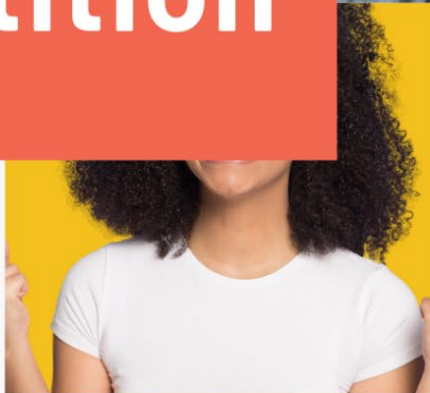


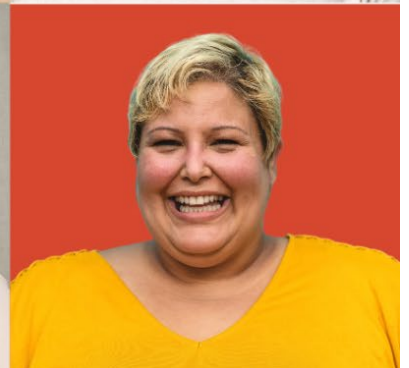


# Protégé Competition

PROGRAM MANUAL



**Your guide** to  
managing the  
CUxEL Protégé  
Competition



# **CUxEL Protégé Program Manual**

I. [Program Mission & Overview](#)

II. [Program Structure](#)

III. [Rules & Regulations](#)

IV. [Program Timeline](#)

V. [Competition Components](#)

VI. [Scoring Procedures](#)

[VI.A Tie-Breaker Procedures](#)

[VI.B Tie-Breaker Clause](#)

VII. [Awards](#)

## I. Program Mission & Overview

Common concerns of increasing urgency to credit unions are the appeal to young people and development of promising individuals. Inspired by the Pennsylvania Credit Union Association's Youth Ambassador Program, the SC Credit Union League launched the Palmetto Protégé Competition in 2010 to address this growing concern.

Following the consolidation of the NC Credit Union League and SC Credit Union League, the Protégé program was rebranded and placed under the direction of the CUaware Leadership Council in 2014. It was again rebranded under the emerging leader initiative in 2023 as CUxEL Protégé.

Now the **CUxEL Protégé Competition**, the mission continues to recognize the value and potential in rising professionals age 40 and under; enhance chapter programming and credit union interest; and support CUxEL and the League's investment in developing leadership.

Participation from the chapter system elevates the visibility of credit union history, philosophy, and cooperation in a process that ultimately names a chapter representative to the competition finals, where the CUxEL Protégé is chosen. Participants gain greater credit union knowledge, networking experience, creative experience, and presentation skills.

## II. Program Structure

### **First – Interested Candidates will complete the Protégé application.**

Each interested candidate should prepare for the Protégé program by selecting a speech topic from the designated Speech Topics List and complete their application form which includes a short essay prompt, which is predetermined each year. Applications should first be submitted to their credit union leadership for next steps.

### **Second – One representative from each credit union is identified.**

Participating credit unions may select one representative to compete at the chapter level competition. Representatives may be chosen directly by leadership or by using an internal competition process that mimics the chapter-level competition. This is highly dependent upon internal interest and credit union resources. Credit union candidates may only compete within one chapter-level competition. Once a candidate has been selected, their completed application should be submitted directly to the chapter board members.

### **Third – Each Chapter will determine one finalist.**

Chapters will host a competition during a chapter meeting event for all credit union candidates that fall within their respective designated areas. All candidates will have their essays pre-scored by the panel of judges. At the chapter event, candidates will then deliver their presentation to the event attendees. All judging will be conducted by impartial parties. One candidate per chapter will be determined to proceed to the finals' competition.

### **Fourth – Finals competition at LAUNCH**

CCUL's annual LAUNCH Conference will host the Protégé Finals Competition. Candidates will begin the finals competition process by participating in a scored, virtual interview conducted by an esteemed industry professional in the weeks leading up to the LAUNCH Conference. Then, candidates will attend LAUNCH and deliver their presentation once again to attendees and a distinguished panel of judges. The scoring from the interview will be combined with the presentation scoring to determine a first, second, and third place winner.

### III. Rules and Regulations

1. Contestants must be at least 18 years of age and no more than 40 years of age throughout the entirety of the program.
2. **Contestants must belong to a League-affiliated credit union** and must be sponsored by a chapter that has provided equal opportunity for all its member credit unions to participate in the competition.
3. **All essays, oral presentations, and visual materials used as part of the CUxEL Protégé Competition must reflect original work, ideas, and preparation of the participant.** The use of AI tools is permitted solely for minor mechanical functions and may not be used to rewrite, enhance or suggest substantive content. Any detected misuse or overuse of AI tools may result in disqualification at any stage of the competition.
4. Each participating credit union may be represented by only one (1) contestant.
  - a. Winners of any credit union competition automatically become eligible for a chapter competition, provided all rules have been properly observed and the chapter has agreed to host a competition.
  - b. Credit unions that operate in multiple chapters may choose at their discretion to have their candidate participate in *either* 1) the chapter where the nominee works *or* 2) in the chapter where the headquarters of the credit union is located.
  - c. Each credit union will be responsible for its candidate's expenses in connection with the chapter competition.
5. **Chapter contests may be held from August 1<sup>st</sup> through December 6<sup>th</sup>.**
  - a. Each eligible chapter may be represented only by one (1) contestant in the finals.
  - b. Each chapter must submit a Chapter Participation Form to CCUL, prior to hosting their event, indicating that they plan to sponsor a competition.
  - c. Chapters must provide written notice to every credit union in the chapter that a contest will be held. Notice must be sent no later than **30 days** prior to the chapter's scheduled competition date.
  - d. Chapter winners become eligible for the finals, provided all rules have been properly observed.
6. Staff members of the League are prohibited from serving as judges during any chapter or finals-level Protégé competitions.

## Rules and Regulations – *Continued*

7. Each sponsoring chapter must determine their winner no later than December 6<sup>th</sup>. Chapters must submit the following to the CUxEL Protégé Coordinators at [development@carolinasleague.org](mailto:development@carolinasleague.org):
  - a. A copy of the chapter winner's application form
  - b. A copy of the winner's signed photo release form; and
  - c. A print-quality color photograph (digital 300 dpi, jpeg, or minimum size of 4" x 6") of your chapter protégé.
8. The chapter accepts primary responsibility for its winning candidate's expenses and may seek assistance from the winner's sponsoring credit union. Expenses for participation in the finals will include:
  - a. Conference registration;
  - b. Hotel accommodations; and
  - c. Meals and mileage/gas reimbursement (or stipend)
9. Protégé finalists are expected to be in attendance for the LAUNCH Conference and Protégé Finals Competition every day.
10. Finalists may be asked to select an alternative speech topic if the same option has been identified under three or more finalists in a given year.
11. Visual materials are optional. If a slideshow is used, it must be saved and shared as a .pptx file format.
12. The winner of the finals will hold the title of CUxEL Protégé (unless revoked for cause) for one year, until a successor is selected during the following year's finals competition. Awards will be presented to the CUxEL Protégé, First Runner-Up and Second Runner-up.
13. Individuals receiving the title of the CUxEL Protégé become ineligible to re-enter future contests.
  - a. All other participants, including the first and second runners-up, may not compete during the immediately following year. After skipping one year, they may compete again, after repeating the process of being sponsored by a credit union and a chapter.
14. If for any reason the CUxEL Protégé should be unable to complete their one-year term, the title will be passed to the First Runner-up. If the First Runner-up is unable to serve, the title will pass to the Second Runner-up.
15. Employees and directors of the Carolinas Credit Union League and its affiliated organizations, and members of their immediate families are ineligible to participate.

## IV. Program Timeline

### **First Week of July: Protégé Program Kick-off**

- Participant materials become available on the CUxEL Protégé homepage
- Marketing materials are shared with Chapter Board Officials

### **August 1: Chapter Participation Commitment Deadline**

- All chapters must submit their Chapter Participation Form no later than August 1<sup>st</sup>

### **August 1 – December 6: Credit Union and Chapter-Level Competitions**

- Credit unions and their staff are recommended to reach out to their chapter board officials to alert them of a potential chapter-level candidate.
- Credit unions and their staff can monitor chapter events by visiting the online [Chapter Meetings & Events Calendar](#)
- All candidates must adhere to chapter deadlines

### **December 6: All Chapters identify their Chapter Finalist**

- Chapters must submit all required materials to CCUL by December 6<sup>th</sup> of the given program year. Materials may be sent to: [development@carolinaleague.org](mailto:development@carolinaleague.org)

### **December 15: Study Guide Materials**

- A study guide will be sent to all finalist candidates no later than December 15<sup>th</sup> of the given program year in preparation for the finals' interview round.

### **January 1 – 30: Virtual Interview Rounds**

- Each finalist candidate will participate in a private virtual interview for judging

### **February: LAUNCH Conference & Protégé Finals Competition**

- Please refer to the current year's event promotion for dates and further details.

## V. Competition Components

### **Credit Union and Chapter-Level**

#### **1. Essay**

Credit union knowledge will be determined through a one-page essay, completed as part of the application process. The same pre-determined essay question will be asked of all candidates, and the judges will assess the applicants' understanding of the subject as well as writing skills.

#### **2. Oral Presentation**

Each contestant will be asked to present a five-minute speech on a credit union subject selected from a League-provided list. PowerPoint is not required.

### **Finals Competition**

#### **1. Interview**

Each contestant will participate in a private, virtual interview with one (1) industry professional. This interview will act as a testament of the finalists' credit union knowledge, personality, and ability to communicate. The selected industry professional will act as the sole judge for all interviews within a given year.

#### **2. Oral Presentation**

Each contestant will be asked to present a five-minute speech on a credit union subject selected from a League-provided list. PowerPoint is not required.

## VI. Scoring Procedures

### Credit Union and Chapter-Level

- 1. Credit Union Knowledge (Essay) – 20%** (20 points)
  - a. Comprehensive thoughts
  - b. Original voice
  - c. Grammar
- 2. Ability to Communicate – 50%** (25 points)
  - a. Organized and focused
  - b. Careful planning and research
  - c. Prompt is answered
  - d. Speaking pace
  - e. Time limit
- 3. Personality – 30%** (15 points)
  - a. Audience engagement
  - b. Focus
  - c. Confidence

### Finals Level

- 1. Interview – 20%** (25 points)
  - a. Clarity of thought
  - b. Professional Presence
  - c. Understanding of Credit Union Philosophy
  - d. Reasoning & Judgement
  - e. Time Management
- 2. Ability to Communicate – 50%** (25 points)
  - a. Organized and focused
  - b. Careful planning and research
  - c. Prompt is answered
  - d. Speaking pace
  - e. Time limit
- 3. Personality – 30%** (15 points)
  - a. Audience engagement
  - b. Focus
  - c. Confidence

## Scoring Procedures – *Continued*

- Each scored item within a category uses a 1 – 5 scoring model, allowing for quarter decimals to be used. (4.25, 3.75, 5.0, etc.)
- Timekeeper scoring for the oral presentations will be determined as follows:
  - o 5/Excellent: 4:00-6:00
  - o 3/Average: 3:00-3:59 or 6:01-7:00
  - o 0/Forfeit: *less than 3:00 or more than 7:00*

### VI.A. Tie Breaker Procedures

Awards are presented to first (1st), second (2nd), and third (3rd) place finalists. Exactly three (3) finalists shall be recognized each competition year. The following procedures shall apply in the event of a tie:

1. The Essay/Interview category shall be removed from the tie-break calculation. Only the ‘Ability to Communicate’ and ‘Personality’ categories will be used in determining the winner(s).
2. The scores for the remaining two categories will be recalculated as *total points earned* from the total possible points for those categories. The contestant with the higher points earned shall be ranked higher. Total number of points available for the two categories, assuming a 3-person judging panel, is 120.
3. If a tie persists, the chapter or CCUL may implement additional tie-breaking methods at its discretion.

### VI.B. Tie Breaker Clause

Only one (1) contestant may be recognized in each placement (first, second, or third).

1. **Tie for First (1st) Place:** If a tie occurs for first place, the tie shall be resolved pursuant to Section VI.A. The contestant determined to be ranked higher shall be awarded first (1st) place. The other contestant involved in the tie shall be awarded second (2nd) place. The next highest-ranked contestant shall be awarded third (3rd) place.
2. **Tie for Second (2nd) Place:** If a tie occurs for second place, the tie shall be resolved pursuant to Section VI.A. The contestant determined to be ranked higher shall be awarded second (2nd) place. The other contestant involved in the tie shall be awarded third (3rd) place.
3. **Tie for Third (3rd) Place:** If a tie occurs for third place, the tie shall be resolved pursuant to Section VI.A. The contestant determined to be ranked higher shall be awarded third (3rd) place. No additional finalists will be recognized.

## VII. Awards & Prizes

All participants in the CUxEL Protégé Competition gain enhanced credit union knowledge, positive reinforcement of their value to the movement, and networking via the process and membership in the CUxEL Network.

### CUxEL Protégé Winner & Runners-up

1. Immediate benefit to the CUxEL Protégé and the two runners-ups are a selection of the following developmental scholarships:
    - Southeast Management School (SRCUS)  
One year's registration, **at current value** (requires commitment to three-year program)
    - TalentGuided Professional Coaching Program – Eight counseling sessions, **valued at \$1,400**
    - CCUL Hike the Hill (Washington, DC) – Full participation including airfare and lodging, **valued at \$1,500**
    - Principles & Philosophy Conference + Webinar Network Voucher – Includes conference tuition, two nights lodging, meals, and a \$600 webinar voucher, **valued at \$1,300.**
  
  2. Eligibility to apply for an ambassador role on the CUxEL Council. His or her responsibilities, coordinated by CUxEL, may include:
    - Presentations at various League chapter meetings on his or her background, experience, CUxEL, and the CUxEL Protégé programs;
    - Appearances at 1-2 premier League events during the year as a secondary presenter and CUxEL advocate; and/or
    - Assist in facilitating CUxEL events.
  
  3. Eligibility to apply to the Mentor Program, which pairs emerging leaders with seasoned credit union leaders for a 9-month mentorship that aims to provide valuable cross-cultural impact and career development.
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