

WEGE PRIZE 2018

DESIGN BRIEF

Wege Prize, organized by Kendall College of Art and Design's Wege Center for Sustainable Design with support from the Wege Foundation, is an international student design competition that gives teams of five the chance to collaborate across institutional, disciplinary, and cultural boundaries, use design thinking principles, and contend for over \$30,000 in total cash prizes, all while helping to **show the world what the future of problem solving looks like.**

WANT TO BUILD A BETTER FUTURE?

YOU'RE NOT ALONE. LET'S COLLABORATE TO REDESIGN THE WAY ECONOMIES WORK

THE BIG QUESTION: HOW CAN WE CREATE A CIRCULAR ECONOMY?

Our current *linear economic system*, in which we "take, make, and dispose," relies on large quantities of easily accessible resources and energy, and as such is unfit for the reality in which it operates. Working towards efficiency—a reduction of resources and fossil energy consumed per unit of manufacturing output—will not alter the finite nature of these resources, but rather can only delay their inevitable extinction. Therefore, *a change of the entire operating system seems necessary.*

One potential new system is a *circular economy*. A circular economy is one that is restorative by design, and which aims to keep products, components and materials at their highest utility and value, at all times.

Imagine if we could design objects so that every material or component in them could be put to productive use at the end of that object's useful life. By reusing materials at high quality instead of extracting new ones, we can save money and energy while having a positive impact on the natural environment.

Now imagine if we designed businesses or services that mimicked how living systems operated, so that they add value to the whole system. Living systems are generous; they give back more than they take out, operating on the basis of abundance.

Finally, imagine if the whole economic system was designed to facilitate these ideas; and imagine if it was all powered by clean, renewable energy. *This is the essence of a circular economy.*

THE CHALLENGE

Wege Prize teams must leverage their transdisciplinary makeup to collaboratively design and propose a solution to a wicked problem of their choosing that can, in turn, help solve the wicked problem of transitioning from a linear economic model to a circular economic model. Possible solutions include, but are not limited to:

- Products
- Services
- Businesses or non-profit organizations

Remember, in the words of architect Bill McDonough, "**Doing less bad is not the same as doing more good.**" Wege Prize teams work together to rethink and redesign the way our economy works by creating regenerative solutions that have a widespread and lasting positive impact.

The judges are looking for solutions that address the shortcomings of a linear economic model on a systemic level. The most successful solutions will:

- **Think in systems** by demonstrating an understanding of how parts influence one another within a whole, as well as the relationship of the whole to the parts.
- **Consider the economics and viability** of the solution within natural, social, and financial systems.
- **Preserve and enhance natural capital** by controlling finite resource stocks and balancing renewable resource flows.
- **Optimize resource yields** by circulating products, components, and materials at their highest utility at all times in both technical and biological cycles.
- **Foster system effectiveness** by designing out waste and negative externalities such as pollution, toxicity, and climate change.

WHAT IS A WICKED PROBLEM? A wicked problem doesn't imply a sense of 'evil', but rather denotes a problem that is considerably resistant to resolution. Efforts to grapple with one aspect of a wicked problem often reveal or create other obstacles that must be considered and overcome.

THE PROCESS

PHASE I – TEAM APPLICATION AND RESEARCH PLAN *DUE NOV. 15, 2017*

Your first challenge is to **investigate**, **incubate**, and **communicate**. Introduce your team, tell us where your interests lie, and build a framework of research that will ultimately help you develop your solution. *You do not need to identify and defend a specific solution at this point.* Keep your writing concise and focused on the big picture, and don't worry about being bold with your intentions—we expect your idea to change and grow.

TEAM APPLICATION (500-1000 WORDS) SHOULD ADDRESS:

- Why is your team interested in participating in Wege Prize 2018?
- How and why did you choose your team members?
- How will your transdisciplinary makeup enable you to succeed?
- What steps has your team taken to understand the basics of the circular economy?
- What do you find most exciting/inspiring about the circular economy and the possibilities it creates?

RESEARCH PLAN (500-1000 WORDS) SHOULD ADDRESS:

- What problem or opportunity are you interested in addressing?
- How could addressing the problem or opportunity support the development of a circular economy?
- What basic research have you done to understand the human, technological, and ecological factors involved in your approach?
- How do you plan to involve mentors and/or subject matter experts in your design process?
- What are your next steps?

FEEDBACK LOOP:

Teams that are cleared to move on to Phase II will receive feedback from the judges by Nov. 30, 2017.

PHASE II – PROJECT SUMMARY 1ST DRAFT* *DUE JAN. 15, 2018*

Your next challenge is to respond to the judges' feedback by beginning to develop your research plan into a concrete solution. You'll communicate this solution through an informative and visually compelling document composed of the following elements:

PART ONE – COLLABORATION ANALYSIS/SOLUTION SUMMARY

Describe the nature of your team's collaborative work to this point and develop a succinct (2-3 sentence) description of your solution.

PART TWO – CONTEXT

Provide information and insight to help the judges understand the conditions surrounding the wicked problem you're working to solve.

PART THREE – SOLUTION OVERVIEW

Describe the solution you are proposing in detail and illustrate how it will work in a real-world context.

PART FOUR – BARRIER ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Acknowledge the challenges preventing your solution from succeeding and outline a plan to address them.

PART FIVE – RESOURCE LIST

Provide a list of resources (with links included) summarizing the research that informed your project summary.

**Your Project Summary 1st Draft should be a PDF document composed of no more than 6 pages, sized 8.5" x 11" (25.9cm x 27.94cm). For complete details on what should be included in your Project Summary 1st Draft and how it should be designed, visit wegeprize.org/projectsummary.*

FEEDBACK LOOP:

Teams that are cleared to move on to Phase III will receive feedback from the judges by Feb. 1, 2018

PHASE III – PROJECT SUMMARY 2ND DRAFT* *DUE MAR. 15, 2018*

Your next challenge is twofold: you must first respond to the judges' feedback by revising and refining all elements of the Project Summary 1st Draft you submitted in Phase II. You must then develop the additional elements below into your document, supporting your conclusions with as much hard data as possible.

DETAILED MATERIAL ANALYSIS

Detail the resources/materials—technological, biological, and/or capital—incorporated into your solutions, provide justification for their use, and illustrate their alignment with the circular economy.

DETAILED ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

Detail the business model that will ensure your solution's economic viability, identify the strengths and weaknesses of your business model, and identify risks you may face and how you plan to address them.

PROJECT SUMMARY 2ND DRAFTS SHOULD BE ORGANIZED AS FOLLOWS:

- **PART ONE – REVISED** Collaboration Analysis/Solution Summary
- **PART TWO – REVISED** Context
- **PART THREE – REVISED** Solution Overview
- **PART FOUR – NEW!** Detailed Material Analysis
- **PART FIVE – NEW!** Detailed Economic Analysis
- **PART SIX – REVISED** Barrier Acknowledgment
- **PART SEVEN – REVISED** Resource List

**Your Project Summary 2nd Draft should be a PDF document composed of no more than 8 pages, sized 8.5" x 11" (25.9cm x 27.94cm). For complete details on what should be included in your Project Summary 2nd Draft and how it should be designed, visit wegeprize.org/projectsummary.*

FEEDBACK LOOP:

Teams that are cleared to move on to Phase IV will receive feedback from the judges by Apr. 2, 2018.

PHASE IV – PROJECT SUMMARY FINAL DRAFT/FINAL PRESENTATION MATERIALS *DUE MAY 13, 2018*

PROJECT SUMMARY FINAL DRAFT*

Your Project Summary Final Draft must respond to the judges' feedback by revising and refining all elements of the Project Summary 2nd Draft you submitted in Phase III.

**Your Project Summary Final Draft should be organized in the exact same way as the 2nd Draft.*

FINAL PRESENTATION

Finalist teams will select **one member** to present and defend the team's solution in its entirety on stage in front of the judges and live/online audiences at the 2018 Wege Prize Awards on Friday, May 18, 2018. Teams may present their solution however they wish, but are encouraged to start with a slide show presentation as a base and build from there. Each presenter will be allotted ten minutes on stage, followed by a ten-minute Q+A session with the judges.

PROJECT FINAL DRAFTS AND FINAL PRESENTATIONS WILL BE JUDGED ON THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:

A. DEPTH OF RESEARCH

- Have you clearly identified the problem you're trying to solve?
- To what depth have you studied and analyzed the problem?
- Have you researched existing solutions?
- Have you consulted experts to refine your solution?

B. PRESENTATION

- Is your presentation organized, and does it deliver a clear message?
- Have you gotten creative and thought outside the box when developing your presentation?
- Can you provide immediate and thoughtful answers to the judges' questions?

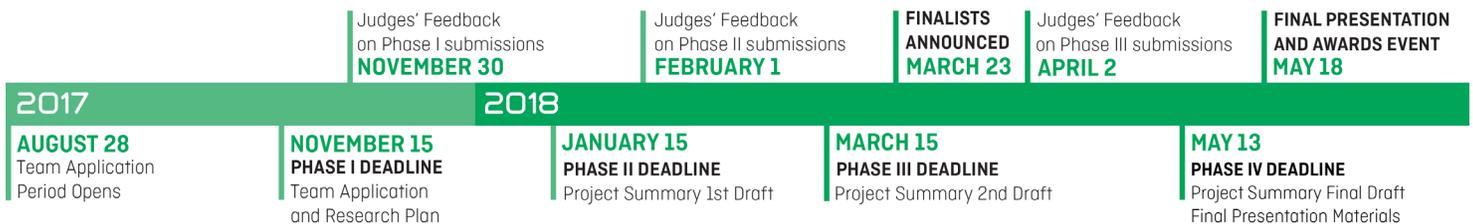
C. INNOVATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

- Does the solution help accelerate us into a circular economy?
- Is your solution technologically feasible?
- Is your solution economically/financially feasible?
- Is there proven customer need for your solution?
- Is there sufficient motivation for people to use your solution?
- What system conditions need to exist to make your solution possible?
- If your solution builds on an existing project or research you're already involved in, have you built upon it?

D. COLLABORATION

- Have you built a strong and balanced transdisciplinary team?
- Have you engaged all of your teammates in the development of your solution?
- Beyond dividing up different tasks, have you worked across disciplinary boundaries and brought your different perspectives together?
- Have you effectively engaged mentors and/or subject matter experts in your design process?

THE TIMELINE



WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO COMPETE?

For complete individual and team participation requirements, visit wegeprize.org/rules

HOW CAN TEAMS APPLY?

For complete application details, visit wegeprize.org/apply



Kendall College of Art and Design
of Ferris State University



KCAD's Wege Center for Sustainable Design's
Wege Prize is supported by The Wege Foundation