

AAAS Fellows Nomination Guide



The **American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Honorary Fellow** is a national benchmark faculty honorific. A thoughtful strategy developed and nurtured over time can result in increasing the number of successful faculty nominations for AAAS Fellows, whether you are starting with few AAAS Fellows or already have many. Annual AAAS Fellows nomination cycles with detailed instructions are available online at <https://www.aaas.org/programs/fellows/current-nomination-cycle> and questions on the 3-Fellow nomination process can be submitted to fellownomination@aaas.org.

Identifying sponsors: internal nominators and external letter writers

The requirements for sponsors states that only previously elected AAAS Fellows who are **current** in their membership and in **good standing** can serve as primary, secondary, or tertiary sponsors. Furthermore, a fellow is limited to sponsoring **two** nominations in an annual cycle and only **one** of the three sponsors can be currently affiliated with the same institution as that of the nominee. AAAS maintains a searchable listing of fellows who are current members at <https://www.aaas.org/fellows/listing>. agInnovation South reviews this list annually for current members in good standing who are at the 15 affiliated universities in the southern region and distributes this sub-listing to our members. This list is also on the agInnovation South website at <https://saaesd.org/aaas-fellows-and-other-honorifics/>. These lists will help you vet the names of potential letter writers to ensure that they are current AAAS Fellows in good standing.

It is important that nominators feel supported throughout the process. Hosting an annual meeting of all AAAS Fellows at your university, including AAAS Fellows outside of your college provides an opportunity to get to know other Fellows and is a good first activity early in the nomination cycle. Don't neglect retired AAAS Fellows, who are often willing to continue writing letters. A "Fellow's luncheon" can break down the silos that tend to separate colleges and can be a very invigorating and exciting opportunity for faculty to collaborate in a new way. You can also play an important role in coordinating nominations for the upcoming cycle. The current member list described above can be useful networking tools to help the nominator identify the two external letter writers required for nomination. This ready list of current AAAS Fellows can also help to identify someone in the same or a related discipline as the nominee. First time nominators also benefit from having an experienced mentor who has been through the process to request help or answer questions. Finally, developing a list of highly qualified faculty based on relevant criteria will assist the nominators in selecting potential nominees.

Identifying and nurturing potential nominees

Effective strategies can be developed to identify eligible faculty. Unexpectedly, one of the first hurdles encountered is often the AAAS membership requirement. Recall that eligibility for nomination requires an individual to have been a continuous member (with no lapses in membership) of AAAS for four years by the end of the calendar year in which they would be elected. Purchasing gift memberships for highly

cited faculty who have been identified as potential nominees is way of ensuring eligibility by maintaining continuous AAAS membership. Gift memberships can also be seen as a recognition of faculty excellence.

It is important to note that AAAS Fellows criteria are broad and inclusive to recognize individuals for their extraordinary achievements across a wide range of disciplines. ***“Nominees may have made significant contributions in research; teaching; technology; services to professional societies; administration in academe, industry, and government; and communicating and interpreting science to the public.”***

Just as criteria for election as AAAS Fellow are broad and inclusive, similarly criteria for identification of eligible faculty from your department, college, or university can be broad and inclusive. Our experience is that current AAAS Fellows appreciate lists of eligible faculty members, but the definition of eligible can vary widely by discipline. The promotion dossiers of faculty provide ample evidence of distinction that can be cited in nomination letters, and in many different categories of accomplishments in research, teaching, and service. Publication databases such as Google Scholar provide several quantitative metrics that are straightforward to collect and analyze, including total number of publications, number of publications per year, total number of citations, number of citations per year, h index (i.e., number of papers with h or more citations). Additional quantitative metrics are reflected in journal impact factors, and m quotient (i.e., increase in h per year). However, any of these metrics can be strongly biased depending on the discipline and other factors, and we caution against using any single metric as a sole determinant of eligibility. Additional criteria could include, but are not limited to: Editorial service for “flagship” societal journals; Federal and/or international agency grant review service; Service on “blue ribbon” advisory committees; Leadership roles in professional societies; Invited keynote addresses at major conferences; Outstanding mentoring and placement of graduate and/or undergraduate students; Outstanding grooming of postdoctoral mentees for STEM careers; Distinguished leadership of diversity, equity and inclusion efforts; Outstanding teaching and innovative curriculum revision; Continuous pedagogical improvements; Technology transfer, inventions, or entrepreneurship; and/or Distinguished service as an administrative leader. All the above are possible ways to identify faculty eligible for nomination as AAAS Fellow given the broad and inclusive criteria.

For universities that subscribe to Academic Analytics, the “Research Insight” module contains a comprehensive database of faculty honorifics that can be leveraged to generate lists of eligible faculty members within your university. These lists can be sorted in numerous ways and can be a helpful resource to **grow your culture of nomination.**