



***2017 Rice University Business Plan Competition  
More than \$1,500,000 in cash and in-kind prizes!***

**Official Rules, Requirements, and Judging Criteria  
April 6-8, 2017**

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(Last Revised November 28, 2016)

**2017 Rice University Business Plan Competition  
Entering and Important Deadlines**

**APPLICATION SUBMISSION**

**How to Enter:** The RBPC uses the Startup Rounds platform to manage applications. To enter, the designated team leader should complete the online application found at [www.rbpc.rice.edu](http://www.rbpc.rice.edu). The Application consists of eligibility questions, a 5-page Executive Summary and a one-minute Video Pitch, and must be completed by 5:00 pm CST, Friday, February 10, 2017.

**Note:** Schools may submit an unlimited number of entries, but **typically only 1-2 teams per school will be invited to compete.** (Exceptions to this guideline may be made on a case-by-case basis.) In the case of multiple entries from the same university, RBPC will choose the team(s) to represent that university at the Competition.

**Important Deadlines – Pre-Competition**

<p><b>Friday, February 10, 2017</b> by 5 pm CST</p>	<p>Deadline to submit Application, Executive Summary, and Video Pitch:</p> <p><i>Submit online: go to <a href="#">RBPC website</a> to access Startup Rounds platform</i></p> <p><b>All teams</b> that complete an Application will receive a free 6 month subscription to <b>Live Plan</b> by Palo Alto Software. Instructions your subscription will be provided after the application deadline.</p>
<p><b>Monday February 27, 2017</b></p>	<p>RBPC announces 42 Teams to Compete</p>
<p><b>Monday, March 6, 2017</b> by 5 pm CST</p>	<p>Invited Teams to confirm commitment to compete Withdrawal Deadline--last day to withdraw without penalty (see below)</p>
<p><b>Monday, March 13, 2017</b> by 5pm CDT</p>	<p>Deadline to submit Written Business Plan and Media materials in online application</p>
<p><b>Saturday, March 25, 2017</b> by noon CDT</p>	<p>Judges Review of written BP released to teams in online application</p>
<p><b>Monday, April 3, 2017</b> by 5 pm CDT</p>	<p>Revised Business Plan due in online application</p>

**General Notices**

**Withdrawal Penalty:** If a confirmed team **DROPS OUT AFTER MARCH 6, 2017 at 5:00 pm CDT FOR ANY REASON**, their **university** will be ineligible to compete in the Rice Business Plan Competition for two years. In addition, a letter will be sent to their faculty advisor and to the Dean of their School informing them of the team’s failure to honor their commitment, and of their school’s disqualification for the next two years. Spaces are limited at the RBPC, and a last minute cancellation will prevent another university from competing.

**Feedback:** All teams which submit complete applications will receive feedback on their submissions from the RBPC Review and Selection Board. It is our expectation that, even if a team is not selected to compete, the application process will provide a unique coaching opportunity for developing ventures. Feedback will be available after invited teams are announced.

**Non-confidentiality:** All sessions of the competition, including but not limited to oral presentations and question/answer sessions, are open to the public at large. Any and all of these sessions may be broadcast to interested persons through media which may include radio, television and the Internet. Any data or information discussed or divulged in public sessions by entrants should be considered information that could possibly enter

## **2017 Rice University Business Plan Competition Entering and Important Deadlines**

the public realm, **and entrants should not assume any right of confidentiality** in any data or information discussed, divulged, or presented in these sessions.

**Due to the nature of the competition, we are not able to ask judges, reviewers, staff, or the audience to agree to or sign non-disclosure statements.** However, the Rice Alliance for Technology and Entrepreneurship, the organizer of the RBPC, will make every effort to limit distribution of business plans presented at the competition. The Rice Alliance cannot guarantee that other individuals will not obtain access to electronic or hard copies of the business plan. All presentations are open to the general public, and some presentations may be videotaped. Attendance by media personnel is expected.

**Copyrights & Permissions:** If a team uses copyrighted materials and/or images from a third-party in their submissions or presentations, they must obtain permission and authorization in advance from the owners to use this material.

Information presented by the Company at the Rice Business Plan Competition is the sole responsibility of the Company. Rice University, including the Rice Alliance for Technology and Entrepreneurship and any of its affiliates (collectively, "Rice"), has not taken, and does not intend to take, any steps to verify the adequacy, accuracy or completeness of any information, materials or statements presented by the Company. The Company, and not Rice, is responsible for ensuring the Company's compliance with all applicable federal, state and other securities laws, and it is solely the Company's responsibility to comply with any of such laws that are applicable. Rice does not give investment advice, endorsement, analysis or recommendations with respect to any securities and is not a broker, venture fund or an investment advisor.

**Use of Conference Materials:** The Rice Alliance reserves the right to use any material prepared for the RBPC in publicizing and promoting the event. The Rice Alliance may use these materials in any printed materials and any videotape or other medium that it may produce. The Rice Alliance may videotape any portion of the Competition and utilize these tapes in any way that its sees fit.

**Entry Fees:** The RBPC does not have an entry fee.

**Changes to Competition Rules:** While not anticipated, these rules and prizes are subject to change at the discretion of the Rice Alliance at any time. The Rice Alliance staff has the right to interpret these rules according to its own judgment.

**Decisions regarding the Competition and the Winners:** All decisions regarding the competition rules, procedures, and processes are at the sole discretion of the Rice Alliance. Changes and/or interpretations of these rules may be made by the Rice Alliance at any time, even though they may be (or may appear to be) in conflict some previously published information. The selection of the teams to compete and the decision of the winners are at the sole discretion of the judges and the Rice Alliance. Best efforts will be made to make decisions in accordance with this Official Rules document.

## 2017 Rice University Business Plan Competition Eligibility Requirements

**Teams must meet all the following eligibility requirements in order to be selected to compete:**

**Outside Funding:** All ventures must be seeking outside equity capital, typically early stage venture investment or early stage angel investment. All ventures must be “for profit” entities.

**Student Enrollment:** The competition is for students currently enrolled on a full- or part-time basis (i.e., from July 2016 through June 2017). This includes students who graduated, or will graduate in August through December 2016. Students who graduated before July 2016 are not eligible to participate. Appropriate adjustments will be made for teams from non-US universities that have a different academic calendar.

**Team Size:** The presenting (competing) team should include at least two current students and not exceed five current students. **(At least two students must travel to Houston to compete and both must participate in the oral presentation of the business plan).** Others involved in the venture (non-students) are welcome to travel to Rice with the competing student team, but are prohibited from participating in the presentations or Q&A sessions. More than five students can travel to Rice with the team, but only five students can serve as presenters. Faculty advisors or other team mentors are encouraged to attend.

**Team Composition:** This is a competition for graduate students, and at least one currently enrolled graduate student must be a member of the venture’s startup management team, and must be part of the team that presents in the competition (competing team). A team with some undergraduates will be allowed to compete, and the undergraduates may participate fully. Competing team members may be from different disciplines and/or different universities. All graduate students, not just MBA candidates, are eligible to participate in the competition. This includes executive MBAs, MD candidates, JD candidates, other Masters Candidates, and PhD Candidates.

**NEW for 2017** - A team may have a maximum of **one** post-graduate scholar on the competing team **in addition to** the current graduate student. The post-grad should be within three years of graduation, and currently participating in a university-based educational program in innovation or entrepreneurship.

Non-students may be members of the venture’s founding/management team and may participate in planning the venture. However, only enrolled students (as of July 1, 2016) may compete (present the plan and answer questions from the competition judges). The maximum number of student competitors on a team participating at Rice is five (5), although there is no restriction on the total size of the venture’s founding team.

**Student Involvement:** The competition is for student-created and -managed ventures, including new ventures launched by licensing university technology. Students are expected to:

- (1) be the driving force behind the new venture,
- (2) have played the primary role in developing the business plan,
- (3) have key management roles in the venture, and
- (4) own significant equity in the venture.

In general, a member of the student team should be CEO, COO, or President of the venture, or members of the student team should occupy 50% or more of the functional area management positions that report directly to the CEO, COO, or President.

Members of the student team are expected to also own equity in the new venture. **It is anticipated that students should own at least 20% of the equity in the venture.** (One objective of this rule is to exclude ventures formed and managed by non-students who have given little or no equity to students for writing their business plan.)

## **2017 Rice University Business Plan Competition Eligibility Requirements**

Recognizing that the equity structure of these new university-based ventures may not yet be established, the 20% equity ownership rule may be waived in this situation. This waiver will be examined on a case-by-case basis.

**Faculty Involvement:** Each team **MUST** have the endorsement of a faculty advisor at their school and must provide contact information for their faculty advisor, regardless of whether or not the advisor will travel with the team to Rice University. **All faculty advisors will be asked to confirm the eligibility of the team.**

**Nature of Ventures:** The competition is for new, independent ventures in the seed, start-up, or early growth stages. Generally **excluded** are the following: buy-outs, expansions of existing companies, real estate syndications, tax shelters, franchises, licensing agreements for distribution in a different geographical area, and spin-outs from existing corporations. Licensing technologies from universities or research labs is encouraged, assuming they have not been commercialized previously.

**Prior Activity:** Technologies may be presented in the RBPC only once. Competing team members may participate in the RBPC more than once if entering with a new venture/new technology.

Ventures with more than \$100,000 in revenues in prior academic years (before July, 2016), are excluded. Ventures that have raised more than \$250,000 in equity capital from sources other than the members of the student team or their friends and families before the current academic year (before July, 2016), are excluded. However, both student and other team members may have worked on an idea or new technology in previous academic years, or in the case of the student team members, even prior to entering graduate school, provided that their venture's revenues and equity capital raised does not exceed these limits. Research and other grants do not count toward funding limits; competition winnings do not count toward funding limits; traditional loans do not count toward funding limits; any friends and family funding does not count toward funding limits. Equity funding awarded as part of an accelerator/incubator program counts toward funding limits.

**The Rice Alliance has the final decision on which teams are invited to compete in the Rice Business Plan Competition and reserves the right to include or exclude any teams for any reasons.**

### **Additional Team Requirements:**

**Attendance:** To be considered for any award, all competing (presenting) team members must arrive at Rice on April 6, 2017 by Noon CDT and be present on campus on Thursday at 6:30 pm for the Elevator Pitch Competition; on Friday, April 7, 2017 at 8:30 am for the First Round; **and** on Saturday, April 8, 2017 at 8:00 am for the Semi-Final or Challenge Round. Teams may not add or substitute presenting members during the competition. Teams must attend the Awards Banquet on Saturday night to receive their awards. Teams should plan their return travel **NO EARLIER** than Sunday morning.

**Prize Payments:** Award payments will be issued to either the Company, or the Team's affiliated university. All required taxes will be withheld, and tax refund documents issued by Rice University.

**Required Forms:** Each team will be required to provide appropriate documentation to receive award payments which include W-9 and/or EIN forms for US teams, and W-8 BEN forms for International teams **No prizes will be awarded without the required forms submitted.**

**2017 Rice University Business Plan Competition  
Submission and Presentation Guidelines**

**SUBMISSION AND PRESENTATION GUIDELINES**

**Executive Summary:** Please submit the file in **Adobe Acrobat PDF**. **No other format will be accepted**. Files should be named according to the following format: ES\_CompanyName\_UniversityName.pdf and should be submitted as part of the team's online application.

**Requirements:** Executive summaries should be a maximum of 2 to 5 pages of text and must include the following information:

- Company summary
- Customer/market analysis: market size, potential market share and the problem or need your company solves
- Product or service description including current state of development
- Intellectual property: status of patents and licenses (if applicable)
- Competitive differentiation
- Company Management team and/or advisor bios, including relevant experience
- Financial: 3-5 year projection of revenue, profit and cash flow
- Amount of investment you are seeking and use of funds

**Video Elevator Pitch (Optional):** Teams should submit a **60-second Video Elevator Pitch** as part of the online application **due before February 10, 2016 at 5 pm CST**. All teams will receive feedback from the Review and Selection Board on their presentation. **Teams should upload their video to youtube, and paste the link** into the appropriate field in their application. *You must ensure the youtube video settings include permission to embed the video on an external site (check box). You may set the privacy settings to "Unlisted" but NOT "Private" if you wish to restrict viewing to the RBPC.*

The video pitch should be in similar format to the elevator pitches presented at the competition—pitches from previous years can be found on our website, and format and guidelines are found below. You may use any recording device readily available (cell phone, computer, etc). The focus should be on your presentation and content, not video production quality.

**Written Business Plan:** Please submit the file in **Adobe Acrobat PDF**. **No other format will be accepted**. Files should be named according to the following format: BP\_CompanyName\_UniversityName.pdf and should be uploaded to the team's online application

**Requirements:** Written business plans are limited to 10 pages of text and should include the executive summary and summary financial data. Detailed spreadsheets and appropriate appendices should follow the text portion of the plan but will be limited to 6 pages. Plans with fewer than 6 pages of appendices may not use the remaining pages to increase the size of their business plan beyond 10 pages. **In total, the maximum number of pages is 18, if a cover page and table of contents are included.**

**Contents of the Written Business Plan:** your business plan must include the following information:

- Executive Summary
- Product or service description (incl. current status of development – beta, prototype, etc.)
- Customer/Market analysis (market size and potential market share)
- Sales and Marketing Plan (how you will go-to-market)
- Intellectual property status (e.g., patents, licenses, etc.)
- Competitor Analysis (competitors and your competitive differentiation)
- Company Management team and/or advisor bios, including relevant experience
- Financial highlights (cash flow, income statement, & balance sheet)

## **2017 Rice University Business Plan Competition Submission and Presentation Guidelines**

- Offering of the company (how much investment you are seeking, uses of funding, possible exits)

**Business Plan Financial Data:** Financial data should include a cash flow statement, income statement, and balance sheet. This data should be included in a summarized fashion in the main section of the business plan. Include an explanation of the offering to investors indicating how much money is required, how it will be used, and the proposed structure of the deal, (i.e., stock, debentures, etc.) and possible exit strategies. Detailed financial data and tables should be included in the appendix.

**Please note:** The team is not required to reveal the exact desired terms of the deal (i.e., proposed company valuation and percentage of company being offered). However, **teams should expect to be asked about these terms** and should be prepared to answer these questions in some fashion (if this information is not already provided in the written plan.) It is up to the team to assess the BEST way to address this question; however, past experience indicates that some judges will want to know a team's estimated company valuation.

**Appendices:** should be included only when they support the findings, statements, and observations in the plan. Because of the number of teams in the competition, judges may not be able to read all the material in the appendices. Therefore, the text portion of the plan (10 pages) must contain all pertinent information in a clear and concise manner. All appendices must fall within the 6 page limit; any pages over this limit will not be posted or otherwise provided to the judges.

**Revised Business Plan:** Once the online business plan submission round closes on March 13, 2017 at 5 pm CDT, it will be provided for review by the judges who will judge your pitch in the First Round of the competition, and you will receive written feedback from them by noon CDT on Saturday, March 24, 2017. This feedback will not be used for advancement or placing in the competition, rather is for coaching purposes only.

After the feedback is released to teams, you will have the opportunity to submit a revised written business plan as part of your online application. This is advised, but not required. The revised plan should follow the same format as outlined above and is due Monday, April 3, 2017 by 5 pm.

**Team Media Materials:** Teams will be required to submit materials that will be used in print, web, and other media including:

- Team Descriptions
- Team/Team member photos
- Product or prototype photos (if applicable)
- Company Logo
- University Logo/University External Relations/PR/Marketing contact information
- **PITCH Infographic** created in Palo Alto LivePlan software (free 6-month subscription provided with completed application)

### **STARTUP PITCHES**

**Startup Presentations** will take place on the Rice University campus in Houston on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, April 6-8, 2017. Teams should arrive on campus by Noon on Thursday, April 6, and plan return travel no earlier than Sunday morning, April 9.

- **Practice Round, Thursday, April 6:** All teams will participate in the Practice Round on Thursday beginning at 2:00 pm. This will provide an opportunity for each team to present their startup pitch and receive specific, team focused feedback from a select group of judges prior to the start of the competition. You will have 15 minutes for this presentation, plus 15 minutes for judges' questions/answers and feedback. **The practice round will not be scored.**

## 2017 Rice University Business Plan Competition Submission and Presentation Guidelines

- **First Round, Friday, April 7:** In the First Round, each team will have 15 minutes to present its business plan. The presentation will be followed by a **20-minute** question-and-answer session with the judges. **THIS TIME LIMIT WILL BE STRICTLY ENFORCED.**
- **Feedback Session, Friday, April 7:** In the Feedback Session, each team will have 15 minutes of additional feedback from the judges evaluating their presentation.
- **Semi-Final Round, Saturday April 8:** The 15 Teams advancing to the Semi-Final Round will have 15 minutes to present its plan and 10 minutes for Q&A.
- **Challenge Rounds, Saturday April 8:** The Challenge Round is formatted differently than the First Round and will provide competitors with a third type of presentation experience for the 27 Teams in this Round. There will be four teams in each flight (except for one flight that will have three teams); each will have a total of 25 minutes for presentation and Q&A. However, there will be no individual time limits on the presentations or Q&A. **Judges are encouraged to ask questions throughout the presentation.** Students should be prepared to make shortened presentations to accommodate the less structured format.
- **Final Round, Saturday, April 8:** The 6 Teams in the Finals will have 15 minutes to present, followed by a 10 minute question-and-answer session. There will only be 5 minutes between each presentation for teams to set-up in the Final Round. **For the Final Round, each team should be in position at least 15 minutes prior to their designated presentation times.** On Saturday, teams will start early if the team before them finishes ahead of schedule.

**Note: Teams may not observe other teams' presentations AFTER they have made their presentation. Teams may not observe another team's practice round or feedback session.** *The same observation guidelines apply to Team Faculty Advisors and Team Special Guests. In the Practice Round and Feedback Session, the Presenting Team, their Faculty Advisor, and their Team Special Guests are allowed only during the assigned presentation time, and cannot observe any other teams.*

**Equipment:** Teams should plan to bring a laptop and a copy of their presentation on a flash drive. Each presentation room is equipped with a large-screen projector and a room equipment to run your presentation (each room type has a presentation guide that will be available to all competitors). **IMPORTANT NOTE:** if a team is using Mac laptop, you should bring your own video adapter to be able to connect into the A/V system in the room.

Please note that if your presentation contains video, graphics, and/or sound, there is every expectation that your presentation will work properly at the Competition. However, based on past experience, we cannot guarantee that video, graphics, and sound will work 100% of the time.

**Elevator Pitch, Thursday April 6:** All teams will participate in the Elevator Pitch competition on Thursday evening beginning at 6:30 pm. One presenting team member from each team will give a 60-second pitch in front of the entire RBPC kick-off audience, including the judging pool (attendance is generally around 400 people in a large auditorium). The Elevator Pitch is your business overview that you should be able to deliver powerfully and concisely and should provide enough information to pique the interest of potential investors and strategic partners. It should provide a clear picture of the company and its solution. Examples of past RBPC elevator pitches can be found on our website.

### Rules:

- All Teams will compete in the **Elevator Pitch Competition** on Thursday evening, April 6, 2017.
- Each team will be given a **maximum of 60 seconds** to present its elevator pitch to the panel of judges, as well as general audience.
- Index cards or other notes are not allowed
- **This presentation will be given by one team member.** Only current students can present at the elevator pitch, as in other competition rounds. The 60 second Elevator Pitch will be uninterrupted. There will be no Question and Answer period. Teams will be judged on their oral presentation alone. You will have a large time clock in front of you so that you can regulate your own time, and if you speak longer than 60 seconds, you will be stopped.



**2017 Rice University Business Plan Competition  
Tentative Schedule**

<b>Thursday, April 6</b>	11:00 am – 1:00 pm	Team Registration
	Noon – 1:00 pm	Lunch
	1:00 pm – 2:00 pm	Making the Most of the RBPC Panel
	2:00 pm – 5:30 pm	Practice Round for Teams (non-scoring)
	5:30 pm – 6:30 pm	Kick-off Reception & Company Showcase
	6:30 pm – 7:45 pm	Elevator Pitch Competition
	7:45 pm – 9:00 pm	Texas Barbeque Networking Dinner
<b>Friday, April 7</b>	7:30 am – 8:30 am	Continental Breakfast
	8:30 am – 9:00 am	Welcome and Review Judge Instructions
	9:00 am – Noon	First Round Competition
	Noon – 1:00 pm	Lunch
	1:00 pm – 2:30 pm	First Round Competition Continued
	2:30 pm – 3:00 pm	Networking Break
	3:00 pm – 4:30 pm	Feedback Session
	4:30 pm – 6:30 pm	Houston Reception & Announce Semi-Finalists
<b>Saturday, April 8</b>	7:00 am – 8:00 am	Continental Breakfast
	8:00 am – 11:00 am	Semi-Final Round & Challenge Round Competitions
	11:00 am – Noon	Lunch
	11:45 am	Finalists Announced at Lunch
	Noon – 3:30 pm	Final Round Competition
	5:00 pm	Team Set-up for Company Showcase
	6:00 pm – 7:00 pm	Cocktail Reception and Company Showcase
	7:00 pm – 9:45 pm	Awards Banquet: Announce Winners

*Note: event times are subject to change and contestants should reconfirm the schedule prior to the event.*

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## Thursday, April 6

### **Noon – 5:30 pm: Team Registration, Past Winners Panel, and Practice Round**

Registration will open at 11:00 am on Rice campus on Thursday afternoon, April 14, 2016, and remain available until 1:00 pm. Lunch will be served from Noon to 1:00 pm. All participants are invited to a Panel Discussion with Past RBPC Competitors on “Make the Most of the RBPC” from 1:00 – 2:00 pm. All teams will participate in the Practice Round beginning at 2:00 pm on Thursday. Teams will present their plan to a small panel of judges and receive feedback prior to the start of competition on Friday. The Practice Round will not be scored and will NOT count toward the overall competition. This is an opportunity for teams to fine tune their presentation and check presentation equipment.

### **5:30 pm – 8:30 pm: Company Showcase & Opening Reception, Elevator Pitch Competition, and BBQ Dinner**

On Thursday night beginning at 5:30 pm, a Team Showcase and Reception will be held. All teams will be given a portion of a table to display information about their company and the opportunity to meet the judges and other competitors. Teams may bring table top displays that will fit on a 3’ x 2’ table top. Teams can use their laptop for their display, but outlet access is not guaranteed. Teams may hand out printed materials. (Trade show booths or similar full-sized displays will not be allowed.)

Following the Showcase and Reception, all teams will compete in a 60-second Elevator Pitch Competition highlighting the participants and their companies to all the attendees and officially kicking off the Competition.

Following the Elevator Pitch Competition, teams, judges, and guests will be treated to a Texas Barbeque networking dinner.

**2017 Rice University Business Plan Competition  
Tentative Schedule**

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**Friday, April 7**

**8:30 am – 4:30 pm: First Round and Feedback Session**

A continental breakfast will be served from 7:30 to 8:30 am at the Rice Campus. At 8:30 am, a session with judges will be held to explain the rules and selection criteria. Teams are welcome to attend. The First Round presentations will commence at 9:00am on Friday; all teams will orally present their business plans to the judges during the First Round. Teams will be divided into seven flights (of six teams each) based on industry segment. The first and second place winners from each of the seven flights, plus the highest-ranking third place winner will advance to the Semi-Finals. The third through sixth place teams from each of the seven flights will advance to the Challenge Round.

**4:30 pm – 6:30 pm: Announcement of Semi-Finalists**

The Semi-Finalists and Challenge Round Participants will be announced at the Houston Reception which begins at 4:30 pm. Teams are required to pick up instructions for Saturday's rounds, plus judges first round feedback at the Reception.

Teams will not have any required activities on Friday evening (after 6:30 pm).

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**Saturday, April 8**

**8:00 am – 4:00 pm: Semi-Final, Challenge, and Final Rounds**

A continental breakfast will be served from 7:00 to 8:00 am at Rice Campus on Saturday morning. The 15 teams in the Semi-Final Round will begin competition at 8:00 am. Semi-final teams will be divided into three new flights of five teams each. Teams will not be clustered by industry category, however teams will be assigned so they will not be competing against teams they faced in the first round. We also try to minimize the chance a team would compete against another team from the same school. The top 2 teams from each of the semi-final flights will advance to the Final Round.

Teams that do not advance to the Semi-Final Round will advance to the Challenge Round on Saturday morning. The 27 teams in the Challenge Round will be divided into seven new flights of four teams each (one flight will have three teams). Teams will not be clustered by industry category, however teams will be assigned so they will not be competing against teams they faced in the first round. We also try to minimize the chance a team would compete against another team from the same school. All teams in each of the seven Challenge Round flights will receive cash prizes ranging from \$500 to \$1,000 per team. In the Challenge Rounds, the judges are encouraged to ask questions throughout the presentation.

The six finalist teams will be announced at 11:45 am during lunch, and present their business plans in the Final Round on Saturday afternoon starting at Noon and finishing by 4:00 pm.

**6:00 pm – 9:45 pm: Awards Banquet, Cocktail Reception, and Team Showcase**

The Awards Banquet and Cocktail Reception will be held on Saturday night from 6:00 pm to 9:45 pm. All winners and prizes will be announced at the Awards Banquet. The Awards Banquet is provided at no cost to the teams, and **all team members from each team must be present to win any prizes.**

The Cocktail Reception and Team Showcase will be held from 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm. **Teams should plan to arrive at 5:00 pm to set up for the Team Showcase.** All teams will be given a table to display information. Teams will have the opportunity to further discuss their business ideas with judges, sponsors, local business members, and other competitors.

## **2017 Rice University Business Plan Competition Tentative Schedule**

Banquet attendees will vote on the Best Showcase Company during the reception and the team that wins will receive \$1,000. Teams may bring table top displays that will fit on a 3' x 6' table top. Teams can use their laptop for their display, but electric power is not guaranteed. Teams may also hand out printed materials. (Trade show booths or similar full-sized displays will not be allowed.)

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### **Event Locations**

**Competition Rounds:** All Competition rounds will be held the Jesse H. Jones Graduate School of Business in McNair Hall on the Rice University campus.

**Houston Reception:** The Houston Reception and Announcement of Semi-finalists will be held at Baker Institute for Public Policy Dore Commons on the Rice University campus.

**Awards Ceremony:** The Awards Banquet will be held at the JW Marriot Houston Downtown. A shuttle will be provided from the Hilton Medical Center (lodging hotel) to transport participants to and from the banquet venue.

## 2017 Rice University Business Plan Competition Judging Criteria and Evaluation Process

### General Evaluation Criteria:

The competition is intended to simulate the real-world process of entrepreneurs soliciting start-up funds from early-stage investors and venture capital firms. The judges function as early stage venture capital investors deciding on which business venture they would most likely fund. The quality of the idea, the size of the market, the competitive differentiation, the strength of the management team, and the clarity and persuasiveness of the written plan and oral presentation, all influence the judges' decisions. **Ultimately, the winning team should be the team in which the judges would most likely invest their money.**

Most of the judges of the RBPC come from the investment community and are involved in making early-stage investment decisions on an ongoing basis. Their ranking of the top teams is guided by the scorecard (described below), but should be consistent with the approach that would be used by an early-stage venture capital or angel investor.

We recognize that consistent with real life investment situations, early-stage companies can be in very different stages of development. To compensate for this, we would expect that an investor would require the higher investment returns for a very early stage company than for a later stage company which has less risk (i.e., the greater the risk or the longer the time to a liquidity event, the higher the required return). We assume, in general, that these rules would apply for the judges at the RBPC.

Teams are not required to reveal the exact desired terms of the deal (i.e., their proposed company valuation and percentage of company being offered to investors). However, some investors prefer to have this information upfront, (while some investors feel that it is not as important until later). We recommend that teams be prepared to address questions about their terms, but it is up to the team to decide how they want to answer these questions.

Unlike many venture capital funds, judges in this competition should not restrict themselves to investing in only certain types of new business ventures (such as biotechnology or information technology). Judges in this competition should assume that they would be open to investing in any type of new business venture, assuming that other criteria such as those mentioned above, are met.

There are three main rounds of competition: the **First Round** on Friday, the **Semi-Final and Challenge Rounds** on Saturday morning, and the **Final Round** on Saturday afternoon. All teams must be in Houston from April 6-8 to present their plan to the judges.

In the First Round on Friday, teams will be "clustered" by industry segment to the extent possible, and judges will be divided based on their area of experience. Possible groupings may include: 1) life science/biotechnology, 2) energy/clean technology, 3) information technology, 4) tech innovation

**During the competition, judges are asked to evaluate each team individually and should not discuss their evaluation with other judges until all judges' evaluation forms have been submitted.**

### SCORING - CRITERIA

The winners of the competition will be determined by the judges' **ranking** of the teams. This ranking will be based on the judges' willingness to invest in the company as noted above. The ranking will be completed by the judges at the end of each day's competition. Judges will **rank** the teams from 1 (most likely to invest) to 6 (least likely to invest).

To assist the judges in this decision process and to provide additional feedback to the teams, the judges will fill out 2 scorecards for each team. The 2 scorecards will cover:

- Part I Written Business Plan
- Part II Verbal Presentation & Business/Investment Viability

## 2017 Rice University Business Plan Competition Judging Criteria and Evaluation Process

The individual feedback forms are designed to provide guidance for judges in evaluating the individual components of each team in order to develop their overall rankings. Feedback forms are also designed to provide feedback to the competitors, and will be given to competitors at the end of each round.

### Written Business Plan Evaluation

Judges review the written business plans of each of the six teams in their flight and complete Part I of the RBPC Scorecard online for each plan in advance of the competition. Part I is designed to help assess the written business plan, focusing on key elements and the effectiveness of the summary financial data. The scores provided to the teams are for feedback purposes only, and will not be used to determine advancement or winners. *Judges will evaluate the written business plan in advance of the competition and completed Part I of the scorecard online. The feedback will be provided to the teams prior to the competition.*

### SCORING – PROCESS

In the First Round, teams in the competition will be divided into seven flights. The flights will consist of six teams, “clustered” by industry sector, to the extent possible. Judges will be assigned to flights based on their background and areas of expertise. Each judge will assess the written business plans, oral presentations, and business viability of the six teams in their flight in the First Round of competition.

The first and second place teams from each of the seven flights, plus the top-scoring third place team overall will advance to the **Semi-Final Round**. The teams who finish third through sixth place in their flights will advance to the **Challenge Round** on Saturday morning. The first and second place winners of the Semi-Final Round will advance to the Final Round (six teams total). Announcement of the **Semi-finalists** and **Challenge Round** participants will be made on Friday, April 15, at the Houston Reception which begins at 4:30 pm.

### Scoring – Elevator Pitch

Judges will score each team that presents on a scale of 1 (excellent) to 5 (poor). The teams with the best (i.e., lowest) overall scores will be the winners.

Judges should evaluate each team based on how convincingly they present their business concept, such that the judge would want to learn more about the company as a potential investor. The best teams are those teams that an investor would want to schedule a follow-up meeting for further discussion because they believe this company represents a strong investment opportunity.

### Scoring – First and Semi-final Rounds – Startup Pitches

Each judge will listen to and evaluate the startup pitches of the six teams in their flight. Judges will use Part II of the RBPC Scorecard as a **guide** to determine their rankings:

#### ➤ Part II Feedback Form

The quantitative assessment provided by the Feedback Forms is only meant to serve as a guide to the judges for ranking the teams in the First Round. The **rankings** will determine the overall winners based on **where judges would invest their money**.

#### ➤ Part II Ranking Sheet

The winning team from each of the seven flights will be determined by the judges **ranking** of the teams within each flight. This ranking will be determined Friday afternoon after all of the teams have presented to the judges. The judges will rank the teams within their flight from 1 (most likely to invest) to 6 (least likely to invest)

## **2017 Rice University Business Plan Competition Judging Criteria and Evaluation Process**

The teams who placed third through sixth in each of their flights in the **First Round** on Friday will advance to the **Challenge Round** on Saturday morning.

The winners of the **Semi-Final Round** will be chosen in the same manner as in the **First Round**. Judges will rank teams from 1 (most likely to invest) to 6 (least likely to invest). In total six teams will advance to the Final Round.

- **Scoring – Challenge Round:**

Teams which do not advance to the Semi-final Round will advance to the Challenge Round. A total of 27 teams will compete in the Challenge Round, divided into 7 flights of 4 teams each (one flight will have only 3 teams). All teams in the Challenge Round will win cash prizes.

The Challenge Rounds are formatted differently than the Semi-Final Rounds and will provide competitors with a third type of presentation experience. Each will have a total of 25 minutes for presentation and Q&A. **However, there will be no specified time limits on the presentations or Q&A. Judges are encouraged to ask questions throughout the presentation.**

The winning team in each flight of the Challenge round will be determined solely by the judges' **ranking** of the teams. This ranking will be determined after all four teams have presented to the judges. The judges will rank the four teams in the Challenge Round from 1 (most likely to invest) to 4 (least likely to invest).

Teams will win cash prize money ranging from \$1,000 (first place) to \$500 (fourth place) depending on how well they perform in the Challenge Round.

- **Scoring – Final Round:**

The winning teams in the final round will also be determined solely by the judges' **ranking** of the teams. This ranking will be determined Saturday afternoon after all of the teams have presented to the judges. The judges will rank the six teams in the finals from 1 (most likely to invest) to 6 (least likely to invest).

The rankings from each of the judges will be aggregated and the teams with the lowest total scores will be the winners. As in the previous rounds, in the case of a tie, the team with the most number of first place scores will be declared the winner.

**2017 Rice University Business Plan Competition  
Judge's Evaluation Forms**

**Part I. Written Business Plan Evaluation (completed PRIOR to teams arriving on campus)**

**Please evaluate the written business plan on the following aspects:**

(Using this rating system: 1 = excellent, 2 = very good, 3 = good, 4 = adequate, 5 = fair, 6 = poor, 7 = very poor.)

	<b>Excellent</b>					<b>Very Poor</b>	
1. <b>Executive Summary</b> (Clear, exciting and effective as a stand-alone overview of the plan)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. <b>Products or Services</b> (Description, features and benefits, pricing, current stage of development, proprietary position)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. <b>Market and Marketing Strategy</b> (Description of market, competitive analysis, needs identification, unique capabilities, sales/promotion)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. <b>Management</b> (Backgrounds of key individuals, ability to execute strategy, personnel needs, organizational structure)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. <b>Summary Financials</b> (Presented in summary form, easy to read and understand, consistent with plan and effective)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. <b>Offering and Viability</b> (Proposal/terms to investors—clarity of investment proposal; investment potential)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. <b>Overall Assessment of Written Plan</b> (Is the plan clear and compelling?)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**Strengths of the Written Business Plan**

**Areas for Improvement**

**2017 Rice University Business Plan Competition  
Judge's Evaluation Forms**

**Part II. Oral Presentation & Business Viability  
Feedback Form**

(Using this rating system: 1 = excellent, 2 = very good, 3 = good, 4 = adequate, 5 = fair, 6 = poor, 7 = very poor.)

	<b>Excellent</b>							<b>Very Poor</b>	
<b>1. Market Opportunity</b> (There is a clear market need presented as well as a way to take advantage of that need.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
<b>2. Distinctive Competence</b> (The company provides something novel/unique/special that gives it a competitive advantage in its market.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
<b>3. Management Capability</b> (This team can effectively develop this company and handle the risks associated with the venture.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
<b>4. Financial Understanding</b> (This team has a solid understanding of the financial requirements of the business.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
<b>5. Investment Potential</b> (The business represents a real investment opportunity in which you would consider investing.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
<b>6. Presentation</b> (The team presented their venture in a logical, persuasive manner, and answered questions well.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		

**Strengths of Presentation**

**Areas for Potential Improvement**



**2017 Rice University Business Plan Competition  
Judge's Evaluation Forms**

**Part II. Oral Presentation & Business Viability  
Ranking Sheet**

Ranking of Companies (1 = highest: most likely to invest, 6 = lowest: least likely to invest)

At the end of the day, please rank all 6 presenting companies from highest (1) to lowest (6). Please do not use the same number twice (i.e., no ties).

	Ranking (1= highest/best, 6= lowest/worst)
Company Name: _____	_____
Company Name: _____	_____
Company Name: _____	_____
Company Name: _____	_____
Company Name: _____	_____
Company Name: _____	_____

**2017 Rice University Business Plan Competition**  
**Logistics**

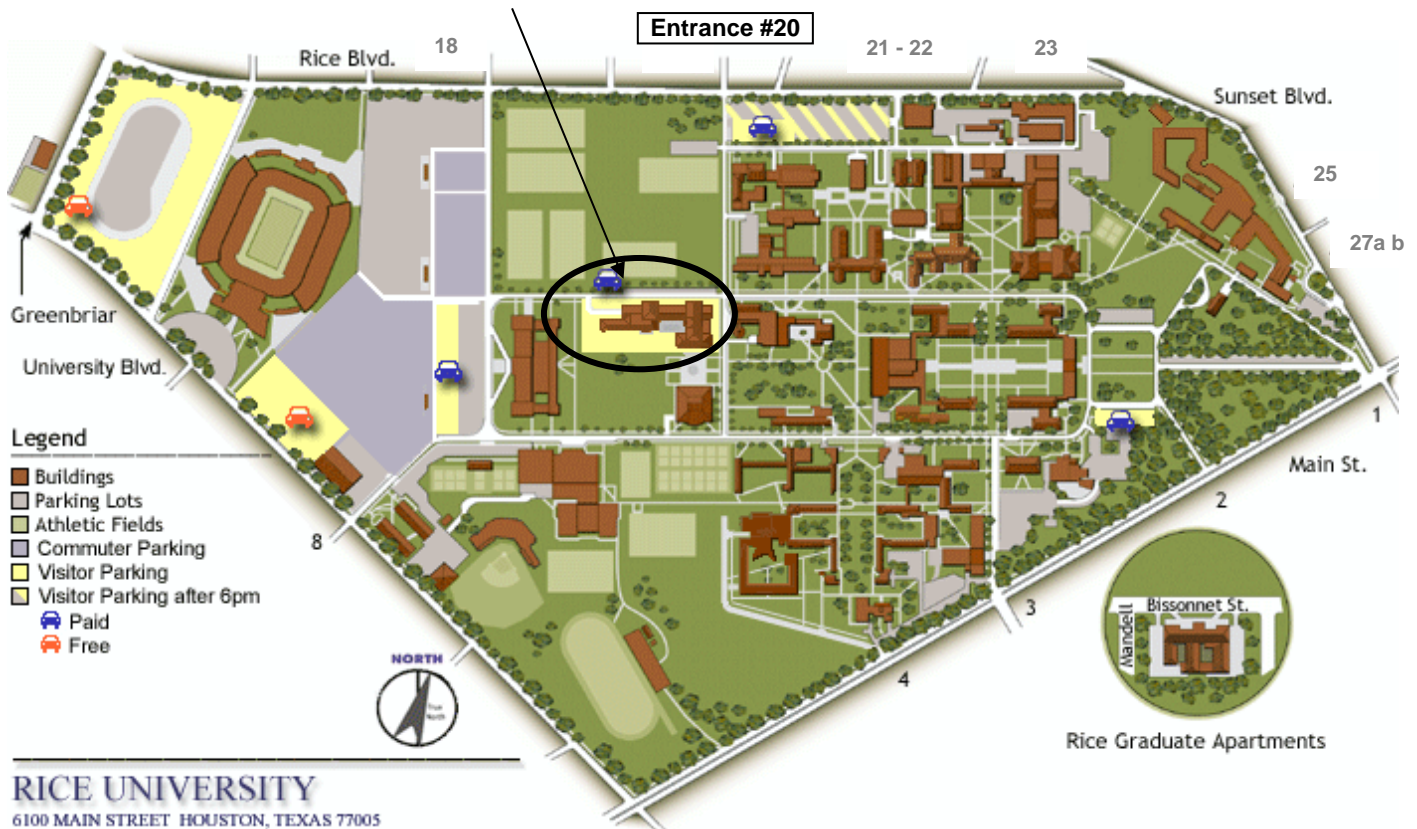
- **Hotel Accommodations:** A block of rooms, at a discounted rate, are being held at the Hilton Houston Plaza/Medical Center, 6633 Travis Street, Houston, Texas 77030, for individuals participating in or attending the competition. However, **you are responsible** for making your own team's reservations.

Reservations must be made **no later than** Wednesday, March 17, 2017. However, we encourage you to book your reservations early, as all rooms may sell out. Reservation information will be provided in your invitation to compete.

- **Shuttle:** The Hilton Medical Center is located near the campus on University and Main (less than a half mile from the Jones School). We will provide free continuous shuttle service between the campus and the hotel. A schedule will be provided to you when you arrive on Thursday.
- **Venue:** All Competition events except for the Awards Banquet on Saturday night will be held at the Jones Graduate School of Business McNair Hall on the Rice University campus. The Awards Banquet will be held at The JW Marriot Houston Downtown.
- **Meals:** Competitors will be provided meals at no cost during the competition. This includes lunch and BBQ dinner on Thursday; continental breakfast, lunch, and light appetizers on Friday; and continental breakfast, lunch, and banquet dinner on Saturday. Competitors will be "on their own" for Friday evening and Saturday evening after the Award's Dinner, and are encouraged to experience the Houston nightlife with fellow participants and their Rice MBA student-guides.
- **Travel:** Teams should plan to arrive on the Rice campus by Noon (CDT) on Thursday, April 6, 2017 for team registration (registration will open at 11 am) and lunch and plan to leave Houston no earlier than Sunday morning, April 9. The Competition will end after the presentation of awards on Saturday night at approximately 9:45 pm.
- **Travel Expenses:** Competitors must handle their own travel expenses (except for meals and shuttle transportation service from the Hilton Medical Center as noted above). This includes travel to Houston, hotel accommodations, and transportation from the airport to the hotel/campus.
- **Air Travel:** Houston is served by two major airports: George Bush Intercontinental Airport (IAH) and Houston Hobby Airport (HOU). George Bush International Airport is located north of the city, 22 miles from, the Rice Campus. Houston Hobby Airport is located about 12 miles southeast of the Rice Campus.
- **Taxi to and from airport:** A cab from George Bush Intercontinental Airport (IAH) costs approximately \$55 one way to get to the Hilton Medical Center and the drive time is approximately 30-40 minutes. A cab ride from Houston Hobby Airport costs approximately \$32 one way to the Hilton Medical Center and the drive time is approximately 20-30 minutes, of course depending on the time of travel.

2017 Rice University Business Plan Competition  
Rice University Campus Map

Jones Graduate School of Business, McNair Hall  
Paid Visitor Parking – Central Campus Garage  
(Underground parking)



**Directions to Rice University from Airports**  
<http://www.rice.edu/maps/directions.html>

**Directions:**  
From HW 59, take the Greenbriar/Shepherd Exit and head south on Greenbriar.  
Turn left on Rice Boulevard (heading east). Enter campus from Entrance #13.

**Visitor Parking:**  
Paid visitor parking is available in the Central Campus Garage, the garage beneath the Jones Graduate School of Business building. To park in this garage, enter from Rice Boulevard (Entrance #20), and turn right at the second stop sign. The building and entrance to the garage will be on your left. Take the elevators at the east end of the garage to the first floor.

To park in the stadium visitor parking lot, enter the campus from University Boulevard (Entrance #8) or from Rice Boulevard (Entrance #18). For free parking, enter from Greenbriar. If you park in the stadium lot, you can walk or take the shuttle bus to the new Jones Graduate School of Business building.

**Campus Map - Online:**  
This map of the Rice campus is available at: <http://www.rice.edu/maps/maps.html>

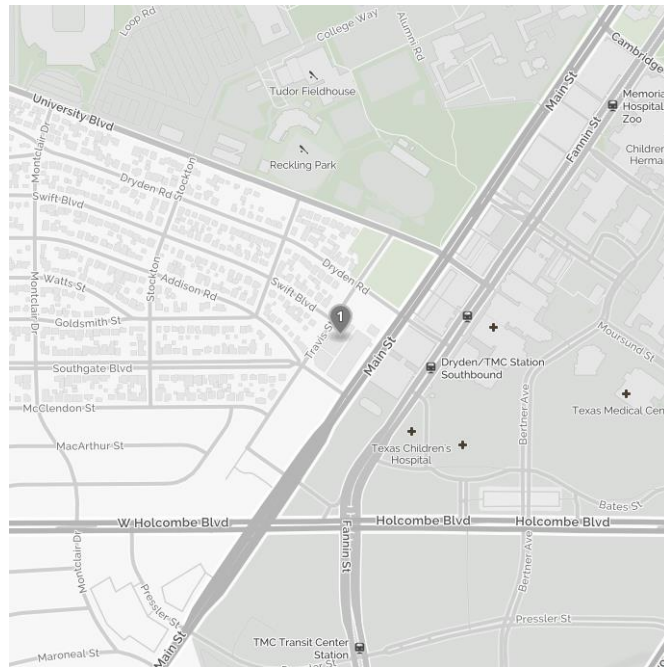
**2017 Rice University Business Plan Competition  
Hotel Maps**



**Hilton Hotel Houston Plaza/Medical Center**

6633 Travis Street  
Houston, TX 77030  
Phone: 713.313.4000  
Toll-Free: 800.445.8667

Check-In Time: 3:00 pm  
Check-Out Time: 12:00 pm



**2017 Rice University Business Plan Competition  
Hotel Maps**

**Marriot Marquis Houston  
(Awards Banquet)**

1777 Walker Street, Houston, Texas 77010

[www.MarriottMarquisHouston.com](http://www.MarriottMarquisHouston.com)

T 713.654.1777

