

***Preparing Successful Award
Nominations
More Art than Science***

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THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS
**MDAnderson
Cancer Center**

Making Cancer History®

Why focus on women?

Women disproportionately under-represented as award recipients in science and medicine

Nobel Laureates

in Medicine (1901-2011): 10 (5%) women, 189 (95%) men

IOM Members (2011): 21 (32%) women, 44 (68%) men

NAS Members (2011): 9 (12%) women, 63 (87%) men

Awards/honors figure prominently in:

enhancing credibility

career advancement

obtaining leadership positions

Sources: www.nobelprize.org, www.iom.edu and www.nationalacademies.org

And... sends clear message to young women

Women need not apply



Not Unique to AAMC

What can you do?

Prepare a compelling nomination packet.

As the nominator, **your most important responsibility** is to identify a (woman) colleague who has made significant contributions within the scope of the award



1. Understand the nomination process

START EARLY! FOLLOW DIRECTIONS!

Read the eligibility requirements carefully- MORE THAN ONCE

- number of nominators/supporting letters
- other supporting documentation
- technical requirements (font, page limits, etc.)

Look into unacknowledged rules – call awarding organization with questions

Check award timelines – give yourself ample time to assemble documents

Award committees rely on concise and complete nominations

Well written nominations allow committees to use their time effectively

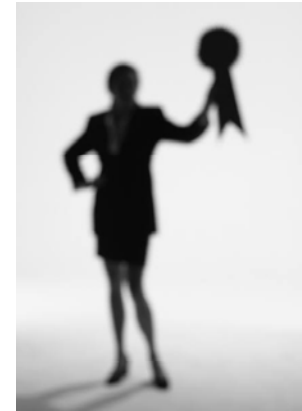
Applications may be discarded if you do not follow the instructions

Always confirm receipt of materials

2. Identify the nominee

- Establish benchmarks - Who are previous recipients?
- Match the nominee to the award criteria

Nominating a colleague who has done outstanding work, but does not satisfy the criteria of the award, is a waste of time



- Build libraries of faculty by certain criteria- age, rank, etc.
 - Who are your stars?
 - Who are the “faculty to watch”?
 - Who is receiving awards?
- Seek input from colleagues who are former members of the award committee

Choose nominators and supporters well

- **Prestige** → Ask arbiters of quality in the field
- **Personal commitment** → lukewarm letters can be damaging
- **Mix of internal and external nominators/supporters**
- **Address different aspects of the candidate's qualifications**

Each letter should

- enhance/add different information to nomination
- focus on a certain aspect of the nominee's work or career
- discuss the nominee as an arbiter of quality in the field



3. Prepare the Nomination Letter

Nomination letter should be **CONCISE** and address **IMPACT** of nominee's contributions

- Prepare a **strong opening and closing** statement.
- Provide **specific, meaningful description of the candidate's contributions.**
- **Use specific examples** of accomplishments.
- **Avoid sweeping generalities** and make every sentence count.
- **Address all aspects** of the award criteria.
- Watch the superlatives, less is more



It takes a village



Enlist nominee

- update an already prepared letter
- update CV and summary of accomplishments that describe
impact of accomplishments
overall career impact
citations of key publications (journal impact factors)

Solicit chairs/other colleagues who have detailed knowledge of nominee's contributions

Enlist colleagues who are former members of the award selection committee

Use all current sources of information
(i.e., news articles, other nomination letters)

Make the reviewers life easy

- **Organize the letter to make it easy to identify accomplishments** specific to the award criteria.
- Have nominee/chair/other colleagues **read to clarify and strengthen** the letter.
- **Proofread** – grammatical errors and misspelled words detract from the quality of the nomination.
- Review to **ensure that you have met the criteria and requirements of the award.**



Gender Speak

Male applicants

are more likely to be described
in AGENTIC terms:

- Ambitious
- Independent
- Self-confident
- Intellectual

Female applicants

are more likely to be described
with COMMUNAL terms:

- Helpful
- Sensitive
- Kind
- Sympathetic

The results have implications for the advancement of
women, because research shows that
agency is linked with advancement in the workplace.

Sources: Madera J., Hebl M. and Martin R. (Rice University). Gender and Letters of Recommendation: Agentic and Communal Differences. Journal of Applied Psychology. Vol. 94 (6): 1591-9, November 2009

Watch your language!

Letters for **MEN**:

- Longer
- More references to CV
- Publications
- Patents
- Colleagues
- Highlight research, skills and abilities → portray men as researchers and professionals



Letters for **WOMEN** :

- Shorter
- More references to personal life
- Fewer terms of praise
- More “doubt raisers” (hedges, faint praise, and irrelevancies)
 - *“It’s amazing how much she’s accomplished.”*
 - *“She has significant accomplishments ... even though she had a child.”*
- Highlight teaching and training → portray women as teachers and students

Sources: Trix & Psenka (2003) *Discourse & Society*, Volume 14(2): 191-220 and STRIDE Program at the University of Michigan, *Strategies and Tactics for Recruiting to Improve Diversity and Excellence*

Don't take "no" for the final answer



- Be persistent
- Was your nominee a "good fit"?
- Always update nominee's information