

NEWS



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AACC, NSF to Showcase Student Innovators from Community Colleges *Community College Innovation Challenge invites community college students to create STEM solutions to real-world challenges*

Washington, DC – Now in its fifth year, the [American Association of Community Colleges](http://www.aacc.nche.edu) (AACC), in partnership with the [National Science Foundation](http://www.nsf.gov) (NSF), has relaunched its national platform to advance student innovation and impact in STEM through the Community College Innovation Challenge (CCIC).

The CCIC is a prestigious competition where community college students, working with a faculty or administrator team mentor, use science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) to innovate solutions to real-world problems. Teams of two to four students will spend up to six months growing their proposal from a unique, game-changing idea into a Shark Tank-style business pitch for STEM industry leaders and feature their projects at a poster session for members of Congress on Capitol Hill.

“AACC is proud of our partnership with NSF,” said [Walter G. Bumphus](#), president and CEO of AACC. “Our nation’s community colleges are leaders and innovators in STEM curriculum and education. They deliver technical education and training programs that provide opportunities for innovation and entrepreneurship to meet growing workforce needs nationwide. This program showcases amazing students whose ideas illustrate the high level of innovation that happens at community colleges across the country.”

The competition fosters the development of students’ innovation, research and entrepreneurial skills. It also enables students to discover and demonstrate their capacity to use STEM to make a difference in the world and translate that knowledge into action.

“The Community College Innovation Challenge is a national competition designed specifically to offer community college students a seat at the STEM innovation table,” added Ellen Hause, program director of Academic & Student Affairs at AACC. “We encourage students to submit their novel research and innovative ideas and look forward to working with the finalist teams to provide them the tools to make their ideas a reality.”

Given the rapid pace of technological advancement and the requirement of new skills sets to prepare for the future of work, students of today must be prepared to compete in an increasingly competitive and global market.

CCIC finalist teams will compete for cash awards and earn travel support to attend an Innovation Boot Camp in the Washington, D.C., metro area, where students interact with entrepreneurs and experts in business planning, stakeholder engagement, communication and marketplace dynamics.

AACC's mission to build a nation of learners by advancing America's community colleges aligns with the goals of the NSF's [Advanced Technological Education \(ATE\) program](#) to prepare students for meaningful employment in the high-technology fields that drive our nation's economy. In 2015, the NSF funded the initial launch of CCIC alongside AACC.

"NSF is committed to nurturing student talent across the U.S. in STEM and supporting the advancement of STEM careers," said Karen Marrongelle, NSF assistant director for Education and Human Resources (EHR). "Community colleges are at the forefront of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education improvement in the U.S. and serve a broad diversity of learners. CCIC provides the opportunity for students to not only learn and showcase their innovative ideas, but to foster their entrepreneurial skills."

All team submissions are due by 11:59 p.m. (ET) on March 31, 2020. To learn more and apply, visit www.aaccinnovationchallenge.com. For questions, email CCIC@aacc.nche.edu.

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About AACC

As the voice of the nation's community colleges, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), delivers educational and economic opportunity for 12 million diverse students in search of the American Dream. Uniquely dedicated to access and success for all students, AACC's nearly 1,000 member colleges provide an on-ramp to degree attainment, skilled careers and family-supporting wages. Located in Washington, D.C., AACC advocates for these not-for-profit, public-serving institutions to ensure they have the resources and support they need to deliver on the mission of increasing economic mobility for all. <https://www.aacc.nche.edu/>

About NSF

The National Science Foundation (NSF) is an independent federal agency that supports fundamental research and education across all fields of science and engineering. In fiscal year (FY) 2020, its budget is \$8.3 billion. NSF funds reach all 50 states through grants to nearly 2,000 colleges, universities and other institutions. Each year, NSF receives more than 50,000 competitive proposals for funding and makes about 12,000 new funding awards.

<https://www.nsf.gov/>

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