

PUBLIC RELEASE

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FRC Awards

FIRST Leadership Award

The FIRST Leadership Award (prior to 2026 the Dean's List Award) has been part of FRC since 2010. The description of the award is provided below

The FIRST Leadership Award recognizes the dedication and individual contributions of outstanding secondary school students participating on FIRST Tech Challenge or FIRST Robotics Competition teams. Students in 10th or 11th grade are eligible to be nominated by their team for the FIRST Leadership Award for excelling in areas such as leadership, entrepreneurship, and dedication to advancing the mission of FIRST within their communities.

Each team is permitted to submit two students per season. These nominees are referred to as FIRST Leadership Award Semi-finalists. Those that are selected at District events to be interviewed at the District Championship are referred to as FIRST Leadership Award District Championship Semi-finalists. Those students who are selected at District Championship are referred to as FIRST Leadership Award Finalists. At FIRST Championship, 10 students are selected from the pool of finalists to become that season's FIRST Leadership Award Winners.

Each year, the mentors on The RoboBees will confer and select up to two students to be the team's semi-finalists. In 2026, Colin Butrym was selected at the Pasadena qualifier to be the team's first District Championship Semi-finalist. We hope to see many more FIRST Award recipients in the future. If you, as a team member, believe that a certain student should be recognized, you should contact the Lead Mentor with your input. The criteria used in this award are as follows:

- Demonstrated leadership and commitment to the FIRST Core Values
- Effectiveness at increasing awareness of FIRST in their school and community
- Demonstrates passion for a long-term commitment to FIRST
- The student's individual contributions to their team contribute to the overall success of the team
- Proven experience in areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM)
- The student is a role model and can motivate and lead fellow team members

Before nominating a student, the mentors will ask the students if they want to be nominated. While this is a great honor, it does come with obligations before and during the competitions. Students who are selected will be expected to work with the mentors and other volunteers to actively improve their interview skills, in preparation for the interviews associated with this award process.

FIRST Leadership Award Semi-finalists will be competing with other students from other teams. Since this is a competition, the team will select those students that we feel are most competitive and who are most likely to advance to higher levels. This does not always equate to the students who have made the biggest contributions to the team, the robot, or the organization.

More information about the FIRST Leadership award can be found on the [FIRST website](#).

Woodie Flowers Award

The Woodie Flowers Award was established in 1996 to “recognize mentors within the FIRST® Robotics Competition who lead, inspire, and empower using excellent communication skills.” FIRST notes that:

This award recognizes an individual who has done an outstanding job of motivation through communication while also challenging the students to be clear and succinct in their communications. As such, it is very important that this be a student-led effort and a student decision. Team students should decide whom to nominate. Team students should write the essay nomination in their own words.

It is the expectation that students on the team take the lead in submitting this award. The significance of these nominations lies not in earning a Woodie Flowers Finalist Award, but in meaningfully honoring our mentors who shape, guide, and inspire our students every day. The process is an opportunity for students to reflect on the impact of mentorship and to express their appreciation in a thoughtful and lasting way.

The Lead Mentor will designate a student as an award submitter on the FIRST Dashboard. This student will lead a group of students in identifying a single, appropriate and deserving mentor, write the essay nomination for the mentor, and submit the award prior to the listed deadline. The students can look for help in drafting this essay, but the students should write the essay in their own words.

Before nominating a mentor, students must ask that mentor if they want to be nominated. Students should also engage and talk with that mentor to get their backstory and understand as much about them as possible. This understanding will allow the student nominator to construct an effective narrative for the essay that must be written for this award.

There is no need to keep the submission a secret on the team and better essays will come from an open process. Ideally, the award submission will be drafted at least one month prior to the submission deadline and submitted ahead of time. It is also a good idea to get several mentors and students to proofread the essay before it is submitted.

More information about the Woodie Flowers Award can be found on the [FIRST website](#) or at the [Woodie Flowers Award website](#).

FIRST Impact Award

The FIRST Impact Award (prior to 2023 the Chairman’s Award) is undisputably the most prestigious award in FIRST. FIRST describes the Impact Award with the following:

The FIRST Impact Award (formerly the Chairman's Award) is the most prestigious award at FIRST, it honors the team that best represents a model for other teams to emulate and best embodies the mission of FIRST. It was created to keep the central focus of FIRST Robotics Competition on the ultimate goal of transforming the culture in ways that will inspire greater levels of respect and honor for science and technology, as well as encouraging more of today’s youth to become science and technology leaders.

The benefits of this award are fitting the prestige provided to it by FIRST. An Impact Award win at the District Qualifier level automatically guarantees an invitation to District Championship. An Impact

Award win at the Regional or District Championship level automatically guarantees an invitation to FIRST Championship.

Winning the Impact Award at FIRST Championship is the only way for a team to be installed in the FIRST Hall of Fame. A Hall of Fame team is automatically extended an invitation for FIRST Championship for the next ten years.

This award involves several essays, executive summaries, a presentation, and a video. At minimum, several dedicated students are needed to truly make this an award worthy of pursuit for the team. This is not an award to take lightly, and the team will only submit for it if we are putting everything we have into the process.

Students who wish to help the team with the efforts for this award must be dedicated to the process and need to start on the essays early in the year. The focus should not be on generating new teams or creating new outreach opportunities but rather on effectively telling the story of what the team is already doing. This means students need to spend a lot of time learning about the team, asking questions, and creating documentation.

Ideally, the essays for this award should be mostly complete by Kickoff for the season they are being submitted for. The bulk of the work for this award should not take place during build season but before it – with the time in the season devoted to refining the submission and working on the presentation, video, and any other collateral for the award.

Historically, The RoboBees have been strong contenders for this award. In 2011, the team won the Chesapeake Regional Chairman's Award. This award started the team's current FIRST Championship streak. We also won the Chesapeake Regional Chairman's Award in 2012, the Palmetto Regional Chairman's Award in 2013, and the Palmetto Regional Chairman's Award in 2015.

The team last submitted for the Impact Award (at the time, the Chairman's award) back in 2020. Since then, the team has not had a group of students who have been interested in work necessarily to submit for this award. Our willingness to submit for this award is reviewed each year.

More information about the FIRST Impact Award can be found on the [FIRST website](#) or the [FIRST Hall of Fame website](#).

Safety Animation Award

The RoboBees were a finalist for the [2022 Safety Animation Award](#) and won the [2023 Safety Animation Award](#).

UL Solutions provides restricted grants to the Winner and Finalists. The Winner receives \$500 and each of the two Finalists receives \$250 towards registration for the next season. The submission is also shown at all FIRST competitions.

More information about the Safety Animation Award can be found on the [FIRST website](#).

Digital Animation Award

This award, sponsored by WPI, celebrates STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics) and emphasizes the ability to tell a story through animation that integrates

technological, social, and humanistic concepts.

The Digital Animation Award is offered to help encourage students to cultivate skills in design and creation of animation while telling a story about the impact of technology on society.

WPI will provide a team sponsorship covering the next season's registration fee (a \$6,300 value) to the winner of this award. FIRST will also send an official FIRST trophy & plaque to the winner.

The RoboBees won the [2023 Digital Animation Award](#). If you read carefully, you will notice that this is the same year that the team won the Safety Animation Award. These accomplishments were entirely due to the efforts of Brian Biglin, a 2023 graduate of the team.

More information about the Digital Animation Award can be found on the [FIRST website](#).

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Last update: **2026/08/23 19:28**

