What is an OTM?

An OTM, or Of-The-Month, is a formal recognition essay, in which the writer nominates a person, group, 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.

Additionally, OTMs are rewarded with Cow Bell Points, based on the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Achievement</th>
<th>Cow Bell Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campus Submitted an OTM</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Winner</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Winner</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Winner</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 effort 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 of these OTMs should be the number of residents impacted and the significance and lasting results of that impact.
How does the OTM process work?

The OTM process is designed to emphasize recognition, through providing opportunities for recognition at the campus, regional, and national levels. In this way, one person or program can receive increasing degrees of recognition for their efforts. The diagram below illustrates the timeline for the OTM process:

**THE OTM PROCESS**

1. **Xth of the following month**
   - OTM submissions for the previous month are due by the deadline outlined on your campus level.

2. **Yth - Zth**
   - The Campus OTM Selection Committee, if used on your campus, votes on submitted OTMs.

3. **10th**
   - Each school submits Campus Winners to the regional level by 11:59p MST.

4. **11th - 16th**
   - The MACURH Regional OTM Selection Committee votes on submitted OTMs.
   - The committee is comprised of representatives from MACURH member schools.

5. **17th**
   - The MACURH AD-NRHH announces Regional Winners and submits them to the national level.

6. **18th - 24th**
   - The NACURH National OTM Selection Committee votes on submitted OTMs.
   - The committee is comprised of representatives from NACURH member schools.

7. **Last Day of the month**
   - The NACURH NAN announces National Winners.

The OTM process occurs monthly, including the summer and winter months. For more information on getting involved on the campus, regional, or national OTM Selection Committees, contact the MACURH Associate Director of NRHH at ma_adnrhh@nacurh.org.
How good is MACURH?

MACURH’s history in OTMs dates back to February 2000. In over a decade, MACURH has witnessed some impressive OTM success:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Submissions</th>
<th>National Winners</th>
<th>National Winner Placement v. Other Regions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002-2003</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-2004</td>
<td>1,301</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-2005</td>
<td>2,487</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-2006</td>
<td>4,386</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-2007</td>
<td>3,114</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-2008</td>
<td>3,570</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-2009</td>
<td>3,474</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-2010</td>
<td>3,887</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-2011</td>
<td>4,067</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7th (tie)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MACURH has become one of the top OTM performing regions. Below is a chart outlining MACURH’s OTM success against the most competitive regions in NACURH:

**MACURH vs. THE COMPETITION 2010-2011**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>IACURH</th>
<th>MACURH</th>
<th>NEACURH</th>
<th>SAACURH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OTM Submissions</td>
<td>1,973</td>
<td>4,067</td>
<td>2,703</td>
<td>5,434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Winners</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### General OTMs

General OTMs are written like a school paper, a short story, or a newspaper column. There is not structure; just write your OTM, keeping it under 600 words, explaining why your nominee deserves recognition.

**MAXIMUM WORD COUNT**

- **600 words**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>OTM Description</th>
<th>Nominees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADVISOR</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>RHA Advisor, Hall Council Advisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITY</td>
<td>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 Hall.</td>
<td>Centennial Hall, MACURH Delegation, Ellison House, Hudson First Floor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>RHA Executive Board Members, NRHH Executive Board Members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INSTITUTIONAL FACULTY/STAFF</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>Professors, Dining Hall Employees, Maintenance Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIRST YEAR STUDENT</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>Hall Council Members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORGANIZATION</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>RHA, NRHH, Fraternities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESIDENT ASSISTANT</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>Paxton House Resident Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STUDENT</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>Hall Council President, Student Government President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPOTLIGHT</td>
<td>The SPOTLIGHT OTM—for nominees who fit no other category—should focus on the contributions and impact of the nominee in the residence halls.</td>
<td>Community Members, Companies, Departments, Animals, Traditions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**RESIDENTIAL FACULTY/STAFF**

The OTM focuses on the individuals who aide residents within the housing campus community. This category is intended for those not eligible for the RESIDENT ASSISTANT CATEGORY.
# Program OTMs

**MAXIMUM WORD COUNT**

1,400 words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM</th>
<th>DIVERSITY PROGRAM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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.</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relay for Life, National Day of Silence</td>
<td>World Hunger Banquet, Cultural Nights</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM</th>
<th>SOCIAL PROGRAM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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.</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love is in the Air (Sex Ed.), Mardi Gras (Alcohol Ed.)</td>
<td>Dance Party, Circus, Carnival, Karaoke</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PASSIVE PROGRAM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulletin Boards, Educational Campaigns, Walls, Door Decorations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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: [brackets denote the maximum word count for each field]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Origin of the Program [200]</td>
<td>Use this as an introductory paragraph for the program and provide specifics on the planner’s intent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Description of the Program [400]</td>
<td>Outline the happenings of the program. Be specific. Highlight the unique aspects of the event that were successful; explain everything.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals of the Program [200]</td>
<td>Explain, in detail, the programs objective[s]. Do not merely list them. Evaluate the program’s ability to achieve these goals, including successes and shortcomings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive and Lasting Effects of the Program [200]</td>
<td>What will attendees take away from the program? What impacts did the program have on the community?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Evaluation of the Program [200]</td>
<td>Was the program a success? Evaluate the turnout, participation, and value of the program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adapt the Program to Other Campuses [200]</td>
<td>Arguably the most important section, address issues of cost, location, and relevance at other campuses. Provide tips for easy implementation and ideas for other campuses to add their own flare to the program.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The OTM Website

OTMs are submitted through an online database. An online database allows for streamlined submission, voting, selection, and searching processes.

**otms.nrhh.org**

**CREATING AN ACCOUNT**

Upon accessing the site, the primary menu will be on the left-hand side. From this location, one can submit OTMs in either the General or Program Categories; one can also search through the database for previously submitted OTMs.

OTM writers are also able, and encouraged, to create an account* on the website. Creating an account is a simple, one-page form that requires name, address, phone number, email, and username/password.

*Accounts must be verified and approved by a campus administrator prior to their activation.

**BENEFITS OF CREATING AN ACCOUNT**

**Editing/Deleting:** Writers can edit and delete written OTMs up until the submission deadline. If an OTM is submitted from the link on the main page, without an account, there is no way to edit or delete it.

**Past OTMs:** Writers are able to locate all of their submitted OTMs in one location.

**Information:** All of a writer’s information is automatically inserted in the forms, so a writer does not have to re-enter the data each time they submit an OTM.

**Committees:** An account is required to serve on campus, regional, or national OTM Selection Committees.

**NAVIGATION MENU**

Upon logging in, writers will be able to use the menu to search the database, change personal information, or submit OTMs in both General and Program categories.

*The navigation bar may appear on the left-hand side depending on the selecting settings.*
SUBMITTING AN OTM

1. Select Submit General or Submit Program.
2. Fill in the Information for your nominee.
3. Copy & Paste or Type the OTM into the given field(s).
4. Check your Word Count.
5. Submit the OTM.
6. Proofread your OTM and Edit/Delete as necessary.

SEARCHING THE DATABASE

Need a good 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.

HOW CAN YOU USE THE DATABASE?

FIND THE BEST IN THE NATION:
Search the OTM database for recent National Winners.
Award Level: National Winner – Order by: Year/Month, Descending

FIND A COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM
Category: Community Service Program - Order by Year/Month, Descending
Order by Award Level, Descending to see the best programs first
Award Level: National Winner to only see the best
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’re writing, always remember:

OFFER  ■  TRANSLATE  ■  MAGNIFY

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.

Tip: If a statement can be argued, it shouldn’t be included.

Arguable: “Ryan is awesome and funny.”
*This doesn’t explain why they deserve recognition.

Not Arguable: “Ryan planned an 200-person event.”
*This offers a specific contribution.

TRANSLATE
Make no assumptions. It is crucial to explain acronyms, people, and events. Acronyms should be written out the first time they are used. People should be translated with 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 “why does this subject (person/group/program) deserve recognition?” When writing, never forget the answer to that question. Always focus on the reason for nomination and ensure that readers will see that focus. Emphasize the outstanding accomplishments and avoid unrelated filler, such as “[nominee] is also a great student.”

Trouble starting? Find a quote that perfectly describes your subject and let it inspire you.
Nothing shows appreciation quite like recognition on a national stage, but with only one national winner in each category each month, it’s quite the feat. Here are some easy tips to ensure that your OTM has a fighting chance at the national level:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Substance</th>
<th>Tip for Success</th>
<th>Avoid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OTMs should be filled with achievements and recognizable characteristics.</td>
<td>It is imperative to select a deserving nominee. Think of your typical 5-paragraph essay. If you can’t easily name three “topics” for your body paragraphs, pick a new nominee.</td>
<td>Avoid non-achievements, such as: • personal characteristics/trait • scholastic success (i.e. “[name] is also a great student”)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month Specificity</th>
<th>Tip for Success</th>
<th>Avoid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Only achievements within the month of nomination are relevant information.</td>
<td>Before writing, make a bulleted list of recognizable achievements for your nominee. Review the list and cross off any that did not occur within the month of nomination.</td>
<td>Avoid statements like “[name] has been an amazing leader in NRHH all year!” Personality traits are also non-month specific.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adhere to the Category</th>
<th>Tip for Success</th>
<th>Avoid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All substance in the OTM should directly adhere to the category description.</td>
<td>Review the criteria for the category before writing your OTM. When outlining your OTM, eliminate any achievements that don’t follow the category.</td>
<td>Avoid common mistakes: • non-advising related achievements in an Advisor OTM (e.g. managing a desk/staff) • nominee for a Spotlight OTM that could fit in another category</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word Count</th>
<th>Tip for Success</th>
<th>Avoid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OTMs should be thorough and complete. In a good OTM, more words allow for more details and achievements.</td>
<td>Get as close to the word limit as possible without adding fluff. General OTMs: 500+ Words. Program OTMs: Within 50 of limit for each field.</td>
<td>Avoid repetitive sentences and unnecessary description for the sake of add words. If you can’t fill a complete OTM, consider a different nominee.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formatting/Spelling/Grammer</th>
<th>Tip for Success</th>
<th>Avoid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OTMs should be formatted in an easy to understand manner.</td>
<td>Use paragraphs (requires an extra “enter” in the submission form); type the OTM in a word processor with spell check.</td>
<td>Avoid typing directly into the OTM submission form; avoid one chunk of text for 500-600 words.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
An OTM, or Of-The-Month, embodies all that is recognition. It is a written form of recognition, in which the writer nominates a person, group, or program for their outstanding contributions in the residence halls. OTMs effectively congratulate and acknowledge the positive accomplishments or resident leaders while encouraging continued effort and even greater achievement.

**WHAT IS AN OTM?**

**START → FINISH**

**ACCOUNT**
Register for an account at otms.nrhh.org.

**NOMINEE**
Select your nominee and category. Who/what stood out during the past month?

**RESEARCH**
Talk to the nominee and related individuals, and reflect on your own experiences.

**WRITE**
Write your OTM.
- OFFER all details, examples, etc. who? what? where? when? why?
- TRANSLATE acronyms and titles
- MAGNIFY the contributions.

**SUBMIT**
Submit your OTM online.
- Check your word count.
- Proofread.

**CATEGORIES**

**GENERAL**
(Max: 600 words)
*Recognizing individuals and groups.*
- Avisor
- Community
- Executive Board Member
- Faculty/Staff
- First Year Student
- Organization
- Resident Assistant
- Student
- Spotlight

**PROGRAM**
(Max: 1,400 words)
*Recognizing programs and events*
- Community Service Program
- Diversity Program
- Educational Program
- Passive Program
- Social Program

**OTM WRITING TIPS**

**OTM WRITING WORDS**
- Asset
- Community
- Contribution
- Deliver
- Deserving
- Development
- Empower
- Encourage
- Engage
- Enhance
- Impact
- Impressive
- Residential Experience
- Resource
- Valuable

**RESOURCES**

OTM Website........................otms.nrhh.org
MACURH Website............... macurh.nacurh.org
MACURH AD-NRHH...ma_adnrhh@nacurh.org
NACURH NAN.....................nan@nacurh.org

**SUBMITTING AN OTM**

otms.nrhh.org
1. Select Submit General or Submit Program.
2. Fill in the information for your nominee.
3. Copy & Paste or Type the OTM into the given field(s).
4. Check your word count.
5. Submit the OTM.
6. Proofread and Edit/Delete as necessary.

**FORMATTING TIPS**

Paragraphs - Separate into paragraphs for easy reading.
Spelling/Grammar - Use spellcheck and proofread!

**OTM SUBMISSION DEADLINE**

OTMs are due to the region on the 10th of each month at 11:59 p.m.
Thank you for the help you have given towards the creation of this guide...

Garrett Friedrich,
2011-2012 Intermountain Affiliate AD-NRHH,
NACURH, Inc. Chapters of NRHH
Without you, none of this would be possible.