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Student Flexible Packaging Design Challenge 2026

2026 CALL FOR ENTRIES

Deadline for Concept Outlines: March 25, 2026

Deadline for Entries: April 30, 2026

2025 Student Flexible Packaging Design Challenge First Place & Best Video Winner

EZ PB&J Pouch

Student Team: Travis Daly, Jacob Marrer, Olivia Morris, Austin Pralow, and Amanda Szymanoski

Professor: Kyle Dunno, Department Chair and Associate Professor

School: Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT)

Click here to watch the 2025 Challenge's Best Video!

Dear Students,

In its 22nd year, the FPA Student Flexible Packaging Design Challenge has earned a reputation as one of the flexible packaging industry's most respected student competitions. The program celebrates innovative, student-developed solutions that showcase the versatility and impact of flexible packaging across a wide range of products and markets.

The Challenge
Students are invited to develop a flexible packaging solution that addresses a real-world packaging need—such as consumer or product protection, safety and security, health, sustainability, or convenience. Entries may advance the use of flexible packaging; improve upon an existing flexible package; convert a non-flexible package into a flexible format; incorporate a distinctive printing, technical, or sustainability feature; or introduce a product not currently available in flexible packaging.

From retail food to medical and pharmaceutical applications, the possibilities are virtually limitless. The only boundary is your imagination.

Submission Process
Students must first submit a concept outline before developing and submitting a prototype/bench sample. The outline will be reviewed, and selected concepts will advance to the prototype stage. Advancing students will then submit:

- A flexible packaging prototype/bench sample
- A video proposal presenting and defending their concept

Students may collaborate with their schools throughout the design process. FPA members can serve as mentors to those advancing to the prototype development round.

Key Dates

- Concept outline deadline: **March 25, 2026**
- Advancement notifications: **Around April 1, 2026**
- Prototype and video submission deadline: **April 30, 2026**
- Winners announced: **Around May 15, 2026**

Awards & Recognition
Students may compete individually or as teams. Each first-place participant will receive at least $500, and each second-place participant will receive at least $250. An additional honorary award will be presented for "Best Video." The winning student or team will also receive a sponsorship for a team representative to attend the FPA 2027 Annual Meeting.

The video component is critical—it should clearly defend your concept, expand upon your written submission, and persuasively "sell" your solution to both judges and potential consumers. Be sure to highlight: why your concept improves upon current packaging; its sustainability advantages; and its production feasibility.

Winning entries receive significant industry exposure, including: coverage in *FlexPack VOICE®;* featured in leading trade media such as *Packaging World, Packaging Digest, PFFC, Packaging Strategies,* and *Packaging Impressions;* exposure at PACK EXPO International; and promotion across FPA's social media channels.

Complete rules, instructions, and evaluation criteria are detailed in this FPA Student Flexible Packaging Design Challenge *Call for Entries.*

For questions or assistance, contact FPA at (410) 694-0800 or email **ddiehlmann@flexpack.org**.

We look forward to reviewing your submission and wish you the best of luck in The Challenge.

Dani Diehlmann
Vice President, Communications
Flexible Packaging Association

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FPA STUDENT FLEXIBLE PACKAGING DESIGN CHALLENGE
RULES

2025 Student Flexible Packaging Design Challenge Second Place Winner

Pancake Pack

Student Team: Matteo Mazziliano, Emma Powers, Henry Wright, and Kyle Zheng

Professor: Joongmin Shin, Ph.D., Associate Professor

School: California Polytechnic State University (Cal Poly)

ELIGIBILITY
Students currently enrolled in a FPA academic member institution, and studying package engineering, chemical engineering, printing, packaging design, food science or a related discipline may enter the FPA *Student Flexible Packaging Design Challenge*. Students may enter independently or as a team. Students may also work under the guidance of their professors/schools and with FPA members as mentors.

ENTRIES
Any flexible package prototype or bench sample that addresses a packaging issue and advances flexible packaging will be accepted. A flexible package is any package whose shape can be readily changed when filled. The package design can include plastic film, paper, or foil, or any combination of these materials.

The package entry can be an improvement over an existing flexible package; represent a conversion from another package structure to a flexible package; convert a non-flexible package into a flexible package; implement a special printing, technical or sustainability feature; or package a product that is not currently packaged in flexible packaging.

There is no limit to the number of entries a student or team may submit.

ENTRY PROCESS
The entry process involves 3 steps.

1. Completion of the *General Information Request*, which should be submitted at the same time as the Concept Outline.
2. Submission of the Concept Outline via an email sent to ddiehlmann@flexpack.org.
3. Once the Concept Outline is approved by a panel of industry experts, students may send in their prototype/bench sample with the ***Written Defense*** and the ***video presentation.***

CONCEPT OUTLINE
Prior to sending the bench sample or prototype, a Concept Outline must be submitted for evaluation and approval by a panel of industry experts. When the Concept Outline is approved, students may then send in their prototype/bench sample.

ENTRY FEE
There is no entry fee.

PACKAGE DEVELOPMENT
Students may work with their schools and FPA members in the development of the package. At the student's request, FPA will partner the student with an appropriate FPA member who will act as a mentor and assist in the development of the package.

Package prototypes or bench samples must be accompanied by a written defense of the design and structure. The defense must include a description of the package that follows the criteria outlined in the **Entry Form** on page 3.

VIDEO PRESENTATION
When a concept has been accepted, students must submit a video with a maximum length of 4 minutes aimed at the consumer and promoting the innovation demonstrated by the package. The video is critically important in defending your concept and should be used to "sell" the concept to the judges. It should also include why your concept is better than the current packaging, the sustainability benefits, and the feasibility of the production. FPA mentors will help guide the student teams if requested.

PROPRIETARY INFORMATION
Proprietary information and development ideas will be held in strict confidence by FPA, member mentors, and the judges. Students should consider submitting a patent application to protect their intellectual property.

ENTRY EVALUATION
The entries will be judged by a panel of experts from the packaging industry, including technical and marketing experts.

DEADLINES
March 25, 2026: **Deadline for Concept**

Around April 1, 2026: **Concept Approval Notification**

April 30, 2026: **Deadline for Prototype/ Bench Sample, Written Defense, and Video Presentation**

Around May 15, 2026: **Winner Announcement**

AWARDS
Students may compete individually or as teams. Each first-place participant will receive at least $500, and each second-place participant will receive at least $250. An additional honorary award will be presented for "Best Video." The winning team will also receive a sponsorship for a team representative to attend the FPA 2027 Annual Meeting.

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2025 Student Flexible Packaging Design Challenge Honorable Mention

Bounce® Dryer Sheets Resealable Pouch

Student Team: Maddy Cook, Sam Rosa, and Cole Teeple

Professor: Kyle Dunno, Department Chair and Associate Professor

Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT)

2025 Student Flexible Packaging Design Challenge Honorable Mention

GoGlow: Single Serving Skincare

Student Team: Devin Blish, Edison Chow, Paulina Goncharov, and Maya Harris

Professor: Joongmin Shin, Ph.D., Associate Professor

School: California Polytechnic State University (Cal Poly)

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STUDENT FLEXIBLE PACKAGING DESIGN CHALLENGE

ENTRY FORM

GENERAL INFORMATION REQUEST

The following general information must be provided with your Concept Outline(s) and prototype/bench sample. Students working with a team must submit the information for ALL team members:

1. Student's Name (all team members)
2. Student's Permanent Address, Phone, and Email
3. Student's School
4. Supervising Professor
5. Professor's Email Address

CONCEPT OUTLINE

The package concept should address a package issue, such as consumer or product protection, safety or security, or consumer health or convenience. The package concept should advance the use of flexible packaging and make an improvement over an existing flexible package; convert a non-flexible package into a flexible package; convert a non-flexible package into a flexible package; implement a special printing, technical or sustainability feature; or package a product that is not currently packaged in flexible packaging. **Please provide a description of the packaging issue(s) this package will address in a narrative of up to 2,000 words.** The concept should be very detailed.

1. Please remember that your concept **MUST** be for a flexible package. The description of the package concept should include the materials to be used, the structure, and the design of the package.
2. Please submit your concept by March 25, 2026, by emailing it to **ddiehlmann@flexpack.org**.
3. Students will be notified around April 1, 2026, if their concept has been approved so they can advance to the next stage of the Challenge.

WRITTEN DEFENSE FOR THE BENCH SAMPLE OR PROTOTYPE USED FOR JUDGING AND VIDEO PROPOSAL

Once you have been notified that your Concept Outline has been approved, you may send in your prototype/bench sample. Please use the following questions as guidance in writing the defense of your entry and the video presentaion. Please answer the applicable questions. Not all questions will apply to every package. These questions constitute the criteria for which your entry will be judged.

1. Name of the package (package name can describe the structure or the product it will contain).
2. What societal and/or sustainability issue(s) does your submission help to solve, and how does it solve it?
3. Does this submission replace or improve an existing package, or does it package or create a new product (such as bagged salad) or product that is not currently packaged?
4. To what extent does the package represent an innovative or technical solution?
5. Does the package represent new or improved graphics due to printing techniques, substrates, or design?
6. Does the package provide an enhanced solution to the product packaging requirements for package construction, filling, and distribution?
7. What technical achievement does this package represent?
8. Are there environmental advantages to this package?
9. How will this package advance the use of flexible packaging?
10. Are there other enhancements that contribute to the excellence of this package?
11. Can this package be constructed on existing flexible packaging machinery? Can it be mass produced? If not, what modifications would have to be made to enable mass production?
12. Based on the answers to the questions above, please provide a 100-word summary description of this package to be used for promotional purposes.

SUBMISSION OF ENTRY

Your written defense and video should be sent electronically to ddiehlmann@flexpack.org.
Please submit your package sample, video, and written defense no later than April 30, 2026, to:

FPA Student Flexible Packaging Design Challenge
185 Admiral Cochrane Drive, Suite 105, Annapolis, MD 21401