Top 5 Tips for Awards Nomination Letters

Each year, SHAV offers a variety of awards and honors for SHAV members, including Outstanding Student, Early Career Professional, Clinical Achievement, and Fellow. ASHA offers a variety of awards each year, as well.

A nomination for any of the SHAV awards requires a letter from the nominator, and two accompanying letters of support. These letters aren’t difficult to write, but there are a few tips to ensure your letter showcases accomplishments that align with the specific award criteria. While the reviewers may know the individual being nominated, they are not permitted to use their own knowledge to make determinations, and must rely on the written statements submitted. This process ensures that all nominations are fair, and those who are more well-known are not at an advantage.

Here are the top 5 tips from the SHAV Honors Committee to ensure your nomination and two supporting letters are ready to submit:

1. **Confirm that the person you wish to nominate is a current member.**
2. **Check to be sure you indicated the award you are nominating for, and have signed the nomination form.**
3. **Ensure that all authors specifically address time or service requirements.** For example, Fellow requires more than five years in the profession, while early career professional requires less than 10 years of service in the profession. Clinical Achievement requires the achievement occur in the past 6 years, while Early Career Professional requires the accomplishment occur in the past 5 years. Clearly state that the nominee meets the requirement, and provide start dates as evidence of when the activity took place.
4. **Provide specific examples of outstanding contributions that align with the award criteria.** For example, if the award requires outstanding contribution to the profession, focus on specific details that will allow readers to clearly understand that significant contribution. Specific examples of the impact on the profession or wider community are always helpful. If there is an exclusionary criteria, like “must not be part of a class project” for the Outstanding Student Award, be sure that examples used are not class projects. For Fellow, the requirement is for specific contributions in at least 2 of the 4 areas specified in the Fellow criteria. It is helpful to state the specific areas chosen for the fellow nominee, and then provide details and examples for each.
5. **Review all three letters and the award criteria to be sure letters include all information, and provide specific examples and details.**

Remember, reviewers are only permitted to consider that information included in the letters, even if they know the individual being nominated, so the details and examples in your letters must showcase that person’s accomplishments. Award criteria, submission deadline, and requirements are online at [www.shav.org](http://www.shav.org). Virginia is home to many
outstanding professionals who deserve recognition – so why not consider teaming with a colleague to nominate someone for one of SHAV’s prestigious awards?