BIG Ideas FAQ

Who participates in the BIG Ideas Contest?

All team members must be current UNA undergraduates, who are in good academic standing and can be from any field of study. Teams should consist of 3-5 members and must participate in required BIG Ideas activities. Teams may compete in only one track and students may only participate on one team.

Is BIG Ideas a business plan competition?

No. Not all BIG Ideas will result in the creation of commercial ventures. Applicants are encouraged to submit project plans with a business model (for-profit, non-profit, hybrid) and a realistic budget that will enable their venture to have the intended social impact.

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, industry experts, 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 proofreading/editing proposals.

How are teams paired with mentors?

BIG Ideas coordinators individually matches student teams with mentors who can provide necessary expertise and the specific skills.

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. 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 Mary Marshall VanSant at mmvansant@una.edu or Mitch Hamm at Jhamm1@una.edu