



Tomorrow's Doctors, Tomorrow's Cures®

# Group on Institutional Advancement (GIA) Awards for Excellence

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*2023 Guidelines and Instructions*

Association of  
American Medical Colleges

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Dear Institutional Advancement Colleagues,

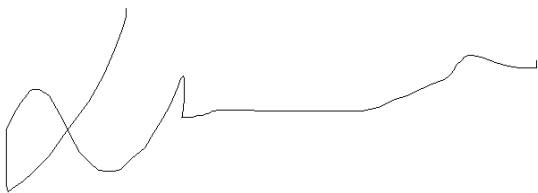


Efforts across academic medicine to address emerging societal and public health challenges, in addition to carrying out our existing missions, have been truly extraordinary. The work you’ve done at your institutions reflects both a commitment to serve and a commitment to excellence. In 2022, as we look back over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, we see countless examples of innovation, exceptional leadership, and dedication.

The Group on Institutional Advancement (GIA) celebrates these accomplishments through its Awards for Excellence. The Awards for Excellence is an annual, peer-reviewed competition that recognizes outstanding work by GIA members 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 programs and projects.

It is truly a privilege to serve as your chair for this year’s competition. When we band together to advance the missions of academic medicine, we work for all of humanity. Spotlighting the quality of our efforts inspires us to achieve while also demonstrates how much we value our colleagues and members of our many teams across these disciplines. The awards also help you demonstrate, to others at your institution and your leadership, national recognition of your expertise and accomplishments.

Participation in the competition is facilitated by a smooth online submission process. There is no more important time to celebrate and show the value of your outstanding work. On behalf of the GIA Steering Committee and the judging panel, I invite you to send us examples. We look forward to reviewing your materials and thank you for all you do in support of academic medicine.



Daniel C. Pollay, Jr.  
 Executive Director, Government & Community Relations  
 Weill Cornell Medicine  
 AAMC GIA Awards Chair

## Important Dates & Deadlines

Date	Deadline
<b>August 1, 2022</b>	Call for Entries Opens <i>Eligible entries must have occurred between April 1, 2021 and June 30, 2022.</i>
<b>August 1-October 11, 2022</b>	Call for Entries Submission Window
<b>September 4, 2022</b>	Early bird discount ends
<b>October 11, 2022</b>	Call for Entries Closes <i>Finalize and submit your entry online before the deadline of 8:00 pm Eastern. Deadline extensions are not granted.</i>
<b>October 2022-January 2023</b>	Judging
<b>January 2023</b>	Notification <i>All entrants receive notification of entry status and feedback.</i>
<b>March 29-April 1, 2023</b>	Recognition at the 2023 AAMC Conference for Institutional Advancement

## Entry Fee & Eligibility

- Submitted projects and programs must have occurred or been completed between **April 1, 2021** and **June 30, 2022**.
- 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.
  - The GIA member sponsor confirms that all people involved or associated with the entry have demonstrated standards of professional ethics and scientific integrity.\*\*
- Entries must be the work of the hospital, health system, 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
    - August 1-September 4
  - Standard Entry Fee: \$50
    - September 5-October 11
- The current Awards for Excellence (AFE) Chair and other GIA members from that institution are not eligible to compete in this year's awards program. For this year, Weill Cornell Medicine staff are not eligible. Staff at this institution 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 Sistak, Constituent Engagement Senior Specialist, at 202-862-6705 or [msistak@aamc.org](mailto:msistak@aamc.org) for confirmation of membership or to become a member.

\*\* Please see [AAMC's Policy on Honors and Awards](#) for more information.

## 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.*

Narratives for all categories except for Robert G. Fenley Writing Awards\* must be **double-spaced**; use **Times New Roman, Arial, or Calibri 12-point font**; **be 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?
- **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:** Diversity, equity, and inclusion are strategic imperatives, and there is demonstrated commitment to DEI.
- **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?



\*Robert G. Fenley Writing Award Entry narratives should be **double-spaced**; use **Times New Roman, Arial, or Calibri 12-point font**; **be 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:** Provide context for the piece and describe the intended audience.
- **Goals:** Outline the need or opportunity that the piece addresses. Questions to keep in mind include: What was the writer trying to accomplish? Was the piece used to solve or address a problem? What results did the writer hope to obtain?
- **Strategy:** Explain and outline the writer’s strategy: Describe the steps the writer took, the options they had, and the decisions they made. Give us an account of the thought process that went into the writer’s decisions.
- **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:** Diversity, equity, and inclusion are strategic imperatives, and there is demonstrated commitment to DEI. For example, the lens the writer chose or who the writer interviewed.
- **Measurements:** Describe the results of the piece, both within the organization and the targeted audience. Provide metrics/analytics wherever possible.
- **Originality:** Does the entry have a strong, unique, and compelling narrative voice and story structure?
- **Innovation:** Overall creativity and innovation of the entry. Does the entry a fresh angle taken on the topic?

## 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. If you have multiple links to share, please put them into a Word document and submit to the supporting documents section. **All supporting materials must be submitted to the online portal and NOT mailed to AAMC.**

## Award Categories

### Crisis Management

This category recognizes strategic approaches and activities undertaken to deal with unexpected events requiring 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.

### 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.

## 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.

## 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.

## 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.

## 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/health system.

### 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/health system.

### C. Solicited Articles

This category is for articles written by freelancers, alumni, students, or patients; however, a medical school or teaching hospital/health system staff member/editor must have worked closely with the writer in developing, soliciting, shaping, and editing the piece. The editor’s role in 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.

## 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.

## 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 2023 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 2023 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.

### 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
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Demonstrated commitment to DEI
- Measurement: Data-demonstrated effectiveness, ROI
- Innovation: Overall creativity and innovation

### 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
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Demonstrated commitment to DEI
- Measurement: Data-demonstrated effectiveness, ROI
- Innovation: Overall creativity and innovation

### **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
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Demonstrated commitment to DEI
- Measurement: Data-demonstrated effectiveness, ROI
- Innovation: Overall creativity and innovation

### **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, audience engagement
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI): Demonstrated commitment to DEI
- Measurement: Data-demonstrated effectiveness, return on investment (ROI)
- Innovation: Overall creativity and innovation

### **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
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Demonstrated commitment to DEI
- Measurement: Data-demonstrated effectiveness, ROI
- Innovation: Overall creativity and innovation

### **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
- Goals: Analytic approach, objectives achieved
- Strategy: Detailed strategy, tailored to target audience/goals, audience engagement
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Demonstrated commitment to DEI
- Measurements: Describe the results of the piece, both within the organization and the targeted audience. Provide metrics/analytics wherever possible.
- Originality: Strong, unique, compelling narrative voice and story structure
- Innovation: Overall creativity and innovation

### **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
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Demonstrated commitment to DEI
- Measurement: Budget and cost constraints, data-demonstrated effectiveness, ROI
- Innovation: Overall creativity and innovation

## Judging

A panel of 24 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 24 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 or plaque. Awardees are also recognized—

- At the annual AAMC Conference for Institutional Advancement 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 2023 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 2024 conference or a \$1,000 donation to their institution's scholarship fund. The prize will be decided by the GIA Steering Committee in 2023. 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 2023 winners will be notified in writing in January 2023, except for Pandemic Pivot and Best in Show, which will be announced at either the 2023 AAMC Conference for Institutional Advancement or during a special Awards for Excellence Virtual 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**

Daniel C. Pollay, Jr.  
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Weill Cornell Medicine  
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### **AAMC Staff**

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