

Hackathon Overview

2025 Fall Innovate 4 SDSU Hackathon (<https://acm.sdsu.edu/hack>)

Introduction

Welcome, Hackathon participants!

This document will contain information regarding the **prompt, project proposal, and ethical guidelines** for the **2025 Innovate 4 SDSU Hackathon**. There will also be information on the next steps in completing your project proposal before the deadline.

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Date	Topic	Description
November 15	Day 1 of the Hackathon	Introductions, team building, brainstorming, and project building.
November 16	Day 2 of the Hackathon	Project building, polishing, presenting, judging, and the awards ceremony.

The Hackathon will take place from 9:00 am to 7:00 pm on Saturday and Sunday, November 15 and 16, in Montezuma Hall and Theatre on the second floor of the Conrad Prebys Student Union.

DAY ONE

HACKATHON SCHEDULE



CHECK-IN & BREAKFAST

9:00 AM - 9:30 AM

OPENING CEREMONY + TEAM FORMATION

9:30 AM - 10:30 AM

TEAM FORMATION

10:30 AM - 11:00 AM

HACKING TIME

11:00 AM - 1:00 PM

LUNCH BREAK

1:00 PM - 2:00 PM

HACKING TIME

2:00 PM - 3:30 PM

MINI CHECKPOINT

3:30 PM - 4:00 PM

HACKING TIME

3:30 PM - 6:00 PM

WRAP-UP

6:00 PM - 7:00 PM

DAY TWO

HACKATHON SCHEDULE



CHECK-IN & BREAKFAST

9:00 AM - 9:30 AM

HACKING TIME

9:30 AM - 11:00 AM

MINI CHECKPOINT

11:00 AM - 11:30 AM

HACKING TIME

11:30 AM - 1:00 PM

LUNCH BREAK

1:00PM - 2:00PM

HACKING TIME

2:00PM - 3:00PM

.Migrations

3:00PM - 3:30PM

PREP FOR JUDGING

3:30PM - 4:00PM

JUDGING/AWARDS/CLOSING

4:00PM - 7:00PM

Hackathon Prompt

Innovate to Transform the SDSU Student Experience

Your mission is to create a mobile, web-based, or physical platform that tackles one or several key challenges students face today. Choose one of the following challenge areas and design a creative and impactful solution:

1. Campus Experience & Third Spaces

How can we create safe and flexible ways for students to study, collaborate, or hang out after hours?

- An app to crowd-share safe study locations.
- A booking system for classrooms at night.
- A virtual study room where students with similar questions can help each other.

2. AI & Privacy

How can AI be used responsibly to support students without invading their privacy?

- A study buddy chatbot that doesn't store personal data.
- An AI tool that helps with scheduling while keeping info local on-device.

3. Safety & Security

How can students feel safer moving around campus, especially at night or during emergencies?

- A campus safety alert app.
- A "walk-with-me" buddy system.
- A low-cost IoT panic button.

4. Student Success & Well-being

How can we reduce stress and give students the right support at the right time?

- An app that connects students to tutors or study groups instantly.
- A tool that matches students with wellness resources based on their needs.
- An interactive calendar that helps students organize their work.

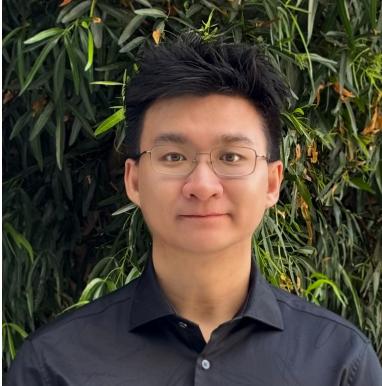
5. Sustainability & Community Impact

How can students lead the way in making campus life more sustainable?

- An app that tracks recycling points or food waste.
- IoT sensors that monitor classroom energy use.
- Gamified challenges for green behavior.

Embrace a user-centric approach by leveraging data, design thinking, and cutting-edge technology to craft a solution that not only addresses these issues individually but also creates a cohesive, engaging experience that makes SDSU campus life more accessible, safe, and enriching. Your challenge is to innovate, integrate, and impact the student community in meaningful ways.

Mentor Schedule

Jianshu Liu  Day One: 9:30am - 12:30am Day Two: 9:30am - 12:30am Occupation: Professor of Computer Science- CS576	Dominic Davish  Day One: 9:30am - 6:00pm Day Two: 1:30pm - 4:00pm Occupation: Computer Scientist, Google	Aishwariya Chunduru  Day One: 9:30am - 10:30 am, 5:00pm - 6:00pm Day Two: 10:00am - 11:00am, 3:00pm - 4:00pm Occupation: Product Manager, Resmed
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<p>Uday Kiran Chilakalapalli</p>  <p>Day One: 10:00am - 11:00am Day Two: 10:30am - 11:30am Occupation: Senior Data Analyst, LPL Financial</p>	<p>Juhi Godhwani</p>  <p>Day One: 1:00pm - 6:00 pm Day Two: Unavailable Occupation: Electrical/Hardware Engineer, Google</p>	<p>Isabella Messina</p>  <p>Day One: 9:30am - 12:30pm Day Two: Unavailable Occupation: Cyber Security Engineer, Viasat</p>
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<p>Anishek Kamal</p>  <p>Day One: 12:00pm - 3:00pm Day Two: 12:00pm - 3:00pm Occupation: Founder, Debtzero</p>	<p>Todd Benrud</p>  <p>Day One: 4:00pm - 6:00pm Day Two: 11:00am - 1:00pm Occupation: AI EdTech StartUp Founder</p>
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Final Project Deliverable

On the second day of the hackathon, your team will collaborate to deliver a project. This deliverable can take many forms - such as a web or mobile application, a program, a device, or another kind of solution - **but it must address a real problem faced by students at SDSU.** The presentation must point out proof that people indeed face their problem, and that the app wasn't just made for the sake of it. Projects that do not solve any actual problems may be penalized.

Presentation Requirements

By the end of the hackathon, your team will present a 2–3 minute slideshow (or a live demo) that covers the following:

- Project Inspiration: What problem are you trying to solve?
- Your Solution: What did you build, and how does it work?
- Optional: You may give a live demo in place of a slideshow, as long as you clearly explain your project's purpose and context.
- **If artificial intelligence was used at any point, the presentation must include where, how, and why it was used.**
- Groups are encouraged to ask the mentors for feedback on their presentations.

Submission Instructions

When your project is ready, bring up your presentation on your computer when called on to plug into the monitor.

You'll need to include:

1. Full names of all team members
2. Contact email address for each team member
3. Title of your project
4. Slideshow (Google Slides or PowerPoint) that answers the following:
[Feel free to use this template](#) (or create your own).

- a. What problem did you try to solve?
 - b. What did you build, and how did you implement it?
 - c. What software, AI, tools, or programming languages did you use?
 - d. How is your solution different from what's already out there?
 - e. What inspired your approach?
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The final project report is due on Sunday, November 16 at 4:00 PM.

Groups will be disqualified if they continue to work on their project during the judging period.

Scoring Guidelines & Prizes

Prizes will be awarded to teams that produce extraordinary projects. Based on a project's score (see the rubric in the next section), students will be able to select their prize from a prize pool. The order of awards dictates the order that prizes will be selected (Best Overall first, Most Complete Solutions second, etc.). Each member of a winning team is eligible to choose a prize from the prize pool. The five projects that will be awarded will show the following characteristics:

Awards

Best Overall

The team with the most outstanding performance across all fields.

Most Complete Solutions

The team whose project has the most, user-friendly, and complex final project. It should be obvious that their hard work payed off to create a fully functional interface.

Most Impactful Potential

The team whose solution has the most potential for SDSU student impact. Their solution shows promise to be adapted and applied to help real communities of people.

Most Creative

The team with the most unique and creative solution. Design, idea, and implementation is truly original and unseen before.

People's Choice

Awarded to the project most liked by peers, as voted by all hacking team members. Teams can not vote for their own project.

Rubric

For your reference, the tentative rubric is provided below. Judges will use this rubric to evaluate your project and delegate awards. This rubric may be subject to change before the date of the competition, with or without notice.

***** 25 point penalty for not disclosing how they used AI in their project**

	25 Points	20 Points	15 Points	10 Points	5 Points
Impact/ Usefulness	Provides a successful solution for real-world adoption	Has potential for out-of-hackathon adoption with room for minor improvements	Addresses problem with some usefulness, but limited scope of impact	Thoughtful attempt at creating impact-but not a realistic adoptable solution	Little to no practical usability or impact
Product Execution	High functioning product-performing without any bugs/issues	Mostly reliable-contains minor bugs	Mostly functional but project feels unfinished and might have some bugs to work though	Executes with major bugs or is very incomplete	Barely functional
Creativity	Entirely new and unique idea, executed in a creative and original way	Mostly unique idea-might be a creative twist on an already existing product	Some originality, but relies on known ideas/concepts	Limited creativity-we have seen this product been done before	Lacking any creativity/uniqueness
Research	Demonstrates a deep understanding and passion of their chosen topic	Shows a solid understanding of the chosen topic and good efforts towards researching	Lacking a solid understanding of the topic-but showed good effort into learning/researching	Missing a good understanding of their chosen topic and shows little proof of research	Little to no research done and a complete lack of understanding
Presentation	Clearly demonstrates the purpose and qualities of their product with confidence.	Communicates the purpose of their product with ease, maybe with minor issues to improve upon	Gives a clear explanation of the product but lacks soft skills or engagement	Presentation is given in an unordered manner and is difficult to follow/understand	Incomplete presentation

Artificial Intelligence Policy

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become ubiquitous for tasks such as coding, researching, and writing. For better or for worse, AI is now part of the standard workflow for computer scientists and others. Therefore, **participants in the Innovate 4 SDSU Hackathon may use generative AI in their projects, to a reasonable extent**, i.e., the AI completes no more than 25% of the project's total intellectual effort. In particular, AI tools such as GitHub Copilot, Chat GPT, Llama, Deepseek, and Claude may be used for research, unit coding, presentation, and other tasks, but should not be solely relied upon, nor should they be used to develop a significant portion of project deliverables. **Usage of generative AI must be disclosed in your presentation, or you will lose 25 points.** Please remember that AI usage is a privilege, which we are trusting you not to abuse.

To summarize, use AI to *accelerate* your work, not *replace* it.

Please see the examples below comparing **responsible** and **irresponsible AI usage**.

Responsible AI usage (allowed):

- Coding help (debugging, boilerplate, explanations)
- Design mockups (logos, UI, visuals)
- Brainstorming (ideas, starter text)
- Documentation support (README, slides, pitch)

Irresponsible AI usage (NOT allowed):

- Submitting end-to-end AI-generated projects
- Hiding AI usage or claiming AI's work as your own
- Feeding real student/ private data into AI tools
- Training large AI models from scratch

Expectations:

- Judges will look at your process as much as your demo
- Be ready to explain what you built vs. what AI generated
- Bonus points for showing ethical and effective AI use

Plagiarism Policy

According to Wikipedia, “Plagiarism is the representation of another person's language, thoughts, ideas, or expressions as one's own original work.” **Plagiarism, of any form, will not be tolerated.** Participants found to have plagiarized materials, without citation, will be disqualified without appeal. This includes representing AI-generated materials as your own work! Please make sure to point out AI-generated materials and referenced materials in your code and presentation.

Anything else?

Website: acm.sdsu.edu/hack

Feel free to reach out to the hackathon committee on:

CTRL Events Discord: <https://discord.gg/ZkgT7zXH>

ACM Discord: <https://discord.gg/UuNuggpKYY>