

UNIVERSITY SENATE
ANNUAL COMMITTEE REPORT 2019-20

Committee Name:

Faculty Senate Awards Committee

Number of meetings held this year:

One in-person meeting was held

Committee Chair:

Stephen A. Royek

Committee Members:

Amanda Adams, Lori Block, Melissa Klapper, John Quinesso, Natalie Schell-Busey, Robert Wieman, Kelly Young

Purpose of/Charge to Committee:

The task of the Faculty Senate Awards Committee is to solicit nominations for, coordinate the selection of, and facilitate the presentation of three Graduating Senior Awards: The Dr. Robert D. Bole Humanitarian Award, the Dr. James M. Lynch, Jr., Courage in Adversity Award, and the Dr. Thomas E. Robinson Leadership Award. The Committee also facilitates the presentation of the Dr. Lawson J. Brown Senior Scholarship Award, which is an academic performance honor.

Summary of Activities this Year:

The just-completed 2019-2020 academic year for the Faculty Senate Awards Committee was strangely like the 2018-2019 year in the chaotic way the term ended. Last year it was due to an unforeseen technical issue with Google; this year it was an unforeseen health issue with COVID-19.

As you can read in last year's Annual Report, we worked our way through the computer problem to make our selections. This year, the selection process went well, but the announcement of the winners was postponed until early May and the distribution of the Rowan Medallions still (as of this writing) has not been completed.

First, though, let's go back to the beginning of this term, back to the fall semester.

With the same committee members as last year, we held our organizational meeting on Friday, November 8. We discussed the updated nomination selection process we would employ for the coming year, using new Google Docs forms to which all committee members would have access. We also discussed ways we would get the word out about the call for nominations, and decided we would, to start, use the same distribution channels we used in the previous year.

We also chose a submission deadline for nominations, based on the schedules and obligations of our members. We settled on Friday, February 20 at 4:30 p.m.

I then volunteered to update the materials the committee uses to solicit and accept nominations:

- Our Call for Nominations that appears every six business days in the Rowan Announcer from mid-October to late February
- Our Electronic Nomination Forms through which members of the campus community – students, faculty, and staff – can nominate individuals for the three awards. These nominations are based on specific criteria included on the nomination form.
- We also decided to once again this year publicize the nomination process by sending a letter to all department chairs on campus encouraging them to share the reminder with their faculty members and staff. As recommended in last year’s annual report, we sent out two of these reminders, one in early December and another in late January, about three weeks before the nomination submission deadline.
- At this meeting, committee member Kelly Young volunteered to create a digital graphic touting the nomination submission process that would run on video boards in common areas across the campus as part of ProfLink. This, we believe, helped boost the number of entries we received, which was a total of 28 across the three categories.

Unlike last year, this process went quite smoothly and we were able to select our winners by early March, in more than enough time for the Medallions to be struck for the mid-April awards ceremony at which they would be announced and awarded.

At this point, as we all know, the COVID-19 crisis closed the campus and cancelled the awards ceremony.

All of our efforts then were focused on the shift from in-person to remote instruction during the two-week-long spring break period as we prepared for classes to begin again on Google Meet and other online programs on Monday, March 30. During this period, there were discussions via email of the possibility of holding an online awards ceremony for the Medallion recipients and of creating a video presentation that could be posted online and sent to the winners in place of an actual in-person event.

These two options were ruled out just about as the semester was ending in late April and a decision was made to announce the winners through the Rowan Daily Mail/Rowan Announcer and to leave it to the department chairs overseeing the course of study in which the graduating seniors received their degrees. This announcement was scheduled to begin appearing in early May.

I also want to thank committee member Natalie Schell-Busey for her help in collecting the information for, and – in concert with the Registrar’s Office – selecting the winner of the Lawson Brown Academic Award. This honor is awarded to the graduating senior with the highest grade point average, with the number of credit hours taken at Rowan University as a tiebreaker if necessary.

2019-2020 Committee Suggestions & Recommendations

- Our committee is functioning very well and all members would like to continue serving, This will, as it did this past year, add consistency and continuity to the committee and that it’s important to have people in place who have gone through the process before and have encountered problems they then went on to solve.

- In addition to using Rowan Announcer, we increased our marketing efforts through a series of Rowan News Minute and Campus Calendar items on WGLS. For the second year in a row, however, we were unable to secure publicity through *The Whit*. For the 2020-2021 academic year, we feel we need to at some point in the fall, reach out to the editors of the student newspaper in a more forceful manner to see what we need to do to publicize these awards in their pages.
- We will continue to send out two notices to the deans and department chair, in the same time frame we used this year.

We welcome comments and suggestions from the Senate as we understand we serve at your pleasure. Please feel free to contact me for any additional information and to offer any feedback. Thank you.

Faithfully submitted,
Stephen A. Royek
Chair, Faculty Senate Awards Committee

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