



2026 PAUL SIMON STUDENT ESSAY CONTEST

The Illinois Community College Trustees Association's PAUL SIMON STUDENT ESSAY CONTEST provides a \$500 scholarship to the student who best describes "How My Community College Has Changed My Life."

CONTEST RULES

All currently enrolled students at ICCTA member colleges are eligible to participate in the Paul Simon Student Essay Contest at the local level. However, each ICCTA member college may enter only **ONE** student essay in the statewide competition each year.

Each essay must be brief (less than 500 words), typed, and address the theme "How My Community College Has Changed My Life." Entrants may use "How My Community College Has Changed My Life" as the essay's title or create their own title related to the theme.

EACH ENTRY WILL BE JUDGED ON THE BASIS OF WRITING STYLE, CLARITY OF EXPRESSION, AND RELEVANCY TO THE TOPIC, WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS PLACED ON CORRECT GRAMMAR AND PUNCTUATION.

★ Failure to follow these rules will result in the disqualification of an essay ★

CONTEST DEADLINES

*Essays are due in SIC's
Office of Academic Services (C 203)
no later than FEBRUARY 27, 2026
The local winner will receive
a \$50.00 award and the right to
compete in the statewide contest. SIC will submit the
local winning essay to the ICCTA for participation in
the statewide contest.*

The state ICCTA winner of the Paul Simon Student Essay Contest will receive a \$500 cash stipend for educational expenses during the Fall 2026 semester. In addition, ICCTA will invite the winner to attend the association's June 5, 2026, awards banquet.