

Entry Kit

U.S. Brand Challenge

Spring 2026



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WELCOME

The Effie Collegiate US program inspires, educates, and engages tomorrow's marketers by providing students nationwide with the opportunity to design marketing strategies that address business challenges for brands.

For over a decade, the Effie Collegiate US program has partnered with top brands like Bose, IBM, MINI, Subaru, Target, V8, Amazon and more, to challenge students.

We are pleased to announce that we will be collaborating with UNA-USA for the 2026 Effie Collegiate US Brand Challenge!

2026 BRAND CHALLENGE PRESENTED BY:



UNA*USA

UNA-USA is challenging students to design a culturally relevant campaign that shows young adults how UNA-USA improves lives and communities across America every day.

A jury of marketers from across the Effie Collegiate US network, representing agencies, brands, and media, will evaluate all qualifying entries. Selected finalists will be invited to pitch their ideas in person to the UNA-USA brand team in Spring 2026.

2026 TIMELINE

JANUARY - MARCH

CALL FOR ENTRIES

APRIL 1

ENTRY DEADLINE

All entries must be submitted via the Effie Collegiate US entry portal.

APRIL 7

JUDGING STARTS

Three rounds of judging will occur to determine finalists.

MAY 5

ENTRY STATUS NOTIFICATIONS

Competition status notifications and judge feedback.

MAY 20-21

FINALIST PRESENTATIONS (TBC)

ELIGIBILITY

WHO CAN ENTER

The competition is open to those enrolled full/part-time at an accredited U.S. college/university or educational institution. This includes undergraduate/graduate students and those enrolled in portfolio and/or online programs. International students that have valid visas are also eligible to participate. If you have any questions, please email effiecollegiateus@effielions.org.

TEAM COMPOSITION

Entries must be submitted by a team of two to four individuals. Teams may not exceed four individuals. Team members are not required to attend the same school. All concepts must be the original work of the students. Participants are encouraged to seek the advice and guidance of professors, instructors and/or faculty advisors.

RESTRICTIONS

All entrants must be at least 18 years of age, legal residents of the United States, an international student with a valid visa, and cannot be an employee or immediate family member living in the same household as an employee of (1) UNA-USA (2) Effie LIONS Foundation (3) any brand/company that is a direct competitor to UNA-USA, its brand(s) or subsidiaries. (4) UNA-USA's marketing/advertising and/or promotion agencies, or (5) marketing/advertising or promotion agencies that represent UNA-USA's direct competitors. Excluding internships, students may not be active employees of clients, agencies, or media companies. The competition is void where prohibited and subject to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations as well as the official competition rules, regulations, and procedures.

MONETARY AWARDS

In addition to being invited to pitch their ideas to the brand team, selected finalist teams will receive monetary awards. UNA-USA will generously award the following monetary awards per team:

First place:	\$5,000.00 USD
Runner up:	\$4,000.00 USD
One honorable mention (at UNA-USA's sole discretion):	\$1,000.00 USD

Monetary awards are subject to information reporting rules. Therefore, winners will receive a form by the statutory due date of 1/31/2027. Winners are solely responsible for all federal, state & local income taxes on their prize. **Winners must supply a fully completed, signed & dated W-9 form** to Effie LIONS Foundation to collect their monetary awards.

CODE OF CONDUCT

All entrants will accept and acknowledge this Code of Conduct when they register their [Intent to Enter](#). Entrants who have concerns regarding compliance with the competition code of conduct please email effiecollegiateus@effielions.org

Entrants (professors and students) of the 2026 Effie Collegiate US x UNA-USA Brand Challenge and those supporting them agree:

- To submit materials (the written case and creative reel/images) that are the original work of the entering team.
- To be clear and transparent about tools and processes used in creation of the original work if relevant.
- To act in the best interests of UNA-USA, the Effie LIONS Foundation and its constituents.
- To act honestly, fairly, ethically and with integrity.
- To conduct themselves in a professional, courteous and respectful manner.
- To comply with all rules and regulations of the competition.
- To act in a manner to enhance and maintain the reputation of UNA-USA and the Effie LIONS Foundation.
- To disclose potential conflicts of interest that they may have while entered in the competition.
- To respect the confidentiality of information (for UNA-USA, the Effie LIONS Foundation and the Effie Collegiate US Competition) as outlined in the [Non-Disclosure Agreement \(NDA\)](#) signed by all participants.
The NDA applies to confidential UNA-USA, Effie LIONS Foundation and Effie Collegiate US Competition information acquired during and after the competition, except when authorized by UNA-USA and Effie LIONS Foundation in writing, or legally required to disclose such information.
- Not to use information acquired in the course of service for personal advantage or disservice to UNA-USA and/or Effie LIONS Foundation.
- To properly source and attribute any data or information that is the original work of the authors directly on the submitted materials, using best in class industry sourcing and attribution standards.
- To abide by all copyright, trademark and intellectual property rules as well as industry marketing standards.
- To avoid including any content in your written entry or creative materials that is illegal, offensive, harmful, or that violates the rights or privacy of others.
- To credit all main strategic and creative team members who contributed to the entry.
- To abide by the decision of the competition.

STEPS TO ENTER

1. REGISTER YOUR INTENT TO ENTER

Both professors and students must complete the registration and acknowledge the [Effie Collegiate US Code of Conduct](#) via the checkbox on the [Intent to Enter](#).

2. SIGN THE NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT (NDA)

To protect the confidentiality of the client brief, all participants (students and professors) must provide Effie Collegiate US with a signed NDA.

Once the [Intent to Enter](#) and NDA are completed, the client brief (in the form of a password-protected PDF) will be shared via email.

[Sign the Non-Disclosure Agreement here.](#)

3. REVIEW CLIENT BRIEF & ENTRY MATERIALS

The client brief will provide full details on the challenge, including UNA-USA brand guidelines/style guide. Work with your team to conduct research, create your campaign, and determine the potential outcomes of your work.

You should begin crafting your entry using the [Entry Form Template](#), which will allow for easy collaboration among your team. Review the [Effective Entry Guide](#) for guidance.

4. SUBMIT YOUR WORK IN THE ENTRY PORTAL

Your responses to the entry form, creative examples, and research must be uploaded to the [Entry Portal](#). There are additional requirements, beyond the scope of what judges evaluate, that are outlined in the [Entry Portal](#). Please begin working in the portal in advance of the entry deadline (April 1st) to ensure you have time to complete all the requirements.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Entries have two parts: the written entry and the creative reel/images. Judges review the written entry form and the creative materials when assessing how well each team addressed the client’s challenge. Additionally, research requirements, team credits, [Release & Waiver of Liability](#) and [Competition Terms](#) are all required in the [Entry Portal](#). All parts of the entry must be complete to submit your entry in the portal. If your entry is incomplete, you will be unable to submit.

ENTRY FORM TEMPLATE

Thoroughly review the client brief and address all elements of the challenge within your entry form. Answer all the questions in the entry form, including the detailed instructions outlined within each question. Responses should be clear, concise and provided in a way that is easy to read and ties together.

Sourcing Data

All data, claims, facts, etc. included anywhere in the entry form must include a specific, verifiable source. Entries that do not source data will be disqualified. Be as specific as possible in documenting all evidence; provide sources of data, the research involved, and the time frame covered.

[Download the Entry Form Template here.](#)

1. CREATIVE & MEDIA EXAMPLES

All entries must include a minimum of three creative executions using three touchpoints. Refer to the client brief for further requirements.

Note: UNA-USA’s logos, and any creative assets provided, are only to be used for this competition. Creative executions should only be viewed by members of the submitting team, focus groups, faculty/professors, etc.

Public distribution of creative executions that include UNA-USA’s branding elements will result in automatic disqualification.

Creative Reel (4 minutes max)

Entrants must submit a creative compilation displaying the creative that brought the big idea to life, as outlined in Questions 3A-3B on the entry form. Creative and communication elements must directly relate to your strategic objectives outlined in Section 1: Challenge, Context & Objectives. Show the “how-when-where” of how you plan to connect with your target audience.

- Participants should not use unlicensed music, videos, or images
Stock/Free images/music are permissible
- Judges will expect to see any creative/communication elements discussed in the strategic brief/entry form on the reel
- 4 min maximum. 280 MB max., mp4 format.

Creative Samples

To provide judges with a better view of your work, we request that you upload still images of print, direct mail, social media examples, webpages (screenshots), flyers, etc. into the entry portal. You may only upload creative examples that are included in your creative reel.

Images: 5 MB max., .jpg/.jpeg format, **1 image required**, 8 images max.

- Radio Executions: 30 seconds max., 15-second cut down recommended. The script must be provided in the entry portal.

2. RESEARCH FINDINGS

As the first step in development of the campaign/effort, it is essential to gain an in-depth understanding of what the target audience currently believes and thinks of the issues/barriers. By conducting exploratory research, entrants should be able to identify key insights and motivators for changing attitudes, perceptions, and/or behaviors within the target audience. This research will help in the development of the strategy and creative efforts. Research and testing through focus groups, interviews, ethnographies, or observation is strongly encouraged. **A minimum of two primary research sources are required.**

Participants are also encouraged to test creative concepts to make sure the message is clear and well-received by the target audience. On the Research tab in the [Entry Portal](#), you will need to indicate all types of research used for your submission, .xls/.pdf files showing your research, and (optionally) any footage from your research (e.g. focus group video).

3. CREDIT INFORMATION

To ensure all members of your team receive proper credit for their contribution to your work, ensure each team member is listed correctly on the "Team Credits & Waivers" tab in the [Entry Portal](#).

4. RELEASE & WAIVER OF LIABILITY

All team members must sign a release of all entered materials to UNA-USA as part of the submission process. By entering the competition, all participants agree that all ideas expressed in written, or presentation form become the property of UNA-USA for any use whatsoever, without compensation of any sort to any person in perpetuity. This form will be uploaded on the "Team Credits & Waivers" tab in the [Entry Portal](#).

5. PUBLICITY MATERIALS

The below materials should be uploaded to the “Publicity Materials” tab in the [Entry Portal](#).

Publicity Image

For website and social media purposes, provide a single image from one of your creative executions that best reflects your work.

School Logo

Please provide a high-res school logo to be used for website and social media purposes.

Team Photo

Should your work be selected as a finalist, Effie Collegiate US would like to acknowledge your team on our website and social channels. When providing a team photo, you consent for this photo to be used for publicity materials. Providing a team photo is optional at time of entry.

REASONS FOR DISQUALIFICATION

Effie Collegiate US reserves the right to disqualify submissions that do not follow entry rules.

- **Data is missing a specific source.**
All data, claims, facts etc. presented anywhere in the entry form must reference a specific, verifiable source. Use footnotes to source your data, as well as the sourcing boxes provided in the entry portal.
- **Entry does not include two primary research sources.**
Entries must clearly indicate at least two primary research sources during their responses to the written entry form.
- **Not enough information.**
Written responses do not adequately address the questions and/or creative work discussed in the entry form is not provided as examples.
- **Violating creative & media requirements.**
Publicly displaying creative executions using UNA-USA trademarks. Failing to follow minimum requirements for the creative examples.
- **Disregarding brand guidelines.**
Entry does not adhere to UNA-USA brand guidelines and/or includes creative executions that use unauthorized brand logos.
- **Violation of the NDA.**
Effie reserves the right to assess a penalty, disqualify, reclaim any and all awards and for any team found to be in violation of the NDA.

Due to the volume of entries and expedited judging timeline, Effie Collegiate US reserves the right to disqualify entries that do not adhere to competition timelines.

JUDGING

Experienced marketing professionals of various disciplines, representing brands, agencies, platforms, and media companies, will judge qualifying entries.

PROCESS

All elements of an entry - written case and creative elements - are scored anonymously and confidentially. Judges recommend entries for advancement that they consider finalist worthy. As each entry is evaluated, judges provide constructive feedback. This feedback is later provided to qualifying entrants and their professors if applicable.

Judges will evaluate submissions against Effie’s Framework for Marketing Effectiveness, which consists of the following outlined in the [Effective Entry Guide](#).

CHALLENGE, CONTEXT & OBJECTIVES

(Entry Form - Question 1A - 1C)..... 25%

INSIGHTS & STRATEGY

(Entry Form - Question 2A - 2B)25%

BRINGING THE STRATEGY & IDEA TO LIFE

(Entry Form - Question 3A - 3B + Creative Examples) 25%

MEASUREMENT METHODOLOGY (RESULTS)

(Entry Form - Question 4A - 4C)..... 25%

Three rounds of judging occur before finalists are determined.

Round One: Independent Judging

Online judging serves as a preliminary review to the group judging sessions. Judges from around the country evaluate entries independently via the online judging portal.

Round Two: Group Judging

Based on the scores and recommendations from round one, select entries advance to round two. Judges review the work in group setting but still score independently.

After each entry is reviewed, the judges engage in a brief discussion before finalizing their scores.

Semi-Finalist Review

Based on the results from prior judging sessions, top submissions will be recommended to UNA-USA. Members of UNA-USA 's brand team will evaluate the semi-finalists and select two finalist teams.

Finalists

Selected finalists will be invited to present their ideas to UNA-USA 's team in late May of 2026, in person. Once presentation dates are confirmed all entrants will be notified via email. Travel and lodging expenses for students will be covered by the brand.

FINALIST INFORMATION

Finalists will be notified of their status via phone. Effie LIONS Foundation will coordinate travel arrangements for student teams. Flight and lodging expenses for students will be covered by the brand. All details including the agenda and presentation instructions will be sent to finalists days prior to the presentation.

Upon entering the competition, all participants agree to respect the confidentiality of information, as set forth in the Non-Disclosure Agreement, relating to competition assets and confidential data/materials. Competition assets and confidential data/materials may not be disclosed any to any third party publicly, whether through oral, written, electronic, or any other means, without written consent from UNA-USA and the Effie LIONS Foundation. This includes, but is not limited to any winner, finalist and/or semi-finalist announcements. Creative materials for all entrants may only be shared privately as part of a portfolio with a protected password.

Should you be chosen as a finalist and/or winner, you agree to adhere to the regulations set forth by UNA-USA during and after the competition, which include but are not limited to the Non-Disclosure Agreement and the Release Waiver.

Finalists must agree to use strict measures to protect confidentiality and avoid disclosure and/or unauthorized use of any confidential information after the competition. Creative materials may not be shared publicly on any platform without UNA-USA 's written consent.

Announcements: Winners can use the public announcement posts of winners by the Effie LIONS Foundation at the end of the competition. No other public announcement / press release can be made without review and written approval by UNA-USA and the Effie LIONS Foundation. Any University press release requires UNA-USA and the Effie LIONS Foundation's written approval before public display regardless of winner status. The approval process typically spans a minimum of three weeks.

Email effiecollegiateus@effielions.org with any questions.

ABOUT

UNA-USA

The United Nations Association of the USA (UNA-USA) is a grassroots movement of more than 23,000+ supporters living in the United States who believe that our interests and values are best advanced by standing with the only global institution with human rights at its core: the United Nations.

Through our mission to Educate, Inspire, and Mobilize, UNA-USA empowers and emboldens members to advocate for a strong US-UN partnership in their communities, on campuses, and in Congress. With over 230 chapters and a membership that is 70% under age 26, UNA-USA acts as a force multiplier, equipping young leaders with the skills and knowledge to champion the UN's global vision.

To learn more visit: www.unausa.org

About the Effie LIONS Foundation

The Effie LIONS Foundation is a global not-for-profit committed to building a more creative and effective marketing industry for everyone by empowering future talent through education, experiences, and unparalleled access. The Foundation is headquartered in New York City and is led by CEO, Allison Knapp Womack.

To learn more visit: www.effielions.org

