Inter-University AI Pitch Competition

Role: Founder, Visionary & Lead Strategist

Organization: AGSM Product Club, University of California, Riverside

Timeline: June 2024 – February 2025

Mission

To empower and equip students to use artificial intelligence as a tool for strategic problem-solving across real-world domains through structured collaboration, mentorship, and innovation.

Vision

To position UCR as a leading hub for interdisciplinary, student-led AI thought leadership by building an inclusive, future-facing competition platform that inspires action, challenges perspectives, and incubates scalable ideas.

Project Overview

The Inter-University AI Pitch Competition is a high-impact, first-of-its-kind initiative developed and executed entirely as a solo project. It was envisioned to bridge the gap between AI theory and real-world application by creating a structured and inspiring platform for student innovators. This competition stands as a landmark achievement—not just for me personally, but for UCR's School of Business, marking its first student-led initiative to unite multiple universities through a shared vision of innovation.

This competition was a masterclass in vision-led execution, scaling from a one-member club with zero assets to a recognized inter-campus collaboration involving 135+ participants, 12 competitive teams, partnerships with industry players, and recognition at the university level. Every aspect—from recruitment and strategy to stakeholder engagement and branding—was handled independently, showcasing the depth and breadth of leadership, planning, and execution required to bring a transformative idea to life.

Strategic Objectives

- Amplify the understanding and use of AI for real-world applications across various disciplines
- Create a cross-campus platform for collaborative problem-solving and entrepreneurship
- Build university reputation through original, student-led programming that fosters innovation and leadership
- Enable participants to approach AI not only as a tool but as a mindset to address systemic challenges

Cross-Functional Leadership in Action

- Conceived the entire initiative independently, setting the strategic direction, goals, and format from scratch
- Designed the end-to-end competition model including video-based qualifiers and a live final pitch round
- Formed and trained a new executive board, setting expectations, workflows, and responsibilities
- Conducted outreach to partner institutions including USC and UCSD through formal emails, virtual meetings, and participation in external student events to build trust and engagement
- Secured collaboration with Perplexity AI, providing free AI access to participating students for research and solution-building
- Oversaw design, branding, digital campaigns, and promotional strategy across multiple platforms
- Developed evaluation rubrics, judging training guides, presentation templates, and registration systems
- Built and maintained relationships with faculty judges, industry professionals, and administrative departments to ensure academic and operational alignment
- Facilitated onboarding, communication, and support for over 135 participants and 12 teams, ensuring clarity, fairness, and resource access

Leadership Skills Displayed

- Visionary Thinking – Initiated a never-before-seen concept at UCR and transformed it into a collaborative platform with long-term institutional value.
- Influence Without Authority – Inspired and mobilized peers, faculty, and external stakeholders without formal power, relying purely on strategic communication and clarity of purpose.
- Resilience and Self-Motivation – Maintained momentum and executional discipline while leading all aspects of the competition independently.
- Stakeholder Alignment – Balanced the needs of university officials, industry partners, participants, and judges through clear communication and structured coordination.
- Creative Problem-Solving – Navigated resource constraints and logistical barriers with innovative formats, outreach methods, and strategic partnerships.
- Community Building – Fostered a culture of collaboration across universities, nurturing a space where diverse teams could work together on future-facing solutions.
- Operational Leadership – Managed end-to-end planning, marketing, judging, and logistics with precision and foresight.
- Mentorship and Coaching – Guided newly formed team members, supported participant teams, and provided resources that elevated the quality of entries and student engagement.

Outcomes & Impact

- 135+ participants from multiple universities (up from 40 in the previous internal-only event)
- 12 high-impact projects pitched, exploring AI use cases in healthcare, sustainability, education, and business
- First-ever external collaboration competition in the history of UCR School of Business organized by a student
- Awarded by UCR for innovation and collaboration, with wide internal recognition by faculty, staff, and peers
- Created a sustainable, replicable model for future student-led pitch competitions
- Positioned UCR Product Club as a recognized center of student leadership, innovation, and cross-functional excellence

Key Competencies Demonstrated

- Strategic Project Ownership and Solo Execution
- Multi-Stakeholder Communication & Relationship Management
- Cross-Institutional Program Development
- Event Architecture, Scheduling, and Contingency Planning
- Scalable Process Design (Rubrics, Templates, Registration Workflows)
- Public Speaking, Internal Advocacy, and Team Mobilization
- Innovation Enablement and AI Education Facilitation

Technology & Tools Used

Canva (branding & decks), Notion (project tracking), Zoom (cross-campus coordination), Google Forms (registration), LinkedIn (partner outreach), ChatGPT (content support), Perplexity AI (research enablement)

Legacy & Reflection

The Inter-University AI Pitch Competition is more than a project—it is a leadership case study and a personal milestone. It required relentless persistence, systems thinking, and stakeholder empathy. It has shaped how I define product leadership—not just as building tools but building systems and cultures that outlast your presence. It is a reminder that with conviction, structure, and smart execution, even a solo effort can inspire an entire institution.