



AWARDS CRITERIA & SELECTION PROCESS



# 2021 SOAR

TBR | The College System of Tennessee  
Statewide Outstanding Achievement & Recognition Awards

Application can be found online at [tbr.edu/soar](https://tbr.edu/soar)

## STUDENT AWARDS

Student Excellence Award (College of Applied Technology)  
Student Excellence Award (Community College)

## FACULTY AWARDS

Faculty Excellence Award (Community College)  
Faculty Excellence Award (College of Applied Technology)

## STAFF AWARDS

Staff Excellence Award (Community College)  
Staff Excellence Award (College of Applied Technology)

## COLLEGE OF THE YEAR AWARD

Selected from among all community and technical colleges

## PARTNERSHIP AWARD

Selected from among all community and technical colleges

## **TIMELINE:**

The general timeline of events will follow the existing state skills competition:

**Aug. 3:** Revised applications will be available on the SOAR website: [tbr.edu/soar](https://tbr.edu/soar)

**Oct. 12:** Applications will be due to TBR.

### **Virtual Competition Dates:**

**Nov. 13:** Student Interviews, All Regions

**Nov. 20:** Faculty Interviews, All Regions

**Dec. 18:** Staff Interviews, All Regions

**March TBA 2021:** Final SOAR Competition, Nashville, TN

## **Key Considerations**

- You may resubmit past candidates, but letters and support materials should be updated accordingly.
- You are not required to submit a candidate for every category for your institution.
- Please ensure your candidates meet the minimum criteria posted.
- Do not use generic recommendation letters. The letters are a key component that regional judges use for scoring the written materials.
- Prepare your nominees for their interviews in advance. Judges notice clear differences in candidates who had been adequately coached. Nominees should:
  - Be familiar with the TBR System and Workforce Development initiatives.
  - Demonstrate on-campus experience outside of the classroom.
  - Be familiar with the selection criteria and why they were nominated.
  - Dress professionally for their interviews.

# STUDENT EXCELLENCE AWARD SELECTION PROCESS

\*Campuses can decide their process for nomination. All finalists will be required to submit this information to the TBR System Office through an electronic web-based form found online at [tbr.edu/soar](http://tbr.edu/soar).

## Community College

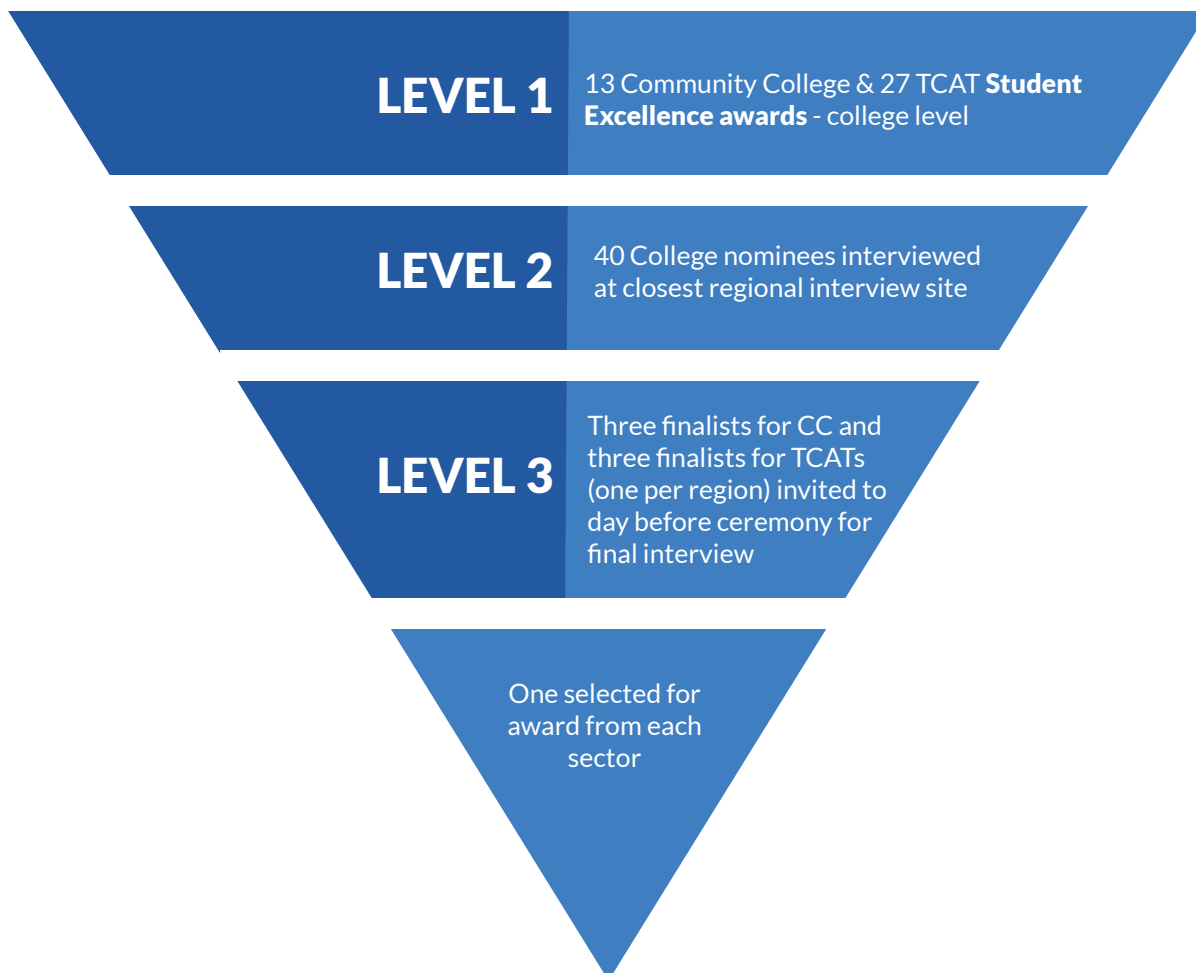
- **LEVEL 1:** Each community college selects one finalist for each award (13 total)
- **LEVEL 2:** Institutional nominees interview at regional site
- **LEVEL 3:** 3 Regional finalists attend the final interview round the day before the awards ceremony in Spring 2021

## Technical College of Applied Technology

- **LEVEL 1:** Each TCAT selects one finalist for each award (27 total)
- **LEVEL 2:** Institutional nominees interview at regional site

*o The state is divided into three regions (West, Middle, East with nine TCATs in each region)*

- **West:** Memphis, Covington, Ripley, Whiteville, Jackson, Newbern, McKenzie, Paris, Crump
  - **Middle:** Hohenwald, Pulaski, Dickson, Shelbyville, Murfreesboro, Nashville, Hartsville, Livingston, McMinnville
  - **East:** Chattanooga, Athens, Crossville, Harriman, Oneida/Huntsville, Jacksboro, Knoxville, Morristown, Elizabethton
- **LEVEL 3:** Regional finalists attend the final interview round before the awards ceremony March TBA, 2021.



## Eligibility Requirements

- Currently enrolled Tennessee Board of Regents students graduating between December 2020 - August 2021 who have been nominated by a faculty or staff member qualify for SOAR awards.
- Students must recognize Tennessee Board of Regents' critical impact on Tennessee's overall workforce readiness and economic future, must have a strong work ethic, a dedicated sense of loyalty and a healthy enthusiasm for promoting education throughout Tennessee.
- Students must be in good standing with their colleges and free from any academic or other "holds" on their college accounts. "Good standing" refers to the student's academic standing, conduct, professionalism on campus and in the community and an outstanding member of the community with good moral character. Each college independently determines specific standards for this requirement. "Holds" refer to any BANNER or other "holds", such as for outstanding parking tickets, advisement requirements, etc., which keep the student from being in good standing with the college.
- Students must be currently enrolled during the college nomination/selection process; however, student may be a recent graduate for the state level finalist interviews. Students' graduation date must be between December 2020-August 2021.
- Students must have completed at least 12 semester hours at the nominating community college at the time of nomination or 450 (earned/projected) clock hours at the nominating technical college by the regional finalist interviews. Note: If they have 12 hours from a previous semester and are only taking one class the spring semester, they are eligible to be nominated.
- Student must be at least 18 years of age.
- Full-time employees of the college or any system office employees who are also enrolled as a student are not eligible for nomination in the awards program.
- Students who otherwise meet eligibility requirements and who are working part-time (20 hours or less) as work study, lab assistants and tutors or students participating in internships are eligible to participate in the awards program.

- Students must fully disclose all prior convictions (regardless of when they occurred) excluding minor traffic violations. Failure to comply may result in disqualification.

## Award Specific Requirements

- CC/TCAT Student Award
  - o The student's overall, cumulative GPA must be at least a 3.3 average to qualify for nomination and must maintain a 3.3 average throughout state competition.
  - o Exhibit exemplary service at institution and throughout community
  - o Exhibit exemplary academic accomplishment during enrollment

## Student Essay Framework

Student 2-page essay should be typed in 12 font, double spaced and uploaded as a PDF to the online web form.

### Essay should be based on these three criteria

#### 1. Career Goals and Commitment to/Knowledge of

**Occupation** – The student has established career goals and can articulate those goals. The student has a passion for his or her field and is knowledgeable about the skills and characteristics that one must possess to be successful in that field.

#### 2. Commitment to/Knowledge of TBR's Education

**Options** – The student understands the value of an education from a TBR Institution, both economically and personally. The student speaks on a TBR institution's potential to both meet the economic needs of the 21st century and better the lives of those receiving it, in either personal or hypothetical terms.

#### 3. Commitment to/Knowledge of the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) system

– The student understands TBR's vision: raise the education and skill levels of Tennesseans through quality programs and services, while providing students with the education and training needed to develop the knowledge and skills to be competitive in the world economy.

## Student Award Definitions of Criteria

**Attendance** – The student attends class, arrives/leaves on time; notifies instructor in advance of planned absences; makes up assignments punctually. The student should have excellent attendance with minimal excused absences, since a student's attendance is an indication of the student's dependability.

**Attitude and Self Confidence** – The student demonstrates a positive attitude, appears self-confident and assured of his/her abilities and has high expectations of his/her self. A positive attitude should be reflected toward the college, other students, instructional staff, administration, career and work. The student should take his or her training seriously and should treat fellow students and college faculty/staff respectfully.

### **Career Goals and Commitment to/Knowledge of**

**Occupation** – The student has established career goals and can articulate those goals. The student has a passion for his or her field and is knowledgeable about the skills and characteristics that one must possess to be successful in that field.

### **Commitment to/Knowledge of Tennessee Board of Regent's Education Options**

– The student understands the value of an education from a TBR Institution, both economically and personally. The student speaks on a TBR institution's potential to both meet the economic needs of the 21st century and better the lives of those receiving it, in either personal or hypothetical terms.

### **Commitment to/Knowledge of the Tennessee Board of Regents system**

– The student understands TBR's vision: raise the education and skill levels of Tennesseans through quality programs and services, while providing students with the education and training needed to develop the knowledge and skills to be competitive in the world economy.

**Communication** – The student displays appropriate verbal and non-verbal skills. The student would be a good choice in advocating on TBR's behalf to the state legislator, governor, business and industry, civic and community organizations. The student is well spoken, confident and clear/concise in his/her communication.

**Enthusiasm** – The student is willing, passionate and wholehearted about promoting TBR's institutions as the best option for post-secondary education.

**Extracurricular Activities** – The student is involved in school activities, such as the student council, clubs/organizations, athletics and community projects as part of a well-balanced life. Extracurricular activities refer to those not required in college. They relate to school, occupational or community involvement.

**Good Moral Character** – The student displays loyalty, honesty, trustworthiness, dependability, reliability, initiative, self-discipline and self-responsibility.

**Leadership/Leadership Qualities** – The student should show initiative in the classroom and other college activities. The student should be one who does more than what is expected and goes the extra mile on an assignment or a project. The student should be highly regarded by other students and be a good role model/influence on fellow classmates.

**Personal Appearance** – The student displays appropriate dress, grooming, hygiene and etiquette.

**Presence** – The student displays charisma, charm, personality and magnetism that would appeal to a wide variety of audiences (community, civic, student, business and industry, legislators).



# FACULTY EXCELLENCE AWARD SELECTION PROCESS

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Award is open to full-time and part-time faculty. To be eligible, a nominee must:

- Have completed at least one year of employment at the institution.
- Be a faculty member who is full-time or adjunct during the 2020-21 academic year.
- Be of any rank (adjunct, lecturer, instructor, assistant, associate, or full professor) and any track (tenure, tenure-eligible or contingent) if applicable.

## Criteria

The foremost criterion for the Excellence Awards is an overall excellence in the responsibilities of a faculty member's specific appointment including teaching, scholarship, service and/or professional activity.

- 1. Teaching:** Teaching excellence remains at the heart of our institutions. Excellent teaching is consistent and sustained, although pedagogies vary from discipline to discipline and school to school. Such diversity teaching enriches our campuses.
- 2. Scholarship:** The Boyer Model is one model used to embrace various forms of quality scholarship, including, but not limited to, scholarship of discovery, integration, application, teaching, and artistic endeavor.
- 3. Service:** Service is also recognized on many levels including service to the department, school, college, profession and community.

Candidates should be able to demonstrate distinction specific to their appointment requirements or beyond if appropriate), reflecting excellence in those area(s). Areas of distinction could also include, but are not limited to:

- Diversity and inclusion initiatives
- Innovations in teaching
- Experiential learning initiatives
- Sustainability initiatives
- Effectively incorporating scholarship into the classroom
- Bringing national recognition to institution or TBR
- Exemplary service to the college, the larger community, and/or discipline

## Faculty Excellence Award Submission Requirements

It is the responsibility of the nominator to gather and submit all required documents. A student nominator, however, may request that this responsibility be given to a faculty member or administrator/staff member. Self-nominations are not eligible.

- Nomination form (to be completed by nominator)  
Curriculum vitae (supplied by the nominee's department chair)
- Three Letters of Support (not to exceed two pages, 12 pt. font)—all letters submitted through online applications as pdf files.
  - a.** One letter from the nominator; any faculty member, administrator/staff member, or student from the college community may nominate an individual for an excellence award.
  - b.** One letter by the nominee's department chair; it is requested that the department chair highlight the specific appointment requirements or expectations (teaching, scholarship, and/or service) of the nominee to enable the committee to adequately review the individual on this basis. If the nominating letter is from the nominee's department chair or the nominee is the department chair, another support letter is required.
  - c.** One letter from an additional individual who supports the recommendation of the nominee for an excellence award; faculty member, administrator/staff member, alumnus/a, student from the college community, or external colleague.

## Community College

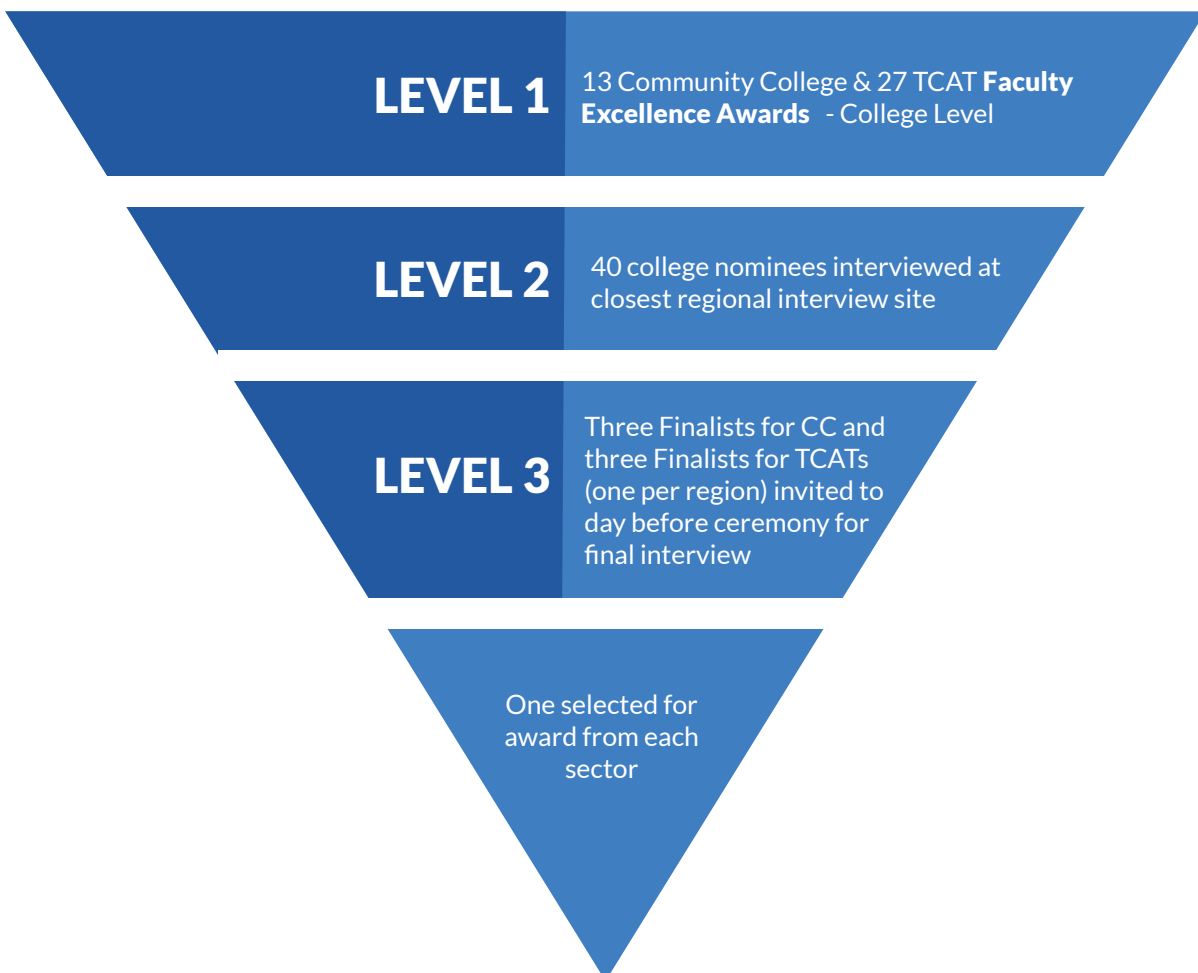
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## Technical College of Applied Technology

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  - **Middle:** Hohenwald, Pulaski, Dickson, Shelbyville, Murfreesboro, Nashville, Hartsville, Livingston, McMinnville
  - **East:** Chattanooga, Athens, Crossville, Harriman, Oneida/Huntsville, Jacksboro, Knoxville, Morristown, Elizabethton
- **LEVEL 3:** Three Regional finalists attend the final interview round before the awards ceremony March TBA, 2021.

It is the responsibility of the nominator to gather and submit all required documents. A student nominator, however, may request that this responsibility be given to a faculty member or administrator/staff member.

- Curriculum vitae (supplied by the nominee's department chair)— upload as a PDF through the online application.
- Three letters of support (not to exceed two pages, 12pt. font):
  - a. One letter from the nominator; any faculty member, administrator/staff member, or student from the College community may nominate an individual for an excellence award.
  - b. One letter by the nominee's department chair; it is requested that the department chair highlight the specific appointment requirements or expectations (teaching, scholarship, and/or service) of the nominee to enable the committee to adequately review the individual on this basis. If the nominating letter is from the nominee's department chair or the nominee is the department chair, another support letter is required.
  - c. One letter from an additional individual who supports the recommendation of the nominee for an excellence award; faculty member, administrator/staff member, alumnus/a, student from the college community, or external colleague.



# STAFF EXCELLENCE AWARD SELECTION PROCESS

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## Award is open to full-time employees. To be eligible, a nominee must:

- Have completed at least one year of employment at the institution.
- Be a non-exempt or exempt employee who is employed full-time during the 2020-21 academic year.
- Be employed at the institution at the time of the final selection.
- In the organizational structure, be at or below the level of associate/assistant vice president (or equivalent).

## Criteria

The foremost criterion for the Excellence Awards is an overall excellence in the responsibilities of a staff member's specific appointment service and/or professional activity.

- Service is also recognized on many levels including service to the department, school, college, profession and community.
- Candidates should be able to demonstrate distinction beyond normal job responsibilities, reflecting excellence in those area(s). Areas of distinction could also include, but are not limited to:
  - Diversity and inclusion initiatives
  - Experiential learning initiatives
  - Sustainability initiatives
  - Effectively supporting student success inside and outside the classroom
  - Bringing national recognition to institution or TBR
  - Exemplary service to the college, the larger community, and/or professional field

## Staff Excellence Award Submission Requirements

It is the responsibility of the nominator to gather and submit all required documents. A student nominator, however, may request that this responsibility be given to an administrator/staff member. Self-nominations are not eligible.

- Nomination form (to be completed by nominator)
- Resume (supplied by the nominee's supervisor)—upload as a PDF.

- Three Letters of Support (not to exceed two pages, 12 pt. font)—all letters submitted through online applications as PDF files.
  - One letter from the nominator; any faculty member, administrator/staff member, or student from the college community may nominate an individual for an excellence award.
  - One letter by the nominee's supervisor; it is requested that the supervisor highlight the specific appointment requirements or expectations of the nominee to enable the committee to adequately review the individual on this basis.
  - One letter from an additional individual who supports the recommendation of the nominee for an excellence award; faculty member, administrator/staff member, alumnus/a, student from the college community, or external colleague.

## Community College

- **LEVEL 1:** Each community college selects one finalist for each award (13 total)
- **LEVEL 2:** Institutional nominees interview at regional site
- **LEVEL 3:** Three regional finalists attend the final interview round before the awards ceremony in Spring 2021

## Technical College of Applied Technology:

- **LEVEL 1:** Each TCAT selects one finalist for each award (27 total)
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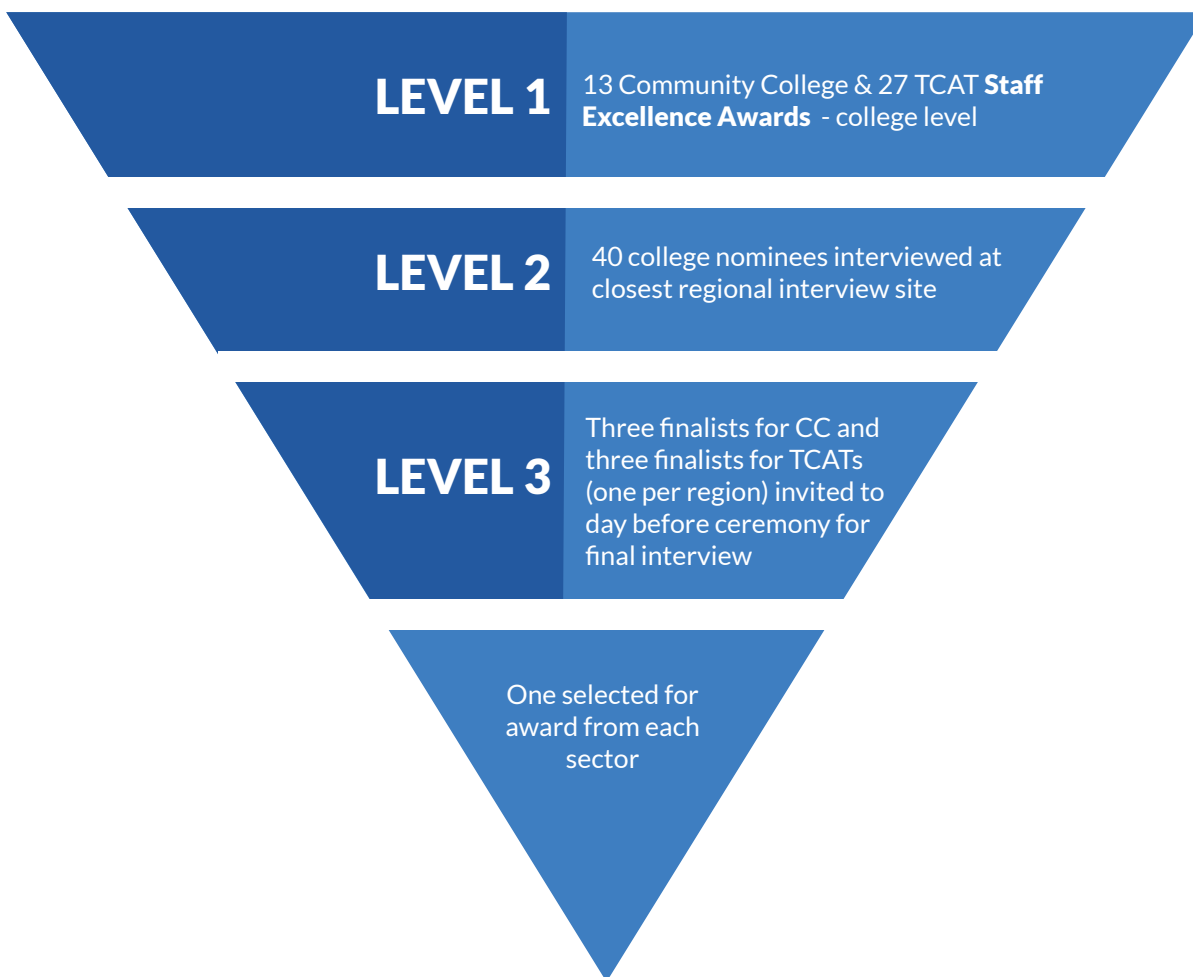


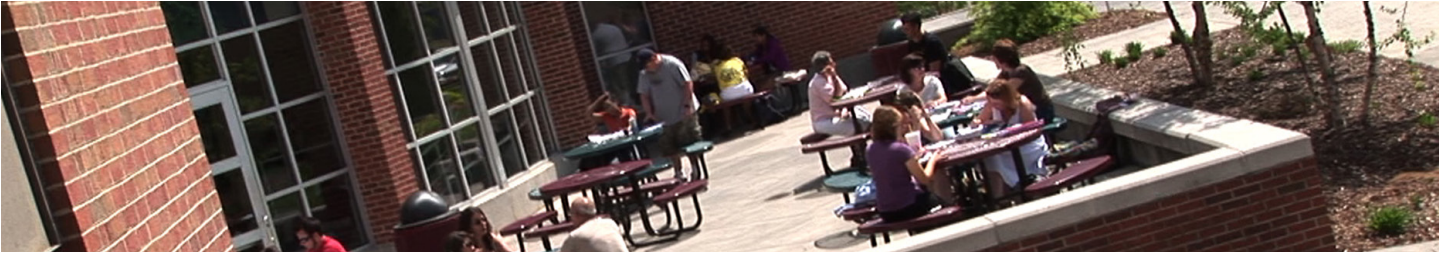
- **LEVEL 3:** Three regional finalists attend the final interview round before the awards ceremony March TBA, 2021.

It is the responsibility of the nominator to gather and submit all required documents. A student nominator, however, may request that this responsibility be given to a faculty member or administrator/staff member.

- Curriculum vitae (supplied by the nominee’s department chair)—upload as a PDF through the online application.
- Three Letters of Support (not to exceed two pages, 12 pt. font)—all letters submitted through online application as PDF files.
  - a. One letter from the nominator; any faculty member, administrator/staff member, or student from the college community may nominate an individual for an excellence award.

- b. One letter by the nominee’s department chair; it is requested that the department chair highlight the specific appointment requirements or expectations (teaching, scholarship, and/or service) of the nominee to enable the committee to adequately review the individual on this basis. If the nominating letter is from the nominee’s department chair or the nominee is the department chair, another support letter is required.
- c. One letter from an additional individual who supports the recommendation of the nominee for an excellence award; faculty member, administrator/staff member, alumnus/a, student from the college community, or external colleague.





## **COLLEGE OF THE YEAR AWARD**

The College of the Year award recognizes the college that has demonstrated, through evidence, a sustained commitment to and proactive advancement of the causes of student success and work force development at their institution.

### **Criteria**

- Has developed a comprehensive, bold and strategic completion plan with a particular focus on addressing existing equity gaps.
- Has achieved measurable and significant increases in:
  - On-time degree completion
  - Certificate completion
  - Transfer rates to either a 2-year or 4-year institution (as applicable)
  - Underrepresented student progression and completion
- Has developed innovative programs that support student success and workforce development in areas such as developmental education, student support services, K-12 partnerships/collaboration, workforce readiness and partnerships.
- Has substantially contributed to the integration of state completion goals and system strategic priority areas across the institution.

### **Selection Process**

The Chancellor, in consultation with members of the system office senior leadership team, will make nominations for the College of the Year Award based on identification of institutions that meet the minimum qualifications listed above. System staff will assess data on the criteria listed and other factors. Finalists will then be discussed by the senior leadership team with a final recommendation made to the Chancellor.

## **PARTNERSHIP AWARD**

The Partnership Award recognizes a TCAT and a Community College (more than 2 institutions in the partnership is allowed) that have demonstrated a new and innovative approach of working across sectors to solve a regional or local problem.

### **Criteria**

- Application demonstrates equal contributions of all parties to identifying solutions to a clearly defined problem.
- The partnership has developed innovative programs that support student success and workforce development.
- The partnership has achieved measurable and significant outcomes that address the defined problem as demonstrated by:
  - Data on improvement in performance of participating institutions, students, and/or graduates.
  - Public relations, media and marketing attention to success of the partnership.
  - Documented collaboration with community and business leaders.
  - Successful application and receipt of grant or external funding.

### **Selection Process**

The partner organizations must individually complete the online application form that includes a letter of support from each institutional president explaining the intent of the partnership and outcomes achieved. In support of the application letters, supporting evidence in the form of data, news releases, media coverage, grant acceptance letters, or third-party recommendation letters must be submitted as part of the application packet. The Chancellor, in consultation with members of the system office senior leadership team, will review applications for the partnership award and review all evidence and documentation submitted with the application.