

UNIVERSITY SENATE
ANNUAL COMMITTEE REPORT 2020-21

Committee Name:

University Senate Awards Committee

Number of meetings held this year:

One Zoom meeting was held

Committee Chair:

Stephen A. Royek

Committee Members:

Amanda Adams, Lori Block, Cory Dixon, Melissa Klapper, John Quinesso, and Natalie Schell-Busey

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:

With the COVID-19 pandemic well underway at the start of the 2020-2021 academic year, our committee knew the entire Graduating Senior Awards process – from pre-planning through Medallion delivery – would be done remotely. The first change came when we held our first (and only) meeting of the term on Zoom. All seven of us attended and we said goodbye to retiring member Kelly Young and welcomed new colleague Cory Dixon.

As our first piece of business, as it is each year, we discussed and set our deadline for receipt of that year's nominations. We do this by counting backwards from the date our selections are due to the Medallion Coordinator. For Spring 2021, that date was Monday, March 1. We then, collectively, decided that two weeks, and the three

weekends surrounding them, would be enough time for us to review however many nominations we receive. With that, our nomination deadline of Friday, February 19 was set.

With our deadline in hand, the Google submission forms were updated with 2020-2021 information and deadlines, and the documents were uploaded to Google Folders dedicated to each of the three awards. In addition, submission forms were created and placed at the end of the respective Google Doc links.

We then moved on to the main discussion we have at the beginning of every Awards Committee year: How do we reach as many faculty, staff, and students as we can to garner the maximum number of applications.

Our main marketing campaigns on campus are:

- Messages in the *Rowan Daily Mail* every six days between the date we open the nomination page and as close as we can get to the date our nominations are due. [A link to this year's announcement can be found here.](#)
- Three email messages delivered throughout the year to the deans of all colleges and the heads and chairs of all academic departments. In these messages, we encourage the deans, heads, and chairs to share this information with their faculty and staff as part of their periodic internal communications.
- One effort to spread the word was launched this past academic year. As chair of the committee, I asked Bill Freind if I could address a University Senate meeting with our request for nominations, and – in November 2020 – I addressed the faculty legislative body. Coincidentally, I was able point Senators and those attending the Zoom meeting that day, to a *Rowan Daily Mail* announcement that appeared in that morning's announcer.
- In past years, we have contacted WGLS and *The Whit* for award nomination publicity . . . with varying success. One year, we received regular announcements on the campus radio station, but we have yet to crack the pages of the school newspaper with our pitch. The hecticness of the pandemic blunted our efforts on this front, but we are confident these are fruitful paths to pursue in coming years
- An additional, less structured approach to spreading the word came this year when our committee members began mentioning the awards to their colleagues and, where appropriate, in their classes. (Remember, the Senate guidelines to our committee is that nominations can come from anyone in the Rowan community, including peers.)

When the nomination period closed, I attempted to share the Google Doc links to the forms and letters with my fellow committee members but had trouble with the transfer. I then downloaded all the nomination forms, converted them to PDF documents, and emailed them to all the committee members.

I received the members' first, second, and third selections in each category several days before the submission deadline. After tallying the votes, we had our selections and

I shared them with the team, of course, and with this year's Medallion Program Coordinator, Professor Lauren Banko.

This is the point of the process where we then write an updated announcement for the *Rowan Daily Mail* announcing the winners and recognizing the members of our committee. [Here's a link to that release.](#)

One final adjustment was made in the process this year in what we hope was a farewell nod to COVID: Instead of picking up the Medallions and delivering them to the dean and/or department chair/head of the winning student, we coordinated for each of those entities to retrieve their own Medallions from Prof. Banko.

In addition to thanking all the members of the committee for their hard work once again this year, I'd like to single out committee member Natalie Schell-Busey for her assistance by working with the Registrar's Office to secure the name of the Lawson Brown Academic Award winner. This honor is given 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.

2021-2022 Committee Suggestions & Recommendations

- Our committee continues to function well, and all members would like to continue serving. This will, as it has done for the past two years, add consistency and continuity to our efforts. We believe it is important to people in place who have gone through the process before and have encountered problems they then went on to solve.
- We will, once again, try to get publicity on the campus radio station and in the student newspaper. I believe starting earlier in the fall semester with those two news outlets may be more successful. . . . We will successfully employ all the other marketing avenues for our 2021-2022 award campaign as we have in past years.
- Sometime before we begin this process all over again, I plan to speak with Rowan IRT to see how we can better automate the process and make it easier for committee members to read the entries as they come in instead of our waiting until they all are in before we begin reading and considering.

Thank you again for allowing us to serve the university and honor its heritage and history with these awards. Please feel free to contact me for any additional information and to offer any feedback. Thank you.

Faithfully submitted,

Stephen A. Royek

Chair, University Senate Awards Committee

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