

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 stage of what is normally a three-stage process in this year's competition. Each stage consists of a "pitch," or short presentation, with the first pitch being held virtually **Tuesday, November 15th starting at 6:30pm**. Team registration forms will be due Friday, November 10th. Updates and forms can be found at <https://bme.unc.edu/i4/>.

The i4 competition – Pitch 1

As in previous years, the emphasis of the first pitch is to focus on identifying 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 will 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.

You will have a very short time to present your idea (e.g., 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 clinical 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? What is the benefit in solving it? (Better outcomes, lower costs, provider satisfaction?)
 - d. What additional downstream work do you still need to do to define the problem better?
2. What is your potential solution? (Optional)
 - a. If you happen to 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?
 - b. Note: This step is truly optional. The fundamentally most important thing at this stage is to be working towards having found a really motivating and important unmet clinical need.
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 better defining this need or

perhaps drafting a potential solution? If doing either of these requires resources that cost money (e.g., you need to pay for information or surveys), please create a budget and request funding for this.

A couple of important things to note:

- 1) The competition is open to BME undergraduates at any stage and teams of multiple years are encouraged. Individuals are also able to compete, so don't hesitate even if you don't have a larger team.
- 2) 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! If not, that is OK too. In this case, just work on being able to convince people that you have really found an unmet need that is really worth solving and provide a plan for how you think you may approach trying to figure out a solution. In general, the more specifics you can provide, the more helpful the feedback you can get from the judges.

\$\$\$ is available to be awarded to more than one team.

The takeaway message is this: **start thinking about, and looking around for, unmet clinical needs.** If you think you or your team have identified a potential problem or unmet clinical need that people will care about, plan on **registering for the first i4 pitch by November 10th.** 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.

Regularly visit <https://bme.unc.edu/i4/> for updates.

Take care and hope to see you all soon!

Best,
Shawn Gomez