

Best Practices: Creating a Successful ACI Awards Nomination Form

Insight on ways to get nominees noticed

by Rachel Belcher

Although each is unique, all ACI awards share a common starting point: an award nomination submittal. This article provides guidance on submitting nominations based on insight from members of the ACI Education Awards Committee (EAC) and the Young Member Award for Professional Achievement Committee (commonly referred to as YMC). While following these guidelines will not guarantee an award, it can help strengthen a nomination submittal. As one award committee member shared, “Successful awards start with quality nominations.”

As a reminder, the ACI Honors and Awards Program accepts nominations for the following awards, annually presented at either the fall or spring ACI Concrete Convention:

- ACI Certification Award;
- ACI Concrete Sustainability Award;
- ACI Education Award;
- ACI Strategic Advancement Award;
- ACI Young Member Award for Professional Achievement;
- Chapter Activities Award;
- Fellow of the Institute;
- Honorary Membership;
- Arthur R. Anderson Medal;
- Roger H. Corbetta Concrete Constructor Award;
- Joe W. Kelly Award;
- Henry L. Kennedy Award;
- Walter P. Moore, Jr. Faculty Achievement Award;
- Henry C. Turner Medal; and
- Charles S. Whitney Medal.

What Makes a Successful Nomination?

Members of the EAC and YMC were asked, “When reviewing nominations from past winners, what made that nomination successful/stand out from others? What guidance

would you give to someone filling out a nomination form?” The following sections include highlights of the insight they shared:

Fit and relevance

The most essential component when reviewing nominations is determining whether a nominee fits the specific award criteria. “Make sure to read the award description carefully,” an EAC member said. “Nominees, even though they may be making great contributions to ACI, must meet the award qualifications. A lot of submissions are received every year that don’t meet any of the stated award requirements.”

A YMC member recommended against self-nomination. They also recommended ensuring that the work of your nominee is directly appropriate for the award, adding: “Read—completely and thoroughly—the instructions for each point of the nomination. Answer ALL of the requested parts and fill in the relevant data.” In summary, check and recheck that you have given exactly the information the nomination form requires.

Clarity and conciseness

Be concise. While it may seem useful to describe the breadth of a nominee’s work, the nominator should focus on the items that are directly related to the purpose of the award.

Include nominee contributions that apply to the award qualifications only. One EAC member noted, “If it is too long, it can be hard to find the particular items that make a nominee eligible to be considered for an award. The best nominations are those that are brief and to the point in outlining a nominee’s contributions that make them eligible for a particular award.”

Another member advised, “Be succinct—do not waffle. Only list publications if they are directly relevant; short, sharp

details that keep to the point of the award are required. Remember to give the ‘statement,’ as it exemplifies why you think the nominee should get that award. If you can’t write this reason for the award, then this might not be a sensible nomination.”

Leadership and collaboration

As a YMC member shared, “I think one of the most important items to stress is that these are ACI awards, and not simply awards related to the concrete industry. As a result, I am looking for applicants to stress the leadership roles that they have successfully accomplished in ACI committees—for example, at the national level, chairing a committee, or leading work related to the publication of a document; or as a Board member or lead for a particular initiative at the local level. Preference is not provided for one over the other.”

Another consideration is “... that not everyone may have the chance to be involved in the national ACI Conventions but may work extremely hard for their local chapter. Also, not every nominee has opportunities to write research papers or mentor young people.”

“The key to making a nomination form stand out is to ensure the nominee demonstrates ability to connect people and connect with people,” a YMC member explained. “Collaboration is so powerful in ACI. By thoroughly demonstrating that the nominee can collaborate and team-build, it makes it much easier for a reviewer to see how an award with international recognition can stimulate future professional growth and continued success for the awardee, which is a major goal for ACI awards.”

Contributions and examples

The information should be focused on anything pertinent to the award for which the person is being nominated. “Don’t make it too wordy... Sometimes the good information gets lost in a forest of words. If it’s an award specific to ACI activities, then make sure those are the first items listed and there are clear details about them,” said an EAC member.

Award committee members appreciate seeing a broad range of contributions. “For me, the most successful candidates have demonstrated their dedication to our industry by making notable contributions in a variety of ways, including industry leadership, academic involvement, published articles, and/or ACI involvement (local or national),” said a YMC member. Seeing a number of examples and/or details for the many areas of contribution is also helpful, along with the amount and duration of time (longer and more sustained rather than a short “flurry of activity”).

Another member shared that “What stands out for me when reviewing nomination forms is seeing that someone has a deep commitment in each of the categories when it’s difficult for them to do so. In other words, when someone goes out of their way to make an impact on a specific category when it’s not part of their professional activities.”

Timing and Process

Additional information to consider:

- Nominations for all awards are considered for 3 years (excluding the Walter P. Moore, Jr. Faculty Achievement Award; refer to the awards webpage for additional details);
- If a nomination is not successful over three review cycles, the nomination will be removed from consideration. For a candidate to be eligible for future consideration, a new nomination form will need to be resubmitted, provided that specific award criteria are still met;
- Multiple nominators for the same candidate are not permitted within each award category. The first nomination received will be considered for the 3-year period or until it is no longer eligible for award consideration;
- Nomination forms can be revised from year to year when received before the award deadlines. Revisions are only necessary if a substantial change has occurred (such as an updated place of employment). Once the revision is received, a confirmation email will be sent;
- Although nominations are accepted throughout the year, it is important to be vigilant of the various award deadlines. When nominations or revisions are received after the award deadline, the nomination will be accepted but not considered until the next year’s awards cycle; and
- Nomination forms and award details are available at www.concrete.org/aboutaci/honorsandawards.aspx. Questions and concerns pertaining to the awards program can be sent to ACIAwards@concrete.org.

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Selected for reader interest by the editors.



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