

NCTC Unmanned Aircraft Systems Business Plan Competition

Northland Community and Technical College will host a Drone Business Plan Competition (BPC) during the Spring Semester of 2022. The competition is the next phase of the National Science Foundation (NSF) Advanced Technological Education (ATE) grant project 1902003 held with Sinclair College (Dayton, OH) and Atlantic Cape Community College (Mays Landing, NJ).

The Northland BPC will follow the proven framework of the Sinclair College Business Plan Competition which was held virtually in Fall 2020. Northland will leverage its extensive UAS network including the NSF ATE funded National Center for Autonomous Technologies (NCAT), and other institutions and experts within Minnesota's two-year technical school ecosystem. The value of the competition is to facilitate entrepreneurship to workforce development for autonomous-literate technicians. Sinclair and Northland believe that technicians' unique skillsets in their respective trades are critical to creating opportunity in game-changing ways across a spectrum of industries. The purpose of the Business Plan Competition is to lower the barriers of entry for these industry experts to start their own companies. By doing so, they can shape their own careers and the future of the industries which they are so passionate about.

The Northland Business Plan Competition applicant teams must meet two minimum criteria. Half of the team must be enrolled in a two-year technical school within the MNSCU system for the Spring Semester of 2022. The business concepts must relate generally to a product, service, or component that is integral to, or notably aligned with the Unmanned Aerial Systems market segment. Northland is actively seeking participation from educators of two-year entrepreneurship tracks. Most semester long 101-level ENTR courses are centered around the creation of a business plan and the pitch, well aligned with the format of this competition. Student groups such as DECA and SIFE are also encouraged to be actively involved. The competition will culminate in a live pitch event, similar to Shark Tank, in front of Minnesota-based professional Venture Capitalists.

Activity	Date / Deadline
Competition Opens	January 10 (First Day of MN STATE Classes)
Elevator Pitch Submission	February 11
Virtual Pitch / Finalist Selection	February 15
NCAT Virtual Instruction	February/March
Finalist BPC Document Submission	March 21 (Monday after Spring Break)
Finalist Pitch Event – Anoka, MN or Virtual	Early April
Finalist Award Event	TBD – After Pitch Event or week of April 24-28

Contestant teams will get valuable mentorship from NCAT and industry professionals throughout the Business Plan Competition. Students will have the opportunity to leverage Northland and NCAT's decades of experience in civilian and military UAS while they develop their vision for their companies.

The winning team will give \$5,000 in support services from both NCAT and Sinclair College. Services include SME guidance on military and civilian government RFPs, personal introductions, and business plan mentorship. Finally, viable companies will get once-in-a-lifetime introductions and connections with a variety of UAS professionals and Venture Capitalists that can inspire, fund, and help the students' venture.