

**UCI** Undergraduate Research  
Opportunities Program

# Fall 2024 Project Pitch Challenge

**Student Presenter Information Guide**

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# What is the Project Pitch Challenge?

The Fall Project Pitch Challenge offers undergraduate students the chance to present a dynamic, three-minute pitch presentation of their research project or creative activity.



**Apply Now**

# Who Can Participate in the Project Pitch Challenge?

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We welcome **all** current UCI undergraduate students who have participated in a faculty-mentored research project or creative activity during the last year.

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## Eligibility & Requirements

- ✓ Currently enrolled as a UCI undergraduate student.
  - ✓ Must be an **individual** presentation with only **one entry per student**.
    - Group presentations are not permitted.
    - Students participating in group projects may submit individual entries.
- 

## Why should I apply?

- This competition gives undergraduates the opportunity to practice articulating the importance of their research to others in a clear, engaging way while competing for one of several gift cards.
  - The top three students will earn gift cards (1st place - \$100, 2nd place - \$50, 3rd place - \$25).
  - **Bonus:** Great experience to add to your resume and LinkedIn!
- 

## What is the timeline?

- **Application Deadline:** 9/16/2024 by 11:59 PM
- **Applicants Notified and Finalists' Applications Returned:** 10/4/2024
- **Workshop Date for Finalists:** 10/8/2024, 3-4 PM, In-Person on campus (Optional, but strongly encouraged)
- **Finalists Deadline:** 10/9/2024 by 11:59 PM
- **Final Round and Awards Ceremony:** Monday, October 14, 5:00 to 7:00 PM, Student Center Doheny Beach A 

**Important: The timeline provided is subject to change, and we reserve the right to adjust it if necessary.**

# Phase I: Preparing Your Application



**Submit your online application materials by Monday,  
September 16, 11:59 PM.**





# How Do I Prepare My Application?

Your online application must include the following:

## 1 Applicant Information

- ☐ Name
- ☐ UCI email address
- ☐ Phone Number
- ☐ School
- ☐ Major(s)

## 2 Project Information

- ☐ Presentation title
- ☐ Pitch Description ([see page 7](#)) 
- ☐ YouTube link to your audition video ([see page 8](#)) 

## 3 Mentor Information

- ☐ Name
- ☐ UCI email
- ☐ School
- ☐ Department
- ☐ Confirmation mentor has reviewed applicants' presentation and supporting materials
- ☐ **Optional:** Additional mentor(s) information

## 4 Acknowledgement

- ☐ Acknowledge you have read this entire guide.



**Submit your online application materials by Monday, September 16, 11:59 PM.**



If you are selected as a finalist for the Fall 2024 Project Pitch challenge, your pitch description and audition video will be posted on our online program for public viewing.

# Pitch Description Overview

## What is a pitch description?

A pitch description is a single, well-developed paragraph of **no more than 250 words**. It is a concise and complete summary of your presentation and your entire project. It highlights major points of the content and explains why your work is important, what your purpose was, how you went about the project, what you learned, and why it matters. **It must be understandable to a general audience** and does not include any charts, tables, figures, citations, or other supporting information.

## What should I Include in my pitch description?

- 1 Begin with your problem, purpose, or context of your study.**  
Give your reader a way to understand why you undertook your project. Providing them with a problem you hope to address, the purpose behind your project, or the context for the work you're doing is crucial.
- 2 Establish the methods, process, or theoretical approach of your project.**  
A brief overview of your methods or theoretical approach gives your audience an understanding of how your project works. What procedures or steps did you follow to complete this project? Keep in mind that this will look drastically different depending on the field that you and your project are a part of.
- 3 Give an overview of the results of your project.**  
Briefly describe the major takeaways of your results.
- 4 Describe the implications of your results.**  
Why should the audience care about your project and how have you grown through your experience?






Need help brainstorming or editing your pitch description? **Book an appointment with the UCI Writing Center.**



# Audition Video Overview


## What should I keep in mind as I create my video?

- ✓ You may create your video in any format you choose (e.g., Zoom recording, Video recording, etc.) and it must be 3 minutes long.
- ✓ Your audition video should also be supported with slides ([see page 10](#)). 
- ✓ Organize your presentation well and use engaging language and visuals ([see page 11](#)). 
- ✓ Deliver your presentation confidently with good eye contact and body language ([see page 12](#)). 
- ✓ Use impactful visuals that are easy to understand.



**Stay within the time limit and use your time effectively. All audition videos must be three minutes in length; audition videos shorter than 2:30 or longer than 3:30 will be disqualified.**

## What content should I include in my audition video?

- ✓ Clearly explain why you conducted your project.
- ✓ Briefly describe your project and its results.
- ✓ Discuss the implications of the results, why the audience should care about them, and how you have grown through the experience.
- ★ Review how your audition video will be judged ([see page 9](#)). 

## I finished recording my audition video, what's next?

- 1 Upload your audition video to your personal YouTube Channel.**  
Your video visibility must be public or unlisted for it to be reviewed.
- 2 Paste your audition video link in your online application.**

Project Pitch Challenge YouTube Recording Link

This is a screenshot of the online application. YouTube link should be added in the field above.



**Check out the audition videos of our 2023 Fall Project Pitch Challenge finalists.  
Need help uploading a video to YouTube? Review the Video Upload Instructions.**





# How Will My Audition Video and Presentation Be Judged?

Audition videos and presentations will be judged on six different areas.

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## Wow Factor

- Was the presentation memorable and inspiring?
- Was the project's impact clear?

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## Articulation of Research

- Was the purpose, problem, or focus of the project/activity clear and easily understood?
- Did the presenter provide strong and direct context, reasoning, and evidence related to their chosen topic?

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## Scholarly Comprehension

- Did the presenter demonstrate a strong understanding of their topic and field?

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## Organization and Synergy

- Did the speaker and visual aids support each other in a balanced presentation that was impactful, logical, and cohesive?
- Was the language appropriate for a general audience, avoiding unnecessary/unexplained technical jargon?

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## Quality of Delivery

- Was the presentation compelling, concise, and of excellent quality?
- Did the presenter have excellent eye contact, appropriate volume, and effective body language?

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## Visual Presentation

- Were the charts, graphics, and visuals impactful, helpful, and self-explanatory?
- Were the visual aids excellently balanced between necessary text, white space, guiding charts, and pictures?

# Formatting Your Presentation Slides

Use the information below to help you format your presentation slides.

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## Your slides must include the following:

- ✓ Title Slide
  - Includes your name and the title of the presentation.
- ✓ Original work generated by the student or work that is appropriately cited.

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## The following is not permitted on your slides:


- ✓ Embedding of audio or video clips.
- ✓ No poems, raps, or songs, except for possible short examples of an original artistic work.
  - These examples cannot take up more than one of the three minutes.

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## Formatting Tips:

- ✓ **Design slides to introduce important information.** Consider doing a presentation without slides. Then consider which points you cannot make without them. Create only those that are necessary to improve your communication with the judges and your audience.
- ✓ **Use minimal text.** Use bullet points, not complete sentences.
- ✓ **Use a large font.** As a general rule, avoid text smaller than 24-point type.
- ✓ **Use a clean typeface.** Sans serif typefaces, such as Arial or Calibri, are generally easier to read on a screen than serif typefaces, such as Times New Roman.
- ✓ **Use contrasting colors.** Use dark text on a light background or light text on a dark background. Avoid red/green combinations, as this is the most common form of human color blindness.
- ✓ **Use special effects sparingly.** Using animations, cool transition effects, sounds, and other special effects is an effective way to make sure the audience notices your slides, but use them only when necessary to make a point.



You may use any program (Google Slides, Canva, etc.) for the slides you use in your audition video. Please note that if you are selected as a finalist, you will be required to submit your slides as a Microsoft PowerPoint link ([see page 16](#)). 

# How to Build an Effective and Organized Presentation

Use the information below to help guide you on your presentation.

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## **Know your audience.**

Your presentation is intended for a general audience who is likely unfamiliar with your field of work. Keep this in mind as you build your presentation.

## **Be simple.**

Clearly establish a single focus for your presentation and eliminate anything that doesn't directly support that focus.

## **Organize your thoughts.**

Start with an outline and develop good transitions between sections. Emphasize the real-world significance of your research.

## **Have a strong opening.**

Why should the audience listen to you? One good way to get their attention is to start with a question, whether or not you expect an answer.

## **Define terms early.**

If you are using terms or acronyms that may be new to the audience, introduce them early in your presentation.

## **Finish with a bang!**

Find one or two sentences that sum up the importance of your project/activity. How is the world better because of what you have done, and what impact has it had on you?

## **Time yourself.**

Ensure that your presentation meets specified time limits.

## **Practice, practice, practice.**

The more you practice your presentation, the more comfortable you will be in front of an audience. Record yourself and watch and listen to it critically. Make it better and do it again.



**Need more tips on how to effectively present a compelling pitch? Watch [this video made by Ryan Foland, Director of the UCI ANTreprenur Center.](#)**



# Presentation Delivery and Engagement

Use the information below to help you connect with the audience and make the presentation more engaging.

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## **Be excited.**

If you're excited, your audience will be as well.

## **Speak with confidence.**

You are the authority on your topic so be confident, but do not pretend to know everything.

## **Make eye contact with the audience.**

Your purpose is to communicate with your audience, and people listen more if they feel you are talking directly to them.

## **Engage your audience.**

Consider how to consistently maintain your audience's interest. For example, asking occasional rhetorical questions engages their minds in considering their possible answers to the questions.

## **Pause.**

Pauses add audible structure to your presentation. They emphasize important information, make transitions obvious, and give the audience time to catch up between points.

## **Acknowledge the people who supported your research.**

Be sure to thank the people who made your research possible, including your mentor, research team, collaborators, and other sources of funding and support.



**Please be aware that acknowledgements will be timed and included as part of your 3-minute pitch. This means that lengthy acknowledgements can reduce the time available for your main presentation content. Plan accordingly to stay within the time limit.**

## Phase II: Next Steps for Project Pitch Challenge Finalists

All applicants will be notified on **10/4/2024** as to whether or not they are selected as a Project Pitch Finalist. Phase II of this guide only applies to Finalists.



**Finalists, resubmit your online application materials by  
Wednesday, October 9, 11:59 PM.**



# Next Steps for Finalists

## I was selected as a finalist, what do I do next?




If you are selected as a finalist, there are several steps that will take place.

### 1 Return of your online application.

On October 4, UROP will return the online application you submitted. You will receive an email indicating that your online application has been returned to you for revisions. Returning your application will allow you to update information you originally added as well as allow you to upload new information we will be requesting from you.

### 2 Updating and resubmitting your online application.

The following must be submitted by Wednesday, October 9, 11:59 PM:




- ☐ Confirmation of your participation in the final round.
- ☐ Presentation profile image ([see page 15](#)). 
- ☐ Short presentation description ([see page 15](#)). 
- ☐ Link to your Microsoft PowerPoint presentation ([see page 16](#)). 
  - You will not be uploading a file attachment.
- ☐ **Optional:** Update audition video link, presenter/mentor information, presentation title, or pitch description.



**Resubmit your online application materials by Wednesday, October 9, 11:59 PM.**

### 3 Prepare and practice your final presentation.

After you resubmit your application, we invite you to do the following:

- ☐ **Optional:** Register and attend the Pitch Presentation Workshop ([see page 18](#)). 
- ☐ Invite your family and friends to the final round ([see page 19](#)). 
- ☐ Modify your slides, if needed.
  - Your Microsoft PowerPoint link will allow you to make edits to your slides even after you submit your Phase II materials. You may continue making changes until 11:59 PM on Sunday, October 13. Changes made after that time will not appear in the slides presented with your in-person presentation.
- ☐ Practice your 3-minute pitch and refer to the scoring rubric ([see page 9](#)). 

# Building Your Presenter Profile

You are required to **update** your original online application with the following information which will shape your presenter profile tile on our UROP website:

## 1 Presentation Profile Image

The image you upload may be an image of yourself or an image that represents your project.

- ☐ Upload as JPG or PNG Format
- ☐ Format image in a 16:9 ratio
- ☐ 10MB in size or smaller

## 2 Short Presentation Description


- ☐ Max 140 characters

### Presenter Profile Example:

**Presentation Profile Image** →

**Presentation Title** →

**Presentation Description (140 characters)** →



**The Life and Times of a Research-Loving Anteater**

This study explores the research contributions of the Anteater community and its effects on Irvine's Ant Population.

**Name:** Peter the Anteater




Need an example of what the presenter profile will look like? [View the profiles of our 2023 Fall Project Pitch Challenge finalists.](#)



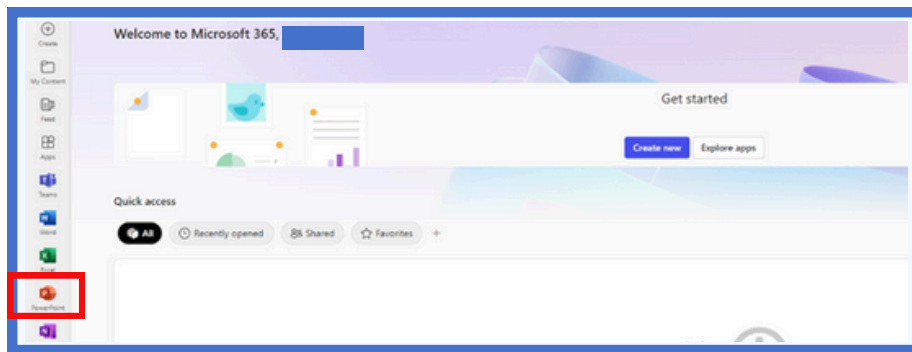
# Creating a Microsoft PowerPoint Shared Link

## Final Presentations

All final presentations must be submitted as a **Microsoft PowerPoint link** (no Canva, Google Slides, or other presentation formats). Follow the steps below to learn how to create a shared link. A Microsoft 365 account is required. Visit [UCI OIT's webpage](#)  for instructions on how to access your free account.

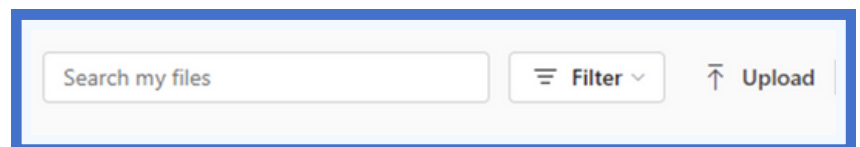
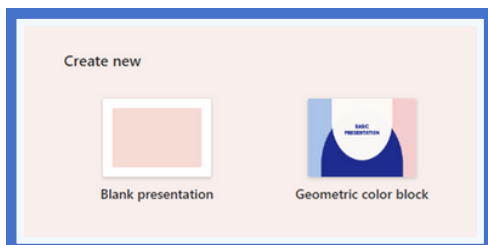
### Step 1:

Log in to your Microsoft 365 account. Select the Microsoft PowerPoint icon and you will be directed to the Microsoft PowerPoint dashboard.



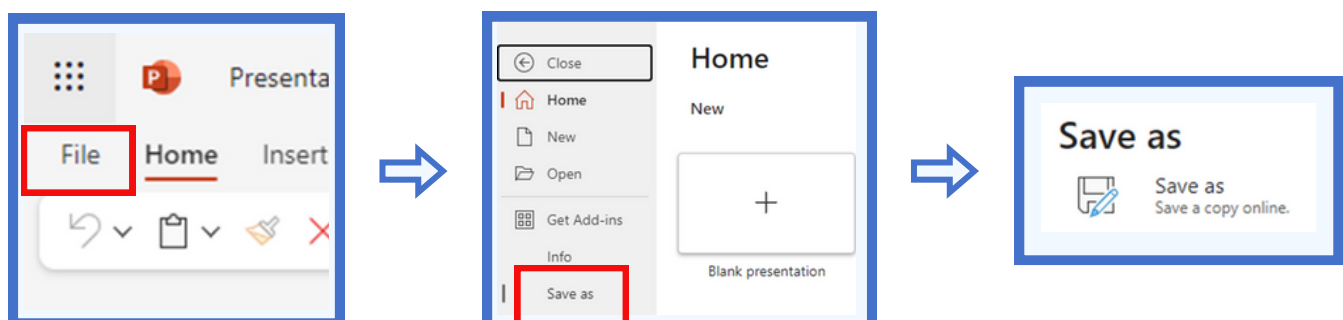
### Step 2:

Create a new blank presentation **or** upload a PPT file you created from another program (e.g. Canva and Google Slides).



### Step 3:

Open your PowerPoint file and click "File," "Save As," then "Save a copy online."

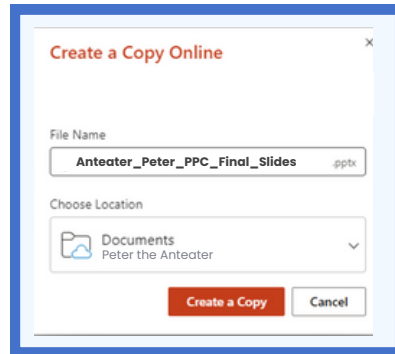




## Creating a Microsoft PowerPoint Shared Link (Continued)

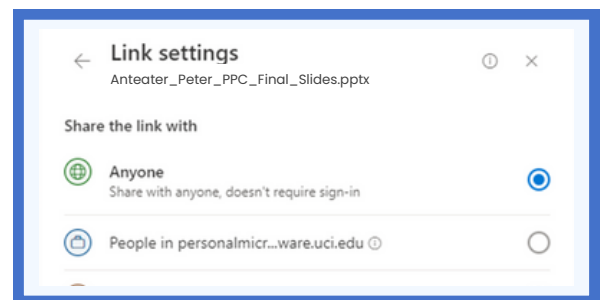
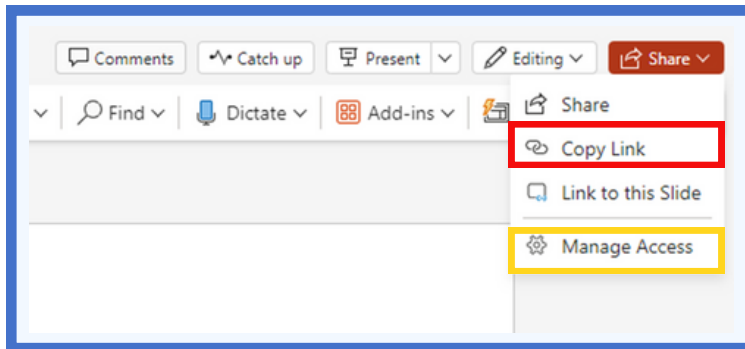
### Step 4:

Name your file with the following format: **lastname\_firstname\_PPC\_Final\_Slides**



### Step 5:

Copy your presentation link. Ensure your link setting is adjusted to “Anyone” by selecting “Manage Access.”



### Step 6:

Add your presentation link to your online application.

**Project Pitch Challenge PowerPoint Presentation Link**

This is a screenshot of the online application. Presentation link should be added in the field above.

# Pitch Presentation Workshop

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It's time for you to prepare your final pitch and presentation. UROP invites and highly encourages finalists to attend the Pitch Presentation Workshop.

## What is the Pitch Presentation Workshop?

The Pitch Presentation Workshop is invite-only and is limited to the 2024 Project Pitch finalists. Finalists will receive an email from UROP with the link to register.

This workshop will allow you to hone your presentation skills and pitch content before the final round. You will have the opportunity to practice your pitch and get feedback in a low-stress environment. A final version of your pitch is not required to participate.

## What is the event information?

You must register for the Pitch Presentation Workshop if you are interested in attending.

- **Workshop Date:** Tue 10/8/2024 3:00 PM – 4:00 PM
- **Format:** In-Person
- **Location:** TBA to finalists



# UCI Community, Friends, and Family: You're Invited to the Fall 2024 Project Pitch Challenge!

## What is the Project Pitch Challenge?

- The Fall Project Pitch Challenge offers undergraduate students the chance to present a dynamic, three-minute pitch presentation of their research project or creative activity.

## What are the event details?

- Final Round and Awards Ceremony: Monday, October 14, 5:00 to 7:00 PM, Student Center Doheny Beach A. All presenters and guests should plan to stay the entire time.

## Do I need to register to attend?

- Yes, space is limited! All Guests should register to attend using [this link](https://forms.gle/HpKR94E17EweUJNh6) to secure their spot.



<https://forms.gle/HpKR94E17EweUJNh6>



# Resources

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We've compiled a list of resources that are meant to support your experience with the 2024 Fall Project Pitch Challenge. Happy clicking!

## UROP Resources

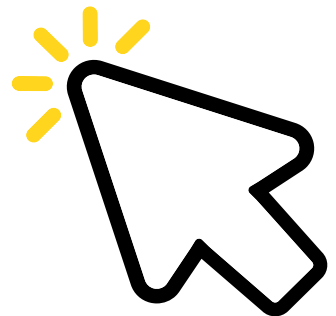
- [Project Pitch Challenge Application](#)
- [2023 Fall Project Pitch Challenge Finalists](#)
- [YouTube Video Upload Instructions](#)

## UCI Resources

- [UCI Writing Center](#)
- [Elevator Pitch Guide by Division of Career Pathways](#)
- [Elevator Pitch Video by Division of Career Pathways](#)
- [Installing Microsoft Office for UCI students](#)
- [ANTrepreneur Center Pitch Training Video](#)
- [Microsoft Office 365 - Personal Use for Students](#)

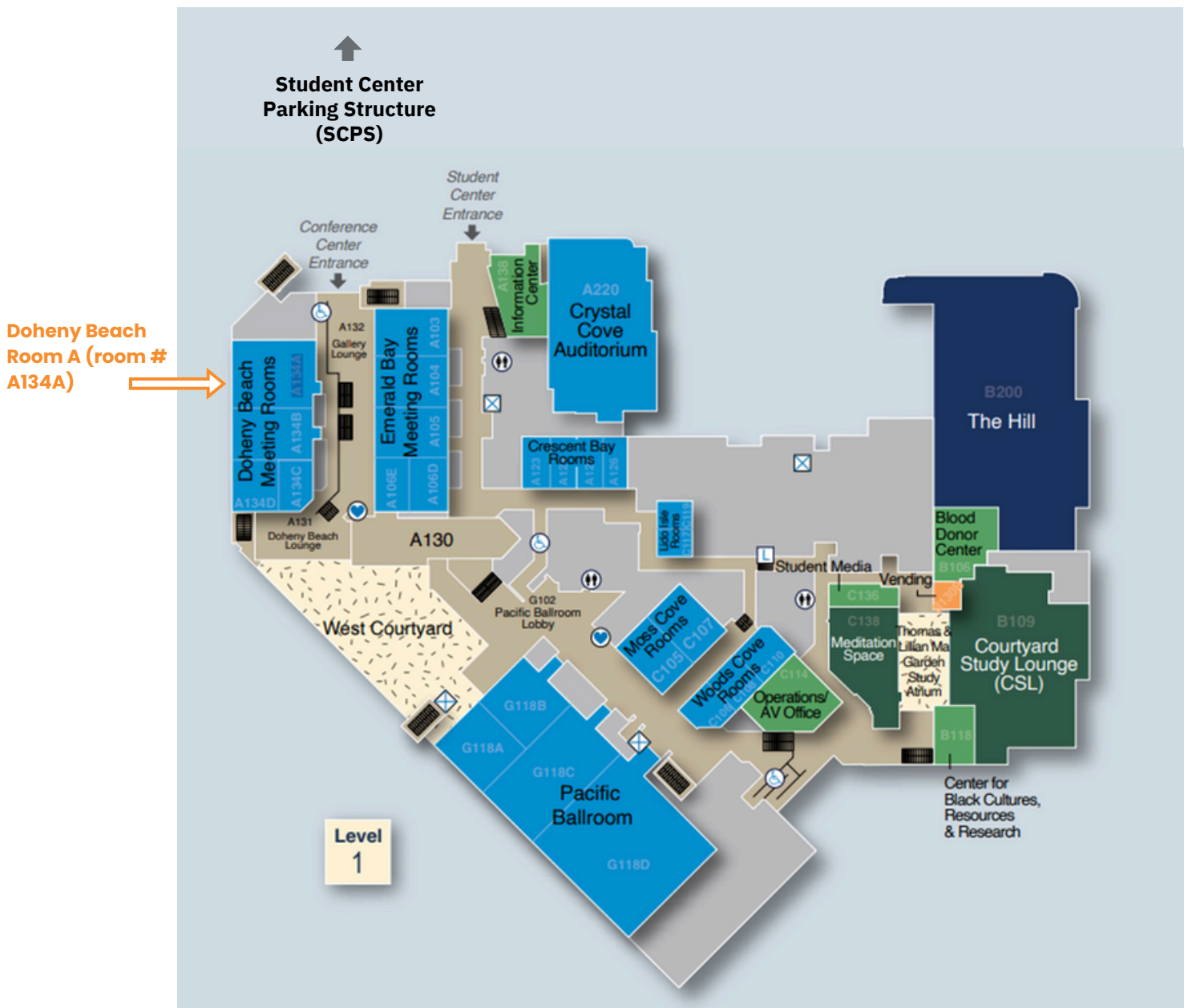
## Other Resources

- [How to give a great presentation](#)



# Student Center Map

The Fall 2024 Project Pitch Challenge will take place in Doheny Beach Room A (room # A134A) inside the Student Center Building. UCI Student Center is building number 113 on the campus map and is located across from the Student Center Parking Structure (SCPS).



Use this campus map to help you arrive to the Student Center (SC). Parking will not be provided to finalists and their guests. Vehicles may be parked in the Student Center Parking Structure. Permit dispensers at the structure accept credit cards and cash.



# Frequently Asked Questions

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<b>I'm part of a group project, can I still participate in the project pitch challenge?</b>	Yes! All undergraduate students who are interested in participating in the project pitch challenge must submit an <b>individual application</b> . If your group members intend to submit their own application, each individual presentation must be unique.
<b>I'm involved in more than one research opportunity. Can I submit more than one application?</b>	No student may submit more than one application.
<b>Who will be judging my audition video?</b>	Each video will be evaluated by a team of judges that may include UCI faculty, graduate students, staff, and alumni, in addition to corporate representatives.
<b>If I make it to the final round, am I required to stay for the whole event?</b>	Yes. We will announce the winners at the end of the event, and you must be present at that time to win.
<b>Can I invite family and friends to the final round?</b>	We encourage you to invite family and friends, in addition to your faculty and/or graduate student mentors. You will likely enjoy presenting more if there are friendly faces in the audience.
<b>Do I need to register for the Pitch Workshop?</b>	If you are a finalist, the workshop will give you an opportunity to practice before an audience and receive feedback that can improve your final presentation. Participating in the workshop is optional, but you must register to attend.
<b>How many finalists will be selected?</b>	There's no set number of finalists. We will select the students whose presentations meet our standards for highest excellence. Use our guidelines and resources to prepare the best presentation you can.