



Previous Winners Words of Wisdom

Before the Pitch

“Take seriously the requirements to be innovative, create new programs or student experiences, that impact various areas on campus.”

“When planning to pitch, ask yourself – where are the areas of opportunity? Who are the experts? What people and organizations might want to collaborate (inside and outside of the college)?

“Find people who are comfortable on stage, creative, and memorable.”

“Clarity and consensus on the pitch idea for team members increases your chances of winning.”

“Practice with simulated pitches to improve your performance. Ask the NACCE coaches for assistance and use their expertise. The more practice, and with different people, tightens up the three minutes in making the project clearer. Your audience is the judging panel!”

“When considering the project, review the purchase list to see if items will adhere to the normal and traditional purchasing process of the college. If not, you may want to start researching the purchasing process as soon as possible.”

“Preparation, rehearse, rehearse, rehearse. And rehearse on site at the conference too. Have a contingency plan if a team member misses their flight, or technology doesn’t work.”

“Allow extra planning time to create a team that includes individuals from across the college and community. Implementation always takes longer, so build in extra time.”

“Identify opportunities and build interest and cultivate local donors. You can multiply your winnings by 5 or 10 times.”

“Create a core team that is strong and passionate about the project. And make sure that the faculty are involved as early as possible in the project to gather their buy-in.”

“Clearly ‘understand’ purchasing to set timelines on how things happen when working with the college/state purchasing system. We learned this the hard way with agricultural drones and all the requirements.”

“Connections matter. Look at potential idea/s (and resources) outside of NACCE and through NACCE programs.”

“If your idea/project can incorporate multiple programs or groups, it's an added benefit that shows innovation in multiple areas or a bigger impact for your campus.”

“Give your pitch a theme. Watching the finals from the past few years, those with a clear theme, and a little bit of fun, stood out to both the audience and the judges. Be serious about it but have some fun too.”

“Be sure to answer this question – How will your project be funded after year one?”

During the Pitch

“The pitch process offered by NACCE through webinars and online tools was good, and the experience of competing was exciting. You have nothing to lose and EVERYTHING to gain.”

“Collaboration and cooperation are essential, and you will find it to be fun and rewarding.”

“Be ready for judges’ questions – especially ones about sustainability, and local funding matches! And, seriously, ask for only the amount of funding that you need, and not the maximum amount.”

“Remember the power of performance! Costumes, music, art and enthusiasm matter!”

“Hurtles can be frustrating (AV can fail, for example), but don’t let that dampen your spirit. Work through it in the planning and on stage. It is worth the fight and energy.”

“Choose presenters that are comfortable speaking to large groups to give your pitch. Make sure they PRACTICE and can answer questions a judge may ask.”

After the Pitch

“If you are lucky enough to get a big foam check (and a real check 😊), be prepared to mail it or transport it via your airplane to display on your campus. Sweet talking the TSA employees and airline staff helps.”

“Develop a reporting and accountability process. Who will oversee the project and hold the different team members accountable? And don’t forget to celebrate success on your campus!”

“Start marketing your winning pitch program way before any action on campus is required. Celebrating the winning will help spread the word on campus and in your community.”

“Get more people from your college involved to share the duties of executing the winning project by leveraging people’s strengths.”

“We turned this opportunity into an internal competition knowing that only one submission per school would be accepted. This year we already have a few different departments putting together ideas.”

GOOD LUCK!