



GRADUATE & PROFESSIONAL CLASS OF 2025 REFLECTIONS

Duke  INNOVATION &
ENTREPRENEURSHIP



Odufa Abalu '25



MBA

“Through the Narrative Design and New Ventures Develop course, I have learnt to tell my story: whether that is about myself, my business idea or my dreams/passions. People will only listen if you give them a reason to.”



OyinOluwa Adaramola '25

MS, Global Health

“The I&E 800 class really helped demystify my outlook towards "Business management". I can't wait to apply all the knowledge and skills gained.

Venkesh Agarwal '24



Master of Engineering Management

“Duke I&E empowered me to transform creative ideas into tangible solutions, teaching me that innovation isn't just about groundbreaking concepts but about the courage to pursue them with purpose and persistence.”



Hunter Aitchison '25

MD

Innovation is central to medicine, but we rarely learn the logistics of how new ideas actually reach patients. Through the I&E certificate—especially the Global Health Practicum and working with a startup to support biometric tracking for the malaria vaccine rollout in Uganda—I learned how business and healthcare must work together to deliver real-world solutions to patients.

Ashmin Akarsh '25



MBA

I&E didn't just teach me how to build—it reminded me why we build. To challenge what exists, to chase what's next, and to turn bold ideas into reality—because the future does not wait for perfect ideas.



**Rutik
Ambre '24**

Master of Engineering Management

I&E instilled in me the ability to be open to experiences and share thoughts coherently.

**Robert
Amie '25**



Occupational Therapy

I&E helped me learn more about what it takes to create and maintain a successful business, giving me the confidence to start my own in the future!



**Ammara
Aqeel '25**

PhD, Molecular Genetics & Microbiology

“One of the most valuable and enjoyable experiences I’ve had at Duke I&E was developing the beginner’s mindset in New Ventures Discovery. This skill not only sparks more ideas than you can keep up with but is also transferable to any domain you can think of and fills everyday life with curiosity and wonder.”

Danna Atway '25



Occupational Therapy

“Participating in Duke's I&E program was incredibly beneficial, as it allowed me to connect with different programs and gain valuable insights from their unique perspectives. It also deepened my understanding of innovation and business, helping me bridge the gap between these concepts and my future career in occupational therapy.”



**Lauren
Bailey '25**

Occupational Therapy

“The Duke I&E program gave me the confidence to know I could realistically start my own business in the future!”

Vidhya Lakshmi Balamourougane '24



Master of Engineering Management

“Duke I&E equipped me with the mindset and skills to turn ideas into impact. It helped me refine my entrepreneurial vision, while the supportive community encouraged me to embrace innovation with confidence.”



Mrinoy Banerjee '24

Master of Engineering - Artificial Intelligence

For one of our Duke I&E classes, we faced a daunting challenge: 90 minutes to turn nothing into cash by selling to strangers—no business plan, no product, no safety net. That experience transformed me forever as I realized entrepreneurship isn't something you theorize about in classrooms; it's about bold decisions, creating immediate value, and having the courage to ask for the sale.

Chinmayee Baral '24



Master of Engineering Management

“Duke I&E gave me the tools and confidence to turn ideas into real-world impact. Courses like DTI taught me how to lead with empathy, embrace uncertainty, and build solutions that truly matter. More than anything, I found a community that encouraged me to stay curious, take risks, and keep creating.”



Kalyani (Kay) Bhagabani '25

MS, Biomedical Engineering

“The Design Health classes, which were a part of my I&E will forever be a part of me and what I decide to do going forth.”

Nitin Bhoopal '25



Master of Engineering Management

“The I&E experience has allowed me to make connections outside of my program, and has enabled numerous insightful conversations. It also allowed me to meet various Duke founders, and learn from their experiences.”



**Diona Lasha
Boone '25**

Occupational Therapy

“ Learning through the lens of innovation and entrepreneurship helped me reimagine what's possible in client care, policy, and education within occupational therapy. ”

Abhinav Chandra '25



Master of Engineering Management

“The Duke I&E certification enhanced my storytelling by sharpening my strategic thinking, refining my communication skills, and helping me craft compelling narratives that drove engagement amongst my audiences”



Cindy Chen '25

PhD, Biomedical Engineering

I graduate enriched by the diverse talents and perspectives encountered here, each molding my approach to complex problem-solving. This program has prepared us to be bold and innovative.

Zeren Chen '25



Masters of Public Policy

Duke I&E gave me an eye-opening glimpse into the inner workings of entrepreneurship and private sector business practices. It helped me rethink many of my assumptions about the “corporate world” and allowed me to borrow useful concepts that apply across both the public and private sectors. With empathy and thoughtful design at the center, I’ve come to believe that meaningful change is possible in any setting.



**Zhanyue
(Harper)
Cheng '25**

MS, Global Health

The Business and Organization Fundamentals for Entrepreneurial Action and Commercialization in Healthcare courses gave me a powerful foundation in turning R&D into real-world products. They showed me how challenging and exciting it is to bring innovation to market, especially in healthcare.

Aarsh Diyora '24



Master of Engineering Management

I&E helped me learn how to speak about your experiences and portray them to the people around you. It helped me confidently speak about myself, my ideas and my vision.



**Vivek Duraisamy
Chandrasekaran '24**

Master of Engineering Management

“Duke I&E's interdisciplinary approach and emphasis on learning by doing prepared me to navigate uncertainty confidently and turn challenges into opportunities for growth and innovation.”

Aubrey A. Enriquez '25



Occupational Therapy

Duke I&E pushed me to think more broadly about what entrepreneurship can look like and how it can be used for meaningful change. I&E 800 was a great starting point and design where it brought in a diverse perspectives/topics/instructors and shifted how I see things, helping me approach my profession with the same creativity, purpose, and community-driven mindset.



Norbert Kah Foy '25

Master of International Development Policy

“Business and Organization Fundamentals was the most impactful course for me. I particularly liked how it shaped my decision making by demonstrating that the answers are usually in the numbers/metrics. Human Centered Design was also very impactful and already shaping the way I analyze and solve problems in my business.”

Peyton Gemmell '25



Occupational Therapy

Participating in the Duke Innovation & Entrepreneurship Certificate, especially the occupational therapy–focused courses, empowered me with the entrepreneurial mindset, practical skills, and confidence needed to pursue my vision of launching an occupational therapy business that fills critical gaps in care. These experiences helped me bridge innovation and occupational therapy in a meaningful, actionable way.



Hudson Hazlewood '25

MS, Population Health Sciences

“ I enjoyed learning how to implement business strategies in Business and Organizational Fundamentals. ”

Bhuvana Hanshika Immandi '24



Master of Engineering Management



Your network is your net worth! I also enjoyed being a brand ambassador, talking to people and listening stories of amazing start up experiences.





**Muskan
Jindal '24**

Master of Engineering Management

“The connections you make here unlock opportunities that you could never know.”

**Aakriti
Johar '24**



Master of Engineering Management



**My experience with Duke I&E has been transformative,
equipping me with the mindset and tools to drive innovation
in product management.**





**Elizabeth
Kane '25**

Master of Engineering Management

Duke I&E has shown me the power of staying true to my ideas and believing in my vision, even when the path isn't clear. Through innovation and collaboration, I've learned that the most impactful solutions come from embracing who you are and pushing forward with confidence.

**Sarah
Kemps '25**



Occupational Therapy

“The I&E certificate enabled me to develop tentative business plans for a "non-traditional" setting in occupational therapy. It has helped me learn how to convey occupational therapy's unique value in settings where it is not yet known.”



**Sai Sree Teja
Kethamreddy '25**

Master of Engineering Management

Duke I&E was honestly life-changing for me! The professors didn't just teach entrepreneurship, they rolled up their sleeves and helped me work through real problems with my startup, which was exactly what I needed when I was stuck. I'm so grateful for the hands-on experience that transformed my business idea from a dream into something real!

**Nadia
Khmou '25**



MBA



I truly enjoyed collaborating within interdisciplinary teams! Beyond learning and applying I&E competencies, it also provided valuable opportunities for leadership development.





**Joan
Kimani '25**

MS, Global Health

Duke I&E's Narrative Design class helped me refine my speaking skills and express myself more effectively, while Business Fundamentals taught me invaluable negotiation strategies. These courses gave me the confidence and practical tools to navigate both storytelling and business with impact.

Lavanya Krishnatra '24



Master of Engineering Management

“The Narrative Design course at Duke I&E helped me communicate ideas more clearly and confidently. Learning how to structure messages using storytelling frameworks made it easier to connect with different audiences and present ideas in a more engaging way.”



**Akshat
Kumar '24**

Master of Engineering Management

Duke I&E and its Narrative Design course were instrumental in helping me realise that storytelling is a superpower. I could feel the audience connect with my ideas when I presented them as stories. The best part is, no matter how much value a story holds, everyone enjoys one.

**Madison
Lira '25**



Occupational Therapy

“The I&E certificate helped me develop confidence and my professional identity as a future entrepreneur by equipping me with valuable knowledge and skills that I will carry into my occupational therapy career.”



**Junqi
Lu '24**

MS, Biomedical Engineering

The Duke I&E program gave me an entrepreneurial mindset and helped me see the world from new perspectives. I&E 748 New Ventures: Discovery taught me to approach opportunities based on market and customer needs rather than just direct problem-solving, which has been invaluable for fostering market-oriented innovation over purely technology-driven innovation.

Nipun Sanjeev Manghi '24



Master of Engineering Management

“Duke I&E has been pivotal in my Duke journey as I was both its student and Teaching Assistant. I have learned how to create real world impact through Duke I&E's innovative courses and faculty members.”



Margaret McCarthy '25

MBA

Duke I&E provided invaluable hands-on learning experiences that allowed me to explore my various entrepreneurial passions. From launching my own venture in New Ventures Discover and collaborating on a classmate's project in New Ventures Develop, to presenting an investment pitch to a panel of Duke alumni investors in Private Equity Buyout Lab, each experience has profoundly inspired my entrepreneurial journey.

Rachael McWilliams '25



Occupational Therapy

“My experience with Duke I&E has been invaluable in shaping my ability to think creatively and approach problem-solving with an entrepreneurial mindset. It provided me with practical skills and confidence to turn ideas into action, which I will carry forward in my career as an occupational therapist.”



Meenakshi '25

Master of Engineering Management

Duke I&E taught me the power of storytelling, an essential skill not just for product management but for every aspect of life. The ability to craft and communicate a compelling narrative has been one of my most valuable takeaways from the program.

Chrystel Melhem '25



Master of Engineering Management

“Duke I&E’s Narrative Design course transformed the way I communicate ideas by blending the art of storytelling with the science of design thinking to drive impact. It reinforced the power of empathy, authenticity, and precision in crafting narratives that truly resonate.”



Suraj Nair '24

Master of Engineering Management

“The entrepreneur always searches for change, responds to it, and exploits it as an opportunity.” – Peter Drucker. Duke I&E helped me see the universe of possibilities where hard work, adaptability, and creativity turn challenges into opportunities.

Keon Nartey '25



MS, Data Science

“This course has given me valuable insights into building a business from the ground up and effectively pitching both myself and my ideas. I believe these skills will be valuable as I embark on my new career, with future aspirations of becoming an innovator myself.”



Runo Obafemi '25

MBA

“My I&E classes were incredibly impactful. The New Venture Develop Class taught me how to execute effectively, stay customer-focused, and continuously test assumptions, while Narrative Design transformed the way I communicate and pitch myself.”

Hrishitha Paduri '25



MS, Biomedical Engineering

Through the Design Health program at Duke I&E, I gained hands-on experience applying human-centered design to tackle real-world healthcare challenges — from conducting ethnographic research in clinical settings to developing and validating innovative medical device prototypes. This immersive process not only strengthened my technical and entrepreneurial skills, but also showed me the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration in driving impactful innovation.



Yash Patil '25

Master of Engineering Management

“My participation in Duke I&E has been transformative, especially through the Innovation & Entrepreneurship Certificate Program. The hands-on approach and mentorship helped me develop crucial problem-solving skills and a mindset focused on creating impactful, sustainable solutions.”

Sayantika Paul '24



Master of Engineering Management

“Taking the Narrative Design course within I&E was genuinely fun and eye-opening. I'd always followed Aaron Dinin on Instagram, but learning from him in person was incredibly interactive and enjoyable.”

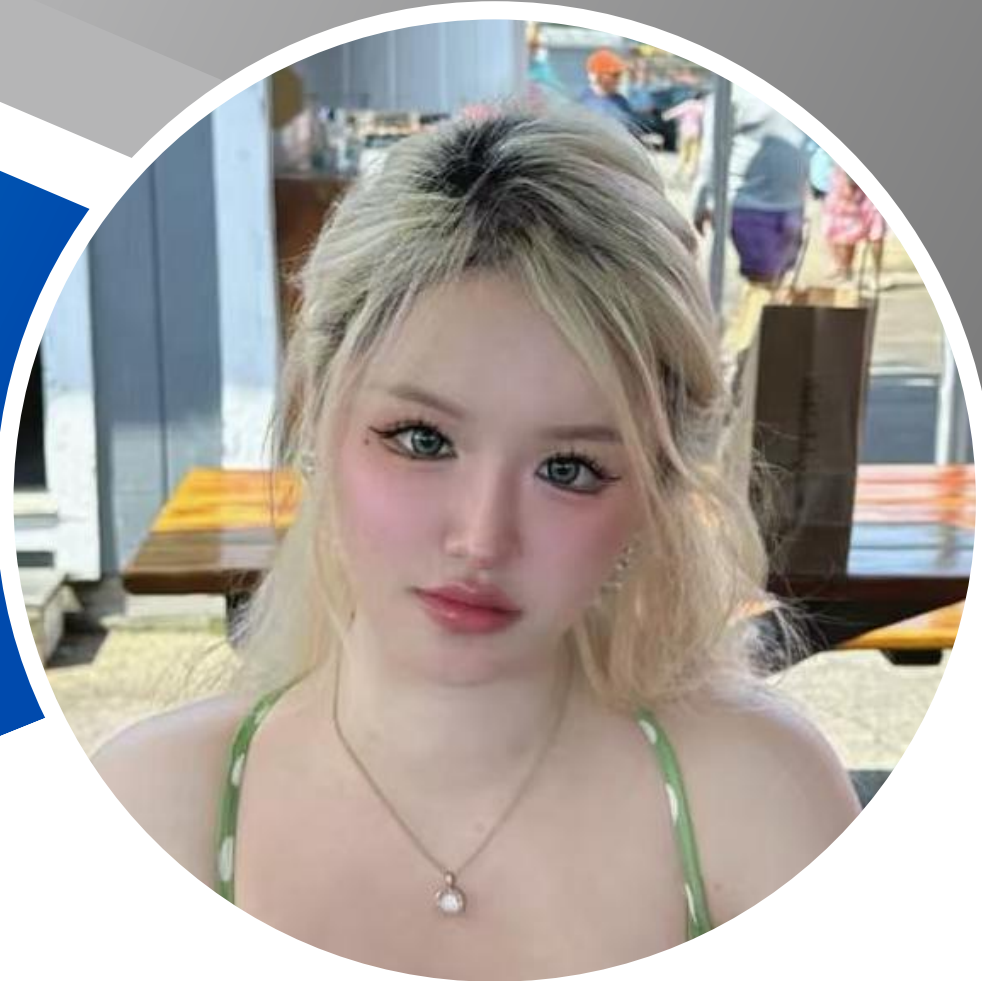


**Candice
Phillips '25**

Occupational Therapy

The collaboration between Duke I&E and the Occupational Therapy program was incredibly valuable in helping me understand the business side of occupational therapy. Working with Dr. Faison provided meaningful insights into business development and strategic planning, allowing me to create and refine my future goals. This experience has given me a clearer vision of the opportunities that lie ahead in my career.

Artemis Qi '25



AM, East Asian Studies

Duke I&E's New Ventures Development class allowed me to contribute to the growth of Alana Eve, a fashion startup, where I gained firsthand insight into early-stage brand building. This experience was instrumental in preparing me for my future role in venture capital, where I hope to support and scale creative ventures like this one.



Shloka Rao '24

Master of Engineering Management

“Duke I&E, especially the 'Narrative Design' course, gave me the confidence to pitch boldly, introduce ideas with clarity, and navigate solutions with purpose. It helped me connect my engineering mindset with entrepreneurial thinking to create real-world impact and lead with both creativity and conviction.”

Aritra Ray '24



PhD, Electrical/Computer Engineering

“Participating in Duke I&E equipped me with a powerful blend of creative problem-solving and real-world innovation skills, especially through the impactful coursework in entrepreneurial strategy and venture creation.”



**Scotti
Russell '25**

Occupational Therapy

“As a future healthcare practitioner I found the Duke I&E program to be most helpful in paving my own path for practice. The I&E courses have given me the foundational knowledge of entrepreneurship needed to start my own practice in the future.”

Widline Senatus '25



MS, Population Health Sciences

“My experience with Duke I&E has been invaluable in transforming my passion for healthcare innovation into tangible skills and real-world applications. The hands-on learning and mentorship provided by I&E faculty professors have equipped me with the confidence and tools to drive meaningful change in healthcare delivery and policy.”



Colette Spriggs '25

MBA

“Dr. Dinin's Opportunity Discovery class challenged us to identify jobs to be done all around us. It changed my perspective from, "I don't have any good ideas" to, "Wow, there are so many problems just waiting to be solved!".”

Christopher Starr '25



Masters of Public Policy

“Getting my I&E certificate really opened my eyes about innovation and it's necessary relationship with failure. I had the opportunity to meet so many great entrepreneurs and talented people in the Duke ecosystem!”



Prerna Sultania '24

Master of Engineering Management

“My experience with Duke I&E, especially the New Ventures Development course, was incredibly valuable. It immersed me in the product development cycle, providing hands-on experience in building, iterating, and refining ideas based on real market feedback.”

Rui Sun '25



Master of Engineering Management

Duke I&E has been more than a program—it's been a home. The Melissa & Doug Entrepreneurs program was truly life-changing, surrounding me with mentors who believed in me before I fully believed in myself. Winning the Duke Startup Showcase has been the highlight of my journey here, but more than the accolades, it's the people who made the difference. In a world that often feels like a race for recognition, I&E offered something rarer: authenticity, community, and purpose. I hope to give back one day, just as so many Duke alumni have so generously given to me.



Rahul Suresh '25

Master of Engineering Management

“In business, it’s important to try new things, fail, and try again to keep adjusting to constant changes in customer needs.”

**Divya
Tata '24**



Master of Engineering Management



It taught me the art of storytelling and how to effectively position myself within the industry by clearly communicating my career journey to others.





Aarushi Tripathi '25

Masters of Public Policy

“Being a part of the Design Climate and Global Health Policy classes was intellectually rewarding. The electives taught me how to move beyond ideation and to communicate my solutions effectively to a wide audience. I feel the learning curve was steep but transformative!”

Shreya Vajpayee '25



Master of Engineering Management Co-op

Participating in Duke I&E's Narrative Design Seminar was transformative for me, I learned how to craft compelling stories that clearly communicate the value of my ideas, and the hands-on workshops helped me develop the confidence and skills to inspire action in diverse audiences. The most important takeaway was understanding how narrative structure can turn innovative concepts into persuasive pitches, making my work more impactful and accessible.



Aparnaa Velayudhan '25

MS, Global Health

“The I&E certificate provided core knowledge in entrepreneurship and business that I beleive will help greatly as I consider future career goals in novel health technologies and personalised medicine.”

Min Yan '25



MBA



Innovation goes beyond bringing ideas to life — it thrives on strategic vision and strong execution.





**Angeline
Yang '25**

Masters of Public Policy

With entrepreneurial experience already, Duke I&E sparked my interest in innovation and provide valuable knowledge that I wished I had before dipping my head in the startup world. My favorite courses are Social Innovation Practicum (with Lila Cruikshank) and Design Climate (with Prof. Judy, Alexis, and Helen), both courses provide hands-on opportunities to work with client and co-designers, which can be chaotic sometimes, but working alongside people with the same passion as you, makes the road less traveled -- a lot more fun!