THE FIRST DEAN’S LIST: Honoring FIRST Student Superstars

November 11, 2011

In an effort to recognize the leadership and dedication of FIRST’s most outstanding FRC students, the Kamen family sponsors an award for selected top students, aka FIRST superstars, known as the FIRST Dean’s List.

Similar to the very prestigious National Merit Scholarship Award winners, there are three (3) “categories” of FIRST Dean’s List Award students:

1. FIRST Dean’s List Semi-Finalists (the group of two (2) students nominated by each FRC team);
2. FIRST Dean’s List Finalists comprised of the two (2) students selected at each regional; six (6) students selected at the Michigan FRC State Championship; and four (4) selected at the Mid-Atlantic Robotics FRC Region Championship;
3. FIRST Dean’s List Winners (10 students selected from the FIRST Dean’s List Finalists by the Dean’s List Committee at the FRC Championship).

Teams nominating students as FIRST Dean’s List Semi-Finalists should note that colleges and universities are extremely interested in recruiting FIRST Dean’s List Award students and accordingly, FIRST strongly urges teams to nominate a student in his or her junior year as a FIRST Dean’s List Semi-Finalist. While FIRST judges will consider any student nominated by their team as a FIRST Dean’s List Semi-Finalist, this year judges will give preference to students in their junior year when they make their selections to maximize the impact of the FIRST Dean’s List Award for students and colleges/universities supporting FIRST.

The students who earn FIRST Dean’s List Award status as either a Semi-Finalist, Finalist or Winner will not only be great examples of student leaders who have led their teams and communities to increased awareness for FIRST and its mission all while achieving personal technical expertise and accomplishment, but it is FIRST’s intention that they will continue on, post-award, as great leaders of FIRST’s ever growing student alumni and as advocates of FIRST. The FIRST Dean’s List Award, introduced in 2010, joined the ranks of other prestigious FIRST awards like the FIRST Founder’s Award which honors sponsors or other supporters who help to grow FIRST; the Woodie Flowers Award, which honors outstanding mentors at FIRST; and the Chairman’s Award, which honors the teams believed to have best achieved the mission of FIRST.

Since its introduction in 2010, the FIRST Dean’s List Award has attracted the attention of prestigious colleges and universities who desire to recruit FIRST Dean’s List students. As FIRST believes such interest is beneficial to our students, those selected will be asked to provide written consent for the release and use of certain personal information, including image, to interested colleges/universities for the sole purpose of their recruitment to the institution. Prestigious colleges have expressed great interest in meeting FIRST Dean’s List’s Award winners and so FIRST hopes that each team will take advantage of the opportunity to nominate their best students as FIRST Dean’s List Semi-Finalists!

The award was created during the 2010 FRC season by the Kamen family in recognition of Jack and Evelyn Kamen; parents of FIRST founder Dean Kamen. Jack, who passed away in August of 2008 at the age of 88, and his wife Evelyn have been fixtures at many FIRST events. Their
humor, along with a positive and supportive attitude, truly symbolizes the FIRST culture. In fact, Jack is the designer of the playful red, white and blue geometric shapes that create the FIRST logo which wonderfully balances the technical and emotional sides of what FIRST is all about. Dean's mother, Evelyn, is a tireless caretaker for her family and is an exceptional teacher, principal and tremendous FIRST supporter. She lends her experience as a leader of schools to chair the judge panel that selects the FIRST Dean’s List Award winners which includes Debra Cain, mother of singer/entertainer Wil.i.am, Vince Wilczynksi, Deputy Dean for the School of Engineering at Yale University and Ceci Neumann, a local CT attorney.

Dean’s parents always encouraged his passion for innovation and his gift for motivating leaders throughout the world to support the FIRST mission. It is the family’s hope that this Award will encourage the passion in all FIRST students to promote the FIRST mission both as a student on an FRC team and for years to come as members of the FIRST student alumni.

The process for competing for the FIRST Dean’s List is similar to the process for the Woodie Flowers Award and the Chairman’s Award in that applicants must first compete at the Regional level to be considered at the Championship level. Applicants for the FIRST Dean’s List are nominated by their mentor as FIRST Dean’s List Semi-Finalists. These students will be reviewed at one (1) Regional where their team is competing with two (2) FIRST Dean’s List Finalists chosen at each Regional.

All FIRST Dean’s List Finalists will be considered for the final selection of ten (10) FIRST Dean’s List Award winners at the FIRST Championship in St. Louis.

Each FRC mentor is invited to select up to two (2) students (may select only one but not more than two) as FIRST Dean’s List Semi-Finalists. In deciding which students to nominate, mentors should consider the impact the award will have on the nominated student. For example, FIRST strongly urges mentors to choose to nominate a junior whose college acceptance prospects would be enhanced by both the nomination and any subsequent advancement in the competition. Each mentor may only submit their two (2) FIRST Dean’s List Semi-Finalists to compete for the FIRST Dean’s List Finalist designation at one (1) regional. Students previously selected as FIRST Dean’s List Semifinalists or Finalists ARE eligible for nomination again this year.

Criteria for selection of the FIRST Dean’s List shall include, but not be limited to a student’s:

- demonstrated leadership and commitment to the ideals of FIRST;
- interest in and passion for a long term commitment to FIRST and its ideals;
- overall individual contribution to their team;
- technical expertise and passion;
- entrepreneurship and creativity;
- ability to motivate and lead fellow team members; and
- effectiveness at increasing awareness of FIRST in their school and community.

Evaluation of Semi-Finalists and Finalists will be based on a one page essay, submitted by the mentor, which best describes each student’s fulfillment of the criteria. (As previously noted, Mentors can submit up to two nominations/essays per team). Although a single mentor must submit the nomination, the team as a whole must verify the accuracy of the submission. FIRST is relying upon the team for veracity and accuracy of the submission data.
Each entry shall be in the form attached which includes identifying information; i.e., the student’s current year GPA and the GPA for each year the student has been a high school student; and an essay of not more than 4,000 characters attesting to why the student has been nominated. Essays must be submitted no later than **NOON Eastern Time on Thursday, February 16, 2012** to [https://my.usfirst.org/frc/tims/site.lasso](https://my.usfirst.org/frc/tims/site.lasso) A photograph or photographs of the **FIRST** Dean’s List Semi-Finalist is encouraged, but optional, and the essay submission and such photos may be used, in promotion of the recipient and/or the award, at the discretion of **FIRST**. In addition to the signed consent of the release and use of certain personal information, **FIRST** Dean’s List Finalists and Winners will be required to sign a **FIRST** media release to allow use of their likeness to sponsors contributing to the **FIRST** Dean’s List recognition program and will be responsible for any taxes associated with federal/state prize requirements.

If a team is attending more than one regional event, the mentor must select one event at which their nominations are to be considered. Each essay must clearly state the team name, the names and grade levels of the student(s) nominated, an explanation of why the students were nominated as well as the regional event at which the nomination is to be considered. Teams participating in Michigan and Mid-Atlantic Robotics Region District events must submit their nominees at the local Championship.

At each FRC regional event, judges will select two (2) students from the **FIRST** Dean’s List Semi-Finalist as **FIRST** Dean’s List Finalists. The two (2) Regional **FIRST** Dean’s List Finalists will be honored at the award ceremonies at that regional event. Six (6) **FIRST** Dean’s List Finalists will be selected/honored at the Michigan FRC State Championship and four (4) selected/honored at the Mid-Atlantic Robotic FRC Region Championship.

All **FIRST** Dean’s List Finalists will be considered for the **FIRST** Dean’s List at the **FIRST** Championship in St. Louis using the essays provided. Finalist candidates need not be present at the **FIRST** Championship in order to be considered. Ten (10) Students will be selected as the **FIRST** Dean’s List Award Winners for the 2012 FRC season.

The ten (10) 2012 **FIRST** Dean’s List Award winners will receive the following:

- a unique trophy and public recognition at the 2012 **FIRST** Championship;
- a written recommendation from **FIRST** leadership to the college(s) or employer(s) of their choice;
- a credit towards the winning student’s team 2013 registration fee;
- a commemorative plaque for the student’s school Hall of Fame;
- an invitation for them, and a chaperone, to attend an expenses paid **FIRST** Dean’s List Award Summit, at **FIRST** Headquarters in Manchester, New Hampshire; and
- the opportunity to work with all members of the **FIRST** Dean’s List and **FIRST** leaders to advance the mission of **FIRST**.

**GOOD LUCK!**