October 2, 2018

Hello all BME Undergraduates:

Hopefully, the majority of you have heard of the i4 competition by now. Briefly, it is an initiative that seeks to integrate the traditional undergraduate engineering education you are now receiving with biomedical entrepreneurship. A central part of the initiative is a competition that seeks to help teams of BME students move their ideas into a form that could potentially be licensed to an existing company, or perhaps even turned into a student-founded company.

We are approaching the first of three stages in this year’s competition. Each stage consists of a “pitch,” or short presentation, with the first pitch being held the evening of Tuesday, November 20th at the North Carolina Biotechnology Center in RTP. The venue will be open at 4:00 and pitches will start promptly at 4:30, so do come early. Heavy appetizers will be provided. Registration forms are due by Friday, November 9th. Visit https://www.bme.unc.edu/i4-competition/ for updates.

The i4 competition – Pitch 1
The first part of i4 is for you to have identified an unmet clinical need. A good need will be one that, if solved, will have significant positive impacts on the people affected by it and/or the healthcare system in general. During this pitch, we want to hear about the problem/unmet need you have identified, who is affected by it, and the early-stage idea(s) you have for how to potentially solve this problem. Please note, Pitch 2 and the Final Pitch will also follow a similar format but will require you to have more details on both the problem and how you think it can be solved.

Instructions
For Pitch 1, you will have a very short time to present your idea (in the form of a powerpoint presentation) to the panel of judges. We will provide the exact time for each pitch when we know how many registrants we have, but it will probably be in the range of 5-6 minutes per team.

To get you started, you should plan on addressing at least some of the following core points in this first presentation (it is not expected that you will know all of these – you may know very few at this point in time):

1. What is the problem/unmet need that you have identified?
   a. Give a basic description of the problem and relevant background information
   b. Who is affected? How many are affected?
   c. What is the “cost” of the problem?
   d. What additional work do you need to do to define the problem better?

2. What is your potential solution?
   a. If you have a potential solution, how will it work? What competitors do you have? How is your solution potentially better/faster/cheaper than what exists out there now? If you already have an idea for a solution, how much will it cost? Who will pay for it?

3. Next steps?
   a. What is your plan moving forward? What does your team need to do to better define this need and/or develop a potential solution?
b. What resources do you think you need to take the next step in creating/testing your solution or better defining your need? If doing either of these requires resources that cost money (e.g., you need to pay for information/surveys to define your need better or you need money to prototype something), please create a budget and request funding for this.

A couple of important things to note:
1) **This may be the last year of i4**, so don’t miss this chance!
2) There will be a separate “track” for sophomores/juniors distinct from seniors, so there will be no direct competition between them.
3) At this early stage, you do not need to have everything figured out! **The most important thing is to be on the path to identifying an important biomedical problem or need and be able to explain the problem/need to someone else.** If you have an idea on a potential solution, great! In general, the more specifics you can provide, the more helpful the feedback you can get from the judges.

We plan on distributing around **$20,000 in financial support** to multiple teams. This support will be distributed based on your budget request and the strength of your argument in relation to the problem and the impact solving it may have (i.e., how well you can convince the judges of the potential of what you are proposing in your pitch). Convince us that the identified problem, and possibly solving it are worth the investment!

The takeaway message is this: if you think you and your team have at least identified a problem or unmet clinical need that people will care about, and you have even a basic idea of how you think you can solve it, **register for the first i4 pitch by Friday, November 9th.** By participating, you will receive constructive feedback, learn what other teams are proposing and possibly receive some financial support to help take your idea a step closer to reality. This is a unique opportunity, so please take advantage of it.

Again, regularly visit [https://www.bme.unc.edu/i4-competition/](https://www.bme.unc.edu/i4-competition/) for updates.

Hope to see you there!
Shawn Gomez