2024 ILO/SPI Working Group Guidelines for the ERC Students’ **“Perfect Pitch”** Competition

# **Competition goals**

* Stimulate a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship
* Emphasize the value of the Perfect Pitch speech
* Cross-pollinate student entrepreneurial experiences between centers
* Teach students to be concise and persuasive
* Stress importance of oral communication and public speaking
* Stimulate good performance under pressure
* Stimulate students to think about the bigger picture and application areas
* Empower students to lead.

# **Competition framework**

* Each ERC —
  + Offers the Pitch Perfect Competition to all current ERC undergraduate, Masters, PhD students, and Post-Docs as appropriate. Eligible groups are up to ERC discretion.
    - Due to the 2024 ERC Biennial Meeting postponement from March to September, **all students who were enrolled during the internal ERC competition period and won their Center's competition** will be eligible as finalists in the ERC Program-wide competition, even if they have since graduated.
  + Runs its own Perfect Pitch Competition to select ONE contestant to compete in the Finals at the ERC Annual meeting.
  + Submits the name of ONE finalist contestant to compete in the ERC-wide Perfect Pitch contest at the Biennial Meeting. The name is submitted by the ERC to NSF via a Qualtrics survey provided in an email from NSF’s Micaela Teets in advance of the Biennial Meeting. Ms. Teets will then follow up with an email directly to the finalist to request additional information.
  + ERC Perfect Pitch ERC-wide contest rules are:
    - 90-second pitch duration
    - 1 slide used for the pitch
* Finalists from all the centers will compete during ERC Annual Meeting.
* Judges will complete their scoring immediately after each contestant delivers their pitch.
* Judges will convene a process to select the winner during the same day as the contest.
* The winner(s) will be announced during a final plenary session at the Annual Meeting.

# **Judging criteria**

Contestants in the ERC-wide contest will be expected to adhere to the judging criteria outlined below:

* Pitch a problem or opportunity connected with the ERC strategic vision in a clear, compelling manner in 90 seconds
* The pitch will cover the:
  + Problem/Opportunity: What is the real-life problem that the innovation will address?
  + Proposed Solution: How does the proposed approach solve it in a unique way?
  + Impact: What will be the impact of this work if successful?

See 2024 Perfect Pitch Slide Deck.pptx Slides #1-2

* Contestants will be judged on the following:
  + Compelling statement of the problem
  + Proposed solution
  + Broader impact of technology
  + Fit within the ERC mission (for local competitions only)
  + Call to action
    - Ex: request for funding/investment, invitation to further discussion (e.g., next meeting), encouragement of behavioral change, etc.
  + Visual design of slide
  + Poise/style

See 2024 Perfect Pitch Slide Deck.pptx Slide #3

## **Suggested composition of judging team for ERC-wide contest**

* The judging panel should consist of at least three, but no more than 5 individuals with appropriate backgrounds in engineering and/or entrepreneurship.  Ideally, the panel will feature 2-3 venture capitalists, 2-3 engineers from industry, and 1-2 engineers from academia or government.  Whenever possible, the panel should also display gender, ethnicity, language, and racial diversity.

# **Prizes**

1. Trophy goes to the home ERC of the first-place winner, to reside at that institution and be returned to NSF in time for the next ERC biennial meeting.
2. Cash prizes to student winners:
   * $5K for 1st prize
   * $2K for 2nd prize
   * $1K for 3rd prize

**Perfect Pitch registration and housing.**

* The competition is on Monday, September 9 from 1:00–2:45 PM, ET. and the Winner will be announced on Tuesday afternoon during the Award Ceremony which will be on Sept 10, 2024, from 2PM to 3PM. Each Perfect Pitch competitor may register (the registration fee covers the food during the event and it’s optional for the Perfect Pitch students) and reserve a room near or at the Westin Alexandria Old Town in Alexandria, VA. (The ERC lead can do this on their behalf.)

Click the link below to get to the registration page.

<https://ercbiennial.asee.org/registration-2024/>

From the Conference registration page, please click on the **"Click here to register"** for the 2024 NSF ERC Biennial Meeting! link to complete the registration, which is underneath the **CONFERENCE REGISTRATION** heading.

* To reserve your room, click on the "**Click here**" link underneath the "**Housing:**" section.