Writing a Strong Award Nomination

How you describe a candidate's accomplishments and qualities is critical to making a strong impression on the judges. Use these tips to create an effective nomination.

Persuasiveness and Impact

- Review the award criteria and rubric before writing.
- Address every criterion included in the rubric.
- Describe the nominee's specific contributions and achievements.
- Explain:
  - What the nominee did
  - How the nominee contributed to the goal
  - What results were achieved
- Include measurable outcomes whenever possible, such as:
  - Program growth
  - Improved retention
  - Higher graduation rates
  - Increased college enrollment
  - Higher test scores
  - Increased funding
- Explain what makes the nominee unique.
- Describe how the nominee has gone above and beyond expectations.
- Use concrete examples instead of general statements.

Clarity and Conciseness

- Summarize in one sentence why the nominee deserves recognition.
- Keep the nomination focused on the candidate's qualifications.
- Make every word count.
- Remove details that do not directly support the award criteria.
- Organize the application so it is easy to follow.
- Clearly connect each point to the award criteria.
- Use bullet points when appropriate.
- Explain achievements in plain language.
- Avoid unexplained jargon, acronyms, or terms specific to your:
  - Content area
  - Program
  - Career and Technical Student Organization (CTSO)

Professionalism

- Proofread the entire nomination carefully.
- Draft the application in Microsoft Word or another program that checks spelling and grammar before copying it into the online form.
- Ask a peer or colleague to proofread the application.
- Allow enough time to make corrections before submitting.

Requesting Letters of Recommendation

- Request letters from colleagues, peers, or supervisors who can provide a strong and positive endorsement.
- Select recommenders who know the candidate's qualities and achievements.
- Provide each recommender with:
  - A copy of the award criteria
  - The candidate's résumé
  - Relevant accomplishments or examples to highlight
- Ask recommenders to address the specific qualities identified in the award criteria.
- Ask that each letter be signed and dated to give it a more authentic and professional appearance.
- Request letters from more than one person so you can select the strongest recommendations.

Final Reminder

- Start the nomination process early.
- Allow enough time to:
    - Gather supporting information
    - Document measurable results
    - Collect letters of recommendation
    - Proofread and revise the application

A strong nomination takes time. Starting early is one of the greatest advantages you can give your candidate. Good luck!