2025 Competitive Events Guidelines

Business Case Competition at Career Connections Conference

Business Case Competition challenges students to analyze a multifaceted business case that may include elements of accounting, finance, economics, strategic planning, international business, entrepreneurship, or marketing. Participants present their findings and recommendations to a panel of judges, demonstrating critical thinking, business acumen, and effective communication skills.

Event Overview

Division	Collegiate
Event Type	Team of 1, 2, 3, or 4 members
Event Category	Case Competition
Event Elements	Presentation with a Topic

Educational Alignments

Career Cluster Framework Connection	Management & Entrepreneurship
NACE Competency Alignment	Career & Self-Development, Communication, Critical Thinking, Leadership, Professionalism

2025 Business Case Competition

Accelerating Naval Innovation: Leveraging Non-FAR Authorities for Smarter R&D Collaboration

Problem Statement

The Naval Surface Warfare Center Carderock Division plays a critical role in advancing ship design and engineering for the U.S. Navy. To remain agile and responsive to fleet needs, Carderock must streamline how it accesses external research and development resources. While traditional Federal Acquisition Regulation or FAR-based acquisition processes are often too slow for emerging technological demands, a range of non-FAR authorities offer promising alternatives for faster, more flexible collaboration with industry and academia. Your challenge is to investigate these non-FAR contracting mechanisms and design a strategic, actionable solution—ideally supported by a digital tool—that enables Carderock's scientists, engineers, and S&T managers to initiate, evaluate, and execute external Research & Development (R&D) programs effectively. The ultimate goal is to enhance mission readiness by improving how Carderock taps into external innovation.

See the full case competition beginning on page 4 of these guidelines.

National

Required Competition Items

Items Competitor Must Provide	Items FBLA Provides
• Conference-provided nametag • Photo identification • Attire that meets the FBLA Dress Code	• Table • Projector screen • Power • Projector with HDMI cord

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Important FBLA Documents

- Competitors should be familiar with the Competitive Events Policy & Procedures Manual, Honor Code, Code of Conduct, and Dress Code.

Eligibility

- Competitors may compete in an event more than once, regardless of placement at a previous Career Connections Conference (CCC).
- Members must be registered for the CCC and pay the conference registration fee to participate in competitive events.
- Competitors must conduct the research and prepare the presentation, not advisers or others not a part of the registered team.
- There are no limits to the number of entries per state.
- If competitors are late for a presentation time, there are no guarantees they will compete.
- The schedules for competitive events are displayed in the local time of the CCC location. Competitive event schedules cannot be changed.

Recognition

- The top three teams will receive a recognition item during the Closing Session of the Collegiate Career Connections Conference.

Event Administration

- This event has one part: Presentation (The presentation is given once.)
- Presentation Guidelines
    - **Equipment Set-up Time:** 3 minutes
    - **Presentation Time:** 10 minutes (one-minute warning)
    - **Question & Answer Time:** 5 minutes
    - **Internet Access:** Not provided
    - The presentation is judged at the CCC. Presentations may be open to conference attendees, space permitting. Competitors may not view other competitors' presentations in their event until after their own presentation.
    - Timing: The presentation time is exclusive to the allotted times. Once the set-up time has been reached, the presentation time automatically begins. The presentation time shall not exceed the stated time, meaning that the set-up and Q&A time cannot be used as presentation time.
    - The case competition presentations are not available for audience members.
    - Competitors can present with and bring any of the following technology into the presentation as long as it fits on the small table in front of the judges' table or is held by the competitors:
        - Laptop
        - Tablet
        - Mobile phone
        - External monitor that is approximately the size of a laptop monitor

- Non-technology Items: Materials, visual aids, and samples related to the project may be used during the presentation; however, no items may be left with the judges unless specifically allowed in the case competition.
- Restricted Items: Animals (except authorized service animals), Food (for display only; may not be consumed by judges during the presentation), Links and QR codes (for display only; cannot be clicked or scanned by judges before, during, or after the presentation)
- Facts and working data must be cited and be secured from quality sources.
- Teamwork: If performing as a team, all team members are expected to actively participate in the presentation.

Scoring

- The presentation score will determine the winners. The presentation rating sheet will be released with the case competition.
- If there is more than one section, scores will be normalized to determine the winners.
- Judges must break ties. All judges' decisions are final.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

- FBLA meets the criteria specified in the Americans with Disabilities Act for all competitors with accommodations submitted through the conference registration system by the registration deadline.

Recording of Presentations

- No unauthorized audio or video recording devices will be allowed in any competitive event.
- Competitors in the events should be aware FBLA reserves the right to record any presentation for use in study or training materials.

Penalty Points

- Competitors may be disqualified if they violate the Code of Conduct or the Honor Code.
- Five points are deducted if competitors do not follow the Dress Code or are late to their assigned presentation time.

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FBLA Future Business Leaders of America

2025 Business Case Competition

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Problem Statement

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Overview and Background Information

Informational Interview

View a video with Carderock employees answering questions.

Background Information

The Naval Surface Warfare Center, Carderock Division (NSWCCD) is one of 10 Warfare Center Laboratories under the Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA) https://www.navsea.navy.mil/Home/Warfare-Centers/NSWC-Carderock/. Carderock's mission is to conduct world-class ship design and engineering that protects our Sailors and Marines and allows them to deliver combat power at sea. Centers/NSWC-Carderock/. Carderock's mission is to conduct world-class ship design and engineering that protects our Sailors and Marines and allows them to deliver combat power at sea. Carderock researches, develops, and applies science and technology associated with naval architecture and marine engineering, integration of surface and undersea vehicles, and provides support to the maritime industry. It is important to know that Carderock is funded to do this work by the individual customers which are primarily NAVSEA and program offices, including the Office of Naval Research. Carderock does not have a direct appropriation from Congress. A small but important fraction of the work performed at Carderock is paid for by private customers in the maritime and associated industries.

Carderock Core Competencies include:

- Ship integration and design
- Environmental quality systems
- Naval architecture, including hull forms and propulsors
- Structures and materials
- Signatures and silencing systems
- Vulnerability and survivability systems

This study primarily is meant to impact the Science & Technology (i.e. early-stage research and development) part of its mission. These non-FAR authorities are meant to facilitate collaboration with outside partners, universities and private industry, and it is our goal to utilize these to the fullest extent practicable.

Carderock's Role

The Naval Surface Warfare Center Carderock Division's (Carderock) role is to create and advance new technologies that accelerate timely and affordable technical capabilities to the fleet and warfighter. Technology insertion is a key part of Carderock's full-spectrum role supporting the entire life cycle of the fleet from Basic and Applied Research, Advanced Development, through acquisition, test and evaluation, in-service engineering and sustainment. In all aspects of this complex process, affordability, agility, and acceleration of capability to the warfighter is paramount. It is imperative that Carderock utilize all tools and processes available to achieve these goals at the speed of need.

Carderock needs to efficiently exploit external Research & Development (R&D) from industry and academic partners to augment its capabilities. The tools to leverage external R&D can be categorized as some form of acquisition that serves to research and develop future capability. Complementary to acquisition is Technology Transfer that facilitates getting Carderock-developed technologies commercialized to speed scaling.

There are two broad ways R&D can be contracted. The largest and most complex is the Federal Acquisition Regulation or FAR-based statutes. The FAR laws are complex to cover all aspects of government procurement in a fair manner. These processes tend not to be as quick as is needed for the current warfighting and technology development paradigms. To address this speed challenge, laws and statutes were created to speed up R&D. Collectively these are called non-FAR-based contracts or agreements. Among these are Grants, Cooperative Agreements, Other Transaction Authority (OTA), Partnership Intermediary Agreements, and Prize Challenges. These authorities are contained in the United States Code Title 10 -Armed Forces 10 U.S.C. §4001 (a)(b), 10 U.S.C. §2371., 31 U.S.C. §6304 and others.

Your job is to investigate the non-FAR authorities and provide an actionable plan and **ideally** a software-based tool to aid Navy technologists on how best to use one of these authorities to initiate and execute external programs to achieve our mission. The customers are primarily the scientists and engineers at Carderock and the Science & Technology (S&T) managers in the Carderock Chief Technology Office (CTO). Other potential stakeholders being the non-FAR contracting and legal teams at Carderock.

Specific Elements to Address

One of the imperatives of the Carderock mission today is to dramatically enhance the capability of the Navy R&D enterprise in supporting all facets of Navy ship design. Some elements the study should cover are:

- **Research** the state of R&D for Ship Design by watching the interview with current experts immersed in solving this challenge at Carderock and other parts of the Navy R&D ecosystem, including industry and academia. Concurrently, the team would research the landscape of relevant authorities and statutes for non-FAR based tools and how these tools are successfully used in the Department of Defense (DoD).
- **Survey** the best practices in other Navy and DoD R&D organizations.
- **Design** a tool that would enable subject matter experts to start the process of assessing their needs and what aspects of non-FAR authorities should be considered to achieve their research goals.

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FBLA Future Business Leaders of America

Business Case Competition Presentation Rating Sheet

Expectation Item	Not Demonstrated	Below Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	Points Earned
Content					
Demonstrates understanding of the case and issues to be solved	*No description or case synopsis provided, and no issues defined*	*Describes and provides case synopsis OR defines the issues*	*Describes and provides case synopsis AND defines the issues*	*Demonstrates expertise of case synopsis AND definition of the issues*	
	0 points	1-6 points	7-8 points	9-10 points	
Research *Research the state of R&D for Ship Design by watching the informational interview and using this information in solving this challenge at Carderock and other parts of the Navy R&D ecosystem, including industry and academia. Concurrently, the team would research the landscape of relevant authorities and statutes for non-FAR based tools and how these tools are successfully used in the Department of Defense (DoD).*	*No evidence of videos watched research on ship design R&D or non-FAR authorities. Information is missing, inaccurate, or unrelated to prompt.*	*Limited information from the informational interview implemented or poorly integrated into findings. Research on R&D and non-FAR tools lacks depth, relevance, or accuracy.*	*Informational interview watched and synthesized insights clearly. Demonstrates accurate understanding of ship design R&D and non-FAR authorities.*	*Comprehensive understanding of the informational interview. Expertly connects findings to the DoD context and demonstrates nuanced understanding of both R&D state and non-FAR tools' application.*	
	0 points	1-7 points	8-13 points	14-15 points	
Survey *Survey the best practices in other Navy and DoD R&D organizations.*	*No evidence of research or reference to best practices in Navy or DoD R&D organizations.*	*Minimal or unclear examples of best practices; sources may be limited, outdated, or lack relevance to the case objectives.*	*Identifies and summarizes relevant best practices from other Navy and DoD R&D organizations with clear connections to the case context and objectives.*	*Provides a well-researched, diverse set of best practices with strong analysis of how they can be adapted to Carderock. Demonstrates insight and originality.*	
	0 points	1-7 points	8-13 points	14-15 points	
Design *Design a tool that would enable subject matter experts to start the process of assessing their needs and what aspects of non-FAR authorities should be considered to achieve their research goals.*	*No tool is provided, or the tool is unrelated to assessing research needs or non-FAR authorities.*	*Tool is incomplete, overly simplistic, or lacks clarity. Limited alignment with the needs of subject matter experts or fails to address key aspects of non-FAR use.*	A functional, well-organized tool is presented that helps users assess needs and identify relevant non-FAR authorities. Demonstrates practical application.	*Tool is innovative, user-friendly, and highly applicable. Clearly guides users through needs assessment and appropriate non-FAR options with adaptability and insight.*	
	0 points	1-7 points	8-13 points	14-15 points	

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Expectation Item	Not Demonstrated	Below Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	Points Earned
Substantiates and cites sources used while conducting research	*Sources are not cited*	*Sources/References are seldom cited to support statements*	*Professionally legitimate sources & resources that support statements are generally present*	*Compelling evidence from professionally legitimate sources & resources is given to support statements*	
	0 points	1-7 points	8-13 points	14-15 points	
Presentation Delivery					
Statements are well organized and clearly stated	*Competitor(s) did not appear prepared*	*Competitor(s) seemed prepared, but flow was not logical*	*Presentation flowed in logical sequence*	*Presentation flowed in a logical sequence; statements were well organized*	
	0 points	1-6 points	7-8 points	9-10 points	
Exhibits self-assurance, poised body language, and strong vocal delivery that enhances overall presentation	*Competitor(s) did not demonstrate self-confidence*	*Competitor(s) demonstrated self-confidence and poise*	*Competitor(s) demonstrated self-confidence, poise, and good voice projection*	*Competitor(s) demonstrated self-confidence, poise, good eye contact, voice projection, and delivery*	
	0 points	1-6 points	7-8 points	9-10 points	
Demonstrates the ability to effectively answer questions	*Does not respond to questions or responses are completely off-topic.*	*Provides incomplete or unclear answers that show limited understanding.*	*Responds accurately and clearly to most questions, showing adequate understanding.*	*Responds confidently with clear, accurate, and thoughtful answers that enhance the overall presentation.*	
	0 points	1-6 points	7-8 points	9-10 points	
Staff Only: Penalty Points (5 points for dress code penalty and/or 5 points for late arrival penalty)					
				Presentation Total (100 points)	

Name(s):		
School:		
Judge Signature:		Date:

Comments: