

# 2022 AACOM Excellence in Communications Awards



**AACOM's Excellence in Communications (EIC) Awards Program** is designed to recognize the important role communications plays in advancing osteopathic medical education and the profession. It also seeks to inspire higher levels of performance among our members.

Each year, more than 70 entries are reviewed and award winners are chosen by an expert panel of judges—consisting of AACOM's Marketing and Communications team, AACOM senior staff members and guest judges who specialize in all areas of communication—based on creativity and effectiveness in achieving the project's stated objective related to the mission of the submitting osteopathic medical school.

**Questions?** Email [eicawards@aacom.org](mailto:eicawards@aacom.org)

## Submission Guidelines

Award winners will be individually notified in March after judging takes place. First-place winners will be recognized during Educating Leaders 2022, the AACOM Annual Conference, to be held April 27-29. All winners will be recognized during the Marketing and Communications Advisory Council (MAC) spring meeting.

### Submission Deadline

All entries must be submitted by **Thursday, February 10, 2022**.

Enter your submissions through AACOM's [Excellence in Communications Awards Program web page](#).

### Eligibility

College or university-based marketing and communications departments engaged in the management and operations of the marketing and communications program at an AACOM member college are eligible to submit entries.

### Judging Recommendation Requirement

This year AACOM is providing the judges for the awards. However, if you would like to nominate a judge, please contact [eicawards@aacom.org](mailto:eicawards@aacom.org). Judges must be:

- Unbiased (does not work for any college of osteopathic medicine)
- A professional in marketing, communications, publishing, design, journalism or a related field
- Available to serve as a judge if selected. Judging will be virtual, and judging will take place between February 14 and March 7, 2022.

### Performance Period

Work accomplished between January 1 and December 31, 2021, will be considered.

## Entry Categories

All entry submissions are entirely digital. Submittal requirements may vary depending on category. Read individual category descriptions below for requirement details. Entries that fail to follow submittal requirements will be penalized in judging.

### Advertising Campaign - Paid

Integrated campaign elements designed to support a paid ad campaign around a communications or marketing objective. Could be recruitment-related, but could also be related to other COM goals, events and initiatives.

Requirements: A pdf of printed ads, or a pdf containing each ad if a series. If entering digital pieces, include a web link to view published digital format online.

### Alumni/Development Engagement Campaign

Integrated campaign elements designed to engage and encourage alumni contributions to the COM through print and/or electronic communications, including but not limited to ads, brochures, form letters, pamphlets, postcards, announcements and email promotions.

Requirements: Pdf, images or online links to the communications pieces used in the campaign. For digital pieces, include a web link to view original digital components online.

### Annual Report

A print or digital publication containing a COM's annual highlights, strategy updates and financial results.

Requirements: A pdf of the printed report, or a web link to view original digital format online.

### COVID-19 Pivot

As the global COVID-19 pandemic continues, our colleges of osteopathic medicine continue to identify and implement new ways of adapting, especially in the communications arena. Activities once thought to be only temporary are being evaluated differently because of the value or benefits provided and may be considered on a more permanent basis. Please provide examples of how your college handled an ever-changing environment and how you were able to connect with your audience despite the challenges still presented by COVID-19. How have your communications efforts shifted to focus on member inclusion throughout the pandemic to now? For example, what did you do differently for return-to-campus planning, White Coat or Graduation celebrations, student orientation, special events, communications to parents, students, employees, staff, etc.?

Requirements: Include any relevant attachments, website addresses, video or other content that exemplifies how the program you're submitting had to change to address health safety concerns, yet still accomplished the marketing and/or communication objectives.

### Feature Story or Article

A print or online article published by a COM and written by a COM employee, student or alum that serves to meet a communications or marketing objective.

Requirements: A pdf of the published print article or a web link to the article published online.

### Infographic

A print or digital infographic highlighting in a visual manner key data or statistics relating to your COM, your COM's programs, students, faculty or other relevant information.

Requirements: A pdf of the published printed infographic, or web link to the infographic published online and a description of how and where it was used.

### Serial Publication – Print or Digital

A printed or digital serial publication or periodical that presents one or more points of view.

Requirements: A pdf of each of the last three issues of the publication. If entering a digital magazine, include a web link to view the last three issues online in their original digital format.

### **Social Media Campaign (unpaid, organic)**

Any marketing effort that utilizes online social media tools to provide a platform for thought leadership, collaboration and user interaction. Can be one platform or a combination of platforms. Examples of social media include but are not limited to blogs, networking sites (e.g., LinkedIn, Facebook), content-sharing sites (e.g., YouTube, Flickr) or news sites (e.g., Reddit).

Requirements: A pdf of screenshots of all the pieces in the social media communications program, as well as web links to view original content online.

### **Student Recruitment Campaign**

Integrated campaign elements designed to recruit potential students through print and/or electronic communications, including but not limited to ads, brochures, look books, form letters, pamphlets, postcards, announcements, virtual tours and email promotions.

Requirements: A pdf of all the pieces in the communications program. For digital pieces, include a web link to view original digital components online.

### **Video (non-recruitment)**

A video (less than 2 min) that highlights specific COM programs, community outreach and/or special (non-recruitment, non-virtual tour) events. Video programs are filmed communications, with or without audio.

Requirements: Include a link to view the video online and a description of how and where it was used.

## **Entry Submission Questions**

Awardees will be notified in early March. The panel of judges will be composed of professionals chosen by AACOM, AACOM staff and any volunteers submitted by applicants. Judging scorecards will not be made public. Submissions will be adjudicated using a point system. Each submission will be assessed and reviewed by the panel using the following criteria:

- **State your strategic marketing objectives and goals or intended outcomes.** (1,500 characters)  
Jurors will be looking for a clear marketing strategy and goals.
- **Outline the planning that took place for this piece or program.** (1,500 characters)  
Jurors will be looking for methodology for collecting and evaluating results, target market, specific tactics and strategies, strategic constraints.
- **What is the intended messaging of this entry?** (1,500 characters)  
Jurors will be looking for a clear marketing message for the intended audience, that the piece or program reflects the COM's strategic direction, that appropriately conservative or innovative approaches are taken to meet the overall marketing objectives and that the writing is clear, error-free and targeted to the intended audience.
- **Describe how the entry conforms to the overall branding of the school or initiative.** (1,500 characters)  
Jurors will be looking for how design, graphics, typography and other branding elements are effectively leveraged to create interest, engagement or otherwise meet the objectives of the project.
- **Explain the thought process used to make your piece or program stand out from other communications aimed at your target audience.** (1,500 characters)  
Jurors will be looking for an entry that effectively uses COM resources, supports the overall goals and objectives of the project and exhibits an innovative approach or breakthrough idea.

- **What actions did the target audience/s take after receiving your materials? Did you achieve your intended goals and outcomes? What were the overall results?** (1,500 characters)  
Jurors will be looking for ROI and any supporting testimonials or feedback.

## Submitting Your Entries

Each entry must include the following to be considered for judging:

1. **Completed [online entry form](#)**  
We are using Reviewr awards software this year. You must create a new account to start your submission.
2. **All submission requirements**
3. **\$50 [submission fee per entry](#)** paid through the AACOM online store.

A \$50 submission fee is required for each entry. Payment can be made online through the [AACOM online store](#) (Visa, MasterCard, and American Express). If submitting the same item in more than one award category, a separate fee is required for each additional submission.

To pay online by credit card (MasterCard, Visa, American Express): Go to AACOM's online bookstore, fill out an order form and then select 'Add to Cart.'

If you are purchasing multiple submissions, add the first submission by clicking "Add to Cart" and, in the shopping cart screen, adjust the quantity to the number of submissions you wish to purchase. *Be sure to keep your payment invoice number, as it is required on the digital submissions form.*

**Questions?** Please email [eicawards@aacom.org](mailto:eicawards@aacom.org).