

MACURH

MIDWEST AFFILIATE OF COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY RESIDENCE HALLS

OF THE MONTH GUIDE

Updated 10/14/2018

WHAT IS AN OTM?

An OTM, or Of-The-Month, is a formal recognition essay, in which the writer nominates a person, group, organization, or program to be considered for acknowledgement at the campus, regional, and national levels. In short, it's how resident leaders say "good job" and let other schools know just how good. The writer (nominator) nominates their subject (nominee) for the [Category] Of-The-Month.

WHY WRITE AN OTM?

OTMs provide much needed recognition for the valuable efforts and contributions of the many student leaders in the residence halls. Whether recognizing a single leader, a group of leaders, or an effective program thrown by leaders, an OTM serves to congratulate and acknowledge the positive accomplishments while encouraging continued effort and even greater achievement.

OTM CATEGORIES

OTMs are separated into two types: General and Program. Each OTM type has specific subjects, writing requirements, and expectations:

General OTMs

General OTMs are utilized to recognize individuals and groups and their contributions to the residence halls.

General OTMs should focus on the specific contributions of the individual or group and how their actions and efforts were outstanding.

Program OTMs

Program OTMs recognize the achievement of programs and how the events contributed to strengthening a community and enhancing residents' lives. The focus on these OTMs should be the number of residents impacted and the significance and lasting results of that impact.



GENERAL OTMS

General OTMs are written like a school paper, a short story, or a newspaper column. There is no set structure; just write your OTM, keeping it under 600 words, explaining why your nominee deserves recognition.

REMEMBER:

The Maximum Word Count is 600 Words.

ADVISOR

The ADVISOR OTM should focus on the advisory role of the nominee and the contributions they have made in helping leaders to develop, learn, and grow. The OTM should center on how they interact with their residents and encourage them to reach their potential. *Examples: RHA Advisor, Hall Council Advisor.*

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER

The EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER OTM must recognize a member of a campus-wide residence hall governing body and should focus on the efforts of the nominee and how they have exceeded the expectations of their position. *Examples: RHA Executive Board Members, NRHH Executive Board Members*

FIRST YEAR STUDENT

The FIRST YEAR STUDENT OTM should focus on the outstanding achievements of the nominee and their contributions to the residence halls as a first year student. Emphasize how much more amazing the achievements are when they are coming from a freshman. *Examples: Hall Council Members*

INSTITUTION FACULTY/STAFF

The INSTITUTIONAL FACULTY/ STAFF OTM should focus on staff role of the individual and how, through their work, the nominee was able to positively impact the residence halls and, as a result, the residents at this campus. *Examples: Professors, Dining Hall Employees, Maintenance or Custodial Staff*

ORGANIZATION

The ORGANIZATION OTM should focus on the contributions of the entire organization (not individuals within the organization) toward achieving goals that impact residents. The OTM should emphasize how the organization has been exemplary during the past month. *Examples: RHA, NRHH, Fraternities, Sororities*

RESIDENCE LIFE PROFESSIONAL STAFF

The OTM focuses on the individuals who aide residents within the housing campus community and have made an outstanding impact in that community. *Examples: Graduate Assistants, Hall Directors, Department Directors, Front Desk Receptionists*



RESIDENT ASSISTANT

The RESIDENT ASSISTANT (RA) OTM should focus on the efforts of the nominee in surpassing the requirements of their position and the contributions made to creating a community and enhancing the experience of residents. *Examples: Resident Assistant, Community Assistants, Community Advisors, Resident Advisors, any other name variation*

RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITY

The COMMUNITY OTM should focus on the development of the community and the group's contributions to creating a better on campus living experience within the Residence Halls.
Examples: Centennial Hall, MACURH Delegation, Ellison House, Hudson First Floor

SPOTLIGHT

The SPOTLIGHT OTM—for nominees who fit no other category—should focus on the contributions and impact of the nominee in the residence halls.
Examples: Community Members, Companies, Departments, Traditions

STUDENT

The STUDENT OTM should focus on the achievements of the nominee over the course of the past month with a focus on the impacts on the residential experience. Remember, even non-residents can impact the residence halls.
Examples: Any student at your institution

STUDENT STAFF MEMBER

The STUDENT STAFF MEMBER OTM focuses on the students who, through their positions, have made an outstanding impact in their residences halls. These students contribute through these positions outside the roles of Resident Assistants or Executive Board Members. *Examples: Desk Assistants, Student Maintenance, Academic Tutors*

OTM QUICK TIPS

- Have a focus
- Know your subject
- Be month specific
- Show, do not tell
- Translate abbreviations and acronyms
- Use engaging adjectives
- Make it unique
- Appropriate word count
- Proofread



PROGRAM OTMS

REMEMBER:

The Maximum Word Count is 1,400 Words.

COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM

Intended for any program that promotes service to the community, the COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM OTM should focus on the service achievements, community impact, and reasons for success.

Examples: Relay for Life, National Day of Service

DIVERSITY PROGRAM

Intended for any program that promotes and/or celebrates diversity, the DIVERSITY PROGRAM OTM should focus on the achievements of goals, community impact, and observable lasting effects.

Examples: World Hunger Banquet, Cultural Nights

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Intended for any program that increases awareness in a relevant subject matter, the EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM OTM should focus on the accomplishments, successful methods, and what the attendees take away.

Examples: Love is in the Air (Sex ed), Mardi Gras (Alcohol)

SOCIAL PROGRAM

Intended for any program that encourages fun, interaction, and community building, the SOCIAL PROGRAM OTM should focus on the program's success, turnout, and achievement of purpose.

Examples: Dance Party, Circus Carnival, Karaoke

PASSIVE PROGRAM

Intended for any program that promotes community engagement through non-active efforts, the PASSIVE PROGRAM OTM should focus on the program's effectiveness and success in meeting a community need.

Examples: Bulletin Boards, Educational Campaigns, Wall or Door Decorations



Program OTMs differ from General OTMs in that, instead of having a single 600-word field, there are six fields addressing more specific information as follows:

Origin of the Program - Max 200 Words | Use this as an introductory paragraph for the program and provide specifics on the planner's intent.

Description of the Program - Max 400 Words | Outline the happenings of the program. Be very specific. Highlight the unique aspects of the event that were successful and explain EVERYTHING.

Goals of the Program - Max 200 Words | Explain, in detail, the programs objectives. DO NOT simply list them. Evaluate the program's ability to achieve these goals, including successes and shortcomings.

Positive and Lasting Impacts of the Program - Max 200 Words | What will attendees take away from the program? What impacts did the program have on the community?

Evaluation of the Program - Max 200 Words | Was the program a success? Evaluate the turnout, participation, and value of the program.

Adapt the Program to Other Campuses - Max 200 Words | Address the issues of cost, location, and relevance to other campuses. Provide tips for easy implementation and ideas for other campuses to add their own flare to the program.



WRITING AN OTM

How the OTM is written is just as important as who or what the OTM is written about. The most deserving subject could be buried by a poorly written, unfocused, lacking OTM. It is the responsibility of the writer to ensure that the OTM selection committees are fully aware of the contributions made by the nominee and why those contributions deserve recognition. When you are writing, always remember:

OFFER

Give information. It is the writer's responsibility to explain what the nominee has done:

Specific

accomplishments, details, examples, and personal experiences. The readers will not know something unless it is specifically stated in the OTM. Be Specific. Use examples; avoid generalizations.

TRANSLATE

Make no Assumptions. It is crucial to explain acronyms, people, and events. People should include their title(s) and involvement. Non-obvious titles should be explained as well. Events need to be fully clarified; readers won't necessarily be familiar with traditional programs, etc.

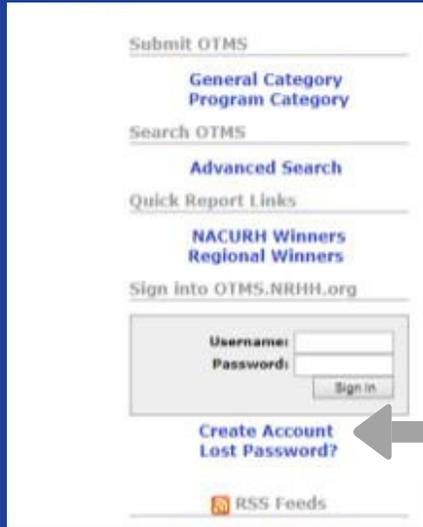
MAGNIFY

Why should people care? Before starting, ask yourself, "Why does this subject deserve recognition?" When writing, never forget your answer to that question. Always focus on that reason and ensure that readers will see that focus. Emphasize the outstanding accomplishments and avoid unrelated filler, such as "[nominee] is also a great student."



OTM WEBSITE

OTMs are submitted through an online database (otms.nrhh.org). This allows for streamlined submission, voting, selection, and searching processes.



CREATING AN ACCOUNT

Upon accessing the site, the primary menu will be on the left hand side. From this location, you can submit OTMs in either the general or program categories, explain on the next two pages. You can also search through the database for previously submitted OTMs. OTM writers are also able, and encouraged, to create an account on the website. Accounts must be verified and approved by a campus administrator prior to their activation. Creating an account is simple--All it requires is your name, address, phone number, email, and a username/password combination.

BENEFITS OF CREATING AN ACCOUNT

- Writers can edit and delete written OTMs up until the submission deadline. If an OTM is submitted on the main page, without an account, there is no way to edit or delete it.
- Writers are able to locate all of their submitted OTMs in one location.
- All of a writer's information is automatically inserted in the forms, so a writer does not have to reenter the data each time they submit an OTM.
- An account is required to serve on campus, regional, or national OTM Selection Committees.

SEARCHING THE DATABASE

Need a program idea? Want to see the great things people are doing in MACURH? Select Advanced Search from the menu.

You can filter your search by region, university, OTM category, award level (Regional winners, etc.), Month and Year

of submission, and the nominee/nominator. You can also sort your results by year/month, award level, category, and more.



SUBMITTING AN OTM

Follow the simple 6 steps below to submit an OTM:

STEP #1

Select Submit General or Submit Program

STEP #2

Fill in the information for your nominee

STEP #3

Copy and Paste your OTM into the given field(s)

STEP #4

Check your word count

STEP #5

Submit the OTM

STEP #6

Proofread your OTM and Edit as necessary

