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AACC, NSF Announce 12 Student Teams to Advance to Community College Innovation Challenge Finals

Community college students will attend an Innovation Boot Camp to pitch their STEM solutions to real-world challenges

Washington, DC – Today, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), in partnership with the National Science Foundation (NSF), announced that it has selected 12 finalist teams to advance to the final round of the Community College Innovation Challenge (CCIC), set to take place in June 2024.

Now in its eighth year, the competition seeks to strengthen entrepreneurial thinking among community college students by challenging them to develop STEM-based solutions to real-world problems. 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.

Teams consist of two to four students and a faculty or administrator team mentor. Finalists attend an Innovation Boot Camp in June and interact with entrepreneurs and experts in business planning, stakeholder engagement, strategic communication, and marketplace dynamics. The Boot Camp culminates in a Student Innovation Poster Session on Capitol Hill with STEM leaders and congressional stakeholders and a pitch presentation to determine the first, second, and third-place winning teams.

"Congratulations to the 2024 CCIC finalists," said Walter G. Bumphus, president and CEO of AACC. "Once again, I am inspired by the incredible level of talent and creativity our community college students showcase through the CCIC. Along with our partners at the National Science Foundation, we know this program is a foundation for future scientists, entrepreneurs, and engineers and are very proud to shine the spotlight on these talented future leaders."

Among the ideas teams presented this year are solutions for addressing clean water, renewable energy, HIV treatment, healthcare, fire prevention, and assistive technology devices. The 12 finalist schools and their projects are:

- ***Coalinga College (California)***
  Project: Got Calcium: The New Battery Innovation
  - The Coalinga College team seeks to switch from lithium to calcium batteries to improve cost-effectiveness, safety, and battery performance offering an eco-friendly alternative for energy storage solutions.

- ***Columbus State Community College (Ohio)***
  Project: Aquavive's Ripple Effect: Transforming Water Protection
    - Aquavive is a groundbreaking pollution detection buoy system that offers pristine, potable water accessible to all. Combined with a user-friendly app, Aquavive promotes environmental monitoring and STEM education with the goal of uniting communities to invest in clean water.

- ***County College of Morris (New Jersey)***
  Project: Using Molecular Solar Thermal Systems as a Solar Alternative
    - The County College of Morris team proposes to safely and efficiently increase the world's energy supply through a molecular solar thermal system. This system is non-toxic, cost-efficient, and can capture light energy as heat, and then convert stored heat as energy.

- ***Dallas College (Texas)***
  Project: Autonomous Monitoring for Blaze Emergency Response (AMBER)
    - AMBER is an early detection system that uses infrared cameras and sensors to alert farmers and local authorities to fire risks. Combined with a third-party drone provider, AMBER can quickly track and mobilize a rapid fire response and preserve agricultural land.

- ***Henry Ford College (Michigan)***
  Project: Stay Vigilant with Source Alert
    - Source Alert is an application that connects to internet search engines and word/image processing services to detect the source of information and display it to the user in real-time. Source Alert can serve to raise public awareness to potential misinformation.

- ***Houston Community College (Texas)***
  Project: The MaxCap Supercapacitor
    - MaxCap offers an energy storage technology solution for the electric vehicle market by introducing metal oxide-vertical polyaniline hybrid supercapacitors, which provide greater performance, sustainability, and cost-efficiency than current energy storage options.

- ***Hudson County Community College (New Jersey)***
  Project: S.E.E. (Sound Enabled Emplacement)
    - S.E.E. is an assistive technology device designed to guide visually impaired individuals to key areas in their home. Through the use of remote, users activate speakers to emit sounds for navigation, which allows for safe, confident, and independent movement.

- ***Itawamba Community College (Mississippi)***
  Project: ViruShield: Next-Generation Care for HIV Patients
    - ViruShield is a subcutaneous pump that tests for HIV viral loads and administers doses of medication to an HIV-positive patient to help increase treatment compliance and prevent AIDs.

- ***Perimeter College at Georgia State University (Georgia)***
  Project: Gorginea Care
    - The Perimeter College team seeks to redesign cervical cancer screening by offering a noninvasive alternative to the speculum. This alternative makes screening more accessible and has the potential to impact cervical cancer mortality rates, especially in low-income countries.

- ***Red Rocks Community College (Colorado)***
  Project: Bloom Buster
    - In all 50 states, harmful algae blooms represent an environmental issue that impacts human health and aquatic ecosystems. The Bloom Buster system can effectively remove suspended particles, algae, and other contaminants from lake water leading to water quality improvement.

- ***University of Arkansas Community College at Batesville (Arkansas)***
  Project: IntelliCline - Smart Ramp
    - IntelliCline is a smart ramp solution that can adjust slope, height, and temperature to enhance accessibility for people with disabilities. By eliminating common barriers, IntelliCline improves quality of life and creates more inclusive communities.

- ***Virginia Western Community College (Virginia)***
  Project: Plastic Up Cycling
    - The Virginia Western team proposes an affordable and sustainable way to reuse plastic through the development of a 3D filament printer, which turns recyclables into reinforced filament. The filament is being used to create specialized materials to rebuild a local school playground.

To receive updates about the 2024 Innovation Boot Camp and the winners, follow @Comm_College or visit www.aaccinnovationchallenge.com.

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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 opportunities for nearly 12 million diverse students in search of the American Dream. Uniquely dedicated to access and success for all students, AACC's 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.
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