

**ACC Clean Energy Business Plan Challenge 2012**  
**Official Rules**

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**Entries Accepted:**

- The competition is intended to select a business plan which captures the commercialization potential for a technology with the potential to create a sustainable impact on the clean energy space. Entries are accepted for any technologies in the clean energy space, including projects related to renewable energy, energy efficiency improvements and advanced fuels/vehicles. Programs of interest to the Department of Energy (DOE) include:
  - property designed to be used to produce energy from the sun, wind, water, geothermal deposits (or other renewable resources)
  - fuel cells, microturbines, or an energy storage system for use with electric or hybridelectric motor vehicles,
  - electric grids to support the transmission of intermittent sources of renewable energy, including storage of such energy,
  - property designed to refine or blend renewable fuels or to produce energy conservation technologies (including energy-conserving lighting technologies and smart grid technologies),
  - new qualified plug-in electric drive motor vehicles qualified plugin electric vehicles, or components which are designed specifically for use with such vehicles, including electric motors, generators, and power control units
- For additional information on the types of technologies that fall within the DOE's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, teams should visit [www.eere.energy.gov](http://www.eere.energy.gov)

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

***Eligibility:***

- Competition is open to graduate and undergraduate students actively enrolled in accredited colleges or universities in Alabama, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, Washington, DC and West Virginia.

**Note:** Competition is open to all degree-seeking graduate students including: MS candidates, PhD candidates, MBAs, executive MBAs, MD candidates and JD candidates. Students in certificate programs are not eligible to participate.
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- Teams may only submit one entry into the competition.
- At least 50% of the formal team members (defined as though involved in the incorporation of the business) must be students enrolled in U.S. universities and colleges.
- Presentations to the judges, including presenting the plan and addressing questions from the judges, must be delivered by student team members. Non-student members may consult with students during the Q&A phase, but students shall respond to all questions.
- Foreign students enrolled at U.S. universities may be included on formal teams. However, each team must contain at least one student member who is a US citizen.
- Management Teams for the venture may consist of students, faculty and non-students. However, a minimum of 20% of the equity allocated to the management team in the company must be owned by students, one of whom must be a US citizen.
- Although incorporation is not required at the time of submission, companies must incorporate prior to the Regional Finals Competition (April 25, 2012). Prizes will only be awarded to incorporated entities, not to individuals. Teams must possess an Employer Identification Number (EIN) prior to issuance of prize money.
- Winners of the ACC Clean Energy Business Plan Southeast Region Challenge are required to compete in the U.S. Department of Energy National Clean Energy Business Plan Finals in Washington, DC (June/July 2012). A minimum of two student team members must travel to Washington, DC and participate in the oral presentation of the business plan.

***Company Size/Investment Stage***

- Competition is for new start-up ventures in the seed, start-up or early growth phase. Buy-outs, expansions of existing companies, franchises and spin-outs from existing organizations are excluded from participating.
  - Teams which have received more than \$200,000 in equity funding prior to February, 2012 are not eligible to participate.
  - Teams which have received research or grant funding for research or product development are eligible to compete.
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- All sources and amounts of funding must be disclosed.
- Teams which have generated revenue from sales in excess of \$50,000 prior to September 2011 are not eligible to compete.

***Intellectual Property***

- Content of the business plan submission must be factual and the plan must be the original work of the entrants.
  - Entrants do not have to own the Intellectual Property Rights for the invention but should ensure that third parties or researchers do not have rights on the technology which could block commercialization.
  - Technologies used in the competition must derive from university or national labs. Entrants agree not to misrepresent the inventions and to disclose the status of the IP.
  - Entrants must complete the U.S. Department of Energy Disclosure form to disclose ownership of the IP associated with the technology they are presenting and submit with their applications. Failure to submit this form will prevent advancement in the competition.
  - Entering teams should speak with independent legal counsel and take steps to protect their intellectual property through appropriate filings and notices.
  - Entrants should not assume any right of confidentiality in data or information presented during the presentations and judging sessions as all sessions are open to the public. Any information presented during these sessions should be considered information which could enter the public realm. Sessions and submitted video pitches may be broadcast through various media, including the internet.
  - Non-disclosure agreements will not be made available or signed by participants, staff, judges, reviewers or audience members.
  - Business Plans will only be distributed to those involved in the review and judging process. However, since it cannot be guaranteed that other individuals may not obtain access to copies of the documents, any information submitted is at risk of public disclosure.
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**ENTRY INFORMATION:**

***General:***

- The Southeast Regional Semi-Finals and Finals of the Clean Energy Plan Competition will be held on April 25, 2012 at the Clarice Smith Center for the Performing Arts, located on the University of Maryland Campus. Winner of the Competition will receive a \$100,000 prize sponsored by the U.S. Department of Energy.
- The Southeast regional finals will consist of up to 15 semi-finalists. Each ACC school in the Southeast region will receive one automatic berth in the competition. Non-ACC schools in the region will receive up to a total of 4 berths. If no qualifying entries are received from an ACC school, the number of at-large berths may be increased.
- Students should register their teams at [www.accnrg.org](http://www.accnrg.org) starting November 15, 2011
- Teams will be responsible for their own travel expenses to the Finals on April 25, 2012 including transportation to College Park, MD and hotel accommodations.

***Key Dates:***

<b>Date</b>	<b>Activity</b>
November 15, 2011	Registration Opens
February 20, 2012	Round 1: Executive Summaries Due
March 1, 2012	Teams Notified of Advancement to Round 2
March 19, 2012	Round 2: Business Plans Due
March 27, 2012	Teams Notified of Advancement to Round 3
April 5, 2012	Round 3: Video Pitches Due
April 10, 2012	Teams Notified of Advancement to South East Regional Competition
April 24, 2012	Banquet and Networking Reception
April 25, 2012	Southeast Regional Finals Competition

***Submission Requirements***

- Three rounds will be conducted to determine the Semi-Finalists who will compete in the Southeast Regional Finals. Teams which are selected from Round 1 will be invited to participate in Round 2. Winners selected from Round 2 will be invited to participate in Round 3.
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***Round 1: Prepare an Executive Summary of Your Business Plan (Entry Deadline: February 20, 2012)***

- Teams will be notified if they advance to the next round by March 1, 2012.
- Executive summaries should be **limited to 3** pages in length, including all graphs, spreadsheets and business plan details. No attachments of any kind beyond this limit will be allowed. Longer executive summaries and full business plan submissions at this stage will be disqualified.
- Executive Summaries should include the following information:
  - Company description
  - Product description
  - Value proposition
  - Customer/market analysis, including market size and potential market share
  - Competitor Analysis
  - Competitive Differentiation
  - Intellectual Property Status
  - Management Team Members including relevant experience
  - Financial model, including overview of revenues and expenses
  - Investment Needs
  - Current stage of development
- There are no specific formats required for the Executive Summary.

***Round 2: Prepare a Written Business Plan (Entry Deadline: March 19, 2012)***

- Entrants selected for Round 2 will prepare a full business plan
  - Winners from this round will be notified if they have been selected to submit a video pitch entry by March 27, 2012
  - The plan must not exceed 15 total pages, not including the title page or the table of contents. The 15-page limit includes all business plan text, tables, exhibits, figures and appendices. Business plans exceeding these page limits will be disqualified.
  - Business plans should be single or double spaced using a legible font with one-inch page margins.
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- Business plans should include a Cover Page and Table of Contents and address the following topics:
    - Abbreviated executive summary (1-2 pages in length)
    - Description of product and business concept
    - Value proposition
    - Target market
    - Competitive advantage
    - Intellectual property status
    - Customers
    - Competitors
    - Competitive advantage
    - Management Team
    - Current stage of development
    - Business model (revenue and profit projections)
    - Any prior funding, current funding needed and potential return for investors
  
  - Business plans should make strong and convincing cases with supporting evidence for the following (as applicable):
    - Products
      - Value propositions (specific problem addressed and comparison to existing products)
      - Understandable, brief technical description
      - Status of intellectual property
      - Possible future products
    - Market
      - Industry – growth, size, segments, barriers to entry
      - Target markets – growth, size, initial customers, what additional market segments will you pursue
      - Competitor matrix – strengths and weaknesses
      - Competitive advantage – substitutes
    - Company
      - Vision, mission values
      - Management team, advisors and board members
      - History/stage
    - Marketing and Sales Plan
      - Marketing strategy
      - Sales plan – bottom up sales projection
      - Promotion
      - Pricing
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- Distribution channels
- Other items, as applicable
  - Legal structure
  - Technology status
  - Regulatory and legal challenges
  - Manufacturing requirements
  - Supply chain challenges
  - Growth strategy
  - Major risks
- Financial Plan
  - Pro forma financial statements (including cash flow, income statements and balance sheets) for a minimum of 3 years, post revenue
  - Burn rate/breakeven point
- Investment Proposal
  - Investment needed – sources and uses of funds
  - Investor rate of return

***Round 3: Prepare a 5-8 Minute Video Pitch (Entry Deadline: April 5, 2012)***

- Entrants selected for Round 3 will prepare and upload a video pitch entry for judging.
  - Winners from this round will be notified if they have been selected as a semi-finalist to present in front of judges at the Flight Round at the Southeast Regional Competition by April 10, 2012
  - A **5-8 minute investor pitch** should be prepared and uploaded. For investor pitch videos, students should dress in professional business attire.
  - Investor pitches should at a minimum highlight the following items:
    - Description of the problem that you are addressing
    - Description of your product, including time to market
    - Value proposition
    - Market
    - Management Team
    - Investment Needs – what will the funds be used to support
  - Video pitches will be posted on the internet but with access restricted to judges and others involved in running the ACC Clean Energy Challenge. However, teams should still be cautious about what information it chooses to include on these video pitches.
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## **COMPETITION INFORMATION**

### ***Presentation Requirements for Southeast Regional Finals on April 25, 2012***

- Oral presentations will take place at the University of Maryland Campus on Wednesday, April 25, 2012.

### ***Initial Flight round:***

- For the initial round, teams will be divided into three tracks consisting of up to 5 teams per track. Each track will contain a minimum of one entry from a non-ACC school. All tracks will occur simultaneously.
- Each team will have a total of **20 minutes** to present their business plan and answer questions from the judges. The business plan presentation cannot exceed **12 minutes** with the remaining **8 minutes** reserved for questions. If the business plan pitch lasts less than 12 minutes, the remaining time may also be used for questioning. **Time limits will be strictly enforced.**
- The top two finishers in each track will proceed to the final round.

### ***Final Round:***

- The final round will include 6 teams.
  - Each team will have a total of **20 minutes** to present their business plan and answer questions from the judges. The business plan presentation cannot exceed **12 minutes** with the remaining **8 minutes** reserved for questions. If the business plan pitch lasts less than 12 minutes, the remaining time may also be used for questioning. **Time limits will be strictly enforced**
  - A team, once it has finished its presentation, may observe the presentation and Q&A session for subsequent teams. Teams may not observe presentations until after they have made their presentation.
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