

LOMBARDO HALL FOOD & BEVERAGE CHALLENGE

The Intersection of Food, Beverage, and Community

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YOUR IDEA COULD BECOME THE NEXT FOOD & BEVERAGE CONCEPT IN LOMBARDO HALL.

What Is the Challenge?

The Lombardo Hall Food & Beverage Challenge invites currently enrolled Millersville University students from every major to develop an original food or beverage concept that could strengthen the Lombardo Hall experience. Teams will move from an initial idea through concept development, mentorship, financial planning, market research, and a final pitch.

Think beyond a class project: this is an opportunity to turn a student idea into a concept with a path toward real implementation in Lombardo Hall.

Eligibility & Team Rules

Rule	Details
Who can enter	Any currently enrolled MU student. All majors are welcome; participation is not limited to LCOB.
Team size	2-4 members are required. No solo submissions.
Cross-disciplinary encouraged	Teams may combine students from business, IT, marketing, wellness/nutrition, sport management, communication, art & design, and other academic areas.
Team continuity	At least 50% of the original team members must remain through Pitch Day.
Concept ownership	All ideas remain the intellectual property of the student team, subject to any final university-approved competition terms.

Phase 1 — Submit Your Idea

Due: October 26, 2026

Phase 1 is the starting point of the Lombardo Hall Food & Beverage Challenge. Your team will identify a student need, opportunity, or idea and begin developing it into a food, beverage, or food-and-beverage concept that could strengthen the Lombardo Hall experience.

This is your opportunity to introduce the idea, explain why it matters, and demonstrate that it is worth developing further. You do not need to have a finished business plan at this stage.

Teams that advance will build on their Phase 1 concept through Workshop #1: Building the Plan, where they will explore food service operations, financial modeling, market research, and customer discovery before being matched with mentors for continued development.

What Your Team Will Submit

Your Phase 1 submission should give the selection team a clear picture of:

- The Concept: What food, beverage, or food-and-beverage experience are you proposing?
- The Opportunity: What need, problem, or opportunity does your concept address?
- Your Customer: Who would use or purchase it? What do you know about what they want?
- Why Lombardo Hall: Why is Lombardo Hall the right place for this concept?
- The Business Idea: How might the concept generate revenue or otherwise be financially sustainable?
- Your Evidence: What have you learned so far through observation, conversations, surveys, research, or other forms of customer discovery?
- Your Team: Who is on your team, what are your areas of interest or expertise, and what does each person bring to the project?
- The Vision: If your idea succeeds, what could it look like in Lombardo Hall?

Workshop #1 — Building the Plan

Target timing: Week of November 16, 2026 Format: Half-day session in Lombardo Hall / Innovation Court

- Welcome from the Dean: framing the opportunity and what success could look like.
- Food service operations: licensing, health codes, and MU facilities partnerships.
- Financial modeling: startup costs, cost of goods sold (COGS), pricing, and break-even analysis.
- Market research: surveys, taste tests, customer discovery, and competitive landscape.
- Mentor Q&A: direct questions from experienced mentors and practitioners.
- Mentor matching: an optional speed-dating format gives teams short conversations with 2–3 mentors before formal pairing.

Workshop #2 — Pitch Like You Mean It

Target timing: Early February 2027 Format: Afternoon session with a practice pitch round

- Build a compelling pitch: storytelling, structure, confidence, and clarity.
- Think like a judge: understand the questions and evidence a Shark Tank-style panel may look for.
- Handle tough Q&A: prepare for challenging questions about customers, operations, finances, and feasibility.
- Dry Run: each team gives a 5-minute practice pitch; peers and a coach provide feedback.
- Visual presentation: coaching on slide design and how to communicate the idea visually.

Final Pitch & Judging

Finalists will present their concepts to a judging panel in a Shark Tank-style format. The panel is expected to include representatives from faculty, students, staff/student life and dining services, and alumni. The final judge roster and scoring criteria will be provided to teams before Pitch Day.

Pitch format: Teams should be prepared to communicate the problem/opportunity, concept, target customer, market evidence, operating model, financial picture, implementation path, and why Lombardo Hall is the right home for the idea.

The Lombardo Venture Award

The winning team receives a package designed to help move an idea from competition to implementation—not simply a cash prize.

- Up to \$10,000 in startup funding
- Student scholarships / award support
- A free Independent Study course in Summer 2027
- One year of mentoring
- Workspace in Lombardo Hall
- University marketing support
- A ribbon-cutting / launch event for the new creation
- Alumni networking
- Media coverage

Lombardo Hall Food & Beverage Challenge

Competition Timeline

DATE	MILESTONE	DETAILS
September 28, 2026	Competition Announcement	Competition officially announced; information sessions begin.
October 26, 2026	Phase 1 Submissions Due	Teams submit their initial food and beverage concepts.
November 6, 2026	Advancement Decisions	Teams are notified whether they advance to the next phase.
Week of November 16, 2026	Workshop #1: Building the Plan + Mentor Matching	Food service operations, financial modeling, market research, Q&A;, and mentor matching.
December 2026 – February 2027	Mentorship & Concept Development	Teams work with mentors to develop and strengthen their concepts.
Early February 2027	Workshop #2: Pitch Like You Mean It	Pitch preparation, financials, storytelling, slide design, Q&A;, and practice pitches.
February 25, 2027	Pitch Day — Shark Tank-Style Finals	Finalists present their concepts to a panel of judges.
March 8, 2027	Winner Announced	The Lombardo Venture Award winner is officially announced.
March – August 2027	Implementation Planning	The winning team works with university partners and mentors to prepare for launch.
August 2027	Winning Concept Launch	The winning food and beverage concept launches in Lombardo Hall.