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**For Immediate Release**

## **Univ. of Maryland Team Captures First Place in PCI Design Precast Competition**

CHICAGO, March 10, 2025 – The Precast/Prestressed Concrete Institute (PCI) Design Precast pilot competition was a rousing success, with a three-student team from the University of Maryland winning first place. The competition’s goal is to equip architecture students with the knowledge and ability to design a resilient enclosure system using architectural precast concrete.

This is the first PCI competition aimed specifically at collegiate architecture students who are interested in designing with precast concrete. The PCI 2024 Design Precast competition focused on aesthetic design solutions that conform to the fictitious building owner’s design needs and precast concrete production processes. The teams were tasked with designing a total-precast concrete data center with an artistic theme representative of Indianapolis’s culture. The top three teams presented their projects at the 2025 PCI Convention last month in Indianapolis, Ind.

The top three finishing teams were from the University of Maryland’s School of Architecture, Planning & Preservation. The first place team’s building pays homage to the Union Station transportation hub in Indianapolis. The columns on both sides of the building emulate train tracks running across the building to create a sense of connection and continuation. “The biggest thing for me was opening my eyes to what precast concrete, or concrete in general, can do,” said Alexander Bayer, a member of the winning team. “When you start, you think it’s just concrete, until you realize what you can do with it. It’s like adult Legos. Everyone has fun with those!”

“I always thought that an architectural competition would be a wonderful opportunity to bring together precast concrete producers with our students,” said Carlos Barrios Kleiss, associate professor of architecture at Clemson University who spearheaded the competition in its first year. “The competition focuses on the artistic impression architectural precast concrete contributes to our skylines.”

### **2024 Design Precast Top Three Teams**

**First place:** Alexander Bayer, Sasha Duwan, Katarina Patzkowski

**Second place:** Zeina Elchayeb, Oleksandra Poddubska

**Third place:** Brenda Benitez, Wanjiru Duncan, Daniel Zuniga

The 2025 PCI Design Precast Competition opens on June 1.

Photo caption: The winning team in the 2024 PCI Design Precast competition presented their project at the 2025 PCI Convention. From left to right are Alexander Bayer, Katarina Patzkowski, Sasha Duwan, and Michael Carlos Barrios Kleiss, associate professor of architecture at Clemson University. Photo: PCI

### **About PCI**

*Founded in 1954, The Precast/Prestressed Concrete Institute (PCI) is a technical institute for the precast concrete structures and systems industry. PCI develops maintains, and disseminates the Body of Knowledge for the design, fabrication, and construction of precast concrete structures and systems. PCI develops consensus base standards, industry handbooks, quality assurance programs, certification, research and development projects, design manuals, continuing education, and periodical publications. PCI members include precast concrete producers, erectors, suppliers, professional engineers and architects, educators, students, and industry consultants who complement the wide range of knowledge of precast concrete. For more information, visit [pci.org/howprecastbuilds](https://pci.org/howprecastbuilds).*