

Climate Leadership Challenge

Final Update: 1/2/09

Eligibility and Rules

Project Statement

The goal of the Climate Leadership Challenge is to promote innovative, practical solutions to the urgent problem of climate change. Sponsored by the generous funding from the Global Stewards Society (John F. & Mary Cooper; Gary & Ellora Cooper; John & Mary K. Noreika; Peter Vogel, Vogel Brothers Building Company; and David Beck-Engel, J.H. Findorff & Son), the CLC is coordinated by the Center for Sustainability and the Global Environment (SAGE), part of the Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies, to promote campus-wide engagement in global environmental challenges. To submit to the CLC, student teams must create a professional, 20-page project plan, with optional supplementary material (details described below). Projects will generally fall into the category of product, policy, or program, and must either address climate change mitigation or adaptation. Solutions appropriate to Wisconsin, the U.S., or the world are appropriate, and submissions should clarify the scale(s) at which the proposed solution is expected to have an impact. Additional information is provided on the CLC Mission Document and on the CLC website: www.sage.wisc.edu/clc.

Contestant Eligibility and Team Structure

The CLC is a university-wide competition open to all undergraduate, graduate, special, and professional UW-Madison students*. All team members must be enrolled as students during the Spring 2009 semester. In order to be considered, contestants or teams must meet all deadlines as set by the CLC committee. For any questions on eligibility or deadlines, contact Josh Ghena (ghena@wisc.edu).

Teams can range from 1-4 members. We recommend teams reflect an inter-disciplinary approach to capitalize on the wide variety of skill sets within the UW-Madison student body. Teams are encouraged to use University faculty members for guidance, and to connect with private industries relevant to the proposed project, but only students can participate as members of the team. An individual may compete on more than one team, and teams may submit up to three entries. It is expected that the final project will be an original work created by the team. Teams may change membership up until the submission deadline as long as the team continues to meet eligibility requirements.

Awards

The competition has three distinct categories: projects must be focused at the state level (Wisconsin specific), the national level, or the international level. We expect a total of four awards will be given away. One for each first place winner in the three categories and the fourth prize will be given to the project deemed to be the best overall entry. The award for the best overall project will receive \$20,000. Up to \$10,000 will be awarded as the first place in each category (specific prize awards will depend on the quality and number of submissions). Depending on the number of submissions, awards may be given in additional categories (e.g. Best Undergraduate Team, Most Innovative, etc.). All prize money will be distributed evenly among team members per project submittal, with no exceptions. Any decisions made by the teams following receiving the money will be on their own terms.

* Students funded through the Center for Sustainability and the Global Environment (SAGE) are ineligible to compete.

Registration

There is no pre-registration deadline. Any project submitted by April 10th at 5:00 pm will be eligible. Entries may either be submitted online via email to sageclc@gmail.com or in hard copy to the mailbox of project coordinator Josh Ghena, room 144 of the Enzyme Institute. Submissions will be reviewed and final decisions made by the CLC Expert Advisory Panel to determine which projects will advance to the final round of presentations. Final decisions will be made based on presentations at the Nelson Earth Day conference at the Monona Terrace on April 22nd. Final presentations will consist of a professionally organized booth explaining the project.

Any decision made by the CLC advisory panel regarding eligibility, due to any concern, is final.

Judge Panel

The CLC Expert Judge Panel consists of blue ribbon experts and innovators in the field of sustainability. Judges range from academia, business, NGOs, and government. All decisions made by the panel are final and not subject to change.

Burrill Competition

The Burrill Competition is the annual entrepreneurial competition organized by the University of Wisconsin--Madison Business School. To be considered for the Burrill, teams must submit a comprehensive business plan. In an effort to encourage sustainable entrepreneurship, the CLC will accept the required Burrill business plan as meeting our application requirements. However, the proposed business plan must be applicable to the issue of climate change (either mitigation or adaptation). Any team submitting to both the CLC and the Burrill must clearly state so in their project introduction.

Judging Criteria

A Team's project will be judged on the following criteria – 20 pages total, including figures and tables. References are not counted against the 20-page limit.

- Required CLC Cover Form (1 page, downloadable from CLC website)
- Define Project Concept (4-5 pages)
 - Describe the specific aspect of the climate change problem that your solution addresses. This should take on the role of an executive summary.
 - Clearly describe your basic idea.
 - Clarify whether your solution may be described as a policy, program, or product
 - Solutions to climate change focus on either mitigation or adaptation. What direction has your team taken? Take time to explain how your project mitigates climate change or offers a solution for adaptation. All answers should demonstrate a competent understanding of mitigation and adaptation.
- Background review (2-3 pages)
 - To fully understand your project, it will be important to have background knowledge on the chosen climate change problem. In doing this, identify and discuss contemporary research being done that is relevant to your project.
 - Describe past work related to your solution (cite specific projects, studies, policy initiatives, etc.)
 - Explain how the team's project is new and unique. Detail what innovative approaches the team has taken to address the chosen climate change issue.
- Environmental and social impact (4-5 pages)

- Describe how your project helps solve the identified climate change issue. Answers should speak to the specifics of how their project creates positive environmental and social change.
- Each project will have different environmental and social impacts. Describe how your team is measuring the idea's impact. What is your definition of project success and how will it be measured?
- Although the project is (most likely) not currently being implemented it is important to display what impact your team expects to make. As such, please provide illustrative examples that demonstrate how your team's project will have a significant impact on people's lives.
- Financial feasibility (3-4 pages)
 - If they are to be implemented, environmentally sustainable ideas need to be financial sustainable as well. What type of financial investment is necessary for the project to be successful?
 - What types of funding sources are available for the project? What steps would be necessary for the project to procure this funding?
 - How do you see your solution becoming a "real-world" option? As a start-up company? Offer a direction for corporate development? Government sponsorship? philanthropic support? Etc.
 - In explaining the project, define what market the project is entering. Why has the team chosen this market, and is there existing competition? If so, who and what is the team's plan to deal with this issue?
- Distribution (2 pages)
 - What target audience is the project geared toward and what makes the project so compelling for this group of people?
 - Once this target audience is identified, what is the team's plan to reach them?
- Project Timeline (2-3 pages)
 - For the project to come to life what essential steps need to occur? After you have identified these steps put together a timeline that defines what the crucial events are and how the team will go about implementing them.
 - Every great idea has potential risks. What are the major roadblocks that your team foresees for this project?
 - After you have defined the likely risks to development, create a contingency plan that lays out how the project is planning on overcoming them.
- Team Biography
 - For the panel to have a good understanding of the team, please create a ½ page bio on each team member. This should describe what talents each individual brings to the team and what role they played in the project creation. When combined, bios should not amount to more than two pages.
 - Major external influences: Please cite any individuals not on the team who have significantly influenced your team's projects, and note briefly each person's influence. This should include any business contacts, faculty advisors, family members, interviews with experts, etc.
- References
 - Please format citations in one of the styles noted on the CLC website.
- Optional
 - Teams may submit optional supplementary if it significantly affects the concept of their CLC submission. Formats of this material may include:
 - YouTube video of 4:00 minutes or less
 - A website
 - A physical model with dimensions not exceed 3' in any dimension

- A portfolio of up to 10 images

Final Event

All submissions are final after 5:00 pm on April 10th. Properly submitted projects will go through an initial round of screening immediately after the submission deadline. All teams will be notified of the CLC's first round decision by April 13th. Projects selected to go on to the final will have ten days to prepare a professionally done display booth. Judging will take place at the Monona Terrace on April 22nd. In order to be eligible all team members must be present. Booth criteria, judging rubric, program itinerary, and resources to aid booth preparation will be made available to each of the remaining teams ten days prior to the competition.

Disclosure

Once materials are submitted, the University of Wisconsin reserves the right to publish information about the contestants' work in university publications and to release information to the news media. Any concern about copyright or patenting should be addressed by the team prior to the final presentation.

Scoring Rubric

Project Criteria	What A Judges Considers	"A good answer"
Project concept	How does the overall concept address the CLC's mission?	The team offers an innovative solution to either climate change mitigation or adaptation in the form of a product, policy, or program.
Well defined scope to meet existing market need	What niche does the proposed innovation fill? What will it be competing against and how will it be relevant?	The climate challenge that is addressed affects human, social, built, and environmental systems on multiple scales. The product, policy, or program offers a clear and rational way to address a significant aspect of this climate problem.
Environmental impact	Does the product, policy, or project offer a measurable benefit to state, national, or international climate management goals?	Your proposal addresses the problem in a innovative and environmentally sustainable way.
Financial and social aspects	Is it financially feasible to bring your idea to life? Does the product, policy, or program enhance social equity?	Numbers reflect that the project is financially viable from an investment perspective. The idea successfully improves the social equity associated with the climate problem.
Project Timeline	Does the plan layout a staging for the necessary details to bring about project creation?	The timeline defines the key events and offers a clear method for project creation.
Distribution	Who is the project geared toward? Does this relationship make sense?	The project plan demonstrates a clear relationship between the project and its intended market.
The team's overall work and final product	Is the final product professional? Has adequate time been given to all the details of the project creation?	Your entry is polished and shows the product in a professional light.