

CAUCE Excellence Awards Committee AGM Report 2026

Prepared by Karen Hamilton, Kristopher Noseworthy, and Christina Abraham (Co-Chairs)

Executive Summary

The CAUCE Excellence Awards continue to recognize and celebrate outstanding achievement in continuing education across Canada. The 2026 awards cycle demonstrated strong engagement from institutional and affiliate members, reflecting ongoing innovation in program development and marketing practices. Through enhanced promotion, a structured adjudication process, and increased outreach efforts, including a national webinar, the committee successfully supported a competitive and inclusive awards program. A total of 23 submissions were received from 14 institutions, with awards presented at the CAUCE Annual Conference in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Overview

The CAUCE Excellence Awards recognize outstanding achievements in continuing education through Program and Marketing categories. These awards celebrate innovation, impact, and excellence in the design, delivery, and promotion of programs that serve diverse learner communities and advance lifelong learning across Canada.

The 2026 awards cycle continued to build on enhancements introduced in previous years, including expanded participation from affiliate members and a strengthened focus on engagement and visibility across the CAUCE network.

2025–2026 Excellence Awards Cycle

The committee launched its work in Fall 2025, establishing governance, adjudication processes, timelines, and a coordinated communications strategy.

A comprehensive promotional campaign from December through February was implemented to increase awareness and participation, including structured email deployments and social media posts, website updates, and hosting a webinar titled “Showcase Your Success: Building a Strong 2026 CAUCE Excellence Awards Submission,” held on January 21, 2026, that provided submission guidance improvements.

Submissions and Participation

The 2026 awards program received:

- 23 submissions
- 12 institutional members
- 2 affiliate members participating

This continued engagement from CAUCE members demonstrates growing awareness of the awards program. Program submissions increased, while marketing submissions have remained lower in recent years. As we continue to promote the new awards structure, these numbers are expected to improve.

Adjudication Process

The committee followed a two-phase adjudication process:

1. Initial review by category specialists (Program and Marketing)
2. Final cross-committee review to confirm Gold, Silver, Bronze, and Honourable Mentions.

Awards Presentation

The 2026 Excellence Awards were presented at the CAUCE Annual Conference in Halifax, Nova Scotia (May 13–15, 2026)

2026 Excellence Award Winners

The committee was pleased to recognize the following recipients:

Programming Awards

- Gold : Indigenous Language Documentation Micro-Certificate, University of Victoria Continuing Studies
- Silver: Fundamentals of the Homelessness Serving Sector Micro-certificate, University of Victoria Continuing Studies
- Bronze: Nuclear Career Accelerator, OntarioTech Continuous Learning
- Honourable Mention; ACT II Studio: Career Transitions into the Performing Arts, The G. Raymond Chang School of Continuing Education, Toronto Metropolitan University

Marketing Awards

- Gold: Evolve, University of Guelph, School of Continuing Studies
- Silver: Indigenous Health Allyship, PowerED by Athabasca University
- Bronze: Where Careers Move Forward: Learner-Centred Design Driving Measurable Growth, The G. Raymond Chang School of Continuing Education, Toronto Metropolitan University
- Honourable Mention: Explained Simply, University of British Columbia

Committee Membership (2025–2026)

The committee brought together a strong national representation of CAUCE members, with a mix of returning and new contributors.

Co-Chairs:

Christina Abraham, Toronto Metropolitan University
Karen Hamilton, McMaster University
Kristopher Noseworthy, Université de Saint-Boniface

Liaison:

Jack Rice, Acadia University

Committee Members:

Karen Allwood, Toronto Metropolitan University
Amy Baier, University of Toronto
Lauren Baker, University of Winnipeg
Jody Edwards, University of Calgary
Kathleen Geelen, McMaster University
Carolyn Maclaren, University of the Fraser Valley
Marcia McKenzie, University of Manitoba
Tatiana Qaqish, University of Victoria
Ewa Wasniewski, Concordia University of Edmonton (New)

Nomination Committee

Rod Lastra, University of Manitoba
Sheila LeBlance, University of Calgary
Christie Schultz, University of Regina

Key Activities and Achievements

1. Strengthened Promotion and Engagement
The implementation of a coordinated communications plan led to improved awareness and participation. The addition of a webinar was particularly valuable in supporting applicants and demystifying the submission process.
2. Continued Refinement of the Adjudication Process
The established two-phase adjudication model ensured both subject matter expertise and cross-category consistency in evaluating submissions.
3. Program and Website Enhancements
The committee reviewed submission guidelines, rubrics, and website content to improve clarity, usability, and accessibility for applicants.
4. Increased Inclusion of Affiliate Members
The continued inclusion of affiliate members contributed to a broader range of submissions and perspectives within the awards program.

Recommendations for 2027

To further strengthen the awards program, the committee recommends:

- Expanding awareness through early-stage promotion and outreach efforts
- Continuing webinar offerings and adding on-demand resources
- Incorporating testimonials and examples from award recipients
- Implementing a formal applicant experience survey
- Further refining adjudication tools and submission guidance

Acknowledgements

The committee extends its sincere appreciation to all institutions and affiliate members who submitted nominations and shared their outstanding work.

We thank the members of the Excellence Awards Committee for their time, expertise, and commitment throughout the year.

Special thanks to the CAUCE Secretariat and communications team for their continued support in promoting and delivering the awards program.