BIG IDEAS

MENTOR HANDBOOK
2013-2014 BIG IDEAS CONTEST

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Big Ideas@Berkeley Mentor Handbook

Thank you for agreeing to serve as a mentor for the 2013-2014 Big Ideas@Berkeley Contest!

This handbook provides you with information about the Big Ideas contest, expectations for mentors, key dates, and FAQs.

About the Contest

Big Ideas@Berkeley is an annual innovation contest aimed at providing funding, support, and encouragement to interdisciplinary teams of UC undergraduate and graduate students who have "big ideas." Since its founding, UC Berkeley's annual Big Ideas prize contest has inspired innovative and high-impact student projects aimed at solving the world's most pressing problems. By seeking out novel proposals and then supporting efforts to help them succeed, Big Ideas has supported contest winners in making a difference all over the world.

Big Ideas Mentors

Big Ideas mentors have the opportunity to preview and provide feedback on students' innovative ideas in the second round of the contest. By serving as a mentor, you'll have an opportunity to give back while also getting a first-hand look at some of the most innovative ideas being developed by graduate and undergraduate students. In addition, mentors will have the opportunity to build their own professional networks by attending Big Ideas events and mixers where they can meet other mentors, contest judges, faculty, and students.

The Big Ideas@Berkeley mentorship program is designed to support students in critically analyzing the viability of their project ideas before they are asked to submit a full proposal in the final round of the contest. In the pre-proposal round, finalist teams were selected based on the creativity of their projects and potential for innovation. In the final round, judges will increasingly consider the extent to which their projects are feasible in their first year of implementation. As a result, mentors assist students in thinking about the implementation and design of their project ideas, with an eye toward feasibility and viability.

Structure of the Contest

The Big Ideas contest is split into two rounds: a pre-proposal round in the fall and a full proposal round in the spring.

Round 1: Pre-proposal

Eligible students were invited to submit a five-page pre-proposal by Tuesday, November 5, 2013. Depending on the number of applicants to each category, between three and nine finalist teams were selected in each contest category based on judges' feedback. All pre-proposal teams received detailed feedback from the judges, regardless of whether or not they were selected as finalists. During the pre-proposal round, teams had the option of attending information sessions, networking and team building events, and writing and budgeting workshops.

Round 2: Full Proposal

Finalist teams will have the opportunity to develop and refine their pre-proposals into ten-page full proposals due on March 11, 2014. In this full proposal, finalists will expand on the ideas presented in their pre-proposals, edit their proposals based on judges' feedback, and refine their project ideas through collaboration with a Big Ideas mentor. From the finalist pool, judges will select between two and five award winners in each category. This packet gives you an idea of what judges will be looking for in making their final selections.

Category	Description
CLEAN & SUSTAINABLE ENERGY ALTERNATIVES	The aim of this category is to encourage student led innovations focused on the design, development, or delivery of sustainable energy solutions.
CREATIVE EXPRESSION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE	Seeks proposals for innovative art projects that meaningfully engage with issues of advocacy, justice, and community building through any art form.
FINANCIAL CAPABILITIES	Seeks proposals for improving the financial capability of young adults, particularly those from low-income communities, to help ensure they have access to the tools, education, and resources necessary to manage money with confidence.
GLOBAL POVERTY ALLEVIATION	Seeks proposals that describe an action oriented, inter-disciplinary project that would help alleviate poverty. Possible areas of innovation may include education, clean water, health care, and agriculture.
IMPROVING STUDENT LIFE	Seeks proposals that describe a new policy, program, course, initiative, or service that improves the UC Berkeley student experience in a meaningful way.
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY FOR SOCIETY	Seeks proposals that stimulate new thinking on a broad range of social benefits of information technology in areas that help address a major societal challenge.
OPEN DATA	Seeks proposals that leverage publicly available datasets to address social challenges.
PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS	Seeks proposals that will help combat the causes or consequences of corruption or indirectly foster the rule of law.
SCALING UP BIG IDEAS	Seeks proposals from past Big Ideas winners who have made substantial progress on their original concept, and who are now ready to expand the scale, impact or scope of their project.

How Are Entries Judged?

In the final round of the contest, students are instructed to submit full proposals no longer than 15 pages, single-spaced (including a budget spreadsheet but <u>not</u> including references). Entries will be judged according to the criteria below.

Project Described Is Viable (40%)

Given the project description and the team members' expertise, skills, training, the team will likely be able to meet their proposed goals. (**Please keep in mind that we asked teams to explain how their project would look and consider implementation in only the first year of their project.**) For example:

- The proposal demonstrates consideration of potential obstacles to implementation/adoption and has proposed convincing solutions to address these challenges.
- The team has identified and developed relationships with potential community partners, where applicable.
- The project team members and partners possess the necessary skills and experience to be successful in implementing the project.
- The team has considered all relevant aspects of development, considered/developed viable marketing goals, effective marketing strategies, and realistic training and recruitment procedures for personnel or volunteers, if applicable.

Familiarity with the Community or Market (15%):

The team demonstrates familiarity with current research on the problem they plan to address and on the market or community they plan to enter. The proposal discusses similar initiatives, projects or products that currently exist, the issues that have emerged with those other initiatives projects or products, and specifically how their project compares. The proposal demonstrates that the applicants have given sufficient consideration to the cultural, ethical, and legal implications of their proposed intervention.

Needs Statement is Convincing (15%)

The proposed project **addresses a pressing and important social problem.** The team provides the reviewer with sufficient statistics and research to understand the problem, and makes a clear and compelling case that their project addresses this need.

Budget is Thorough and Realistic (10%)

The proposal includes a realistic budget that outlines **all relevant expected expenses and revenue for the project's first year**. The budget spreadsheet demonstrates that the applicants have given sufficient consideration to necessary supplies, equipment, travel expenses, etc. **The funding requested from Big Ideas is no greater than $10,000**. If the projects' expenses are greater than $10,000 total, the team has a reasonable plan to raise additional funds (e.g., the team has plans to submit additional grant applications, fundraise, etc.).

<u>Evaluation Plan (10%)</u>

The proposal demonstrates a viable plan for measuring success in achieving the project's goals. The exact measurement tools (e.g. survey instruments) need not be developed at this stage, but the proposal should explain what will be measured and when/how it will be measured.

<u>Project Described is Innovative (5%)</u>

The idea presented is a novel, innovative, or creative solution to the identified problem. Big Ideas defines "novel, innovative, or creative projects" as those that either a) propose a new idea, method, invention, or product, **or** b) the creation of a better or more effective product, process, service, technology, or idea.

<u>Overall Merit (5%)</u>

The overall merit of this idea is high. This is an idea worth funding.

Mentorship Basics

The Big Ideas@Berkeley mentorship program is designed to support students in critically analyzing the viability of their project ideas before they are asked to submit a full proposal in the final round of the contest. In the pre-proposal round, finalist teams were selected based on the creativity of their projects and potential for innovation. In the final round, judges will increasingly consider the extent to which their projects are viable in their first year of implementation. As a result, mentors assist students in thinking about the implementation and design of their project ideas, with an eye toward viability and impact.

Mentorship Minimum Requirements

To this end, Big Ideas teams and their mentors are expected to work together for approximately **2 hours per week** (via email, telephone, or in person meetings, to be negotiated with team members) from approximately January 29th to March 11th. During these communications, mentors are expected to assist students in reviewing the feedback that teams received from pre-proposal judges, coach teams through plan development, and provide feedback on relevant aspects of the project—taking into consideration which areas are weighted most heavily in the judging criteria.

Before mentorship begins, mentors are **encouraged to join their finalist team at our Full Proposal Information Session on Wednesday, January 29tht[h] at 6:30PM in B100 Blum Hall on the UC Berkeley campus.** During this event, mentors will have the opportunity to meet their teams in person, and together teams and mentors will learn more about expectations for the mentorship program and the application requirements for the final round of the contest. If you cannot make this event, it will be recorded and available on the Big Ideas website at http://bigideas.berkeley.edu/mentors. Mentors will receive email notification when the recording is available online.

Also, many of our applicants hope to launch ventures following the contest. It is required that mentors will maintain the confidentiality of the proposals before, during and after the mentorship process.

Finally, at the end of the mentorship period, Big Ideas will ask each mentor and student team to fill out a feedback form, indicating areas of success and challenge in their mentorship relationship. This form will be viewed by Big Ideas staff only and is designed to assist staff in improving the mentorship program in future years.

Successful Mentorship

Based on feedback from last year's mentors and finalist teams, Big Ideas has developed a list of tips for successful mentorship:

1. Discuss expectations and the boundaries of the mentorship relationship at the beginning of mentorship. **To assist in this process, teams and mentors are required to submit the Mentorship Agreement Form (provided below.) Please submit your completed agreement (filled out by both team and mentor) via email (please send to bigideas@berkeley.edu) by February 7th.**
2. Consider setting up a regular time for meetings.
3. Conduct in-person meetings whenever possible. If the Mentorship is being conducted remotely, set up video conferencing meetings (via Skype, Google+ Hangout) whenever possible.
4. Review the judging criteria before mentorship begins to ensure that both you and the team understand how their proposals will be judged in the final round of the contest.
5. Review feedback provided to the team by pre-proposal judges.
6. Practice active listening and ask questions to challenge the team.

7. Encourage the team to take an active-approach to problem solving rather than relying solely on you as their mentor to solve project problems.

In sum, this mentorship opportunity is entirely what mentors and teams make of it. **Therefore, it is essential that teams and mentors establish and maintain a clear schedule and good communication throughout the mentorship phase.**

Additional Resources for Mentors
- [Top 10 Qualities of a Good Mentor](#) from About.com
- [Read This Before Our Next Meeting](#) by Al Pittampalli
- [Building Blocks for Teams](#) from Penn State
- [Powwownow](#) free conference call service
- [Doodle](#) for meeting scheduling
- [Box.net](#) for file sharing
- [Zoho Projects](#) for project management and collaboration
- [Skype](#) for free video conference calls

MENTORSHIP AGREEMENT FORM

This document outlines responsibilities and expectations of mentors and team members and includes a worksheet for mentors and teams to fill out to determine goals for the mentorship relationship.

Relationship and Commitments

By signing this agreement, mentors agree to spend a approximately **2 hours per week** communicating with students (via email, telephone, or in person meetings, to be negotiated with team members) from January 29nd to March 11th. During these communications, mentors are expected to assist students in reviewing the feedback teams received from pre-proposal judges, coach teams through plan development, and provide feedback on relevant aspects of the project—taking into consideration which areas are weighted most heavily in the judging rubric. Mentors should not assist students in writing portions of teams' proposals.

By signing this agreement, teams' understand that it is their responsibility to fully explain the rules of the Big Ideas contest to their mentors, including the judging criteria for the full proposal round of the contest. Students are primarily responsible for engaging their mentor by suggesting topics for discussion and questions to confer with their mentors about, as necessary.

By signing this agreement, both mentors and students agree to respect each other's time, to attend mutually scheduled meetings, and request assistance from Big Ideas staff as necessary during the mentorship period.

MENTORSHIP WORKSHEET

Mentor Resources

Mentors, please list your areas of expertise/experience that you think may be beneficial to this particular team. Please share these strengths with your finalist team.

1.
2.
3.
4.

Mentor Suggestions/Goals for Mentorship

After reading the team's pre-proposal and/or meeting with the team to hear about their project ideas, please provide your initial suggestions or recommendations for improvement. Please share these thoughts with the team.

1.
2.
3.
4.

Student Goals for Mentorship

Student teams, after reviewing the feedback provided by pre-proposal judges, please indicate the areas of your proposal you wish to significantly improve, or areas you would like help from your mentor to think about and improve. Please share these areas with your mentor.

1.
2.
3.
4.

_____

Signature of mentor

_____

Signature of team leader

_____

Date

FAQs

Who participates in the Big Ideas@Berkeley Contest?

All students on campus are encouraged to participate. In past years, participants were approximately 60% undergraduate and 40% graduate students. Students come from a wide range of fields, including scientific and technical studies, liberal arts, law, public health, and business.

Who funds the contest?

The contest receives support from the Andrew and Virginia Rudd Family Foundation. In addition, each of the contest categories are sponsored and funded by departments and centers across the UC Berkeley campus. For a complete list of current sponsors, please refer to the "Our Sponsors" section of our Contest page: http://bigideas.berkeley.edu/contest.

Is Big Ideas a business plan competition?

No. While some proposals take the form of a formal business plan, not all ideas will result in the creation of commercial ventures. Applicants are encouraged to submit project plans aimed at addressing a wide variety of **social** issues. However, we expect all applications to have an understanding of the populations they are designed to benefit and a realistic budget, regardless of whether they take the form of scalable enterprises or short-term projects with a significant impact on the community.

Who judges the Big Ideas contest?

Judges hail from a variety of fields and have diverse expertise to assess ideas and provide valuable feedback. Judges are academics, business people, social entrepreneurs, and non-profit and creative professionals.

Do mentors edit or help write proposals?

Mentors are responsible for helping students think through issues of project design and implementation. Mentors are not responsible for idea generation, completing portions of the proposal, or proofing or editing proposals. Mentors should participate in reviewing drafts of the final proposal and offer constructive feedback and suggestions for improving the proposal. However they should not participate in the actual writing of the final proposal.

How are teams paired with mentors?

We will match student teams with mentors who can provide necessary expertise and help them develop skills in project management and business development.

Is mentorship mandatory?

No. Student teams are not required to work with a mentor, but all finalists were given the opportunity to complete a mentor matching form, signifying their desire and commitment to work with a mentor during this phase of the contest.

What should student teams do if the feedback they received from judges is contradictory? Must student teams address all comments made by pre-proposal judges?

Judges reviewed pre-proposals independently, meaning that some judges may disagree on the relative strengths and weaknesses of a proposal. In collaboration with their mentor, student teams can determine to what extent the weaknesses pointed out by pre-proposal judges should be addressed.

Typically, pre-proposal judges do not serve as full proposal judges in the final round, and full proposal judges will not have access to the comments or scores provided by pre-proposal judges. However, we strongly encourage student teams to consider their pre-proposal feedback as they work to strengthen their proposals for the final round.

Who do I contact if I have any issues or concerns?
Please email bigideas@berkeley.edu or call (510) 666-9120. Also, students are welcome to attend drop-in office hours with Big Ideas advisors. Please check the Big Ideas website for the list of our updated hours: http://bigideas.berkeley.edu/resources/#advising.