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

Over the course of nine months and four distinct phases, Wege Prize teams will grow their ideas from an informal research plan into a fully-developed solution that can be prototyped and tested in the real world. Guided by direct feedback from competition judges, teams will work to rethink and redesign the way economies work by creating regenerative solutions that have a widespread and lasting positive impact.

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.
PHASE I – TEAM APPLICATION AND RESEARCH PLAN  DUE NOV. 18, 2018

Your first challenge is to investigate, incubate, and communicate. Introduce your team, tell us where your interests lie, and develop a research plan 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 significantly over the course of the competition!

TEAM APPLICATION (500-1000 WORDS) SHOULD ADDRESS:

• Why is your team interested in participating in Wege Prize 2019?
• 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 Dec. 2, 2018.

PHASE II – PROJECT SUMMARY 1ST DRAFT* DUE JAN. 20, 2019

Your next challenge is to consider the judges’ feedback as you work to develop your research plan into a concrete circular solution. You’ll communicate your solution through an informative and visually compelling document composed of the following elements:

PART ONE – SOLUTION SUMMARY
Provide a clear and concise (2-3 sentence) summary of the solution your team is proposing.

PART TWO – CONTEXT
Provide information and insight to help the judges understand the conditions—economic, geographic, social, technological, etc.—surrounding the wicked problem you’re proposing to solve.

PART THREE – SOLUTION OVERVIEW
Describe in specific detail how the solution you are proposing will work, explain how it aligns with the principles of the circular economy, and illustrate the feasibility of your business model.

PART FOUR – IMPACT ASSESSMENT
Explain how your solution differs from existing solutions and describe its potential for social/cultural/other impact.

PART FIVE – PROTOTYPING
Detail any steps you’ve taken to begin prototyping your solution and testing it in a real-world context.

PART SIX – BARRIER ACKNOWLEDGMENT
Acknowledge the challenges preventing your solution from succeeding and outline a plan to address them.

*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. 3, 2019.
PHASE III – PROJECT SUMMARY 2ND DRAFT* **DUE MAR. 17, 2019**

Your next challenge is twofold: you must first consider the judges’ feedback as you revise your Project Summary 1st Draft to reflect how your solution has developed from what you submitted in Phase II. You must then expand the Solution Overview portion of your document by creating the additional elements below, supporting your conclusions with as much hard data as possible.

**DETAILED MATERIAL ANALYSIS NEW!**
Detail the resources/materials—technological, biological, and/or capital—incorporated into your solution, provide justification for their use, and illustrate their alignment with the circular economy.

**DETAILED ECONOMIC ANALYSIS NEW!**
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** 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** Impact Assessment
- **PART SEVEN – REVISED** Prototyping
- **PART EIGHT – REVISED** Barrier Acknowledgment

*Your Project Summary 2nd Draft should be a PDF document composed of no more than 8 pages, sized 8.5” x 11” (21.59cm 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 Mar. 31, 2019.

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PHASE IV – PROJECT SUMMARY FINAL DRAFT/FINAL PRESENTATION MATERIALS **DUE MAY 26, 2019**

**PROJECT SUMMARY FINAL DRAFT**
For your Project Summary Final Draft, consider the judges feedback as you update only those aspects of your document that have been developed further since the previous phase.

*Your Project Summary Final Draft must follow the same organization and design guidelines as the 2nd Draft.*

**FINAL PRESENTATION**
Finalist teams must translate their Project Summary Final Draft into a slideshow presentation. Each team 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 2019 Wege Prize Awards on Friday, May 31, 2019. Each team’s presenter will be allotted ten minutes on stage, followed by a ten-minute Q+A session with the judges.

**PROJECT SUMMARY 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, economically, and financially feasible?
• Is your solution socially and culturally appropriate?
• 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, to what extent have you built upon it?
• Have you prototyped your solution?

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AUGUST 27</td>
<td>NOVEMBER 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Application Period Opens</td>
<td>PHASE I DEADLINE</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Team Application and Research Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>JANUARY 20</td>
<td>FEBRUARY 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHASE II DEADLINE</td>
<td>Project Summary 1st Draft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARCH 17</td>
<td>MARCH 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHASE III DEADLINE</td>
<td>Project Summary 2nd Draft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAY 26</td>
<td>MAY 31</td>
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<tr>
<td>PHASE IV DEADLINE</td>
<td>Project Summary Final Draft</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Final Presentation Materials</td>
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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

KCAD
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

Individuals with disabilities who require special accommodations to participate should contact the KCAD President’s office at 616 451-2787 x1150 at least 72 hours in advance. Ferris State University is an equal opportunity institution. For information on the University’s Policy on Non-Discrimination, visit ferris.edu/non-discrimination.