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AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF
COLLEGES OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE

STUDENT RESEARCHER OF THE YEAR AWARD PROTOCOL *(REVISED 08.18.2025)*

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I. Student Researcher of the Year (SROY) Award Recipient

A. Eligibility

1. Must be a full-time student at a College of Osteopathic Medicine
2. Applicant cannot be a previous school or national SROY recipient
3. Students who applied in past years but did not receive the award may apply again
4. Dual DO/PhD students are welcome to apply, however, they must designate which research activities were completed during their PhD curricular period on their application form.

B. SROY Ideals and Values

1. Dedication to the Osteopathic Research
2. Leadership in Osteopathic Research
3. Embodiment of Osteopathic Philosophy
4. Professional Development

II. School Selection Committee

A. COM Committee Chair: Guidelines and Responsibilities

1. The COM/SOM's appointed COSGP Research Liaison will serve as the SROY Selection Committee Chair. If they are unable to fulfill this role, the Committee Chair can be represented by any member of the Osteopathic institutions' student body, faculty, or staff as designated by the Student Government Association (SGA) of that school. Their responsibilities will include:
 - a) Set and enforce the deadlines for the SROY Award at their institution
 - b) Publicize the SROY award
 - c) Assemble the SROY Selection Committee
 - d) Distribute the application and instructions to their student body in a timely manner
 - e) Collect the complete set of application materials from applicants, blind them, and distribute them to the school selection committee
 - f) Gather the committee for discussion of the candidates and select campus SROY
 - g) Submit all materials of the SROY Winner to the National Committee Chair by the predetermined deadline
2. In the event the Committee Chair decides to submit an application for consideration of SROY, they must step down as Committee Chair; and the SGA of that school will need to designate a new Chair who is not submitting an application this cycle.

B. COM Committee Members

1. Director of Research or equivalent faculty member involved with research on your campus
2. Other suggested members can include:
 - a) Up to additional 2 faculty members, preferably who are involved in research.
 - b) Research Club President, or campus equivalent
 - c) Student representatives from each class
3. The composition of your School Selection Committee is up to the discretion of your Committee Chair, however, it is required to have at least 5 people, and no more than 8, serve in these positions.

C. COM Committee Responsibilities

1. The purpose of the COM Committee is to select their campus Student Researcher of the Year. Responsibilities of this committee include to:



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- a) Review and score all nomination packets for the SROY
- b) Return the score sheet to the Committee Chair by the predetermined deadline
- c) Attend meetings related to selecting the recipient of their campus SROY

D. COMs with Satellite or Branch Campuses

- 1. You may collectively submit one candidate to the National SROY, but there must be equal representation from both/all campuses on the school selection committee; or
- 2. Your satellite campus or additional teaching location is able to have their own selection committee, and submit their own candidate for the National SROY

III. National Selection Committee

A. National Committee Chair: Guidelines and Responsibilities

- 1. The National Research Representative (NRR) of the Council of Osteopathic Student Government Presidents (COSGP) will serve as the National Committee Chair. Their responsibilities include:
 - a) Coordinate all communications regarding SROY with the Committee Chairs at each of the College of Osteopathic Medicine through COSGP Research Committee members
 - b) Set and communicate timeline for SROY
 - c) Prepare and disseminate application materials in a timely manner
 - d) Contact members of the National SROY Selection Committee and ensure they understand their role
 - e) Collect all SROY national nominee materials from the Committee Chairs
 - f) Distribute blinded SROY application packets to the National Selection Committee members
 - g) Gather the score sheets from the National Selection Committee to determine the National SROY
 - h) Tally the scores for each of the national nominees
 - i) Compose and release all publications regarding the SROY Program
- 2. The National Committee Chair is ineligible from applying for consideration of SROY in the application cycle in which they serve as COSGP NRR.

B. National Committee Members

- 1. National Committee will be comprised of:
 - a) COSGP NRR, who will serve as Chair
 - b) At least one member of AACOM, preferably the Senior Vice president for Medical Education and Research and/or the Director of Research if possible
 - c) At least one faculty member, recommended to be recruited through AACOM's Council of Osteopathic Researchers (COR)
 - d) One selected member of the COSGP Executive Board, if there is interest
 - e) At least one General Council member of the COSGP Research Committee

C. National Committee Responsibilities

- 1. The purpose of the National Selection Committee is to select the National Student Researcher of the Year. Responsibilities of this committee include to:
 - a) Review and score all nomination packets for the National SROY
 - b) Return the score sheet to the National Committee Chair by the predetermined deadline
 - c) Attend meetings related to selecting the recipient of the National SROY



IV. Application Materials and Timeline

A. Application Packet

1. Each applicant must assemble the following for evaluation:
 - a) A standardized application consisting of research experience prior to medical school (presentations, publications, other research experience) and research during medical school (comprised by likewise information)
 - b) Two letters of recommendation from a: (1) PI or research mentor, and (2) professor, faculty member, or academic administrator of the student's choosing.
 - c) An essay based on the topic established by the National Chair
 - d) A current Curriculum Vitae
 - e) A high-definition headshot picture of the applicant

B. Application Timeline

1. Applicants will be given a minimum of two weeks to complete the application packet
2. The application packet should be submitted to the COM Committee Chair by the predetermined deadline
3. No application packets will be accepted beyond the deadline set by the National Committee chair

V. COM SROY Selection Process

A. Blinded Essays

1. The COM Committee chair will remove all identifying information from each candidate's essay and randomly assign a number to each candidate. Essays will be distributed and scored separately from the unblinded application forms
 - a) The committee chair will create a key of identifying information and numbers for later identification
 - b) The blinded candidate essays will be distributed to the members of the selection committee for review and scoring
 - c) The selection committee will be given a minimum of one week to review the essays
 - d) A score sheet will be provided to each committee member and packets will be scored on the criteria outlined below in Section VI, Part 2 (Essay)

B. Unblinded Materials

1. Once all score sheets have been returned from the COM Selection Committee, the COM Committee Chair will distribute the complete unblinded applications, which include the candidate's letters of recommendation.
 - a) The selection committee will be given a minimum of one week to review the applications
 - b) A score sheet will be provided to each committee member and packets will be scored on the criteria outlined below in Section VI, Part 1, (Application Form)
 - c) The unblinded candidate applications, including letters of recommendation, will count for 70% of the nominee's total score

C. Nominee Discussion

1. Once all the score sheets have been returned from the selection committee, the COM Committee Chair will tally the total scores
2. The COM SROY Committee will then meet and discuss each of the candidates taking into account the impression each of the candidates has left on others and acknowledging their efforts



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from a more personal standpoint.

- a) The scores obtained from the committee's discussion will count for 5% of the nominee's total score (additional information in Section VI, Part 4)

VI. Application Scoring Process

A. Scoring Criteria

1. Application Form

- a) Each area of the application will be scored using the following:
 - (1) Research Activities During Medical School (55 points)
 - (2) Research Activities Before Medical School (5 points)
- b) The application form is worth 60% of the total score

2. Essay

- a) Each essay will be scored using the following scale and criteria:
 - (1) Questions answered with strong examples, contribution to the field, originality and relevance (10 points)
 - (2) Communication of passion and dedication, and future involvement (10 points)
 - (3) Grammar, spelling, mechanics (5 points)
- b) The total is worth 25% of the total score

3. Letters of Recommendation

- a) Points are given on a sliding scale
 - (1) Would recommend (10 points)
 - (2) Would not recommend (0 points)
- b) Letters of Recommendation will be worth up to 10% of the total score

4. Committee Discussion

- a) The committee will be able to influence the score up to 5% (5 points)
- b) Each member of the committee will provide a score out of 5 points for each candidate after the discussion period. The average score across all committee members for a single candidate will be added to the remainder of their score to determine the final score.

VII. Final Selection

A. Calculating Scores

- 1. A winner will be selected on their total points for the blinded and unblinded selection process
 - a) Essays (blinded) = 25%
 - b) Application form (unblinded) = 60%
 - c) Letters of Recommendation (unblinded) = 10%
 - d) Committee discussion rankings = 5%
 - e) A tie is defined as less than a point difference between the highest score holders
- 2. The nominee with the highest score is chosen as SROY for their respective school

B. Special Circumstances

- 1. A tie is defined as less than one-point difference between the highest score holders
- 2. In the event of a tie the Director of Research, or equivalent on the committee, will serve as a tie-breaker

C. National SROY Nomination



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1. The campus SROY winner is to be notified within one week of their selection
2. The committee or designee thereof is to write a letter of recommendation on behalf of the school to be submitted with the winner's materials to the national committee
 - a) Note: the winner may not alter their application for submission to the national level
3. The committee chair will submit all necessary documents to the national committee chair by the predetermined deadline

VIII. National Award Process

A. National Nomination Packets

1. The National Committee Chair will notify each COM Committee Chair that their materials were received
2. Nomination packet consists of the following from the SROY winner from that school:
 - a) Completed Application, Essay, and 2 Letters of Recommendation
 - b) Letter of COM Committee Recommendation: written by the committee or designee thereof that describes the nominee's contribution to the school and how the student meets the values and ideals of the SROY as stated in Section I
 - c) Headshot that meets specifications of AACOM and COSGP
3. Nomination packets will not be accepted beyond the predetermined deadline set by the National Committee Chair

B. Selection Process

1. The National Committee will be given a minimum of three weeks to review the application packets and essays, grade them, and return their score sheets to the National Committee Chair.
2. Following submission, the national selection committee will meet three weeks after the materials have been received to discuss the top candidates in an online meeting.
3. Once the National Research Committee Chair has received all the score sheets from the national committee, the scores are tallied, and the national winner is chosen according to the criteria outlined below.

C. National Scoring:

1. The national nomination packet will be graded out of 100 points, using the same grading rubric provided to school selection committees.
2. Application Form
 - a) Each area of the application will be scored using the following:
 - (1) Research Activities During Medical School (55 points)
 - (2) Research Activities Before Medical School (5 points)
 - b) The Application is worth 60% of the total score
3. Essay
 - a) Each essay will be scored using the following scale and criteria:
 - (1) Questions answered with strong examples, contribution to field, originality and relevance (15 points)
 - (2) Communication of passion and dedication, and future involvement (10 points)
 - (3) Grammar, spelling, mechanics (5 points)
 - b) The total is worth 30% of the total score
4. Letters of Recommendation



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- a) Points are given on a sliding scale
 - (1) Would recommend (10 points)
 - (2) Would not recommend (0 points)
- b) Letters of Recommendation will be worth up to 10% of the total score

D. Ranking Nominees and Selecting National SROY

1. The National Chair will gather the score sheets. The **top ten nominees** with the highest total score will be evaluated in an open discussion by the National Committee.
2. After completion of discussion, each member of the National Committee will cast a vote on who the SROY should be.
3. In the event of a tie, the COSGP National Parliamentarian will serve as the tie breaker
4. The national selection committee may also give honorable mention to a maximum of three candidates outside of the SROY. In an effort to recognize these students for their outstanding contribution to osteopathic medicine, they will have honorable mention listed under their photo on all public announcements, plaques, and posters.

IX. Schedule of Announcements

- A.** At the E-Board meeting following the selection of the winner and potential honorary mentions, the secretary will announce the awardee(s) to the E-Board and AACOM leadership
- B.** The National SROY and honorable mentions' COM deans will then be notified to inform the winners using an AACOM pre-approved email.
- C.** The will follow-up with the winning students to assure that they have been notified, one week after the dean notification.
- D.** The award results will be presented after the COSGP January meeting by mid-February to the General Council. The 2nd Vice Chair and PR/Web Representative will work with the to coordinate COSGP social medical publication of the winner and honorable mentions by mid-February.
- E.** The will work with AACOM to develop a press release and PR resources for the winning school(s) to utilize in their recognition and this will be released to them within 1 month of the student's notification of winning
- F.** The schools will be allowed to conduct their own publication of the results on their own timeline and in whatever manner they choose
- G.** The will apply for funding from the COSGP for the SROY's travel to the AACOM awards banquet immediately after the selection of the SROY

X. Recognition for the National Student Researcher of the Year

- A.** The SROY will be the recipient of a monetary award that will be formally announced at a later date
- B.** SROY winners from each of the Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine will receive a certificate
- C.** AACOM and COSGP reserve the right to publish essays, non-sensitive, pertinent application information (such as community service projects, publications, and activities), and excerpts from Letters of Committee Recommendation in articles, press releases, and posters pertaining to the national SROY
- D.** The award will be officially presented at the AACOM Annual Awards Banquet at a TBD date. If applicable, the winner will be notified of the AACOM awards banquet and allowed to bring a guest to the dinner. He/she/they will be given instructions on how to RSVP and who to contact with any questions including parking, attire, etc.

XI. Protocol Review and Feedback

- A.** The NRR will review this protocol and elicit feedback regarding the application cycle on an annual basis



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and update the process as needed.

SDOY Timeline Overview:

Sept 15 – Oct. 10	1. Select your campuses' SDOY Selection Committee 2. NOMINATION PERIOD OPENS
Oct. 10	Last day to accept nominations
Oct. 10 – 31	Application period
Oct. 31	LAST DAY TO ACCEPT APPLICATIONS <i>**Hard deadline**</i>
Nov. 1 – Dec. 5	School selection committees meet to decide school award recipient
Dec. 5	LAST DAY TO SUBMIT ALL MATERIALS TO THE NATIONAL SDOY COORDINATOR <i>**Hard deadline**</i>

Last updated by COSGP National Research Representative - Victoria Comfort



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