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SACSCOC Announces Inaugural Torch Awards Recipients

Recognizing institutional leadership in affordability, student success, and post-college outcomes

DECATUR, Ga. – At its annual meeting the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) announced the recipients of its inaugural Torch Awards, a new recognition program celebrating member institutions for their leadership in affordability, student success, and post-college outcomes. Like so many SACSCOC member institutions, the Torch Award winners have raised the bar for what higher education can deliver for students and their communities.

The Torch Awards elevate the work of institutions that demonstrate exceptional commitment to access, quality, accountability, and measurable improvement, reflecting SACSCOC's mission to highlight and support student-centered excellence across the region. The recipients were selected based on their strength across multiple indicators in each award category, rather than overall ranking.

“Students at our member institutions will always be at the forefront of everything we do,” SACSCOC President Dr. Stephen Pruitt said. “We’re excited to recognize the impact our member institutions make on the lives of students and their communities. The Torch Awards honor our member institutions that are not only meeting high standards but pushing themselves to do even more for their students.”

Torch Award Recipients

The inaugural awards spotlight institutions across three major categories derived from multiple indicators, including progress, student achievement, and affordability. The awards recognize colleges and universities of every level and size among SACSCOC's more than 780 member institutions.

Levels reflect institutional classifications and do not represent a ranking of performance.

1. Affordability

Level I

- **Trident Technical College**

Level II

- **St. Petersburg College**

Level III / IV

- **New College of Florida**

Level V

- **Fayetteville State University**
- **Northern Kentucky University**

Level VI

- **Florida Atlantic University**
- **University of Florida**
- **University of the Cumberlands**

2. Student Support and Completion

Level I

- **Beaufort County Community College**
- **John A. Gupton College**
- **Pamlico Community College**

Level II

- **Carolinas College of Health Sciences**
- **Centre College**
- **Davidson College**
- **Wofford College**

Level III / IV

- **Thomas University**

Level V

- **University of Richmond**

Level VI

- **Vanderbilt University**

3. Post-College Success

Level I

- **Marion Military Institute**
- **Northern Virginia Community College**

Level II

- **Virginia Military Institute**

Level III / IV

- **Trinity University**

Level V

- **Washington and Lee University**

Level VI

- **Rice University**
- **University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston**

Torch Award honorees will receive a plaque recognizing their achievements and will be featured on the SACSCOC website, organizational communications, and across SACSCOC's social media platforms. Additional institutions will be highlighted as part of this ongoing recognition series, and in future years SACSCOC will continue expanding award categories to reflect the breadth of excellence across its membership.

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