

Call for Nominations: 2026 AI Innovator in Education Award

Award Overview

The **brAIInHub AI Summit 2026** planning committee invites Western North Carolina's colleges and universities to nominate faculty and staff members for the **"2026 A.I. Innovator in Education Award."** This honor recognizes creative, effective, and ethical applications of artificial intelligence designed to enhance educational outcomes or institutional services.

Eligibility & Scope

Nominees must be current faculty or staff members at an eligible institution in the Western North Carolina region (counties listed below). Nominations may represent individuals or collaborative teams. Projects must be implemented or in an active stage by Spring 2026.

- **Geographic Criteria:** Participating institutions must have a campus located in the Western North Carolina counties including Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Caldwell, Cherokee, Clay, Cleveland, Catawba, Gaston, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Lincoln, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Swain, Transylvania, Watauga, Wilkes, and Yancey counties.
- **Who:** Full-time or part-time faculty and staff members.
- **Project Types:** Nominations may represent individuals or collaborative teams working on a specific AI project.

Evaluation Criteria

Submissions will be judged on originality, practicability, and usefulness to a broader academic audience. Projects should demonstrate a clear impact in **at least one** of the following areas:

- **Improving educational outcomes including the ethical, responsible and inclusive use of A.I. for students.**
- **Streamlining student services and administrative efficiency.**
- **Connecting campus initiatives with the regional employment needs of WNC.**

Prizes & Recognition

Three winning projects will receive a \$1,000 award, the opportunity to present at the BrainHub AI Summit, and regional recognition across partner platforms. Team awards will be issued to the institution for distribution according to institutional policy.

Important Dates

May 1, 2026 — Submission deadline; committee selects "finalists."

May 15, 2026 — Final selection of three winning projects.

May 22, 2026 — Notification of winners

June 4–5, 2026 — Award presentations at the AI Summit, Kimmel Arena, UNC Asheville (Note: Awards are given to the individual or team not the institution)

Submission Requirements

All nominations must be submitted as a single PDF (maximum 10 pages, 50 MB, 12 point font). Submissions should include a project overview, description of AI use, evidence of impact, ethical considerations, scalability, and a brief nominee biography. External media may be included via hyperlinks within the document. Please be sure to

- **Adhere to the PDF requirements above**
- **Fill out google form on website**
 - [brAIIn Hub Educator Award 2026 Submission Form](#)