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.
PHASE I – TEAM APPLICATION AND RESEARCH PLAN DUE NOV. 9, 2020

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 2020?
• 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. 22, 2020.

PHASE II – PROJECT SUMMARY 1ST DRAFT* DUE JAN. 10, 2021

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 Jan. 24, 2021.
PHASE III – PROJECT SUMMARY 2ND DRAFT* DUE MAR. 7, 2021

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” (21.6cm 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. 21, 2021.

PHASE IV – FINAL PROJECT SUMMARY/FINAL PRESENTATION MATERIALS DUE MAY 16, 2021

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

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

FINAL PRESENTATION MATERIALS
Finalist teams will select one member to virtually present and defend the team’s solution in its entirety in front of the judges and a global online audience at the 2021 Wege Prize Awards on May 21, 2021. Each team’s presenter will be allotted ten minutes to present, followed by a ten-minute Q&A session with the judges. Finalist teams will present their solution in its entirety by translating their Final Project Summary into a slideshow presentation. Slideshow presentations will also be due on May 16, 2021.

FINAL PROJECT SUMMARIES 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

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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

Kendall College of Art and Design of Ferris State University

Wege Prize is organized by Kendall College of Art and Design of Ferris State University’s Wege Center for Sustainable Design with the support of The Wege Foundation.

Individuals with disabilities who require special accommodations to participate should contact KCAD at 616 451-2787 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.