CRAFTING CLARITY IN CODE

Winning the Pizza Model Challenge was the kind of experience that compresses months of learning into a few intense days

The opportunity arrived through our alumni spotlight. On the third day of the UG-Student Induction Program, our alumnus Aspert Benjamin announced the Pizza Model Challenge on 25/06/2025. His invitation felt like a doorway to explore a little deeper and meet peers beyond our sections, and we were quietly excited to see how far we could stretch ourselves. When the challenge officially commenced on 26/07/2025, that curiosity turned into steady momentum to build and learn together.

We are first-year UG students in B.Sc. Computer Science at Loyola College—our regular classes actually began only on June 23. Our team—Kamalesh, Pragathieswar, and Karthikeyan—formed as a team on the day of the announcement. We come from different classes within the Computer Science Department, and that mix became a gentle uniqueness for us. None of us had prior achievements to point to; this was a first for each of us, both as individuals and as a team. We simply chose to learn together and give our best.

We began with a simple goal: model a pizza in code. Very quickly, we realized we were modeling an entire system end to end. Turning crusts, sauces, cheeses, and toppings into clear classes pushed us to think like product-minded engineers. Every attribute had to map to a real operational decision, from vegan flags to half-and-half topping placement. When the model clicked, the code stopped being a diagram and became working logic that tied decisions to outcomes.

A key moment for us was learning to tell a clear story with technical structure. We practiced explaining how modular classes reduce maintenance, how enums speed up seasonal rollouts, and how well-named options improve accuracy on the line. That practice helped us speak without jargon and handle questions with calm and clarity.

The challenge also stretched our collaboration. We favored clarity over cleverness, chose names any developer could understand at a glance, and kept the model open to change. Under time pressure, we discovered that sustainable design isn't about fancy patterns; it's about simple boundaries that are easy to extend. One idea that shaped our approach was the "has-a" composition principle. We used it to show how a Pizza object composes a Crust, Sauce, Cheese, and Toppings in a clean, testable way. During evaluations, when judges pressed us on half-and-half logic, vegan constraints, and adding new items, we traced each requirement to concrete classes, enums that guard valid states, and clear extension points. Being able to demonstrate how new options could plug in without breaking existing code is, we believe, what helped us get selected. We share this with gratitude, knowing there is still much to learn.

We are very thankful for the support at Loyola College. Our Head of the Department, Dr. J. Jerald Inico, strengthened our technical thinking—especially in shaping UML diagrams and turning requirements into precise models. Our class faculty, Dr. Edison, coordinated us throughout the journey, kept us aligned, and made sure we met every deadline. The Computer Science Department provided steady support, resources, and encouragement that helped

move from ideas to implementation. We are also grateful to alumnus Aspert Benjamin for bringing this challenge to us and creating a space to grow and connect.

Before joining Loyola, our expectation was simple: to find a place where fundamentals are taught clearly and curiosity is encouraged. We arrived a little nervous but hopeful, wanting a strong start and a community that would help us learn the right way. This experience matched that hope and gave us confidence early in our journey.

What we carry forward is a habit of modeling the domain first, then building structures that can grow gracefully as needs evolve. That mindset—along with the confidence to explain choices simply—is the real prize we gained. We leave this experience with more clarity, a stronger foundation, and deep gratitude to everyone who stood with us and turned hard work into results. As a heartfelt bonus, our team received prize money of Rs. 10,000, which we see as encouragement to keep learning with the same steady focus.

A small message to the next batch: start with the basics, name things clearly, and keep your designs open to change. Ask honest questions, be patient with your first drafts, and let feedback sharpen your work. Work with people who think differently from you—it makes the model better and the journey richer.