



Advice to Nominators

Thank you for nominating students to the 2017 All-USA Community College/Cola-Cola Community College Academic Team programs. Because each college is limited to nominating two students per campus, your role is crucial to identifying stellar candidates for these programs. **Please carefully review the following information, even if you have nominated students in the past.**

To be eligible, a nominee:

- Must be enrolled at your community college through December 2016 in a minimum of six (6) semester credit hours (or 9 quarter credit hours).
- Must have a cumulative college-level GPA of 3.50 on a 4.0 scale for all coursework completed in the last five years (fall 2011-present), regardless of institution attended. If the student has attended more than one school, transcripts may be recalculated to determine the cumulative GPA for all college-level coursework taken. GPA is evaluated at the point of application and the student must maintain a 3.50 or higher GPA through the fall 2016 semester to remain eligible.
- Students must be on track to earn an associate or a bachelor's degree (or the equivalent of a U.S. associate or bachelor's degree). Students should have a minimum of 36 semester (or 48 quarter) college-level credits completed at or transferred to a community college by December 31, 2016 and 48 semester (or 72 quarter), college-level credits by August 31, 2017. Students must have a minimum of 30 semester (or 45 quarter), college-level credit hours completed at a community college in the past five years. (Courses must be college-level. Developmental or remedial coursework, such as pre-algebra or basic writing, will be removed when determining number of credits as well as cumulative GPA.)
- To be considered for the Coca-Cola Community College Academic Team, the student must be enrolled at least part-time at a two-year or four-year college for the fall 2017 semester. Proof of enrollment will be requested.
- Must not have previously been nominated for the All-USA Community College Academic Team or the Coca-Cola Community College Academic Team.
- The student must hold temporary or permanent residency in the country of the community college the student is attending or possess a visa considered appropriate by the college. The [Citizenship Eligibility](#) document outlines acceptable documentation used to verify proof of citizenship.
- Students who attend community college in the United States do not need to be a member of Phi Theta Kappa. Students attending community colleges outside of the U.S. need to be members of Phi Theta Kappa and may only apply for the New Century Scholars program. Both students attending in the U.S. and internationally should submit the All-USA Community College Academic Team/Coca-Cola Community College Academic Team nomination form and materials.
- Must have a community college record free of suspension, probation or other serious disciplinary action. Nominee must not have a criminal record, or if a convicted felon, must have all conditions of sentencing, including probation, completed.

When selecting nominees, consider:

- Nominees are not required to be members of Phi Theta Kappa.
- Anything nominees submit in their application could be made public through the media. Students must carefully consider the possibility that should they win, publicity about their accomplishments - work with support groups or advocacy, for example - could carry implications about their personal lives or immigration

status. In fairness to all nominees, recipient's applications are used as the basis for news coverage of the teams, and contents are subject to rigorous fact-checking.

- Students are required to submit unofficial transcripts reflecting fall 2016 grades and credits by January 13, 2017. Failure to submit these transcripts will result in the application being eliminated from consideration of national scholarships.
- The program seeks to honor outstanding students who also represent the range of students found on American community college campuses. Traditional, non-traditional and early start students all have been named to the All-USA Community College Academic Team. Those seeking associate degrees as well as those intending to earn a bachelor's degree are eligible.
- Transcripts are evaluated when a student's application is received. The student GPA is evaluated at the point of admission. Remedial or developmental courses are removed and are not counted toward the student's required total courses or toward the cumulative GPA. If there is a question about the student's grades or credits, and whether or not they are eligible, it may benefit the student to have the transcript evaluated prior to submission.
- Judging criteria include academic excellence and intellectual rigor; leadership and service; and how students have extended their education beyond the classroom to benefit society. These awards are merit based and are assessed on what students have done while attending community college, and should not be considered as a need-based scholarship.
- The centerpiece of the nomination is the 500-word essay describing the nominee's most significant endeavor while attending community college in which the student extended his or her community college education to benefit the school, community or society. Students who have demonstrated leadership and initiative in service learning, who contributed to scholarly research, or who have made lasting contributions to your campus or community may make excellent candidates. If endeavors are not yet complete, they must be far enough along that the nominee can discuss the specifics of work done thus far.
- The program is an "Academic" team, so the student's academic record is important. Judges look at the overall academic record and how well students' courses match their career goals. Students are allowed to explain circumstances that may have affected their transcript, so those with several withdrawals or a temporary drop in grades should not necessarily be ruled out. However, carefully consider those students with several withdrawals, as statistically, they do not achieve high academic rigor. As a result, a nominee with more than a couple of unexplained withdrawals will not typically advance in the competition. To ensure a quality applicant, it is wise to review a nominee's transcript in advance for both coursework breadth and depth.
- Application questions are meant to give judges a sense of the nominee's background and time commitments outside of school. The program is open to part-time as well as full-time students and answers are intended to help the judges contextually frame the nominee's accomplishments. The questions should not be interpreted to mean students must have overcome obstacles or be disadvantaged in order to be named to the All-USA Community College Academic Team.
- USA TODAY and Follett Higher Education Group have been granted exclusive press coverage of any winners selected from the All-USA Community College Academic Team nominations. Students named to the All-USA Community College Academic Team are not allowed to be announced publicly until presented at the AACC Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana, in April 2017.
- Please note that all nominees will be required to go through a verification process. As a nominator, you are requested to notify Phi Theta Kappa if a nominee faces any type of disciplinary action between the time of nomination and public awarding at the AACC Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana.
- The nominees you select may be considered role models on your campus. Consider which students you would be proud to represent your community college.