



2025-2026 Application

The Idea

The Pitch is a student contest, which is designed to be an applied learning experience in entrepreneurial leadership. Entrepreneurial leaders drive social, economic, and environmental change by adding value to ideas that transform communities, improving/disrupting systems, and creating enterprises that shift equilibriums. Participating students are supported at each stage of the process - from idea to implementation. The winner will receive a **\$10,000** award.

The Support

The *HWS IdeaLab* is our best program to prepare for *The Pitch*. Selected participants will join a dynamic learning environment where faculty, staff and alums lead workshops to develop ideas. Participants can also pitch to our Student Opell Start-Up Fund Committee for seed funding to work on their idea *and* to enhance their proposal for *The Pitch*.

The Initial Challenge

Submit a proposal that addresses the following requirements below in 4 pages max (single-spaced). Include a cover page with your name and idea name (not counted in 4pgs). You are also encouraged to craft your proposal in the following order:

- **Requirement #1: The Problem**
Describe the problem(s) your idea will be addressing. Why is it hard to solve, what is the urgency to solve the program, and how are individuals/groups currently solving the problem?
- **Requirement #2 Solution and Value Proposition**
How will you solve the problem? What is your product, service, or platform? What value will you deliver to customers? Provide lots of details, but here is a way to briefly write out a value proposition: For [target customer segment] **Who wants/needs** [compelling reason to buy] **The** [product/service/platform name] **is a** [product/service/ platform category] **That provides** [key value benefit] **Unlike** [main competitor].
- **Requirement #3 Customer Segments**
Who is your target customer(s)? What are their needs (e.g., [jobs, pains, and gains](#))? Try to observe, interview, or survey potential customers and share that data to show how you will market your idea?
- **Requirement #4 Industry Trends**
What research supports the need for your idea? What evidence suggests it will be adopted? We highly suggest utilizing the Industry Data and Statistics tools (e.g., Statista) from [our shared research guide](#).
- **Requirement #5 Competitors**
Does your idea exist? Have you googled it? Who are your [competitors](#)? How are you different? Feel free to put your comparison in a graphic or chart as well.

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- **Requirement #6 Implementation Timeline**
What are the steps you will take to implement your idea? Make a graphic timeline.
- **Requirement #7 Social and Environmental Responsibility**
How does your enterprise benefit society? How will you embed social and environmental responsibility, beyond creating jobs and basic approaches such as recycling? Think deeply about community engagement as you respond.
- **Requirement #8 Leadership Role**
What is your leadership philosophy? How are you a leader? What ethical practices will you employ?
- **Requirement #9 Pricing/Cost Structure**
How will you generate revenue/funds to launch and sustain your idea? What are your major costs/expenses?

Application Deadline: Wednesday, November 5, 2025 at 11:50 P.M.