

# Panel Session: Preparing a Competitive Nomination for IEEE and ASEE Fellow and other Competitive Awards

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**Abstract—** In this session, a panel of members of the current Fellows Committee of the IEEE Education Society will share advice on preparing nominations for Fellow of the IEEE and Fellow of the American Society for Engineering Education. The panelists will also provide advice on applications for competitive national and international awards. The panelists will explain how to enhance career planning to become eligible for awards and honors.

**Keywords—** awards, Fellow

## I. INTRODUCTION

Societies and organizations benefit from awarding recognition to members who have significant achievements in their professional careers. These recognitions can raise the profile of the society and can bring concomitant benefits to all society members. Awards and honors for individuals can bring with them the opportunity to increase the impact of their work, including increased possibilities for funding. Award programs can be highly competitive. Since IEEE elevates less than one tenth of one percent of the membership to the Fellow grade each year, many qualified nominees may not be selected. To maximize the chances of selection, the nominator should carefully prepare the materials, paying close attention to stated requirements.

In this panel session, the panelists will discuss techniques for enhancing the quality of award nominations, beyond meeting the nomination requirements: writing an effective recommendation letter, selecting recommenders, and clearly describing a nominee's achievements. They will review the requirements for the nomination of an IEEE Fellow and an

ASEE Fellow. They will also give examples of other award nominations with ideas for an effective approach to addressing their individual requirements. These other awards include the Presidential Award for Excellence in Science, Mathematics, and Engineering Mentoring, IEEE Education Society awards, and ASEE society-specific and general awards. In some cases, the panel may provide anonymous examples of elements of a nomination packet.

## II. DESCRIPTION OF THE PANEL

### A. Goals

This session is designed to demystify the process of applying to become a Fellow of the IEEE or the ASEE. It is also designed to share information about applying for other major awards and when and why someone might consider applying. Many individuals may not have considered the idea of planning ahead to become eligible for awards. But in practice, many of those recognized with awards have done something deliberately to become eligible or to ask to be nominated. This session will provide recommendations and advice from panelists who have not only received awards themselves, but who have also sat on award selection committees. Individuals who attend this session will gain ideas on applying for awards and for nominating others.

### B. Background

When preparing a nomination for elevation to Fellow of an organization, the nominator should communicate early and often with the nominee to ensure that all relevant information about their achievements is included. Depending on the organization, there are advantages to highlighting various types

of achievements and activities, although all are important. Some Fellow criteria may place more emphasis on service to the organization, while some weigh technical achievement more. In some cases, Fellow evaluations take place in multiple stages, and different stages may have different emphases. This means that the nomination packet needs to address and emphasize the contributions of the nominee in such a way as to position the nomination to successfully pass several levels of evaluation.

Although the nomination for elevation to IEEE or ASEE Fellow cannot be self-initiated, many awards do allow self nomination. Examples of these kinds of awards will also be discussed from the collective experience of the panel. The strategies for submitting these kinds of awards can differ from those of Fellow. The panel will outline approaches for interpreting the award requirements and matching a nominee's professional and scholarly contributions with the requirements.

One aspect of this panel that will be unique: the panel will address planning for the future and determining which awards and which kinds of awards may be appropriate to consider on a career pathway. Planning for the future can enable individuals to assemble a portfolio of accomplishments formatted and sorted to make application for certain awards easier. Looking ahead may also allow individuals to collect commitments for letters of support earlier than a specific application window, because collecting recommendation letters is sometimes the most difficult part of preparing an application or nomination package.

### *C. Agenda*

The panel will be moderated by one of the panel members. The other panel members will answer only a subset of the questions asked, to avoid spending too much time on any one question. The moderator will ask questions of the panel members on each of the topics listed below:

- Introductions: Each panel member will introduce themselves and give an example of an award that they have applied for or nominated someone for.
- The panel will explain the overall process by which potential Fellows are evaluated.
  - For IEEE
  - For ASEE
- The questions will encompass information around the following topics.
  - Discussion of processes of nominating someone for Fellow:
    - Letters of recommendation
    - Optimizing discussion of achievements
    - Discussion of service to the organization
  - Discussion of other awards that attendees might consider applying for
    - PAESMEM
    - Other IEEE awards
    - WEPAN awards
    - Other ASEE awards
- Questions from the audience

Questions will be selected based on the combined experience of the panelists. A list of potential questions follows.

What are some things that you have learned in the process of evaluating Fellow applications?

What are some of the most common mistakes that nominators make?

If the application requires a certain number of recommendation letters, is there an advantage to providing more?

What is the most important thing that a nominator can do to increase the chance of success for a nomination?

These questions will be answered for a variety of types of awards and nominations. Fellow nominations will be considered first. Then each panelist will present another type of award and discuss applying. Questions from the audience will be taken after each type of award is discussed. The panel will conclude with each panelist giving advice and recommendations to the attendees around how to plan for award nominations as a part of a career trajectory.

## III. OUTCOMES

Attendees will leave with tips and ideas, as well as encouragement to consider planning to apply for the types of awards that will further their own career development. The panel will provide a list of example awards that match the trajectory of various career pathways, including disciplinary, professional society, and other types.

## IV. PANEL PARTICIPANTS

This panel will consist of IEEE and ASEE members who have been selected for awards and elevated to Fellow, and who have also served on selection committees. They will provide insight into the selection process and tips and ideas for anyone who may wish to prepare award applications or nominations. The panelists will include

Dr. Laura Bottomley, Director of Engineering Education at NC State University and IEEE and ASEE Fellow and PAESMEM Awardee

Dr. Cynthia Finelli, Director of Engineering Education Research at University of Michigan and Fellow of IEEE and ASEE

Dr. Cynthia Furse, Professor in the Electrical and Computer Engineering Department at the University of Utah and Fellow of IEEE and the National Academy of Inventors

Dr. Michael C. Loui, Professor Emeritus of Electrical and Computer Engineering and University Distinguished Teacher-Scholar at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, formerly the Dale and Suzi Gallagher Professor of Engineering Education at Purdue University, and IEEE and ASEE Fellow

Dr. Anthony Maciejewski, Director of the NSF Division of Electrical, Communications and Cyber Systems and Fellow of IEEE and the Asia-Pacific Artificial Intelligence Association (AAIA)

Dr. Barbara Oakley, Distinguished Professor of Engineering at Oakland University and Fellow of IEEE, the American

Institute of Medical and Biological Engineers and the World Academy of Art and Science,

Dr. Bruce Wheeler, University of California, San Diego and Fellow of the AAAS, IEEE, BMES, AIMBE and IAMBE.

The panelists were members of the Fellows Committee of the IEEE Education Society in 2024.