



AAMC

Tomorrow's Doctors, Tomorrow's Cures®

GIA Awards for Excellence

2021 Guidelines and Instructions

Association of
American Medical Colleges

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2021 GIA Awards for Excellence

Guidelines and Instructions



Greetings GIA Members,

The year 2020 will be one we remember for many reasons. Our institutions and teams stepped up immensely to execute an extraordinary collective mission. The Group on Institutional Advancement (GIA) Awards for Excellence competition has been reimagined and streamlined to celebrate the efforts, successes, and people responsible for providing guidance in academic medicine during a public health crisis.

The Awards for Excellence is an annual, peer-reviewed competition that recognizes outstanding work by members of the GIA and their staff. The awards honor the most creative and effective approaches used to promote academic medicine through alumni relations, communications, development, marketing, and public affairs and community engagement programs and projects. I am honored to serve as chair for this year's competition.

Why enter the competition with so much going on? You not only lived through the first half of 2020, you thrived. Simply put, your team is deserving of national recognition now more than ever!

Additionally, your recognition will spur inspiration and ideas for peer institutions from across the country. We've listened to your feedback and updated the submission process to a completely online format, extended the nomination period, and added two new categories: Crisis Management Award and Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity Award.

Participation is also an excellent way to celebrate your teams' talents and share their accomplishments with your institution's leadership. Past winners have even been able to advocate for, and receive, additional recognition and resources after receiving an Award for Excellence!

On behalf of the GIA Steering Committee and Judging Panel, we look forward to reviewing your stellar work!



Allison Otu
Executive Director, Corporate & Community Relations
The University of Arizona Health Sciences
Office of Communications
AAMC GIA Awards for Excellence Chair

Important Dates & Deadlines

Date	Deadline
September 9, 2020	Call for Entries Opens <i>Eligible entries must have occurred between April 1, 2019 and June 30, 2020.</i>
September 9-November 6, 2020	Call for Entries Submission Window <i>Early Bird Discount ends October 7, 2020.</i>
November 6, 2020	Call for Entries Closes <i>Finalize and submit your entry online before the deadline of 5:00 pm Eastern. Deadline extensions are not granted.</i>
November 2020-January 2021	Judging
Late-January 2021	Notification <i>All entrants receive notification of entry status and feedback.</i>
Spring 2021	Recognition

Entry Fee & Eligibility

- Submitted projects and programs must have occurred or been completed between **April 1, 2019** and **June 30, 2020**.
- Entries must be sponsored by an individual GIA member who is in good standing.*
 - Work performed by a non-GIA member employed directly by the entering institution (full-time or permanent part-time employee, not a freelancer) must be sponsored by a GIA member in good standing from that institution.
- Entries must be the work of the hospital or medical school staff submitting the nomination and should accurately characterize the work and role of outside agencies, consultants, or vendors. Projects done completely by outside agencies or consultants are not eligible.
- Each award submission requires an **entry fee**, payable online at the time of entry via credit card only: MasterCard, Visa, American Express, or Discover. You will receive a payment confirmation and receipt via email once confirmed. The AAMC does not accept entry fee payment by check. Entry fees are nonrefundable.
 - Early Bird Entry Fee: \$40
 - *September 9-October 7*
 - Standard Entry Fee: \$50
 - *October 8-November 6*
- The current Awards for Excellence (AFE) Chair and other GIA members from that institution are not eligible to compete in the awards program. This year, the University of Arizona College of Medicine – Phoenix and the University of Arizona College of Medicine staff are not eligible. Staff at these institutions are eligible to submit in next year's program.
- Judges and members of their institutions are not eligible to compete in the categories the judge is reviewing.
- Judges may review entries submitted by affiliated organizations that operate under separate executive leadership from their own. The AFE Chair will make the final decision about the eligibility of an entry.

*A member in good standing is an alumni relations, communications, development, marketing, or public affairs representative who has been appointed to [GIA membership](#) by an AAMC member institution and whose membership dues are current and paid in full. Contact Madalyn Sistik, Constituent Engagement Specialist, at 202-862-6705 or msistik@aamc.org for confirmation of membership or to become a member.

Components of an Entry

Entries must be submitted via [an online portal](#).

All entries, including the narrative and supporting entry materials, must be uploaded into the online system. **Do not mail any documents to the AAMC.**

Your entry must contain the following components:

Narrative

Each entry must be accompanied by a written narrative that contains a goal, a strategy statement, and objectives stating how the submitted project addressed a need or helped solve a problem. This narrative must clearly outline the rationale for the project and measurable outcomes obtained.

The narrative is your opportunity to tell the judges your story; help them understand the situation you and your institution faced. The narrative is as important as the supporting materials because it provides the foundation of your submission.

With the exception of the Robert G. Fenley Writing Award entries*, all narratives should be **double-spaced; Times New Roman, Arial, or Calibri 12-point font; no more than four (4) pages in length**; and include the following components:

- **Entry Number:** This number is provided during the time of online entry form submission.
- **Summary:** A short account of the project, program, or publication. Provide a concise description of the overall idea.
- **Goals:** Outline the need or opportunity that the project addresses. Questions to keep in mind include: What were you trying to accomplish? What results did you hope to achieve? Was the project used to solve a problem? Where did the problem start? What are its effects? What need were you looking to fill?
- **Solution/Strategy:** Explain and outline your strategy: Describe the steps you took, the options you had, and the decisions you made. Give us an account of the thought process that went into your decisions; how did you decide to pursue one option over another?
- **Measurements:** Describe the results of your project, both within your organization and in your targeted audience. Provide metrics/analytics wherever possible. Provide an evaluation of how well the solution targeted the problem or need, using specific and measurable outcomes (if a survey tool was used, submit a copy). If you took an existing idea and reimagined it for your own institution, let the judges know how it is different. How did it add value to your organization?
- **Innovation:** Overall creativity and innovation of the entry. Does the entry have the potential to be adapted and used by other institutions?

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- **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:** Diversity, equity, and inclusion are strategic imperatives, and there is demonstrated commitment to DEI.

*Narratives written for the Robert G. Fenley Writing Award entries should, instead, provide context for the piece and describe the intended audience.

Supporting Entry Materials

Each entry must include supporting materials highlighting your entry. This may include, but is not limited to, magazines, articles, analytics, photos, video/audio files (included with the entry in the portal, via a weblink, and/or an online drive link), promotional materials from an event or campaign, screenshots of websites and/or apps, and more. **All supporting materials must be submitted to the online portal and NOT mailed to AAMC.**

Award Categories

Print and Digital Publishing

This category recognizes innovative digital and print publishing. Entries must be the work of an institution's alumni relations, communications, development, marketing, or public affairs program. Outside technical assistance is permissible, but concept, organization, and design must be the work of the entrant.

A. Single or Special Issue

This category is for single or special issue print and digital publishing. Entries in this category may include annual reports, fundraising or marketing collateral materials, community impact or community service reports, patient information or education materials, commemoratives, or any other non-periodical publications.

B. External Audience

This category is for print and digital periodicals intended for external audiences. Examples included in this category are medical school or hospital magazines and newsletters produced primarily for external constituencies (e.g., patients, referring physicians, alumni, donors, community leaders, or other external groups). Entries must include two consecutive issues of the periodical.

C. Internal Audience

This category is for print and digital periodicals intended for internal audiences. Examples included in this category are magazines, newsletters, and other serial publications intended primarily for employees and/or faculty of a medical school or teaching hospital/health system. Entries must include two consecutive issues of the periodical.

Electronic Communications

This category recognizes innovative and strategy-driven digital, multimedia, and online projects. Entries must be the work of an institution's alumni relations, communications, development, marketing, or public affairs program. Outside technical assistance is permissible, but concept, organization, and design must be the work of the entrant.

A. Audio and Video

Entries in this category may include, but are not limited to, video news releases, radio or broadcast advertising, podcasts, special event audio and video, or multimedia presentations. Entries that are part of a serial program must be submitted as three or more segments. Narratives, files, and/or links to supporting materials (e.g., YouTube, Vimeo, or items in a Drop Box) must be submitted online.

B. Websites

Entries in this category include website-based projects, such as internal or external websites or consumer/constituent portals developed to support an institution, campaign, program, or special initiative. Narratives, which should be uploaded into the online form, may include screenshots or point out particular features of the site to help convey the impact of your project. Links to websites must be entered in the final section of the online submission form.

C. Social Media

Entries in this category must make unique and strategic use of interactive online communications, communities, or social networks and can include, but are not limited to, blogs and pages/sites or campaigns on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and/or other platforms. Narratives, which should be uploaded into the online form, may include screenshots or point out particular features of the project to help convey the impact of your project. Links to relevant social media sites must be entered in the final section of the online submission form.

The Robert G. Fenley Writing Awards

This award honors Robert G. Fenley, chair of the AAMC Group on Public Affairs (now GIA) from 1985-1986. “I truly enjoy explaining,” said Bob Fenley in an interview. A former *Dallas Times Herald* science editor, Fenley directed the medical information office at the University of Texas Health Science Center in Dallas from 1970-1989. Fenley valued communicating the promise of medicine and science, which he thought was best done in good, plain English. The University of Texas won more than 150 national and regional awards during his tenure, including honors from the AAMC. He was particularly known for his witty yet incisive columns in the former GIA newsletter, *News & Comment*. “Real quality and solid content are most often attained by real work and solid discrimination,” he wrote in that forum. “This comes through most often in simple, direct form that doesn’t need manipulation.” Fenley died on April 28, 1989, of lung cancer. The AAMC established the Robert G. Fenley Writing Awards in his memory.

Entries may include articles in internal publications, electronic or web-based publications, annual reports, brochures, magazine articles, newsletters, case statements, or other published works. Submitted pieces are not subjected to a word limit.

A. Basic Science Staff Writing

Entries include articles about basic and bench research. Basic science articles must be written by a staff member of a medical school or teaching hospital.

B. General Staff Writing

Entries include articles about any other topic related to science or medicine that is not basic or bench research. General articles must be written by a staff member of a medical school or teaching hospital.

C. Solicited Articles

This category is for articles written by freelancers, alumni, students, or patients; however, a staff member/editor must have worked closely with the writer in soliciting, shaping, and editing the piece. The editor’s role in developing, soliciting, shaping, and editing the submitted article should be explained in the narrative.

D. News Releases

Entries include news and/or media releases of any nature for any audience showcasing the ability to explain complex information in an informative and engaging manner. The entry should be written by a staff member of a medical school or teaching hospital.

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The “Shoestring” Award

Projects of special merit with a significantly reduced, limited, or shoestring budget will be recognized in this category. Appropriate projects are one-time or first-time initiatives or the continuation of existing programs with reduced resources. (If the latter, provide this year’s and last year’s budgets and samples from both years.) No dollar maximums are established for this category.

Special Events, Projects, Programs, or Campaigns

This category serves as a “catch all” category. If your project does not fall into one of the other Awards for Excellence categories, you may submit it here. Possible entries in this category include, but are not limited to, alumni subset programs, engagement events, alumni reunions, mock interviews, annual campaigns, capital campaigns, public or media relations initiatives, brand development and special promotion, community outreach and communication, and “Project Medical Education” programs.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiatives

This category recognizes innovative and impactful diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives or campaigns. Entries must be the work of an institution’s alumni relations, communications, development, marketing, or public affairs units. Please include the extent to which the initiative has not only achieved its own goals, but also contributed to DEI within the context of the institution’s mission and for the advancement of academic medicine. Possible entries in this category include, but are not limited to, alumni and volunteer programs, multimedia content (podcasts/videos/photos), donor/campus events, annual reports, community outreach/dialogues, social media campaigns, internal/external communications, and recruitment.

Crisis Management

This category recognizes strategic approaches and activities undertaken to deal with unexpected events that required immediate response during a crisis or issue. Possible topics in this category include, but are not limited to, pivoting due to the pandemic, reputation management, safety issues, and campus issues.

The “Pandemic Pivot” Award: Judges’ Choice

The Pandemic Pivot is a judges’ choice award that recognizes creativity and overall innovation in the institutional advancement community during the COVID-19 pandemic. Entries that demonstrate creative thinking, an innovative approach, and the ability to adapt and quickly change course may be considered for this honor. All entries submitted to the 2021 Awards for Excellence competition may be eligible to receive this award. This award is given at the discretion of the GIA Awards for Excellence judges.

Best in Show Award: Judges' Choice

Best in Show is a judges' choice award that recognizes overall program excellence. Entries that include comprehensiveness, productivity, impact, and overall excellence as a result of the program or project implementation may be considered for this honor. Demonstration and impact of a comprehensive strategy, goal achievement, and implementation of objectives designed for significant impact are vital. All entries submitted to the 2021 Awards for Excellence competition may be eligible to receive this award. This award is given at the discretion of the GIA Awards for Excellence judges.

Scoring

Entries will be judged according to criteria listed for each category. In addition, commonly accepted standards of professional excellence will apply.

Print and Digital Publishing

- Summary: Narrative clearly describes entry and demonstrates level of accomplishment
- Goals: Analytic approach, objectives achieved
- Solution/Strategy: Detailed strategy, tailored to target audience/goals, reader/viewer engagement
- Measurement: Data-demonstrated effectiveness, return on investment (ROI)
- Innovation: Overall creativity and innovation
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI): Demonstrated commitment to DEI

Electronic Communications

- Summary: Narrative clearly describes entry and demonstrates level of accomplishment
- Goals: Analytic approach, objectives achieved
- Solution/Strategy: Detailed strategy, tailored to target audience/goals, audience engagement
- Measurement: Data-demonstrated effectiveness, ROI
- Innovation: Overall creativity and innovation
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Demonstrated commitment to DEI

The Robert G. Fenley Writing Awards

- Communicative Quality: Opening sentence/paragraph, readability, organization, interest, use of quotations, overall creativity
- Mechanics: Sentence structure, readability and comprehension, spelling, punctuation, grammar
- Originality: Strong, unique, compelling narrative voice and story structure
- Innovation: Overall creativity and innovation
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Demonstrated commitment to DEI

The “Shoestring” Award

- Summary: Narrative clearly describes entry and demonstrates level of accomplishment
- Goals: Analytic approach with special budgetary constraints, objectives achieved
- Solution/Strategy: Detailed strategy, tailored to target audience/goals, creative use of resources, audience engagement
- Measurement: Budget and cost constraints, data-demonstrated effectiveness, ROI
- Innovation: Overall creativity and innovation
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Demonstrated commitment to DEI

Special Events, Projects, Programs, or Campaigns

- Summary: Narrative clearly describes entry and demonstrates level of accomplishment
- Goals: Analytic approach, objectives achieved
- Solution/Strategy: Detailed strategy, tailored to target audience/goals, audience engagement
- Measurement: Data-demonstrated effectiveness, ROI
- Innovation: Overall creativity and innovation
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Demonstrated commitment to DEI

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiatives

- Summary: Narrative clearly describes entry and demonstrates level of accomplishment
- Goals: Analytic approach, objectives achieved
- Solution/Strategy: Detailed strategy, tailored to target audience/goals, audience engagement
- Measurement: Data-demonstrated effectiveness, ROI
- Innovation: Overall creativity and innovation
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Demonstrated commitment to and impact on DEI

Crisis Management

- Summary: Narrative clearly describes entry and demonstrates level of accomplishment
- Goals: Analytic approach, objectives achieved
- Solution/Strategy: Detailed strategy, tailored to target audience/goals, audience engagement
- Measurement: Data-demonstrated effectiveness, ROI
- Innovation: Overall creativity and innovation
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Demonstrated commitment to DEI

Judging

A panel of 18 GIA members will review entries and select winners. The Awards Chair will serve as facilitator of the judging and, if necessary, an alternate judge. Judges will score each entry based on the criteria for the category and will provide constructive comments on each entry. Entrants will receive a brief summary of the judges' comments—regardless of awarded status.

All 18 members of the judging panel and the Awards Chair will determine the winner of the “Pandemic Pivot” and Best in Show, if granted.

Prizes

Winning an Award for Excellence is a national honor, and entrants may receive a Gold, Silver, or Bronze Award for Excellence. Entries may also receive an Honorable Mention, acknowledging the quality of an entry.

All Awards for Excellence winners receive an award certificate, plaque, or trophy. Awardees are also recognized—

- At the annual AAMC Conference for Institutional Advancement virtual event or during a special Awards for Excellence Virtual Celebration.
- In GIA publications and social media.
- Via a letter from AAMC leadership to the awardees' institutional leadership.

In addition, Gold winners will receive a free AAMC Conference for Institutional Advancement registration for the 2021 conference or a \$1,000 donation to their institution's scholarship fund. “Pandemic Pivot” and Best in Show winners will receive a free AAMC Conference for Institutional Advancement registration for the 2022 conference or a \$1,000 donation to their institution's scholarship fund. The prize will be decided by the GIA Steering Committee in 2021. Institutions will decide for themselves who can use the free registration or which scholarship fund at their institution is designated, to be facilitated by the official points of contact of the award-winning submissions.

All 2021 winners will be notified in writing in January 2021, except the “Pandemic Pivot” and Best in Show, which will be announced at either the AAMC Conference for Institutional Advancement or during a virtual awards celebration. Awards for Excellence recipients are required to provide photographs and additional information about the winning entry to be used for awards displays and in GIA publications.

Awards for Excellence Contacts

Questions about the competition? Not sure which category to submit an entry? Having problems submitting an entry via the online portal? Please contact us—we are here to help!

Awards Chair

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