

NOMINATION SIGNATURE PAGE

2026 Virginia Outstanding Faculty Awards

Nominations must include this as the cover page of the nomination package PDF submission

Name of Applicant:	Heather C. Boone
Institution:	Tidewater Community College
Category (choose only one): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Baccalaureate Institution• Masters/Comprehensive Institution• Research/Doctoral Institution• Two-Year Institution• Rising Star	Two-Year Institution
Signature of President or Chief Academic Officer:	<i>Michelle W. Woodhouse</i>
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MISSION STATEMENT

Tidewater Community College provides collegiate education and workforce training to individuals of all ages, helping them achieve their goals and contribute to the vitality of the regional and global community.

SUMMARY OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Teaching

Heather Boone is a professor of Graphic Design at Tidewater Community College's Visual Arts + Design Center, where she has taught a broad range of design courses—from typography to systems design, web/interaction, and capstone courses—for sixteen years. Recognized as Professor of the Year in 2023–24, she is known for her innovative teaching, collaborative leadership, and dedication to student achievement. She co-led a comprehensive curriculum rewrite in 2023 in order to ensure the program remains aligned with industry standards and transfer pathways. Her students consistently describe her classes as transformative.

Her courses are built around process, critique, and risk-taking. Boone emphasizes that design is not decoration but problem-solving, a mindset that reshapes how students think about their work and themselves. She is especially effective in helping first-generation learners and career-changers recognize their potential. Through assignments that simulate professional practice, she equips students with both technical knowledge and the confidence to step into the role of designer.

This philosophy comes into sharpest focus in the *340 Art + Design Annual*, the program's student-produced publication. First published in 1998, the Annual presents a curated selection of student art and design from across the Visual Arts + Design Center, making it both a document of achievement and a striking work of design in its own right. Each edition captures the culture and creativity of the program while amplifying the vitality of student work. Few colleges or universities—and virtually no community colleges—sustain a publication of this ambition or longevity.

Boone has overseen twelve editions during her tenure, guiding students through a full professional design cycle that begins with brainstorming, audience analysis, and concept pitches and moves through prototyping, editing, design, production, and distribution. Students present their ideas to faculty, alumni, and community members in a professional-style review before refining concepts into finished design solutions. They negotiate with printers, manage budgets, proof work, and even sign off on production proofs before press runs begin. Past editions have included unconventional formats, experimental bindings, and bold conceptual frameworks—all evidence of students' ability to think beyond the expected.

The impact of 340 is evident in alumni success. Graduates have transferred into competitive programs such as Virginia Commonwealth University and secured positions in regional firms. Others have gone on to freelance careers, launched businesses, or returned to teach design themselves. Each success underscores how the project gives students more than a portfolio piece—it provides the discipline, collaboration, and vision to see themselves as professionals.

One clear example of this transformation is a recent graduate who, through participation in the *340 Art + Design Annual*, gained the confidence to take on real-world work. With Boone's mentorship, she landed her first client and went on to design a 130-page publication for the Virginia Community College System—a project that launched her freelance career. Her trajectory illustrates the ripple effect of community college education: a student who once questioned her potential is now shaping the field and contributing back to the profession.

This story reflects the broader outcomes of Boone's teaching and leadership. At TCC, students gain not only technical expertise but also the ability to work collaboratively, think critically, and see themselves as contributors to their communities. Her teaching creates bridges—between classroom and profession, between aspiration and achievement—so that students leave TCC equipped to thrive and to serve.

The *340 Art + Design Annual* is more than a course project—it is a flagship of the program, a teaching practice that prepares students for professional success, and a cultural artifact that reflects the innovation of TCC's Visual Arts + Design Center. Its endurance, inventiveness, and reach speak to Boone's commitment to experiential learning and to her belief in design education as a transformative force.

Discovery (Scholarship)

Heather Boone approaches design as both a teaching practice and a creative discipline, where making, experimentation, and reflection generate new knowledge. She advances design education by developing projects that function as scholarship in their own right—artifacts that embody research, creativity, and professional rigor while serving students and the community.

The *340 Art + Design Annual* exemplifies this approach. Each edition is more than a student project: it is an inquiry into how form, content, and process intersect to create meaning. Boone frames the work as a series of design questions—How can a publication embody an idea rather than merely contain it? What happens when production methods themselves become part of the concept? In pursuing these questions, students learn to treat design as a site of discovery, while Boone models how creative work generates knowledge within the discipline.

Past editions have explored these inquiries through inventive formats: a Smythe-sewn book with its binding intentionally exposed as a design element, a boxed edition that required readers to physically engage with multiple layers of content, and an issue that used anaglyph 3-D effects to create an immersive visual experience. These choices pushed beyond the classroom and into the realm of research, asking what a publication can be and how design functions simultaneously as artifact and idea.

The project's scholarly impact has been recognized across the college and beyond. In 2023, the Visual Arts + Design Center mounted a retrospective exhibition of every edition, displayed alongside photographs, sketches, and production ephemera to give an inside glimpse into the design process and highlight its evolution and cultural significance. Boone also presented the project at the Virginia Community College System peer group conference, where it was identified as a model of experiential pedagogy and creative research.

Her discovery work extends beyond 340. Boone participates in national design conferences such as Typographics, AIGA, and Typecon, where she engages with contemporary discourse in typography, systems design, and interaction. She also contributes as a portfolio reviewer at professional events like the AGIA's Spotlight and Tidal 757, mentoring emerging designers and engaging in dialogue about evolving practices. Her ongoing work as an interaction design consultant further grounds her scholarship in professional realities, ensuring her classroom remains responsive to the rapidly shifting terrain of UI/UX and digital media.

Through these endeavors, Boone demonstrates that discovery in design is not limited to individual studio practice—it emerges from collaboration, iteration, and the act of making. Her work illustrates how a sustained project like the *340 Art + Design Annual* can function as pedagogy, research, and cultural artifact, contributing not only to student learning but also to the broader conversation in design education.

Knowledge Integration

Heather Boone's work consistently bridges teaching, creative practice, and service, creating opportunities where students learn by doing and their efforts resonate beyond the classroom. She designs experiences that mirror professional practice while also advancing the mission of the Visual Arts + Design Center and Tidewater Community College.

The *340 Art + Design Annual* exemplifies this integration. Each year's edition begins in the classroom but extends into the public sphere—students pitch their concepts to faculty, alumni, and community members, receive real-time feedback, and refine their designs in response. Once complete, the publication circulates throughout the college and region, functioning as both a recruitment tool and a cultural artifact. Its visibility has strengthened alumni engagement and even supported transfer partnerships with four-year institutions.

Boone also manages marketing for the Center's gallery program, which features local, national, student, and faculty artists and designers. When the Center mounted its retrospective of the 340 Annual in 2023, she created campaigns that showcased the publication's twenty-five-year history and highlighted the impact of design education at a community college. The exhibition drew alumni, faculty across disciplines, and members of the regional arts community, demonstrating how student projects can become institutional assets that strengthen cultural and civic engagement.

Her integration of teaching and service extends into program leadership. In collaboration with colleague Mary Lee Shumate, Boone co-led a comprehensive curriculum revision, ensuring alignment with both transfer pathways and current industry standards. She also draws advisory board members into critiques, connecting students with professionals while building meaningful ties between the college and the design industry.

Institutional prioritization further highlighted Graphic Design as a vital contributor to TCC's mission, citing its strong enrollment, successful transfer outcomes, and impact on regional cultural vitality. This recognition underscores the way Boone's work elevates both student achievement and institutional reputation.

Through these efforts, Boone demonstrates that design education is most powerful when it crosses boundaries—between classroom and community, between learning and practice, and between student projects and institutional goals. Her work exemplifies Boyer's model of integration, showing how design can simultaneously advance students, programs, and the broader community.

Service

Heather Boone's service reflects her belief that design education thrives when faculty extend their expertise beyond the classroom to strengthen programs, colleagues, and communities.

Over sixteen years at Tidewater Community College, she has taken on leadership roles that advance the Graphic Design program, support the Visual Arts + Design Center, and connect students to professional opportunities.

Her institutional service includes co-directing a comprehensive curriculum revision, contributing to accreditation and program prioritization processes, and serving on committees such as the Faculty Development & Evaluation Committee, Faculty Senate, and the President's Student Achievement Committee. She has also coordinated scheduling and planning for the Graphic Design program, ensuring that courses remain accessible and strategically aligned with student needs.

Boone actively mentors colleagues, offering guidance to adjunct and new faculty in course design, pedagogy, and departmental leadership. This collegial investment strengthens the program's continuity and raises the overall quality of instruction.

Her service extends into community and professional networks. Boone engages advisory board members and regional designers in critiques, ensuring students receive authentic feedback while building ties between TCC and industry partners. She has represented TCC at portfolio days and design conferences, reviewed student work at design conferences, and participated in professional organizations such as AIGA. These activities amplify the visibility of the program while positioning TCC students within Virginia's broader design ecosystem.

She also contributes design expertise to the Center's gallery exhibitions and events, creating campaigns that elevate the visibility of student and faculty work across the region. By combining service with design practice, Boone ensures that the college's cultural programming reaches diverse audiences and reflects the vitality of its creative community.

The impact of this service is evident in how the Graphic Design program has been recognized as a contributor to student success, institutional reputation, and regional culture. Boone's commitment to leadership, mentorship, and collaboration ensures that her influence extends well beyond her own classroom, strengthening both TCC and the community it serves.

PERSONAL STATEMENT

I still remember standing with my students on a press check for the *340 Art + Design Annual*. The air in the press room was heavy with the smell of ink and the rhythmic thud of the machine. My students, a little nervous and buzzing with energy, leaned in close as the first sheets rolled off the giant commercial press. They had labored for months over these pages, but this was the first time they saw their work at full scale, in full CMYK color, on the fine offset paper they had chosen. In the controlled lighting, they compared the proofs to their digital files, adjusting for subtle shifts in tone and contrast. The press operators treated them like colleagues, explaining adjustments in real time. Then came the moment when one student, still hesitant, picked up the pen and signed the proof—giving permission for the full run to begin. The others broke into smiles, patting each other on the back. One whispered, “I never thought I’d see my design like this.” That moment captured what I value most in teaching: the transformation when students see their ideas burst out of the classroom and enter the world as a tangible object.

For me, design education is about creating those moments of recognition. Many of my students arrive at Tidewater Community College balancing jobs, family obligations, and financial stress, or doubting whether they belong in higher education at all. Some are recent high school graduates, others are retirees beginning a new chapter, and many are returning adults changing careers. In the studio, design becomes more than a technical skill. It becomes a means of building confidence, cultivating self-respect, and understanding that their vision has worth. When students push through the full cycle of conceiving, critiquing, refining, and producing a project, they learn to see themselves differently—and to see design as a discipline that can transform both their own lives and the communities they touch.

This belief is most fully realized in the *340 Art + Design Annual*, the program’s student-produced publication. Each edition embodies a professional design cycle—from audience analysis and concept pitches, through critiques with alumni and industry professionals, to production and distribution. Along the way, students are pushed to take risks and to imagine outcomes that exceed expectation. Over the years, they have produced editions with exposed Japanese stab bindings, translucent cover, tipped-in temporary tattoos, and even accordion folds—choices that reveal both daring and craft.

Beyond these, some editions included oversized pages that pushed the scale of the publication toward that of a poster, making the act of turning pages feel monumental. Others featured interactive inserts—postcards, foldouts, or small zines nested inside the main volume—that invited readers to explore the book in nonlinear ways. Thematic editions have used conceptual frameworks such as “time” or “communication,” where typography, paper stock, and format were all chosen to reinforce the central idea. One issue leaned into the tactile, pairing heavyweight uncoated papers with delicate translucent sheets, while another explored color as material, using bold floods of ink and unexpected stock to shift the reading experience.

Together, these experiments demonstrate that 340 is not just a portfolio of student work but a living laboratory. Each year, students are asked to consider not only what the book will contain but also what the book itself can be. In doing so, they learn that design is as much about shaping experiences as it is about arranging images and text—and that their own hands and imaginations can redefine the boundaries of the discipline.

I believe that a design project must become more than an assignment—it should be an object of desire, something delightful to experience and meaningful to share. Not every piece of design work can or should carry that weight—sometimes design’s purpose is purely functional, ensuring that information is clear and accessible. But with 340, the goal is always to create an artifact that resonates. Students understand that they are making something that will circulate beyond the classroom, be held in the hands of alumni, faculty, administrators, and even strangers. That awareness raises the stakes, and the work consistently meets the moment.

The impact of this work is clearest in the stories of alumni. One graduate, after working on 340, went on to design a statewide publication for the Virginia Community College System—a direct echo of what she experienced as a student. Another alumna built a thriving career as both a designer and instructor, returning to share her expertise in the classroom and leading workshops in the community. Their trajectories remind me that the lessons of 340 extend far beyond the book itself. They shape how students imagine their futures and the contributions they can make to the field.

My own practice mirrors this approach. I continue to consult in interaction design, work that keeps me connected to current industry standards and allows me to bring real-world examples back into the classroom. I also design marketing packages for our exhibitions program. These projects allow me to model professional responsibility and creative curiosity for my students, showing them how design operates in public and institutional contexts. The interplay between consulting, making, and teaching strengthens each area, reminding me that design education is a living, evolving practice.

I also carry forward lessons from the broader design community. At Typecon in Boston in 2017, designer and educator Yoon Soo Lee stated: “Self-knowledge and self-respect is at the core of what I believe to be an education.” That sentiment has stayed with me. It reflects what I have witnessed countless times at a community college: students discovering their own self-worth and potential through the act of making. I see my classroom as a place where design is not only taught but lived—where students are invited to experiment, to fail, to recover, and to emerge with a stronger sense of who they are and what they can contribute.

Looking forward, I hope that 340 continues to do what it does best for many years to come: give students the chance to see their ideas made real, to experience the rigor of professional design practice, and to create an object that carries their voices beyond the walls of the classroom. My vision is to deepen the project’s regional presence, strengthen ties with professional firms and community partners, and expand alumni engagement so that future students can see themselves in those who came before them. At the same time, I want to continue sustaining the program’s culture of innovation, ensuring that design education at a community college remains as ambitious and boundary-pushing as any in higher education.

At its heart, my teaching is about giving students the tools and the confidence to step into the world as designers who can think critically, work collaboratively, and create meaning. Design education dignifies existence by showing that ideas, when shaped with care and courage, can change how we see ourselves and our communities. I am grateful for the opportunity to do this work and for the students who continually remind me why it matters.

ABBREVIATED CURRICULUM VITAE

Heather C. Boone

Education

- **MFA, Design (Visual Communications)**—Virginia Commonwealth University
Summa Cum Laude, 2013
- **BFA, Painting & Printmaking**—Virginia Commonwealth University
Magna Cum Laude, 1994
- Additional Study: School of Visual Arts, 2003; Winchester School of Art, 1993

Teaching Experience

- **Professor of Graphic Design** (promoted from Associate Professor, 2020), Tidewater Community College, 2010–present
- Courses taught include Visual Communication, Typography I, Integrated Design Techniques, Interactive Design I & II, Communication Design I & II, Communication Arts Workshop, Computer Graphics I & II, Art Appreciation
- Co-led curriculum revision (2020) aligning courses to transfer pathways and industry standards
- Mentored adjunct and new faculty in Graphic Design, sharing course design strategies and feedback
- Recognized by students and colleagues for experiential, process-driven pedagogy; integrates risk-taking, critique, and professional simulation in coursework
- **Adjunct Faculty**, Tidewater Community College, 2008–2010
- **Adjunct Faculty**, Virginia Commonwealth University, 2005–2008
- **Instructional Assistant**, Virginia Commonwealth University, 2006

Selected Professional Leadership & Service

- Faculty lead/art director for 11 editions of the *340 Art + Design Annual*, TCC's student-produced publication (1998–present series)
- Co-led comprehensive curriculum revision with Prof. Mary Shumate, 2020
- Served on President's Student Achievement Convocation Committee, 2020
- Served on Arts & Humanities Pathway *My Thoughts, My Voice, My Art* committee, organizing events and collaborations (2020)
- Represented TCC at AAA Studio Arts Portfolio Day (2018, 2020), supporting K-12 outreach and transfer recruitment.
- Collaborated with foundation on Perry Glass Wheel Arts Center planning, 2018–19
- Contributions to accreditation reporting and program prioritization
- Gallery marketing campaigns for exhibitions of local, national, student, and faculty artists + designers
- Alumni engagement through 340 release events and critiques; mentorship of students and new faculty
- Advisory Board collaboration, integrating professional feedback into curriculum and critiques

Selected Creative/Scholarly Activity

- *340 Art + Design Annual*—sustained student publication (25+ editions); featured in 2023 retrospective at Visual Arts + Design Center with curated display of all editions, process artifacts, and production ephemera.

- Presenter, VCCS Peer Group Conference—experiential pedagogy and 340 (2021)
- Organizer/host, *My Thoughts, My Voice, My Art* speaker series events (2020)
- **Publications:** *Typographic Design: Form and Communication*, 4th ed. (contributing designer, 2007); *Word Play* (2010, group publication)
- **Exhibitions (selected):** *Word Play* traveling show (Boston/Detroit/Richmond, 2009–10); MFA Thesis Exhibition, VCU (2007)

Selected Professional Development & Presentations

- Attended AIGA Design Educators Symposium at national conference (2020)
- Participant, Typographics (NYC) and AIGA National Conferences (ongoing)
- Participant, Typecon (Boston, 2017)
- Portfolio Reviewer, Tidal 757 / Insight: AIGA Hampton Roads (2017, 2023)
- Participation in AIGA Design Educators' Conference (*BLUNT*, 2013)

Awards & Recognition

- Professor of the Year, 2023–24, Tidewater Community College
- Outstanding Faculty Award, TCC Faculty Senate, 2022–23
- Professional Excellence in Teaching Award, TCC Reward & Recognition Committee, 2024
- Professional Excellence in Institutional Responsibility Award, TCC Reward & Recognition Committee, 2025
- TCC Excellence in Teaching Awards (multiple years)
- HOW Interactive Design Merit Award, 2013
- GD USA American Inhouse Design Awards (two), 2006
- Ledford Scholarship, 2006
- Astrid Award, Best of Show, 2003

Selected Institutional Service/Committees

- Faculty Development & Evaluation Committee
- Faculty Senate
- Curriculum Advisory Board
- Accreditation & program prioritization participation

Professional Practice (Selected)

- Interaction Design Consultant (ongoing)—maintains professional currency in UI/UX and front-end web development.
- Hunter Public Relations, NY (2005–present, freelance): campaigns, brand systems, packaging, and web; clients include Kellogg's, Campbell's, Ernest & Julio Gallo, Hasbro, Lucasfilm, Paramount, University of Florida, Wellness Pet.
- Collaborator, GoodGood Studio, Boston (2009–present)—interdisciplinary research on women in design history.
- Previous roles: Art Director at Winstar, Empire Media, Burlen Corp.: clients included ABC News, Target, AT&T, Coca-Cola, IKEA, New York Times, Reader's Digest.

Professional Affiliations

- AIGA, the Professional Association for Design

LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Dr. Michelle Woodhouse, Ed.D.

Vice President for Academic Affairs, Tidewater Community College

Professor Boone exemplifies the highest standards of instructional innovation, student engagement, and professional leadership. Through the *340 Art + Design Annual*, she has transformed experiential learning, offering students an unparalleled opportunity to develop real-world design skills. The Annual has elevated the college's visibility in ways rare in higher education, particularly at the community college level. Having seen the program evolve during my time as Provost and now as Vice President, I can attest that Professor Boone's leadership has made this project not only a showcase of student achievement but also a model of how community colleges can produce work that rivals and sometimes surpasses four-year institutions.

Mr. Chris Bryant

Vice President for Institutional Advancement, Tidewater Community College

The *340 Art + Design Annual* is used in recruitment, alumni engagement, and donor relations, showcasing the caliber of student achievement in a tangible, beautifully designed format. The 25th edition celebration brought together faculty, students, alumni, and community partners, strengthening TCC's reputation and community ties. I was proud to help fund its printing because it advances both student learning and institutional priorities. As Vice President for Advancement, I have seen how this project opens doors with prospective donors and partners by providing a powerful example of student innovation.

Dr. Mark Frederick, Ph.D.

Professor of Communication Studies, Former Interim Director
Visual Arts Center, Tidewater Community College

I attended a brainstorming session where students, staff, faculty, administrators, and professionals all contributed to the creative process. The vigorous discussion yielded a collaborative, best-practices approach to the final publication. Students benefited from modeling collaboration, the college gained a unique marketing tool, and the design community connected with future professionals—all under Heather Boone's mentorship.

Professor Corinne Lilyard-Mitchell

Professor of Art (Retired), Former Interim Director, Visual Arts Center, Tidewater Community College

As head of the Graphic Design program, Heather successfully restructured the curriculum to reflect the evolving needs of the design profession. She has consistently championed experiential learning, particularly through her supervision of the *340 Art + Design Annual*. Heather exemplifies the qualities this award seeks to recognize: excellence in teaching, service, and leadership.

Ms. Shelley Brooks

Former Curator of Exhibitions and Permanent Collections
Visual Arts Center, Tidewater Community College

Heather's mentorship transformed the *340 Art + Design Annual* into inventive, complex, and exciting works typically found in graduate-level curricula. Disseminated to schools, universities,

libraries, and even city and state leaders, the publication reflects the strength and comprehensiveness of the Graphic Design program at the Visual Arts + Design Center.

Professor Craig Nilsen

Professor of Graphic Design (Retired), Tidewater Community College

The *340 Art + Design Annual* shows a level of innovation and professionalism unequaled by any other college or university in Virginia. What you are looking at is the work of students who are the product of a deeply caring and committed teacher. Heather Boone is the guiding spirit and heart of this program.

Mary Lee Shumate

Associate Professor of Graphic Design, Tidewater Community College

Professor Boone's leadership of the 340 Art + Design Annual has given students unparalleled professional experience—budgeting, presenting concepts, designing layouts, and working with commercial printers. The resulting publications are distinctive, innovative, and treasured artifacts that strengthen resumes, open professional doors, and foster community engagement. Alumni return regularly for critiques, workshops, and release events, underscoring the Annual's impact as both a teaching practice and a cultural asset.

Ms. Diane Graham

Former Student and PR Coordinator, Visual Arts Center; Current Colleague, Old Dominion University

As a student, I found Heather's teaching both challenging and empowering. Later, as PR coordinator, I worked with her on the 340 Annual—a sophisticated, inventive publication.

Now as a colleague at ODU, I continue to admire the benchmark she has set for experiential design education.

Ms. Ayla Elliott

Former Student, Adjunct Instructor, and Practicing Designer

Heather expertly cultivates a classroom environment where students feel seen, included, and supported. Though I wasn't in the class, I have twelve editions of the 340 on my shelf and consider myself a fan. Each one is a time capsule illuminated by the spirit of her students and her vision as a leader.

Ms. Megan Brassart

Designer, Alumna of Tidewater Community College

Her Visual Communications class was the first time I understood that design is not just about making things look good—it is about solving problems. Her leadership on the *340 Art + Design Annual* was especially formative, guiding students through a professional design process that instilled confidence, accountability, and industry standards. Thanks to her recommendation, I landed my first professional client and designed *I Belong*, a 130-page publication for the Virginia Community College System—a project that launched my freelance career. Her influence on my journey has been lasting and profound.