Tips & Tricks

1. When writing, remember: OFFER, TRANSLATE, MAGNIFY.
   1. OFFER information, details, examples, and experience. By presenting tangible achievements, you can ensure that the OTM reader will know exactly what your nominee has accomplished.
      1. Example: Do not say, “A lot of people came to this program,” this is too general. Instead, say “ (X number) of people came to this program,” – this is more specific, and gives the reader a quantifying, specific detail.
   2. TRANSLATE acronyms, people, and events. When using acronyms, write out the full title the first time – “Student Leadership Programs (SLP) ….” – this ensures that readers know what exactly you’re talking about. The same goes for positional titles and events. What might seem obvious to the writer may be unclear to the reader. Fully explain events, individuals, and acronyms for clarification (this also helps to up the word count of your OTMs – but don’t be too excessive!)
   3. MAGNIFY accomplishments, actions, and merit. Ask yourself, “why does this person/group/program deserve recognition?” Carry the answer to this question throughout your OTM as a focus. Put an emphasis on this, and avoid adding unrelated filler, such as “\_\_\_\_\_ is a fantastic student.”
2. Know your subject! If you don’t know all of the specific details on why your nominee is the greatest ever, that’s OK – there is no shame in doing some research when writing your OTM. Asking others about your nominee’s accomplishments, or even the nominee themselves, is a great way to fill in the missing pieces of a great OTM.
   1. With Program OTMs, this is really helpful. The Program form requests information that includes Target Population, Number of People in Attendance, Number of People/Time Needed to Organize, Cost of Program, and Dates of Program). Unless you’re nominating your own program, you probably don’t know all of these details. So, ask! The Programmer or Event Planner will likely be more than happy to share those details with you.
3. Before you start writing, make a bulleted list of tangible achievements that your nominee has done in that month. This will help you with formatting your OTM or tying in a theme.
4. Make sure of which category your nominee falls under! Would you nominate your First Year residents under the ‘Student’ category? Here’s a hint: no. This can get kind of tricky when you’re nominating a Faculty/Staff member – are they Institution, or Residence Life? Make sure you glance over the category descriptions to be sure!
5. Be month specific! Though they’re called ‘Of the Month’ awards, it’s fairly common to see OTMs that focus on how great a nominee was throughout the entire year. While that’s a nice thought, it won’t win any awards. Focus specifically on what your nominee did in the month you’re writing for.
6. Have fun with it! If you’re bored writing an OTM, imagine how bored the reader will be. Boring OTMs don’t win awards. So, HAVE FUN! Make your OTM unique and exciting! Some of the best and most memorable OTMs play with themes and quotes, or don’t stick to the traditional paragraph format. Don’t try to force a theme, but let your personality show. Once you do this, your nominee will really shine through your OTM.
7. Try to get as close to word limit as you can! Many OTM readers don’t read OTMs that are less than 300 words – if your OTM is 500+, it has a much greater chance of winning on the campus, regional, or NACURH level. For Program OTMS, try to get within 100 words of the word limit for each field.
8. Proofread! While the NRHH Vice President of Recognition should be able to catch and fix any grammar, spelling, or formatting mistakes before it’s read by the voting committee, you should try your hardest to submit a polished piece of writing. Typing your OTM into a Word document first is a good way to catch those small mistakes!