



Texas A&M's First Student Business Plan Competition

STUDENT COMPETITION HANDBOOK 2018

#AggiePitch

www.AggiePitch.com

McFerrin Center for Entrepreneurship
Texas A&M University
430 Wehner | 4221 TAMU
College Station, TX 77843-4221
E: McFerrin@mays.tamu.edu
entrepreneur.tamu.edu



McFerrin Center for Entrepreneurship

**OPPORTUNITIES
MADE HERE.**

AGGIE PITCH IMPORTANT DATES

Event	Date
Applications Open Online	Monday, February 19
Application Deadline	Friday, March 9
Finalists Notified & Confirmed	Week of March 26
Finalists Announced Publicly	Week of April 2
Professional Pitch Coaching for all Finalists	Week of April 9
Aggie Pitch (Competition Day)	April 20

WORKSHOPS

How to Pitch a Brilliant Idea

During the application period, the McFerrin Center will sponsor an evening workshop on February 19th. In addition to a general introduction to Aggie Pitch, the workshop is designed to teach you the tips and tricks of a successful pitch.

Chris Westfall, the US National Elevator Pitch Champion will be joining us in Aggieland to host this workshop.

For time and location, check the website at www.AggiePitch.com.

Only those selected as finalists will be invited to attend an additional Pitch Coaching session, to be scheduled during the week of April 9th. This will be the final preparation session for the competition on April 20th, and all finalists will be expected to be in attendance.



WHAT IS AGGIE PITCH?

McFerrin Center for Entrepreneurship is the hub and source of support for all entrepreneurial-minded Aggies. Aggie Pitch is designed to help us identify the best startup pitchers across campus, encouraging all Texas A&M students to explore entrepreneurship and learn how to deliver your business concept in the most compelling fashion. Aggie Pitch offers cash prizes to help you further develop your business – but more importantly – Aggie Pitch offers you the chance to showcase your business idea and potentially be considered for additional business plan/pitch competition across the nation. Many of these established competitions (e.g., S.E.C. Student Pitch Competition, Rice Business Plan Competition, Baylor New Ventures Competition, etc.) invite the McFerrin Center to submit Texas A&M’s best student team for their competitions, so we’re looking for the best of the best to emerge from Aggie Pitch!

All current Texas A&M students (including branch campus & A&M System Schools) are encouraged to create and submit their business concept & plan via online application. After applications have been submitted, the McFerrin Center will invite judges with entrepreneurial expertise to review and score the online entries. Finalists will be selected and privately invited to pitch their concept & plan at the Aggie Pitch event on April 20, 2018 to be evaluated and scored by a panel of prestigious entrepreneur/investor judges.

WHY COMPETE?

CASH PRIZES!!! Finalists will compete for a portion of the largest prize pool ever offered in an entrepreneurial business pitch competition at Texas A&M University:

\$50,000 IN CASH PRIZES AWARDED

These awards will be cash prizes awarded to the individual participants listed for each winning team. They are non-equity, non-ownership cash awards, to be paid through each student’s TAMU account. Student awardees must be in good financial standing with the university, and are encouraged to utilize these funds in a manner consistent with their entrepreneurial goals.

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ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Any registered student (undergraduate or graduate) at a Texas A&M System University is eligible to compete. A list of participating universities can be found here: <https://www.tamus.edu/about/universities/>

At least one member of an applicant team must be a currently-enrolled A&M student. Not every member of an applicant team must meet this criteria, but only A&M students may participate in the actual pitch contest. Anyone delivering any portion of the Aggie Pitch presentation must be a currently-enrolled A&M student as of the contest date.

Applicants do not have to apply as a team, and individual entrepreneurs are encouraged to apply. However, most successful applicants will need team members willing to share the effort of launching and growing a business, and who are all enthusiastic about making their collective concept a success. Teams should be willing to work together on all aspects of both the competition and the business itself.

Company formation is not a requirement to enter, and teams at concept phase only are encouraged to apply. The submission of a winning idea will require creative, careful, and methodical planning, but you will find the application process is much less involved than a fully-developed business plan. Each applicant team should commit significant effort to both the written and video portions of the application, but having either an existing company or a mature business plan is not required.

All forms/types of business concepts are encouraged to apply. There are no restrictions on the type of business concept you are considering (e.g., technology-based, service, non-profit, etc.). The application will ask you to select an intended industry segment for classification purposes only.

The McFerrin Center for Entrepreneurship runs a number of programs throughout the year to help students develop and validate their business concepts (e.g., Raymond Ideas Challenge, 3-Day Startup, Startup Aggieland, etc.). These programs assist students in developing their ability to think in an entrepreneurial way, and practice competencies necessary to identify and successfully implement new business ideas now, and as they progress throughout their careers. If your business idea is not ready for application to Aggie Pitch, we invite you to get involved with any of our 25+ programs to further develop and validate your business concept:

<http://entrepreneur.tamu.edu>



COMPETITION PROCESS

Step 1: Team Up

Students self-organize in teams of up to five members maximum. As stated above, individual entrepreneurs are welcome to apply, but are strongly encouraged to align yourself with teammates who share your enthusiasm for innovation and entrepreneurship. Then, work together to identify the problems, opportunities, solutions, value propositions and business models for your potential customers.

Refine your concept to be able to deliver it in the concise manner required by the Aggie Pitch application. Consider creating a prototype of your solution (whether a physical model, illustration, or digital representation).

Confirm that, if chosen, you can make yourself (and your team) available for the Aggie Pitch competition on April 20, 2018, here on the Texas A&M Main campus.

Step 2: Submit

You have until 11:59 PM on the last day of submissions, March 9, 2018, to complete and turn in your entry. The application can be found at www.AggiePitch.com.

The application includes background information on your startup, in addition to several components of an Executive Summary. Those include:

- Business Summary
- Problem
- Solution
- Business Model
- Target Market/Size
- Customers – Current/Potential
- Competitors

Each startup will be required to also submit a 2 minute video of your elevator pitch as a part of your application.

Step 3: Develop Your Presentation

The McFerrin Center for Entrepreneurship will evaluate all entries, and identify the top finalists as invitees for participation



The Startup Lead of each finalist team will be notified no later than April 2, 2018. Each finalist will have the opportunity to participate in pitch coach training prior to the final competition day on April 20th.

The finalists will be promoted across campus and invited to the final event for presentation, judging, and awards on April 20, 2018. Teams who do not advance are still encouraged to attend the final competition!

If selected as one of the finalists, your team will be required to give an in-person pitch at the final event. Team pitches will be limited to 10 minutes total, including 5 minutes of questions coming from the judges at conclusion of their pitch.

JUDGES & JUDGING CRITERIA

All entries will be evaluated by a screening committee selected by McFerrin Center staff and will consist of members of the business community, entrepreneurs, venture capitalists, lawyers, bankers and Texas A&M faculty. The screening committee will identify the finalists, which then will be evaluated by a second panel of judges (on the day of the final competition) to select all prize-winning teams.

Judges will evaluate and be looking for the following components in each application & pitch:

- Is the startup addressing a significant problem?
- Is there evidence that customers will be willing to pay for their solution?
- Is the problem big enough to build a company around? What is the size of the addressable market?
- Will the solution/technology work? Is there evidence that the solution/technology is feasible and will actually solve the problem (e.g., lab results, field trials)?
- What is the competitive landscape? How are these problems being dealt with today, and does this startup have a significant, sustainable competitive differentiation?
- Is there any intellectual property (IP) or other defensible advantage? What is the status of IP ownership? Does the startup have access to a license or option to commercialize the IP? Are there other startups pursuing this market with similar IP?
- Is this team coachable? Would this be a team I could invest in and work with?
- Does the startup understand key milestones that need to be reached in developing this business?

We recognize that, consistent with real life situations, early-stage companies can be in very different stages of development. Aggie Pitch candidates will be judged on a relational scale, taking into consideration these criteria in context of the stage of development for each applicant.



COMPETITION DAY – APRIL 20

The final event on April 20, 2018 will be open to the public and include the following (tentative):

Welcome & Announcements

The welcome will serve as an introduction of Judges and a welcome to all guests. Pitch times for each team will be announced.

Pitches

All finalists will pitch to the same judging panel. Breaks will be included, and a projector, computer and sound system will be provided. Final team presentations will be due prior to the event.

Awards Reception

Following the judges' deliberation, all guests and participants are invited to join for an afternoon reception, where competition awardees will be announced.

(No) CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

As an applicant and potential competitor, you are responsible to protect any information concerning your plan that you share with advisors, team members, fellow participants of the competition and the attending audience. The McFerrin Center for Entrepreneurship takes no responsibility for unwanted disclosure in any of these instances.

Contestants should be careful about disclosing information concerning proprietary concepts. Competitors concerned about the protection of intellectual property may research intellectual property protection online or at Texas A&M University System or other libraries.

Neither Texas A&M University nor the McFerrin Center for Entrepreneurship takes any ownership in an idea or plan solely through application or participation in the Aggie Pitch competition. Likewise, neither Texas A&M University nor the McFerrin Center for Entrepreneurship ensures any confidentiality or nondisclosure conditions for any information submitted or presented in the Aggie Pitch competition. As with most business plan competitions, you are responsible for protecting your own proprietary information throughout the Aggie Pitch competition.



QUESTIONS

You may contact us and/or visit the McFerrin Center for Entrepreneurship website.

Email: McFerrin@mays.tamu.edu

Website: www.AggiePitch.com

FAQs???

- **I have a class project that I would like to develop into a submission. Is that OK?**

Yes. We encourage you to submit class projects. However, please be aware that it will probably require a good deal of effort to craft an idea entry from a class project, because you must translate the project according to the criteria listed on the entry form, and develop a pitch to convey this idea as a compelling business concept.

- **I can't describe my idea in the character limit. Can I make it longer?**

No. The character limits are the maximum. Please re-read it carefully, and work more on it. You can describe nearly any business idea if you use the right words. One of the intentional challenges of this competition is for students to convey their idea concisely and convincingly in the allotted word count.

- **Do I have to attend the workshop in order to enter?**

Not the initial pitch workshop on Feb 19, 2018. Needless to say, attendance at the workshop would improve the quality of your pitch, but you are certainly not required to attend this initial workshop. All candidates selected to be finalists in the competition will have a mandatory pitch workshop session schedule for them prior to the competition event.

- **Is attendance on Competition Day required?**

Yes, for all finalists. We require that at least one team member presents at Aggie Pitch. All team members are not required to be present, although it is recommended.

- **How will I be notified?**

All applicants will be emailed no later than April 2, 2018. This email will let you know whether you have been selected as a finalist, and will require your commitment to participate in Aggie Pitch.



- **Do I have to submit a video?**

Yes. If you would like more guidance check out the following link:

<http://speakingppt.com/2012/07/26/3-best-elevator-pitches/>

- **What is an elevator pitch?**

An elevator pitch is a short description of problem and solution with important details furthering that solution. For a deeper understanding of an elevator pitch check out the following link: <http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/elevator-pitch.htm>

- **Does the video have to follow the script/guidelines of the written application?**

No. It does not have to follow the script/guidelines of the written application, but it should cover most of the same questions. This is your chance to be creative & compelling in a verbal explanation of your written application.

- **Do all team members have to appear in the video?**

No. Use your best judgment and creativity in delivering the video portion.

- **How do I edit my entry?**

Up until the submission deadline, March 9th at 11:59 PM, you may use your reviewr login to access your entry form(s) and make changes.

