



STUDENT ESSAY CONTEST

NISOD invites students at NISOD-member colleges to participate in our Student Essay Contest!

Students describe in a 500-word (or less) essay a faculty member, staff member, or administrator who encouraged them during their academic journey and how that encouragement helped them reach their goal(s).

The Prize

Three (3) winning student authors will each receive:

- **\$1,000 USD**
- Travel to the International Conference on Teaching and Leadership Excellence (May 23-26 in Austin, Texas), which includes:
- Up to \$400 USD toward travel to Austin, Texas;
- Up to three (3) nights lodging (Saturday, Sunday, Monday nights only);
- One (1) complimentary conference registration.

(Note: Winning authors will read their essays on stage during the conference's Excellence Awards Dinner and Celebration on Sunday evening.)

Evaluation Criteria

Submissions will be evaluated based on the following criteria: content, originality, clarity, organization, conciseness, and grammar.

Eligibility Requirements

Student must be enrolled at a NISOD member college to participate. Check to see if your college is a member here.

Students must be at least 18 years old by May 2026.

The faculty, staff member, or administrator written about in the essay must be employed by the college.

The student and the faculty, staff member, or administrator written about in the essay must be able to travel to Austin to participate in the Student Essay Contest presentation held during NISOD's annual conference.

Timeline

- » Contest opens: September 3, 2025
- » Submission deadline: March 6, 2026
- » Winners notified: March 13, 2026
- » Winner acceptance due: March 20, 2026
- » Prize presented and essay read at NISOD conference: May 24, 2026

Visit www.nisod.org/sec for complete details.



The National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD) is a consortium of community and technical colleges committed to promoting and celebrating excellence in teaching, learning, and leadership.

College of Education | The University of Texas at Austin