

2026

# COMMUNITY COLLEGE INNOVATION CHALLENGE

Advancing Student Innovation & Impact



## The Community College Innovation Challenge- Why Your Students Should Apply!

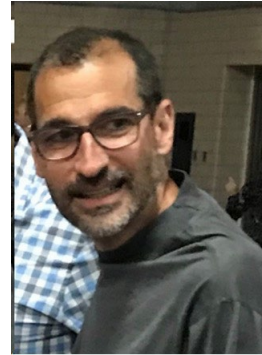
February 5, 2026  
3:00 – 4:00 pm Eastern



# Speakers



**Ellen Hause**  
Associate VP for  
Academic & Student  
Affairs, American  
Association of  
Community Colleges, DC



**PJ Ricatto**  
Professor of Chemistry  
Bergen Community  
College, NJ



**Courtney Larson**  
ATE Program Manager  
American Association of  
Community Colleges, DC



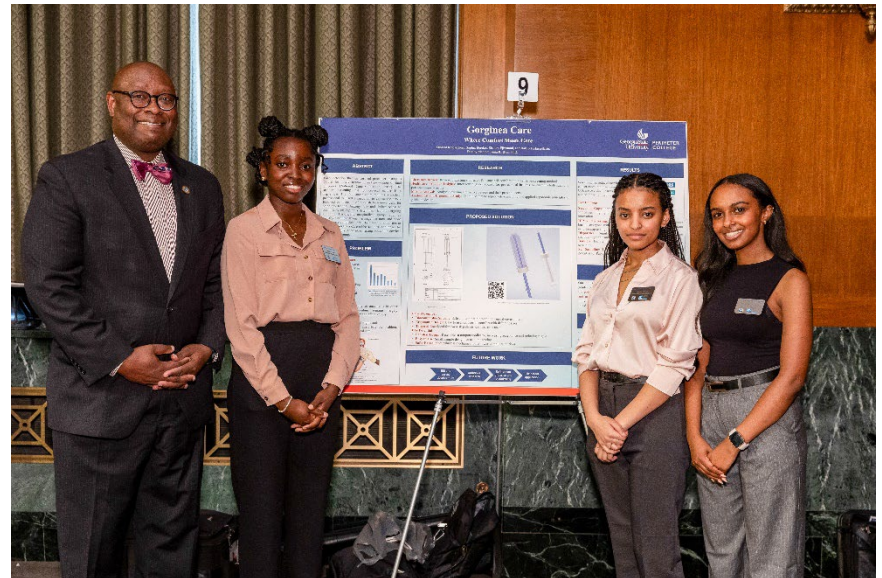
**LaTasha Starr**  
Engineering Professor  
Dallas College, TX



**Nancy Woods**  
Professor of Physics &  
Mathematics  
Des Moines Area  
Community College, IA

# Community College Innovation Challenge

- CCIC run in partnership with AACC & NSF
- Student teams submit STEM-based solutions to real-world problems of local to global concern
- Up to 12 finalist teams attend the Innovation Boot Camp, for technical assistance & coaching to build skills in:
  - Business of Innovation
  - Entrepreneurship
  - Strategic Communication



# Community College Innovation Challenge

- Teams interact with entrepreneurs, experts, & industry professionals.
- The Boot Camp culminates in two capstone events:
  - Poster Session & Reception with key Congressional and STEM stakeholders
  - Pitch competition in front of panel of judges



# Community College Innovation Challenge

- Winners receive:
  - A plaque for all finalist schools;
  - Recognition certificates from NSF and AACCC for each finalist team member;
  - Full travel support for all finalist team members to attend the Innovation Boot Camp in Washington, D.C.;
  - A \$500 cash honorarium;
  - Cash awards made to **each** 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place team member
    - 1<sup>st</sup> place: \$3,000
    - 2<sup>nd</sup> place: \$2,000
    - 3<sup>rd</sup> place: \$1,000





# Stakeholder Engagement



- Teams of 2-4 students with a faculty/administrator mentor
- Develop STEM solution to real-world problem
- Submit a written entry and 90-second video addressing:
  - The problem – relevant background, context of problem
  - The solution – describe the solution, the science/technology that informs it, how it is different & innovative, identify challenges & barriers
  - The impact and benefits – how impact and benefits would be measured, potential societal impact
  - Video to tell compelling story and how team's solution is innovative and unique in addressing problem

[www.aaccinnovationchallenge.com](http://www.aaccinnovationchallenge.com)

# Community College Innovation Challenge



Entries will be evaluated based on innovation and impact, feasibility, and clarity of communication



Up to 12 finalist teams selected to advance to the Innovation Boot Camp taking place June 8-11, 2026, in Washington, D.C.



Finalist team members are required to attend the Innovation Boot Camp

# 2026 CCIC TIMELINE

<b>April 3</b>	Submissions due
<b>Late April</b>	12 finalist teams notified
<b>May 1</b>	Welcome & Orientation to the Innovation Boot Camp Webinar at 1:00 p.m. EDT
<b>May 8</b>	The Customer Discovery Journey in STEM Innovation Webinar at 1:00 p.m. EDT
<b>June 8-11</b>	Innovation Boot Camp in Washington, D.C.
<b>June 9</b>	Student Poster Session on Capitol Hill
<b>June 11</b>	First, Second, & Third Place Winning Teams announced at the end of the Boot Camp



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