

APS Excellence in Physics Education Award Selection Committee Information, Nomination Information, Guidelines, and Related FEd Duties and Responsibilities

Membership of the committee

The committee consists of 5 members: a chair, a vice chair, 2 regular members, and a member from the most recent award. Each year 3 members of the committee are submitted by the FEd to the APS Honors Programs Administrator. These 3 members consist of a vice chair for the current selection cycle, a regular member position for the current selection cycle, and a winner from the most recent award. In the next selection cycle, the vice-chair of the committee becomes the chair, and the regular member stays as a regular member. For the 3 members selected each year, the vice chair serves for 2 selection cycles (2 years – first as vice chair and then as chair), the regular member serves for 2 selection cycles, and the recent awardee serves for only 1 selection cycle. The FEd chair is responsible for submitting the 3 new members to the APS Honors Programs Administrator. The full selection committee should be finalized prior to March 1.

Responsibilities of the committee

Recruitment of nominations is a major responsibility of the selection committee. While members of the selection committee cannot directly contribute to a nomination, they should encourage others to nominate deserving individuals for the award. They should also make clear to those from whom nominations are solicited that their candidates will be considered on an equal basis with all other nominations. The committee is to review these nominations and provide to the APS Honors Programs Administrator a brief report with their recommendation by September 1. The recommendation for the award winner should include a proposed citation, justification for the award selection, a list of those candidates considered for the award, and issues associated with award. The recommended recipient must be approved by the APS Executive Board before the award is official. The final act of the selection committee is to identify candidates for future possible nominations, and contact the home institution of these nominees to encourage possible nominations for the next award cycle. The selection committee should also forward the names of those candidates to the FEd chair so that the FEd can directly encourage their nomination. There is no travel involved. All of the correspondence is done via email and teleconference.

Nomination Guidelines for Award candidates

Nominations for the Excellence in Physics Education Award are due by July 1 for the award that will be presented in the following year. APS nomination guidelines are at:

<http://www.aps.org/programs/honors/nomination.cfm>

Current committee members and further details about the award are at:

<http://www.aps.org/programs/honors/awards/education.cfm>

Previous selection committees are shown at the bottom of the page dedicated to each Award.

Additional guidelines generated by the FEd in response to questions from the selection committee

Issue 1. The award selection committee felt that there was no guidance regarding: What is the minimum level of excellence and significance that should be necessary to win the award?

Response 1 to the award selection committee. The award criteria state that the award: "Recognizes and honors a team or group of individuals (such as a collaboration), or exceptionally a single individual, who have exhibited a sustained commitment to excellence in physics education." The minimum level of excellence and significance is a judgment call that is best determined from the combined experiences of the selection committee members. They make the determination of excellence. Candidates worthy of the award should exhibit excellence in physics education for a sustained period of time. As rough guidelines, the program should be one of the best in the country in their relevant area, as determined by the selection committee, and sustained excellence would involve exhibiting excellence over a period of at least 5 years.

Issue 2. The award selection committee felt that there was no guidance regarding: What constitutes adequate evidence of excellence?

Response 2 to the award selection committee. See response 1.

Issue 3. Should programs be considered if they only address a narrow branch of physics at either the K-12, undergraduate, or graduate level?

Response 3 to the award selection committee. Yes, programs should be considered even if they only address a narrow branch of physics. The award criteria do not define a narrow band of physics education. The guidelines state that the key determinants are excellence in physics education and sustained commitment.

Issue 4. Should the selection of a nominee in a particular year be judged in comparison to previous year's winners?

Response 4 to the award selection committee. No. While the selection committee should be aware of previous awardees, they should not compare nominees to past winners. The sole determinant for award selection should be excellence in physics education and sustained commitment, and award selection should not involve a comparison to the qualifications of previous award winners.

Issue 5. Should the FEd encourage self nominations for the award?

Response 5 to the APS, selection committee, and FEd leadership. In order to maintain the same official APS instructions for nomination, the award criteria will remain as currently stated on the APS award web site. We note that the current nomination guidance does not mention self nominations explicitly, so it is currently neither officially encouraged nor disallowed. However, if the FEd or the selection committee actively solicits nominations for particular candidate nominees, then that letter will state that self nominations are acceptable, but that such

self nominations should include at least two, but not more than four seconding letters from individuals who are not part of the nominee team.

Issue 6. How can we ensure that there is a significant pool of nominees each year for this award?

Response 6 to the selection committee and to the FEd leadership. The FEd and the selection committee members will work together to solicit nominations for the award. The FEd chair and the chair of the selection committee will keep each other informed as to whom they have sent solicitations. Both 2 months and 1 month prior to the award submission deadline, the chair of the selection committee will notify the FEd chair regarding the number of nominees received. If the number is less than 5, the FEd chair and the selection committee chair will develop and implement a plan to solicit additional nominees. The FEd will also continue to include a call for nominations for this award on the FEd home page and in the FEd newsletters. The FEd will encourage announcements about this award at physics education meetings and will contact the AAPT regarding placing an announcement about this award in their publications.

Issue 7. The nomination process is not always posted on the APS web site.

Response 7 to the APS. The nomination process should always appear on the APS web site.

Financial Issues as of 4/3/12

In response to the APS request for guidance regarding how to fund the APS Excellence in Physics Education Award so it is on stable financial grounds, we would like to implement the following:

1. The FEd will pay for travel costs for the 2011 winners (PRTA) and will pay for travel costs until an additional \$16K is raised.
2. The FEd and COE will raise an additional \$16K so that the award is financially self sufficient.
3. Starting with the next award (2012), there will be a limit on the travel costs to \$2000.