

AGU Hydrology Section Awards: Best Practices

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Updated 1/10/2019

Inspired by an original document by M Sivapalan

Chair of Horton Medal Committee (2013-2014, 2017-2019)

Our values and guiding principles

- The AGU Hydrology Section has a core value consistent with the Union to promote “excellence and integrity in everything we do.”
- In our Section awards, we seek:
 - Excellence and transparency: allow for broad input and recognition beyond disciplinary awards.
 - Diversity and commitment to equity: recognition of under-represented groups

The Hydrologic Sciences Award Committee

- **From our Bylaws:** The award is to be given for an outstanding contribution to the Science of Hydrology. All contributions made over a career can be considered but more weight should be given to the last five years. The contribution may be:
 - a single outstanding paper published in any journal;
 - a series of papers which, taken together, define an outstanding contribution;
 - a service to the science which makes an outstanding contribution e.g., an outstanding meeting leading to a change in the science;
 - any other contribution which the nominations committee considers worthy.

Early Career Award

- **From our Bylaws:** The Early Career Award nominees must be members of AGU and must be within 10 years (*new for 2019*) of receiving their Ph.D. on the first day of the year in which the award is to be made. Parental leave, if provided by the candidate's institution and taken by the nominee during this 10-year period, can extend the ten year period. Committee members will be selected to span a range of career levels, but the majority should be mid-career hydrologists at the time of appointment.

Langbein Lecture Award

- **From our Bylaws:** The Walter B. Langbein Lecture is the named lecture of the Hydrology Section. It was established in accordance with the guidelines for such lectures, approved by the AGU Executive Committee at its March 12, 1991 meeting. The Lectureship is to be awarded for lifetime contributions to the basic science of hydrology and/or unselfish service promoting cooperation in hydrologic research. Additional considerations may be the candidate's renown as a lecturer and/or as an educator.
- *Procedure:* The Committee will make its recommendation of its first choice of the Langbein Lecture Awardee and of a runner-up (in case the first choice declines) to the Section President. The Section President with the concurrence of the Executive Subcommittee may accept or return any recommendation to the Committee for further consideration.

Witherspoon Lecture Award

- **From our Bylaws:** The Paul A. Witherspoon Lecture honors the life and work of hydrologist, Paul A. Witherspoon. Witherspoon was a dynamic and influential leader in hydrologic sciences for more than 50 years. The Paul A. Witherspoon Lecture in Hydrologic Sciences will honor the great accomplishments of Witherspoon in advancing the science of Hydrology, its application to socially important problems, and the inspired and dedicated mentoring of young hydrologists.
- The Witherspoon Lecture Award recognizes significant and innovative contributions in hydrologic sciences by a mid-career scientist, which includes the awardee's research impact, innovative interdisciplinary work, application of research to socially important problems, and inspired and dedicated mentoring of young scientists, and acknowledges the awardee shows exceptional promise for continued leadership in hydrologic sciences.

Criteria to consider against the award descriptions

- **Scientific Excellence:** scientific excellence of the candidate's body of work over a sustained period of time (this medal is for lifetime achievement), the publications that have resulted, and the insights gained (including contributions across the earth and space sciences) **(not just a count of publications)**
- **Scientific Impact:** how the candidate's work has made a significant impact on the field overall, and to its growth, through influencing current and future research – articulated in a way that these contributions and their importance can be understood by peers and those outside their research field **(not just count of citations)**
- **Broader Impacts:** who has benefitted from the work, and candidate's recognitions and notable service to his/her field, aligning these with the vision/mission of the Union **(expressed in scientific terms)**
- **Reputation and Leadership:** the nominee's international reputation in his/her field **(not just a list of all committee memberships, chairmanships etc.)**

Section Two-Stage Process

- Stage 1 – January 15-March 15
- Single Nomination letter and CV forwarded to committee on March 1 by AGU.
- Committee, in first telecom or by email, reviews information and selects no more than 5 candidates for full consideration.
- Committee chair returns “short list” to AGU (acovington@agu.org) to request full packages.

Section Two-Stage Process

- Stage 2 – March 15- May 15
- Nominations packages uploaded to AGU submission site by April 15
- Committee, via telecom, meets to review complete nominations
- Committee chair returns name of winner to the Hydrology Section President and Union rep. Antonio Covington by May 15

Suggested Committee Steps

- In the following slides, recommended procedures (steps) for the Hydrology Section Awards Committees is provided.
- These are guidelines and recommendations based on past committee work and may be tailored for your committee if appropriate.

Step 1

- All committee members read the AGU Ethics Policy:
 - <https://ethics.agu.org/files/2013/03/Scientific-Integrity-and-Professional-Ethics.pdf>
 - All committee members read the AGU Conflict of Interest Policy:
 - <https://honors.agu.org/agu-conflict-of-interest-policy/>
-and then declare those conflicts with the initial list of nominees

Step 2

- All committee members review the criteria for award selection (prior to start of assessments):
 - Langbein Lecture
 - Witherspoon Lecture
 - Early Career Award (up to 3 awardees)
 - Hydrological Sciences Award
- Horton Research Grants not discussed here as these are based on proposal evaluation
 - But they too follow our general award philosophy

Step 3

- Each Committee member should study each nomination in detail prior to the first conference call
- Each committee member should provide a short summary of each candidate in terms of each of the award criteria
- No ranking should be made at this stage, not even any comparative analysis
- These assessments are based on facts presented in the nomination packages

Step 4

- The Committee Chair receives the member summaries and organizes them in a short document set against criteria
- The new document is distributed to the committee members and then forms the basis of the first conference call
- Committee members charged with presenting the case for nominees with equal distribution among committee members

Step 5

- **Conference call #1 (1-2 hr, scheduled between March 1 and March 15)**
- Committee members present verbally the case for each nominee
- Committee members to keep an open mind, and be deliberative in their assessments, precludes quick judgment based on prior knowledge or bias
- Be receptive to being informed and educated by other committee members, given the diversity of most committees (in terms of disciplines and age distribution)
- Committee members avoid bringing their disciplinary biases to the discussion
- Synthesis document recommending up to 5 complete nominations prepared following the call by the Committee Chair and then distributed to the committee members and AGU by March 15

During first conference call

- Committee chairs should pay special attention to engage all members of the committee
- When COI exists, recuse recuse recuse....pay attention to optics and perceptions of conflict
- All committee members should refer to these guidelines if any issues arise re: process

Step 6

- To begin after Full Nomination Packages are received (~April 15)
- Committee members do their own initial rankings based on synthesis documents + entire nomination packages + use of any bibliometric indices
- They send their rankings to the Committee Chair for compilation before the 2nd Conference Call

Step 7

- **Conference call #2 (1-2 hr; scheduled between April 15 and May 15):**
- Discussion of rankings and assignment of nominees to Pool A (to be definitely considered for the award), Pool B (to possibly be considered for the award) and Pool c (to not be considered for the award if applicable)
- Discussion of who should move from Pool B to Pool A
- Ranking of Pool A candidates

Step 8

- Committee Chair to submit name of winner to the Hydrology Section President and Union rep. Antonio Covington by May 15
- Committee chair to provide short written feedback to each nominator on their nominee