

GCEC Awards Criteria and Submission Process

2026

Table of Contents

<i>GCEC Awards Criteria and Submission Process</i>	3
<i>Submitting a Nomination</i>	3
<i>General Submission Information</i>	4
<i>Preparing the Nomination</i>	4
<i>Award Categories: Application and Judging Criteria</i>	6
<i>Exceptional Contributions in Entrepreneurship Research</i>	8
<i>Excellence in Entrepreneurship Teaching and Pedagogical Innovation</i>	9
<i>Excellence in Specialty Entrepreneurship Education</i>	10
<i>Outstanding Contributions to Venture Creation</i>	11
<i>Outstanding Emerging Entrepreneurship Center</i>	12
<i>Outstanding Student Engagement & Leadership</i>	14
<i>GCEC Center of Entrepreneurial Excellence</i>	15
<i>GCEC Legacy Award</i>	17
<i>New Award: GCEC Trailblazer Award</i>	18

GCEC Awards Criteria and Submission Process

Welcome

The GCEC awards are designed to showcase and celebrate the very best of university entrepreneurship! We are excited to read about the great achievements of university entrepreneurship programs and proud to recognize them. Each year, the GCEC recognizes the top entrepreneurship programs in nine categories. Whilst each category will typically have one overall winner, the judges may decide to award “Highly Commended” to some finalists.

In addition, schools may nominate an individual for the GCEC Legacy Award. The GCEC Legacy Award recognizes an individual for a lifetime of “pioneering work in advancing entrepreneurship in universities and/or directing a university entrepreneurship center that created a legacy impact on the field of entrepreneurship”.

For 3 of the award categories, there are two tracks under which submissions will be judged:

1. for smaller schools with 7,500* or fewer students, and
2. for larger schools with more than 7,500* students.

*The student population is by Institution.

Judges this year may award two awards in these 3 categories:

- Outstanding Emerging Entrepreneurship Center
- Outstanding Student Engagement and Leadership
- GCEC Center of Entrepreneurial Excellence

The purpose of this change is to allow smaller schools with excellent programs to be recognized, even if they might not have access to the same resources as larger schools.

Submitting a Nomination

Award nominations are being accepted using the Reviewr platform from April 10 to June 23, 2026. To submit a nomination, go to <https://my.reviewr.com/site/2026GCECAwards>.

Award winners will be announced at the annual awards ceremony at the 2026 GCEC Conference in Florida by Florida State University. The awards ceremony and dinner are set for Saturday, October 17. A leader from your entity must be registered for and attend the conference to receive an award.

You can nominate your entity in multiple award categories. A panel of judges, led by past winners and current GCEC members, selects the award recipients.

For questions, please contact one of the following:

Gurpreet Jagpal, Chair
GCEC Awards Committee
Email: g.jagpal10@aston.ac.uk

Holly DeArmond, Executive Director
GCEC
Email: holly.dearmond@rice.edu

Description: Awards can be submitted in the following ten (10) categories:

1. Outstanding Emerging Entrepreneurship Center (2 tracks: smaller + larger schools)
2. Outstanding Contributions to Venture Creation
3. Exceptional Activities in Entrepreneurship Across Disciplines
4. Excellence in Specialty Entrepreneurship Education
5. Excellence in Entrepreneurship Teaching and Pedagogical Innovation
6. Outstanding Student Engagement & Leadership (2 tracks: smaller + larger schools)
7. Exceptional Contributions in Entrepreneurship Research
8. GCEC Center of Entrepreneurial Excellence (2 tracks: smaller + larger schools)
9. Legacy Award (given to an individual, not a university)
10. Trailblazer Award (new; given to an individual, not a university)

General Submission Information

- Each nomination is limited to a total of 7 pages, which include a cover page, a 3-page nomination, and a 3-page appendix, and must be submitted through the Reviewer platform. All documents should be submitted as PDF files. An Appendix and/or Supplemental information (maximum 3 pages) should be provided and must be appended to the 3-page Nomination and sent as a single PDF file. The total PDF file should be no more than 7 pages (including the cover page, 3-page nomination, and 3-page appendix) and no more than 10MB.
- If you are including embedded links for the judges to review, please limit them to 3 links.
- One exception is the GCEC Center for Entrepreneurial Excellence Award. The nomination can be up to 3 pages (plus cover page and 5-page appendix). The maximum page count for the GCEC application with an appendix is 9 pages, and the maximum file size is 10 MB.
- Leaders should submit nominations for the category that they believe best fits their entity's accomplishments. It is a Leader's responsibility to evaluate the category that can best be articulated in terms of their entity's focus, achievements, and purpose. A university may apply for awards in multiple categories if it believes it has strengths in those areas.
- Awards in each category will be given to the centers that demonstrate exceptional achievement. Whilst each category will typically have one overall winner, the judges may decide to award "Highly Commended" to some finalists.
- Awards will be announced and presented at the annual GCEC Conference.
- A representative from each nominated university must be present to accept the award.
- Any award-winning school will not be eligible to submit for an award in the same category for the following 5 years.
- Finally, winning schools may be asked to have a representative on the Award Judging panel to evaluate nominations the following year and future years.

Preparing the Nomination

We want you to tell us what makes your center shine! The following guidelines are designed to

provide a fair, simple basis for nominations, reviews, and award selections.

- Identify the specific category for which the center is nominated. Identify the center's name, the institution's name, and the contact information for the center director and the individual submitting on behalf of the center. Unfortunately, if the category is not clearly identified, the nomination will not be considered.
- In all responses, please clearly indicate the center's role in highlighted activities, and/or specific relationship to the center of individuals, programs, or activities that are highlighted.
- Be sure to address each item in the nomination criteria, even if the answer is N/A. Once these specific items have been addressed, you may add information that you think is relevant. This should be done in no more than 3 pages!
- Appendix
 - Many Award Categories have suggested or required appendix materials. The appendix is limited to 3 pages, including the suggested materials according to the Award Category.
 - The appendix should be attached to the 3-page Nomination and submitted as a single PDF document. The maximum combined file size is 10MB.
 - If you choose to submit optional information in the appendix, we recommend that you include examples of programs, initiatives, or courses that visually capture what you have described in your 3-page nomination. You may include PDFs of marketing materials, fact sheets, collateral, brochures, PowerPoint files, flyers, testimonials, photographs, or other information that supports your nomination. Do not simply use the appendix to include additional text about your program.
 - Also, when including supporting materials, please clearly indicate how each item relates specifically to the award category. In other words, please submit only those that specifically tie to the category and criteria. Ad hoc materials that do not specifically tie to the criteria requests will be excluded from evaluation and may negatively affect the evaluation.

Award Categories: Application and Judging Criteria

Exceptional Activities in Entrepreneurship Across Disciplines

This award honors a center dedicated to creating, advancing, and enabling entrepreneurship education opportunities to multiple audiences and units across campus. Selection criteria will include the creativity of the multidisciplinary approach, measured impact across campus, and the diversity of partners and stakeholders.

Application Criteria:

1. Clearly state the activities' purpose, strategic goals, objectives, and intended target audience.
2. Explain how the center has been proactive in enabling entrepreneurship education opportunities for those who identify as a member of a traditionally underrepresented population, such as but not limited to Black, Latinx, Indigenous, women, LGBTQIA, and students from low-income backgrounds.
3. Explain how the center has leveraged strategic partners from diverse backgrounds, resources, and networks to develop a comprehensive program.
4. Describe the multidisciplinary program and explain why the program is unique and/or innovative.
5. Provide a list of three to five specific achievements and/or related outcomes, with a brief explanation, that illustrate the Center's impact.
6. Explain how this activity distinguishes the center from its peers.
7. Appendix:
 - Provide a center-level organizational chart that includes faculty, staff, other personnel, and strategic partners from other disciplines.
 - Include up to two (2) other items of your choice that best reflect the goals of the interdisciplinary program.

Judging criteria: Rate the Center's multidisciplinary entrepreneurship program 1 - 10 on the following criteria:

1. The Center's multidisciplinary program has identified a unique approach for advancing entrepreneurship activities to multiple audiences.
2. The Center has been proactive in enabling entrepreneurship education opportunities for those from traditionally underrepresented populations, such as but not limited to Black, Latinx, Indigenous, women, LGBTQIA, and students from low-income backgrounds.
3. The Center has activated a significant group of strategic partners from diverse backgrounds and resources from other disciplines to achieve the program's goals.
4. The Center has developed a unique, innovative approach to multidisciplinary entrepreneurship education.
5. Based on the stated achievements and outcomes, the interdisciplinary program's impact has met or exceeded the stated objectives.

6. The Center has instituted mechanisms for ensuring the sustainability of multi-disciplinary collaborations on the campus.
7. Based on the application, the Center's multidisciplinary program distinguishes itself from peer programs.

Exceptional Contributions in Entrepreneurship Research

This award honors a center that is dedicated solely, or as part of its overall mission, to supporting the creation of new knowledge in entrepreneurship through research that advances the discipline.

Application Criteria

1. Clearly state the purpose and goals of your center relative to research (your research agenda) and include what differentiates your program from others doing research.
2. Explain whether your research is more academic or applied, who the audience is for the research, and the streams or research areas that your program is known for.
3. Briefly describe how your center supports research that advances the discipline of entrepreneurship, and include (this may include such things as publications, journal management, reviewing, serving as discussants, and academic conference management).
4. Discuss how stakeholder interest and support have been gathered for the center's research effort.
5. Provide a list of specific achievements (publications, awards, etc.) to date with a brief explanation.
6. Describe the impact of the research on the entrepreneurial community.
7. Appendix (not included in the 5-page limit):
 - Provide a center organizational chart depicting the relationship of research to other center activities.
 - Provide up to two (2) other items of your choice that best reflect the goals of supporting the importance of your Center's research efforts.

Judging criteria: Rate the Center's student engagement and leadership 1 - 10 on the following criteria:

1. Volume of research produced by those associated with the entrepreneurship center or program.
2. Quality of outlets in which the research was published or disseminated.
3. Potential of the research to significantly advance the discipline of entrepreneurship.
4. Number of faculty and staff involved with entrepreneurship research.
5. Support for research in the discipline of entrepreneurship beyond publishing (e.g., reviewing, journal management, hosting conferences, serving as discussant)
6. Demonstrated ability to connect research efforts to other aspects of center programming (e.g., teaching, co-curricular programs, community engagement)
7. The research made an impact on the entrepreneurial community.

Excellence in Entrepreneurship Teaching and Pedagogical Innovation

This award honors a center that has developed a significant original innovation in entrepreneurship pedagogy. Selection criteria include differentiation from existing programs, measurable learning outcomes, student engagement, and stakeholder support.

Application Criteria

1. Clearly describe the pedagogical innovation your center has developed.
2. Briefly discuss the rationale for creating this original innovation and describe the curriculum, tools, resources, and partners required to implement this innovation.
3. Outline how the Center is measuring the learning outcomes and impact of this approach.
4. Provide examples for how this innovation is being used at your center and how it could be replicated elsewhere.
5. Appendix: Provide up to two (2) other items of your choice that demonstrate the innovativeness of your pedagogical approach and application within your Center.
 - If available, provide a list of publications where this innovation can be found as well as examples of where it is being used elsewhere.

Judging criteria: Rate the Center's teaching and pedagogical innovation 1 - 10 on the following criteria:

1. The Center has developed an innovative pedagogical approach to entrepreneurship education.
2. The application clearly describes the rationale, curriculum, tools, resources, and partners required to implement this innovation.
3. Based on the stated rationale and outcomes, this pedagogy is a significant improvement over existing teaching methods and tools.
4. The Center provides tangible evidence of the effectiveness of this approach with students in general or with particular types of students.
5. Peer schools could or should have replicated this program.

Excellence in Specialty Entrepreneurship Education

This award honors a center dedicated to expanding access to entrepreneurship education for a specific audience or area of focus, such as technology/knowledge transfer, social entrepreneurship, women in entrepreneurship, arts & humanities, or traditionally underrepresented populations. Selection criteria include innovation of programming, measurable outcomes, partner engagement, and long-term impact.

Application Criteria:

1. Clearly state the target audience for your specialty program and its genesis.
2. Outline the program, including expected outcomes, participants, and partners. Provide examples of how the program has expanded access to entrepreneurship education to a unique, underrepresented, and/or significant target audience.
3. Identify some of the unique characteristics of this program compared to your peers & discuss how other schools could replicate this program to serve specialty audiences.
4. Provide a list of three to five specific achievements/outcomes to date with a brief explanation.
5. Appendix: Provide up to two (2) items of your choice that best reflect the goals and outcomes of your specialty entrepreneurship program.

Judging criteria: Rate the Center's specialty entrepreneurship program 1 - 10 on the following criteria:

1. The Center's specialty entrepreneurship program has expanded access to entrepreneurship education to a unique, underrepresented, and/or significant target audience.
2. The Center has developed a comprehensive program that addresses the distinctive talents, challenges, and needs of the target audience.
3. Based on stated achievements and outcomes, the specialty entrepreneurship program has met or exceeded its stated objectives.
4. The Center successfully describes how peer schools could replicate this program.
5. Based on the application, the Center's specialty program distinguishes itself from peer programs through its novelty, innovativeness, or uniqueness.

Outstanding Contributions to Venture Creation

This award honors a center that creatively supports the process of launching and accelerating university-affiliated startups through 1) competitions, 2) incubators, 3) accelerators, or 4) other programs. Selection criteria will include the strength of the program's content, specific program outcomes (including the diversity of participants), the program's growth over time, and the level of community engagement.

Application Criteria:

1. Clearly state the contribution's purpose, strategic goals, objectives, and intended target audience.
2. Describe how the venture acceleration program works and how it supports the launch and growth of university-affiliated startups.
3. Outline how the program engages the community (faculty, alumni, mentors, funders) with the associated ventures and entrepreneurs.
4. Describe how your program addresses the cultivation of startup founders who identify as members of traditionally underrepresented populations, such as but not limited to BIPOC, women, LGBTQIA, and students from low-income backgrounds.
5. Provide a list of outcomes achieved from efforts in any of the types of activities (competitions, incubators, accelerators) to include:
 - Number of participants and/or teams
 - Number and amount of awards granted to students
 - Number of startups generated.
 - Number of startups that generate revenue.
 - Percentage of startups that are in business two years after participating in the Center's programs.
 - Content on alumni who have achieved success or continue to grow their venture.
6. Appendix: Include up to two (2) other items of your choice that best reflect the content and outcomes of your program.

Judging criteria: Rate the Center's venture creation program 1 - 10 on the following criteria:

1. The Center's venture creation program has clear goals for supporting the launch and growth of university-affiliated startups.
2. The Center's venture creation program has been proactive in supporting the launch and growth of university-affiliated startups from traditionally underrepresented populations, such as but not limited to BIPOC, women, LGBTQIA, and students from low-income backgrounds.
3. The Center has developed a comprehensive venture creation program. Factors might include content, mentors, seed funding, workspace, or other valuable resources.
4. The venture creation program effectively engages a breadth of contributors from the campus and external community.
5. The Center has identified significant outcomes and achievements.

Outstanding Emerging Entrepreneurship Center

This award honors an entrepreneurship center that is 5 years old or less (from the official Center launch date). Applicants must clearly state the center's purpose and goals, and include the target audience(s). Highlight what you believe differentiates the center from peer centers. This might include, but is not limited to, a specific challenge you overcame to launch the Center, how you created buy-in with key stakeholders, ability to attract major donors, ability to engage students from traditionally underrepresented populations, such as but not limited to BIPOC, women, LGBTQIA, and students from low-income backgrounds.

Selection criteria will include the Center's objectives, campus and community engagement, program portfolio, metrics to date, and the Center's sustainability plan.

Two tracks: For this category, selections will be made in two tracks based on university size. Universities with 7,500 students or fewer will be grouped together, while schools with greater than 7,500 students will be grouped together. You will be asked to make this selection during the application process. The criteria for the two tracks will be the same.

Application Criteria:

1. Briefly explain the rationale for creating this entrepreneurship center, including who the stakeholders are and how you garnered their interest and support.
2. Outline the strategic goals, objectives, metrics, and team structure used to launch the center.
3. Provide a graphical timeline of the center's major milestones from conception to the current year. Include the initial milestones you set and how you met them.
4. Provide a list of three to five specific achievements to date with a brief explanation. Include highlights that illustrate what makes this Center unique.
5. In the first five years, explain how you have distinguished the center from its peers.
6. Describe the plan for sustaining the center.
7. Appendix:
 - Provide a center-level organizational chart that includes faculty, staff, other personnel, and strategic partners.
 - Include up to two (2) other items of your choice that best reflect the goals of your emerging center.

Judging criteria: Rate the Center's entrepreneurship program 1 - 10 on the following criteria:

1. The Center launched with clear goals and objectives.
2. The Center has engaged key stakeholders, including faculty, donors, alumni, students (including those from traditionally underrepresented groups), local entrepreneurs, and other partners.
3. The Center has built a team capable of executing on its objectives.
4. The Center has demonstrated early success based on a set of clear metrics.
5. The Center has outlined a clear sustainability plan.

6. The Center distinguishes itself from its peers through its novel, innovative, or unique approach.

Outstanding Student Engagement & Leadership

This award honors a center that amplifies its impact by achieving high levels of student engagement and student leadership in its entrepreneurship programs. Selection criteria include student engagement, the impact of student leaders on the Center, and the variety of student projects.

Two tracks: For this category, selections will be made in two tracks based on university size. Universities with 7,500 students or fewer will be grouped together, while schools with greater than 7,500 students will be grouped together. You will be asked to make this selection during the application process. The criteria for the two tracks will be the same.

Application Criteria

1. Discuss the various programs or initiatives your Center supports to engage a broad spectrum of students (including underrepresented students who identify as Black, Latinx, Indigenous, women, LGBTQIA, and individuals from low-income backgrounds) to achieve the Center's goals.
2. Describe how you empower students to lead or own the efforts described above.
3. Highlight one to two specific efforts that demonstrate student leadership in your Center. Efforts should highlight the initiatives your Center executed that would not have happened without student leadership.
4. What metrics do you use to measure success? How do you benchmark these efforts vs. other co-curricular activities on your campus?
5. Appendix: Provide up to two (2) other items of your choice that demonstrate student engagement & leadership. This could include testimonials from engaged students.

Judging criteria: Rate the Center's student engagement and leadership 1 - 10 on the following criteria:

1. The Center has developed a range of activities to engage student entrepreneurs, startup enthusiasts, students in general, and campus leaders.
2. The center has a methodical approach to student engagement that could be replicated by peer schools.
3. Center is an exemplar in empowering students to execute on Center programs and initiatives.
4. Based on the metrics provided, the Center has a high level of engagement across several student populations and a demonstrated method for tracking both students reached and student impact.

GCEC Center of Entrepreneurial Excellence

The GCEC Center of Entrepreneurial Excellence award represents the highest honor that a University Entrepreneurship Center can receive. This award was created to recognize the unique achievements and outstanding efforts of entrepreneurship centers worldwide.

The GCEC award honors centers that have made, and will continue to make, enormous contributions to advancing entrepreneurship as a force in global economic growth. The honor is bestowed upon entrepreneurship centers that have made remarkable advancements in the entrepreneurial field in the following areas:

- outreach to emerging ventures
- entrepreneurship curriculum
- community collaborations
- special projects
- overall prestige
- recognition in the entrepreneurship field
- entrepreneurship research

Selection criteria are based on the breadth and depth of the outlined programs, the prestige of the center, the sustainability of the programs, contributions to advancing entrepreneurship education, and commitment to GCEC.

Two tracks: For this category, selections may be made in two tracks based on university size. Universities with 7,500 students or fewer will be grouped together, while schools with greater than 7,500 students will be grouped together. You will be asked to make this selection during the application process. The criteria for the two tracks will be the same.

Application Criteria:

1. Prestige of the entrepreneurship program/center (national and global rankings or other recognition).
2. Significant recognition achieved (e.g., awards, achievements, recognition from other outside organizations, such as but not limited to the U.S. Association for Small Business & Entrepreneurship, Academy of Management, previous GCEC awards, etc.).
3. Entrepreneurship breadth of programming, program quality, and longevity of the program (Ph.D., MBA, BS).
4. Entrepreneurship curriculum development (courses specifically designed for major/minor programs).
5. Contributions to entrepreneurship research (Publications/Books/etc).
6. Outreach activities and resulting impact on targeted groups (significance & uniqueness to the entrepreneurship center).
7. Community collaborations (specific to the entrepreneurship center).
8. Describe how the center has attained financial stability.

9. Commitment to engaging traditionally underrepresented populations, such as but not limited to BIPOC, women, LGBTQIA, and students from low-income backgrounds.

Judging criteria: Rate the Center as an example of Entrepreneurial Excellence 1 - 10 on the following criteria:

1. The Center has been recognized as a leader in the field by a variety of organizations.
2. Center itself has an entrepreneurial spirit, as evidenced by its suite of innovative curricula, programs, and initiatives.
3. Center perennially attracts a growing number of students (including those from traditionally underrepresented groups), campus & community partners, donors, faculty, and alumni to its programs.
4. Center is viewed as a pillar of the campus and community entrepreneurship ecosystem.
5. Center has demonstrated its role as a leader in terms of academic and/or applied entrepreneurship research.
6. University has increased its support of the Center through additional funding, space, and visibility.
7. Center director and staff annually attend GCEC conferences, contribute to panel discussions, and apply/win other GCEC awards.
8. The Center has achieved financial sustainability or has a plan for doing so.
9. Center distinguishes itself from its peers across all categories. This Center is an aspirational peer for the entire GCEC community.

GCEC Legacy Award

This lifetime achievement award is for pioneering work in advancing entrepreneurship in universities and/or directing a university entrepreneurship center that created a legacy impact on the field of entrepreneurship education. Candidates should have demonstrated the following:

- A long-term commitment to entrepreneurship in an academic setting, either as a faculty member, educator, and/or center or institute director.
- Achieved a standard of excellence in an area of university-affiliated entrepreneurship and made a substantial impact upon students, faculty, staff, startups, and/or region, or contributed to the enhancement of other entrepreneurship programs at other universities.
- Clear examples of how he or she made a major impact on at least one of the following:
- University entrepreneurship program: the individual should have made a highly significant contribution to the advancement of entrepreneurship within one or more universities, and specifically made a seminal difference in one or more of the following areas: center development and growth, enhanced quality of offerings and reputation, curriculum and degree program development, co-curricular programming, university-wide entrepreneurship, community engagement and engaged participants from traditionally underrepresented groups.
- GCEC organization: the individual should have significantly contributed to the growth or enhancement of the GCEC organization and/or have made major contributions to the advancement of GCEC's mission to share best practices among universities in order to advance academic entrepreneurship.

Examples of impact could be:

- Teaching: Candidates may have contributed significant innovations in curriculum design, degree program creation, course development, teaching methodologies, and/or pedagogical tools and approaches.
- Center: Candidates may have contributed to the growth of an entrepreneurship program or center at a university that had a significant impact upon that university or region
- Candidates may have contributed to a university program that has a significant impact on the region, e.g., through economic development and venture creation via incubation, seed funding programs, mentoring, student consulting, community events, ecosystem coordination, and other forms of engagement.
- Candidates may be thought leaders who have contributed research or scholarly contributions that affect how we teach entrepreneurship, assist student entrepreneurs, or foster entrepreneurship in the community.
- The award recognizes exceptional contributions, with the review process considering the entirety of the individual's body of work.
- The individual and/or the individual's organization should be well regarded, have been recognized, and/or have significant measurable outcomes.
- The individual and/or the individual's organization has made a commitment to engaging those who identify as BIPOC, women, LGBTQIA, and those who are from low-income backgrounds.

- This award will only be given to a candidate who meets the above criteria. The award may or may not be presented each year.
- The awardee is expected to attend the GCEC Conference to receive the award.
 - An exception may be made for health reasons.
 - The award may be given posthumously.
- The awardee should be nominated by another individual (other than the nominee). The nominator can be someone at the same university, the same center/institute, or from a different university.
- The nomination should be limited to 3 pages and submitted as a PDF. It should include a description and examples of how the candidate meets the profile described above.
 - Please title the PDF file: “GCEC Legacy Nomination – FirstName LastName”.

New Award: GCEC Trailblazer Award

The GCEC Trailblazer Award recognizes individuals who embody the pioneering spirit of the founders of the Global Consortium of Entrepreneurship Centers (GCEC). The GCEC was founded in 1997 by three visionary leaders: Rudolph P. Lamone, University of Maryland; Thomas J. O'Malia, University of Southern California; and Donald F. Kuratko from Indiana University. Their vision was to create a vehicle to share best practices and elevate the work being done in entrepreneurship education across campuses nationwide. That vehicle is now the GCEC, which has grown from three original members in the U.S. to more than 600 members globally.

This award recognizes an individual who has made a meaningful contribution to the growth, impact, and evolution of the GCEC itself. It honors service, leadership, and commitment to advancing the GCEC's mission and global reach.

This award recognizes individuals who have made sustained notable contributions to the GCEC community while advancing entrepreneurship initiatives at their institutions and actively sharing their innovations, experiences, and best practices with peers across the GCEC network to help advance the field.

Trailblazer Award recipients are individuals who are charting new paths through innovative leadership, program development, and community engagement at any point in their career. Like the founders of GCEC, they demonstrate a commitment not only to their own institution but also to strengthening the broader network of entrepreneurship educators, practitioners, and centers through the GCEC.

Application Criteria

Candidates should demonstrate many of the following:

6. The nominee has demonstrated a volunteer spirit by supporting the GCEC through participation and service. This may include serving as a GCEC Awards judge, reviewing conference or summit session proposals, facilitating or leading sessions at the GCEC Summit or Conference, presenting in a GCEC Virtual Connections session, and/or supporting other GCEC programs and activities.

7. Contribution to the broader entrepreneurship ecosystem. The nominee's work has created value within the GCEC community with an emphasis on collegiality, collaboration, and community leadership.
8. Commitment to the collaborative spirit of the GCEC community. The nominee demonstrates a willingness to share knowledge, contribute best practices, and connect with peers across institutions.
9. Nominees may come from either academic or practitioner backgrounds. The award recognizes individuals who advance entrepreneurship through applied leadership, program development, mentorship, or ecosystem engagement while actively contributing to the GCEC community.
10. Nominees may serve in roles at any level within an entrepreneurship center or program, including managers, assistant directors, directors, or other professional staff positions. The award recognizes meaningful contributions and engagement regardless of title.

Nomination Process

5. Nominees must be GCEC members and nominated by a peer, colleague, or team member. Self-nominations are not permitted.
6. The nominator may be from the same institution or from another GCEC member institution.
7. The nomination should include a description of how the candidate demonstrates the qualities outlined above, along with examples of their contributions and impact.
8. Nominations should be submitted as a PDF and limited to three pages.
9. If the nominee is selected, they are expected to attend the GCEC Awards to accept the award.