



BOOT CAMP AGENDA

June 8-11, 2026
Royal Sonesta Hotel
Washington, D.C.

Monday, June 8

10:00 – 11:00 a.m. **Event Registration Opens**
 Prefunction Corridor, 2nd Floor

11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. **Welcome & Introductions**
Getting to Know You – Team Based Introductions
Ellen Hause, Associate Vice President for Academic & Student Affairs, AACC
Joe Schreiber, Adjunct Professor and General Manager, Temple University Television

The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) welcomes the finalist teams to the 2026 Community College Innovation Challenge (CCIC) Boot Camp. Following introductions, join us for an engaging and fun opportunity for all participants to learn about the finalist teams and their projects. Through an interactive session, teams will introduce one another, learn the basics of an ‘elevator pitch,’ and begin to test and develop strategic communications skills while meeting others in the process.

12:00 – 1:45 p.m. **Networking Lunch & Alumni Panel**
 National Room

Jacob Bissonnette, 2025 CCIC Student Team Member, Holyoke Community College, MA
Holly Dahlstrom, 2025 CCIC Student Team Member, Des Moines Area Community College, IA
Derek Gonzalez, 2025 CCIC Student Team Member, Bergen Community College, NJ
Sophia Ibarguen, 2021 Student Team Member, Pasadena City College, CA
Elaf Mahmoud, 2024 CCIC Student Team Member, County College of Morris, NJ
Facilitator: Dr. Olga Pierrakos, ATE Lead Program Director, National Science Foundation, VA

All finalist teams will engage in a networking lunch. Following lunch, we will hear from a panel of former CCIC student participants who will share their experiences, guidance, and advice to the teams—as well as address any questions. This session will conclude with a review of the day’s agenda and the exciting week ahead.

Monday, June 8 (continued)

1:45 – 2:00 p.m.

Break

2:00 – 2:50 p.m.

The Power of Stories

National Room

Joe Schreiber, Adjunct Professor and General Manager, Temple University Television

Students will learn fundamental storytelling strategies to make their pitches more captivating and unforgettable for their audience. Students will compose a brief narrative and then present it to the group. By the conclusion of the session, students will have acquired valuable knowledge and perspectives on storytelling, enabling them to produce more engaging and convincing presentations that will have a lasting impact.

2:50 – 3:00 p.m.

Break

3:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Faculty & Administrator Mentor Meeting

Kreeger Room

Ellen Hause, Associate Vice President for Academic & Student Affairs, AACC
Tammy Reichelt, Chief of Staff, AACC

This is a meeting for the faculty and administrator team mentors to go over their roles and expectations for the Boot Camp, engage with AACC staff and Boot Camp organizers, and address any questions/concerns they may have as they support their teams throughout the event.

3:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Setting the Stage & Team-Based Design Thinking

National Room

Grant Warner, Executive Director, Center for Black Entrepreneurship,
Spelman College | Morehouse College

Student teams will participate in a lively and interactive session designed to introduce design thinking, which is a problem-solving process that begins with understanding unmet customer needs. The process of innovation can be developed and improved from design thinking as it incorporates concept development, creativity, prototyping, and experimentation. Through small group breakouts, students will engage in a design thinking exercise designed to learn the importance of developing empathy, leveraging ideation, and building low-fidelity prototypes.

5:00 – 5:15 p.m.

Key Takeaways & Day 1 Wrap-Up

National Room

Teams will participate in a wrap-up of the day's activities, review key takeaways, and engage in a Q/A with Boot Camp instructors.

5:30 – 6:45 p.m.

Walking Tour of Dupont Circle

Meet in Lobby

This optional and informal walking tour will give CCIC finalist teams the opportunity to explore D.C.'s Embassy Row to see the city's most impressive architectural properties. Along the way, tour guides will share stories about the politicians, society ladies, diplomats, and captains of industry that shaped this grand boulevard. Join your fellow finalists for all or part of the tour to explore this unique area of Washington, D.C.

Tuesday, June 9

8:00 – 8:45 a.m.
Corcoran Room

Networking Breakfast

8:45 – 9:00 a.m.
National Room

Good Morning & Agenda Review

Welcome to Day 2! The Boot Camp facilitator will go over the agenda for the day.

9:00 – 10:15 a.m.
National Room

Signaling Innovation

Joe Schreiber, Adjunct Professor and General Manager, Temple University Television

In this session, teams will be given instruction and participate in small group exercises on how to focus outward to an audience and strategies for audience engagement including: how to signal value; how to use tools to design, develop, and distill messages; and how to effectively use the “Message Triangle.”

10:15 – 10:30 a.m.

Break

10:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.
National Room

Customer Discovery Round-Up – Understanding Customer Segments & Value Proposition

*Grant Warner, Executive Director, Center for Black Entrepreneurship,
Spelman College | Morehouse College*

This session offers a review of Customer Discovery before taking a deeper dive into the process and breaking down the components of identifying the customer, understanding the need, and designing value proposition. The presentation will cover lean launch pad methodology, understanding customer segments, minimal viable product, and problem-solution-fit as part of evidence-based entrepreneurship. The session also includes detailed and small group interactive exercises on identifying and understanding the customers, end-users, and decision-makers for your innovation—and ways to highlight its VALUE.

12:15 – 1:15 p.m.
The Riggsby (Lobby Level)

Networking Lunch & Dress for Capitol Hill

1:15 – 2:15 p.m.
National Room

How to Be Memorable & Persuasive

Joe Schreiber, Adjunct Professor and General Manager, Temple University Television

This session will focus on preparing for the Student Innovation Poster Session, which is designed as a public-facing event. Strategies to be shared include how to create “sound bites” that make messages stick; the magic word that enhances persuasion; and a tool to handle any kind of question.

2:15 – 2:45 p.m.
National Room

Capitol Hill Engagement Launchpad

*Joe Schreiber, Adjunct Professor and General Manager, Temple University Television
Kathryn Gimborns, Manager, Government Relations, AACC*

Teams will learn techniques for how best to address the legislators and key stakeholders that may attend the Student Innovation Poster Session & Reception.

Tuesday, June 9 (continued)

4:30 – 6:30 p.m.

Student Innovation Poster Session & Reception

Cannon House Office Bldg

Room 210

The Student Innovation Poster Session & Reception is designed for the student teams to highlight their challenge projects. Congressional members, community college leaders, STEM stakeholders, key Congressional staff, and other guests have been invited to engage with the finalist teams to learn about their ideas and proposed solutions. The event also provides an opportunity for the CCIC judges to interact with the teams and to view their poster as part of the judging criteria for selecting the competition winners.

Teams will head to lobby at 2:45 p.m. to meet the shuttle bus, which will depart at 3:00 p.m. Teams are asked to bring their posters on the bus and will have time to assemble their posters on site prior to the start of the Poster Session. AACC will transport the foam core poster boards and push pins/adhesive so the teams can assemble their posters upon arrival to the Capitol Hill reception room.

Event Schedule:

- 2:45 p.m. Teams Adjourn to Lobby
- 3:00 p.m. Buses Depart for Capitol Hill
- 3:30 p.m. Team Arrival/Teams Clear Security
- 3:30 – 4:15 p.m. Poster Set-Up Period
- 4:30 – 6:30 p.m. Student Poster Session & Reception
- 6:30 – 6:45 p.m. Teams Take Down Poster & Group Photo
- 7:00 p.m. Buses Return to Hotel

Wednesday, June 10

8:15 – 9:00 a.m.
Corcoran Room

Networking Breakfast

9:00 – 9:15 a.m.
National Room

Welcome to Day 3! Capitol Hill Debrief

9:15 – 10:15 a.m.
Kreeger

NSF Information Track for Team Mentors

*Dr. Olga Pierrakos, ATE Lead Program Director National Science Foundation
Ellen Hause, Associate Vice President for Academic & Student Affairs, AACC*

Faculty and administrator team mentors will meet and engage directly with a National Science Foundation program director to learn about funding opportunities open to community college as well as additional undergraduate research and entrepreneurship opportunities.

9:15 – 11:45 a.m.
National Room

Customer Discovery – Guided Mock Interviews

*Grant Warner, Executive Director, Center for Black Entrepreneurship,
Spelman College | Morehouse College*

The Guided Mock Interview session is a follow-up to the Customer Discovery interviews that the teams were asked to conduct prior to the Boot Camp. The goal of the Guided Mock Interviews exercise is to help the finalist teams become more comfortable with Customer Discovery, and to improve proficiency through practice. Teams will be guided through the four (4) stages of a typical discovery interview with teams assigned to one of the four stages. Teams will be assigned to small breakout groups for this session to work with an innovation coach on discovery approach and questions. There will be a session break from 10:45 – 11:00 a.m. Teams will then reassemble to participate in a group interview and distill key insights from the interview process.

- Breakout Group 1 – National Room
- Breakout Group 2 – Corcoran Room
- Breakout Group 3 – Suite 239
- Breakout Group 4 – Suite 240

11:45 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.
The Riggsby (Lobby Level)

Networking Lunch

Wednesday, June 10 (continued)

12:45 – 2:30 p.m.

Masters of Marketing & Perfecting Your Pitch

National Room

Aileen Andres, Digital Vice President, Fenton

Daria Hall, Executive Vice President, Fenton

Valerie Jean-Charles, Vice President, Fenton

Victoria Roberson, Sr. Account Exec., Fenton

Morgan Travers, Digital Acct. Exec., Fenton

Fenton, the social change agency, will host a workshop to engage finalists in pitching their innovation to different audiences. The goal of the session is for participants to learn how to strengthen their value proposition messaging and presentation style, and practice and receive feedback to refine their pitches.

2:30 – 2:45 p.m.

Break

2:45 – 5:00 p.m.

Team Coaching & Working Sessions

National Room

Breakout Rooms

Teams have dedicated time to prepare and practice their Team Pitch Presentations. The Team Coaching and Working Session also provide time for coaches to meet with the teams to share feedback and guidance on their communication and pitching. See handout in packet for detailed coaching assignments.

5:00 – 5:15 p.m.

Key Takeaways & Day 3 Wrap-Up

National Room

Teams will participate in a wrap-up of the day's activities, review key takeaways, and engage in Q/A with Boot Camp instructors.

Thursday, June 11

8:15 – 9:00 a.m. **Networking Breakfast**
Corcoran Room

9:00 – 9:05 a.m. **Final Day! Introduction to the Day's Agenda**
National Room

Welcome to the final day of the Boot Camp! Teams will review the agenda and expectations for the day.

9:05 – 10:00 a.m. **The IP Road Ahead – An Overview of Copyrights, Patents, & Trademarks**
National Room *Elizabeth (Liz) Jackson, Acting Director, Northeast Regional Outreach Office,
U.S. Patent and Trademark Office*

A representative from the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office will provide an overview of the copyright, patent, and trademark process to get teams thinking about intellectual property and how to further their innovations.

10:00 – 10:15 a.m. **The Final Story – A Review of the Judging Criteria**
National Room *Ellen Hause, Associate VP for Academic & Student Affairs, AACC
Joe Schreiber, Adjunct Professor and General Manager, Temple University Television*

Boot Camp instructors will review the rules, structure, and judging criteria for the Team Pitch Presentations as well as offer words of encouragement and advice before the teams go into their final working session. Teams also have the opportunity to ask questions as they make their final preparations to pitch before the panel of judges.

10:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. **Team Pitch Presentation Rehearsals & Working Lunch**
Corcoran Room

Teams are encouraged to use this dedicated working session to regroup, refresh, and/or to put any final touches on their Team Pitch Presentations. A buffet lunch will be provided from 11:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. Teams should take a break and eat prior to the Final Team Presentations starting at 12:30 p.m.

12:15 – 12:30 p.m. **Break**

12:30 – 3:00 p.m. **Team Pitch Presentations & Judges Feedback**
National Room

The CCIC Boot Camp concludes with a Team Pitch Presentation, where each team has 5 minutes to advance their innovation in front of a panel of judges, and then 5 minutes to address questions posed by the judging panel. During the pitch presentation period, each team will be called upon, in a random order, to come to the front of the room to pitch to the panel of judges. The schedule for the Team Pitch Presentations is as follows.

12:30 – 1:40 p.m.	First 6 teams are called upon to pitch.
1:40 – 1:50 p.m.	Break
1:50 – 3:00 p.m.	Second 6 teams are called upon to pitch.

Thursday, June 11

3:00 – 3:30 p.m.

Award Deliberations – Judges Meeting

Suite 241

The judges for the Team Pitch Presentations will convene in a closed meeting to review the total scores of each team, and then deliberate to select the first, second, and third place winners of the 2026 Community College Innovation Challenge.

3:00 – 3:30 p.m.

Event Evaluation Forms

National Room

Teams will be asked to fill out Boot Camp evaluation forms while the judges are deliberating.

3:30 – 5:00 p.m.

Closing Awards Ceremony & Reception

National Room

The moment you've all been waiting for... please join us as we celebrate all the hard work, dedication, and accomplishments of the student teams and announce the first, second, and third place winners of the 2026 Community College Innovation Challenge! Following the awards ceremony, please join us for a reception in The Riggsby with outdoor seating on the terrace (weather-permitting).