOVEMBER 11TH 2:00PM-4:00PM**
Precious Plastic Recycled Materials Workshop

**DECEMBER 6TH 10:00AM-12:00PM**
Project Showcase & Maker Marketplace

MORE INFORMATION & RESOURCES

This challenge is being sponsored by West Houston Institute and is part of a larger Integrative Learning Initiative. For more information, visit https://library.hccs.edu/integrativelearning.