

**Students of the Year**

**Competition  
Information Packet**

**2025**

## Applicant Guidelines

On behalf of Student Engagement & Belonging, we are excited to invite you to apply for the Students of the Year Awards. Recognized at the annual University Awards, the Students of the Year celebrates the accomplishments of Wichita State University students for their scholarship, leadership, involvement at Wichita State, and service to WSU and the surrounding community. The Students of the Year awards recognizes the Freshman of the Year, Sophomore of the Year, Junior of the Year, Graduate Student of the Year and the prestigious, Senior Honors.

I. Candidates for each of these awards must meet the following criteria:

- a. Must have at least a 2.5 cumulative GPA
- b. Credit Hour Requirements:
  - i. **Freshman of the Year:** Must be an undergraduate student, in good standing, currently enrolled in at least 6 credit hours at Wichita State University. Must have completed less than 30 credit hours with a minimum of 6 hours being completed at Wichita State University.
  - ii. **Sophomore of the Year:** Must be an undergraduate student, in good standing, currently enrolled in at least 6 credit hours at Wichita State University. Must have completed at least 30 to 59 credit hours with a minimum of 15 hours being completed at Wichita State University.
  - iii. **Junior of the Year:** Must be an undergraduate student, in good standing, currently enrolled in at least 6 credit hours at Wichita State University. Must have completed at least 60 to 89 credit hours with a minimum of 20 hours being completed at Wichita State University.
  - iv. **Graduate Student of the Year:** Must be a graduate student, in good standing, currently enrolled in at least 6 credit hours at Wichita State University.
  - v. **Senior Honors/Undergraduate Student of the Year:** Must be an undergraduate student, in good standing, currently enrolled in at least 6 credit hours at Wichita State University. Must have completed at least 90 credit hours with a minimum of 30 hours being completed at Wichita State University. Must intend to graduate with their first Bachelor's Degree on or before December 2025. In other words, December 2024, May 2025, and December 2025 graduating seniors are eligible to receive this distinction.
- c. Must complete the application, in its entirety, including all essay questions as well as the successful upload of a resume **in the requested formats.**
- d. Must complete the Conduct Status Release Form. This action gives permission to check the applicant's status with Student Conduct and Community Standards. Applicants must be in good standing with student conduct and may not be currently under any sanction or investigation status.
- e. Must receive one letter of recommendation submitted with your application
- f. Must electronically sign the FERPA and publicity release statements included in the ShockerSync Application.
- g. Applications will only be accepted online through the forms provided and must be completed by **Friday, February 14<sup>th</sup> at 11:59 PM.**

II. Any falsification on an application or during the competition will result in disqualification.

# Application Process

## I. The 2025 Selection Round includes:

- a. **Round 1. Application Review** – The Application Review Round will thoroughly assess that your application is complete and will be judged on the basis of your application. Applicants must earn a total of at least 80 points in this round to move forward to Round 2 (See Requirements and Scoring for more information).
- b. **Round 2. Interview Round** - Those who are invited to participate in this round will be notified by Friday, March 7, 2025 if you have qualified for the interview round. Interviews will take place March 24<sup>th</sup> through March 27<sup>th</sup>.
- c. **Round 3. Final Presentation** – This round is only for finalists for Senior Honors and Graduate Student of the Year only and will include a 20 minute presentation and Q&A session will a different panel of judges. These will be conducted April 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>, 8am-5pm, and candidates will be contacted by March 28<sup>th</sup> to select an interview time.

## II. Finalists

- a. There will be up to 10 Senior Honor finalists, up to 5 finalists for Graduate, Junior, Sophomore, and Freshman categories.
- b. A photoshoot for your official headshot will be schedule upon notification of the finalists.
- c. The Finalists will be required to attend the University Students of the Year on Tuesday, May 6<sup>th</sup> from 5pm-7pm in the RSC Beggs Ballroom. RSVPs will be sent out to finalists upon notification.

# Scholarships

## I. Applicants will not only be competing for their respective title but will also be competing for scholarships awarded to the finalists.

- a. **The Freshman of the Year:** The top 5 Finalists will receive a \$500 scholarship each, and the Freshman of the Year will receive an additional \$500 (\$1000 total for winner).
- b. **The Sophomore of the Year:** The top 5 Finalists will receive a \$500 scholarship each, and the Sophomore of the Year will receive an additional \$500 (\$1000 total for winner).
- c. **The Junior of the Year:** The top 5 Finalists will receive a \$500 scholarship each, and the Junior of the Year will receive an additional \$500 (\$1000 total for winner).
- d. **The Graduate Student of the Year:** The top 5 Finalists will receive a \$500 scholarship each, as well as a medal and the Graduate Student of the Year will receive a medal to wear at commencement. The Graduate Student of the Year will receive an additional \$1500 scholarship (\$2000 total for winner).
- e. **The Senior Honors:** The Top 10 finalists will be named the 2024 Senior Honors, and will each receive a Wheat Shock Leadership Society stole, the official Senior Honors lapel pin, a \$500 scholarship each, eligibility of additional Senior Honors need-based scholarships selected by the Committee. One of the 10 will be selected as the Undergraduate Student of the Year and will receive an additional \$1500 scholarship (\$2000 total for winner).

# Requirements & Scoring

## Round 1: Application Round

An initial screening of applications will take place to ensure all applications materials are received **in their entirety and formatted correctly**. Applications will be scored as follows:

### I. Online Application

- a. Essays: Essays will be judged according to the candidate's ability to communicate ideas on the essay questions provided. These will be listed in the online application. This will be scored up to 50 points.
- b. Academic Strength: A set number of points will be awarded for cumulative GPA according to the following scale:
  - i. 4.00 = 20
  - ii. 3.90 – 3.999 = 19
  - iii. 3.750 – 3.899 = 17
  - iv. 3.600 – 3.749 = 15
  - v. 3.450 – 3.599 = 13
  - vi. 3.300 – 3.449 = 11
  - vii. 3.150 – 3.259 = 9
  - viii. 3.000 – 3.149 = 7
  - ix. 2.900 – 2.999 = 5
  - x. 2.750 – 2.899 = 3
  - xi. 2.600 – 2.749 = 2
  - xii. 2.500 – 2.599 = 1

### II. Resume: 30 Points

- a. Consistency and Format: Reads clearly, articulately, and concisely. Submitted in PDF Format. No longer than 2 pages.
- b. Grammar and Spelling
- c. Award Criteria Representation: *20 Points*
  - i. **Student Engagement Experiences:** List university-related involvement (e.g., student organization leadership, peer mentoring, athletics participation, fraternal organizations, honor societies, etc.). Please include the name of the organization/experience, years active, any leadership position held, the date(s) of leadership position(s) held, and a brief description of **personal** responsibilities and activities within each organization, not those of the organization as a whole.
  - ii. **Campus Honors and Awards:** Please list all honors, awards, and/or scholarships received during the candidate's college career. Candidates should briefly explain each honor, award, scholarship, etc. listed.
  - iii. **Other Campus Involvement:** Please list any relevant campus involvement (i.e., research with faculty, campus job/employment, service/volunteerism, etc.).
  - iv. **Non-University Involvement:** This category includes other commitments, work experience, community service, non-WSU organizational activities, or other groups the candidate might have been involved in or associated with, that can provide the judges with a better idea of who the candidate is as an individual.
  - v. **Graduate Program Participation (if applicable):** List any activities you are part of concurrent with your individual program. (e.g., Research, Field Experience, Internships, Thesis, etc.). Briefly describe the activity, its purpose, and your role or

level of engagement.

- vi. *Tip: Consider reformatting your resume to specifically highlight the requested sections.*

### III. Letter of Recommendation Received

- a. One letter of recommendation is to be submitted for each candidate. If additional letters are submitted, the first letter received will serve as the official letter of recommendation.
- b. Please note that these letters will be reviewed during Round 2, however, if applicants do not have a letter of recommendation, the applicant will be disqualified.

## **Round 2: Interview and Presentation Round**

This category allows judges to learn more about the candidates. If selected for this round, be prepared to be available to interview during the dates listed above. **This is the only time interviews will take place.**

### I. Presentation

- a. You will prepare a 10-minute sharp PowerPoint presentation covering the following based off of the award below.

#### i. Freshman Candidates:

1. Share your story of how you have contributed to Wichita State University and the surrounding community during your freshman year. Highlight specific examples of your involvement in campus organizations, leadership roles, volunteer activities, or service projects. How have these experiences shaped your personal growth, and what impact have you made?

#### ii. Sophomore Candidates:

1. Reflect on your transition from freshman to sophomore year. How have you grown in your scholarship, leadership, involvement, and service at Wichita State University? Share a specific project, initiative, or role where you made a significant impact, and describe how your approach has evolved as you've gained more experience and confidence.

#### iii. Junior Candidates:

1. Reflect on a leadership role you've held during your junior year at Wichita State University. How have you inspired and empowered others through your actions and involvement? Share specific examples of how you've mentored, motivated, or created opportunities for others within the campus or community, and discuss the impact of your leadership.

#### iv. Senior Candidates:

1. Describe a transformative leadership experience during your senior year that made a significant impact on the Wichita State community or beyond. How did this experience challenge you, and what strategies did you use to lead effectively? Discuss the outcomes and lessons learned, and how this experience has prepared you for life beyond graduation.

#### v. Graduate Candidates:

1. Reflect on your role as a leader and mentor within the Wichita State community. How have you contributed to the academic and personal growth of fellow graduate students? Share specific examples of mentorship, leadership in student organizations, or involvement in community outreach.

What have you learned from these experiences, and how have they shaped your development as a leader?

## **II. Interview**

- a. Judges will spend the remaining 10-minutes asking you questions. Areas to be judged include:
  - i. The candidate's ability to answer questions efficiently and the manner in which the candidate conducts themselves during the interview.
  - ii. Candidates will be judged by a panel of approximately three to five judges. Each interview will last a maximum of 20 minutes with judges asking questions of each candidate based on the information provided on their application

## **III. Letter of Recommendation Received:**

- a. One letter of recommendation is to be submitted for each candidate. If additional letters are submitted, the first letter received will serve as the official letter of recommendation.
- b. Applicants that do not receive a letter of recommendation will be disqualified.

- IV. While judges are given a common scoring rubric, each judge evaluates the candidates individually and scores accordingly.

## **Round 3: Final Presentation Round (Senior Honors and Graduate Student of the Year Finalists Only)**

This category allows the final panel of judges to learn more about the candidates and aid them in selecting the Undergraduate Student of the Year and the Graduate Student of the Year. If selected for this round, be prepared to be available to interview and deliver your final presentation during the dates listed above. **This is the only time interviews will take place.** The total session will be 25 minutes each.

### **I. Presentation**

- a. Each finalist will deliver a 10-minute presentation to a panel of different judges on why they should be chosen as this year's winner. Further guidelines will be presented at a later date.

### **II. Final Interview**

- a. Following the presentation, the judges will move immediately into a brief question and answer period.

- III. While judges are given a common scoring rubric, each judge evaluates the candidates individually and scores accordingly.

# **Student of the Year Competition**

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

**Q: Can past Man and Woman of the Year, Student of the Year, or Graduate Student of the Year candidates and finalists apply for the Student of the Year competition?**

A: Those who have made it to the interview round of their respective competition may apply again, but past finalists and winners are not eligible to apply.

**Q: Who can/should write the letter of recommendation?**

A: Someone with credibility should write the letter. Faculty and staff from institutions which you have had a working relationship with, an employer, or an advisor of an organization you are a member in are good options. Keep in mind the letter of recommendation is part of the Overall Impression score.

**Q: How are candidates chosen for interviews?**

A: There will be an initial screening of applications to determine which applicants will move on to the interview round. Take care to ensure that you submit materials in the requested formats and complete all required forms. Failure to do so is the primary reason candidates are removed from the process in the initial screening.

**Q: Can I apply if I am studying abroad this semester?**

A: Yes. We can make accommodation to conduct both the interview and presentation rounds through video conferencing software.

**Q: Can I apply if I am employed through Wichita State?**

A: Yes. This scholarship competition is open to any student who meets the minimum criteria regardless of employment status.

**Q: Can I apply if I am an online student?**

A: Yes. If you meet the minimum criteria and are currently enrolled at Wichita State, you are eligible to apply.