

REPORT TO THE DEAN AND FACULTY COUNCIL FROM THE AWARDS AND HONORS COMMITTEE (draft)

The Ad Hoc Committee was charged by the Faculty Council in 2023 and had its first meeting in May of 2023. The Committee met every other week until January of 2024 when it moved to monthly meetings. The committee has focused on identifying appropriate nominees for national and international awards that reflect the excellence at the CWRU SOM. Committee members were selected to be representative of the Basic Sciences, Educational Programs and Affiliate Clinical Sites of the SOM, with representatives also from the dean's office. Although the original charge of the FC to the committee indicated that members would be elected, the current committee members have been selected by the chair or nominated by committee members for their senior leadership and knowledge of faculty in their units. A survey of the committee indicated that selection by the dean or chair was preferable to election. The committee also was a learning laboratory, identifying barriers to award nominations, and administrative support needs to encourage and facilitate nominations. Committee members were also ambassadors to their respective units, encouraging and identifying awards and nominees. The committee as a whole elected to be a facilitative body, encouraging any nominations possible and not restricting nominations.

Current Members of the committee: William Merrick, Jon Karn, Jim Young, Jennifer Bailit, Lia Logio, Amy Wilson-delfosse, Tina Lining, John Chae, Robert Bonomo, Lynn Singer (Chair

Cynthia Rahn, Susan Reichert, Yi Fritz, Vivian Wei, Elizabeth Fehsefeld, Ariana Ellis (support and advisors)

In its first year, the committee identified over 40 prizes and facilitated submitted nominations for 22 of them. (See attached for prizes and nominees.)

Over the course of the year, the committee learned a great deal about the state of the CWRU SOM process compared to other Schools. A survey conducted within the committee also made several recommendations summarized here:

First, the SOM has numerous prominent and highly regarded clinicians and scientists that merit award nominations, based on citation indices and Research.com prominence, and the Awards and Honors committee is a first step in developing the processes and supports to make award nominations. The **SOM also needs to mobilize to encourage faculty participation in and leadership possibilities in professional and scientific organizations** in a way that will lead to recognition of their scientific and professional achievements. The committee has focused on several areas where faculty have

established leadership, e.g., Cancer, Genetics, Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Neonatology, Cardiology, Neuroscience, Global health and Infectious disease.

We cite the **need for the SOM to promote membership in professional organizations** and the need for nominations and support to be engaged in those organizations as they are often the sponsors of the most prestigious major awards, such as AAAS, AAP. ASCI, ASBMB, and the more specific ones related to their discipline.

Basic Science and Clinical chairs are critical to finding strong and suitably qualified nominees, especially for young faculty awards. Jon Karn is a liaison to the Basic Science Chairs and represents the committee to the Chairs. We are grateful to Cliff Harding who has nominated a faculty member in his department for a national prize.

While the idea of nominating faculty for awards appears straightforward, it is far from simple and requires numerous steps and collaborative efforts across stakeholders. The committee members work to identify candidates who must be matched to the unique requirements of each award and to stay informed about the **several hundreds of awards due annually**. We thank the dean for the assistance of Vivian Wei in the Faculty Affairs office for the creation of an Awards website to publicize awardees and to identify awards for faculty application. This site was launched last year and the committee continues to work with her office to address how to publicize available awards.

The nominee him/herself must take an active role in describing how their achievements are relevant to the designated award and take the time and effort to engage in the process, including **identifying appropriate references and nominators**. Frequently, the nominees are not comfortable with contacting references themselves and committee members need to be engaged to help contact references or to help the nominee address the award requirements. It is not uncommon to need 2-3 references for an award. When the dean has been the nominator for major awards, this assistance has at times been coordinated by the dean's office, but we have identified that **in other universities, there is often a designated staff member** in the dean's or provost office coordinating these efforts. Committee members have personally received solicitations from other universities from vice-deans, or associate provosts to provide support to faculty in other schools of medicine for awards. Such positions require knowledge of the scientific or clinical discipline of the nominee, ascertainment of the nuances of the award, sensitivity in working with highly esteemed faculty in other schools of medicine, and time consuming followup for letters of reference, similar to the role Cynthia Rahn serves for Foundation grants to the university).

Additionally, the need for reference and nominating **letter writers** is often of importance. While some faculty members may be great writers in addition to their knowledge about their own scientific achievements, many are not and need assistance in constructing appropriate letters or statements for the awards. We have found that it is not uncommon for **the most prestigious references to ask for an already prepared letter** to edit,

requiring that the nominee or committee member or dean's office create a letter. Some of these letters over the past year have been prepared by committee members, but this is not a feasible method for going forward, as the burden on the committee member is too high and/or they may not be excellent writers themselves. At this point, **only UH faculty** have the advantage of the assistance of a Research director for coordination with the dean's office (Yi Fritz) and a letter writer in preparation for a nomination.