Faculty Give Crash Course in Product Design at Outdoor Retailer

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Renee Henze (DuPont), Brian Beckstead (Altra), Andrew Deceuster (USU), and Andrea Olsen (USU) present to Outdoor Retailer attendees

Three times a year, the outdoor industry gathers in Denver, Colorado for the Outdoor Retailer tradeshow. The show is a time to see the latest products, for buying and selling, and now to be taught by Outdoor Product Design and Development faculty from Utah State University. During Outdoor Retailer’s very first University Series, OPDD faculty and industry board members hosted a workshop called, Product Design 101: Designing for Feasibility, Desirability, Sustainability, and Viability.

Associate Professor Andrew Deceuster spoke on the feasibility of designing and manufacturing a product including technology that facilitates iterating ideas and manufacturing. The OPDD program continues to innovate by bringing new technologies and techniques into the classroom which allows students to more quickly iterate and prototype their products, leading to efficiency and profitability for companies.

While products must be capable of being produced, they also need to be aesthetically pleasing to consumers. OPDD faculty member and former design for Columbia and Prana, Andrea Olsen, spoke on the need to develop products that evoke emotion in consumers and make them feel a certain way.

Two OPDD industry board members, Renee Henze (DuPont Sorona) and Brian Beckstead (Altra Footwear), brought the discussion together by speaking on the need for products to be sustainable and ultimately circular as well as being viable in terms of selling to consumers and being profitable to the business.

A constant theme throughout the Outdoor Retailer event was the need for actual innovation and products that create real value. Faculty at USU as well as their industry partners believe that this will only come as industry and educators continue to work together to prepare the next-generation workforce.

Students in USU’s OPDD program have a bright future and have an incredible opportunity to either accept the status quo or drive the industry forward by creating desirable, feasible, sustainable and ultimately viable products.