OTM Writing
Southern Oregon University - Siskiyou Chapter of NRHH

Why should you write OTM's?
OTM's are a way to recognize others. Recognition is a wonderful way to show appreciation and support to your Hall, Resident Assistants, Communities, Students, and Advisors for their hard work. Making people feel appreciated and supported will encourage them to continue going above-and-beyond, and will inspire them to do even more in the future.

Starting an OTM
Start an OTM by choosing your candidate. Think about the past month and reminisce about what went extraordinarily well and who went above-and-beyond. If you need help, ASK OTHERS what they had observed during the past month. Other people are great resources because they can add to the SCOPE and QUALITY of the OTM; they act as another set of eyes and can give you details that you might not have seen. Usually there are many people, programs, and groups worthy of an OTM, but never get recognized, so utilizing other people can help recognize those who deserve it.

Strive to get as many people and programs recognized each month with an OTM, but do not OVERSTRETCH yourself. Make sure you ask for help when you need it. Co-writing OTM's is a great way to save time, but still write that AMAZING OTM. If you have trouble remembering what happened during which month and who went above-and-beyond, keep a list of the people, groups, and programs that deserve recognition so that when the end of the month comes, writing an OTM is faster and easier.

Choosing the Type and Category
After you have chosen the candidate, the next step is to choose the appropriate type of OTM and the category it fits into. Follow the category guidelines very carefully so that your OTM is judged in the correct category. If, for example, a Resident Assistant was nominated in the Spotlight Category, the OTM would have to be reconsidered, losing valuable time and effort in the process. When writing the OTM in a certain category, STRESS how that person, group, or program is EXTRAORDINARY. Did they go above-and-beyond their job requirements? What is so SUPER cool about this group? What made the program so AMAZING?

Program OTM: The Program OTM's recognize an AMAZING Program or Event.

There are 4 categories of Program OTM's:
1. Social
   a. What was the purpose of the program?
   b. How did it encourage residents to interact with one another?
   c. What makes the program unique?
   d. How can the program be adapted to other campuses?

2. Educational
   a. How did the program educate students?
   b. How were the educational needs of the community addressed?
   c. What were the goals of the program and how were they accomplished?
   d. What makes the program unique?

3. Community Service
   a. What was the service project?
   b. Who did it benefit?
   c. How did the project impact the residential community?
   d. What makes this program unique?
   e. How did students take an active part in the program?

4. Diversity
    a. What were the goals of the program and how were they accomplished?
    b. How did the program serve to promote diversity and understanding?
    c. What makes this program unique?
    d. Did the program have a lasting effect on residents?

General OTM: The General OTM recognizes a specific person or group of people.

1. Advisor: The Advisor OTM is designed to recognize those individuals who advise a governing board, campus organization, or other related group in a formal role. The OTM should focus on the individual's role as an advisor, not as a supervisor of a staff or community. Advisors do an extraordinary amount of work that goes unseen.

    a. How did the individual impact, support, and/or recognize the students he/she advises during the month of nomination?
    b. Does the OTM focus on the individual's advisory, rather than supervisory role?
    c. Specific examples of unusual or extraordinary tasks addressed by the nominee?
    d. All fields completed, spelling/grammar/word counts accurate?

    Eligible Nominees: Full Time Advisors, Area Coordinators and advisors of campus organizations
    Ineligible Nominees: Any undergraduate student; submissions emphasizing supervision; multiple people.

2. Community: The Community OTM is designated for groups of individuals not recognized as official campus organizations. Possibly the broadest OTM category, a Community OTM should illustrate what brings a collection of individuals together and how they worked together as a group to accomplish their tasks during the month of nomination. A strong community does not have to be location-specific. A "Community" OTM can be written about a hall, an area, a specific floor, a club or organization, and any residence hall group that has worked together during the month to do something totally amazing.

    a. What unites these individuals as a community?
    b. What specific positive contributions did this community make during the month of nomination to enhance the lives of the group members or those around it?
    c. Specific examples of unusual or extraordinary tasks addressed by the nominees?
    d. All fields completed, spelling/grammar/word counts accurate?

    Acceptable Nominees: Residential floors, wings, halls, complexes, committees, etc.; any staff; two or more individuals united by a common task/assignment/purpose.
    Ineligible Nominees: Individual people; groups recognized as official organizations.

3. Executive Board Member: Executive Board members are amazing leaders in the residence halls. They work hard to keep the halls a fun place to live. This award applies to RHA and NRHH E-board members, not Area Council Executive Board members.

    a. How did the Executive Board member go above and beyond their job responsibilities?
    b. What specific contributions did they make to the team and people they serve?
    c. Specific examples of unusual or extraordinary tasks accomplished by the nominee?
    d. All fields completed, spelling/ grammar/ word counts accurate?

Acceptable Nominees: RHA Executive Board, NRHH Executive Board
Ineligible Nominees: Campus Executive Boards, Area Council Executive Boards, Staff Advisors

4. Faculty/ Staff: Faculty/ Staff includes individuals outside of housing who aid students in their academics/ personal affairs. This category is intended to recognize faculty/ staff who have made a contribution to the residence life community both in and out of the classroom.

   a. How did the faculty/ staff member go above and beyond their job responsibilities?
   b. How did the faculty/ staff engage with students within housing?
   c. Specific examples of unusual or extraordinary tasks accomplished by the nominee?
   d. All fields completed, spelling/ grammar/ word counts accurate?

   Acceptable Nominees: Professors, Instructors, Teaching Assistants, Academic Staff, Custodial/ Maintenance staff, Safety Officers, Dining Staff, etc
   Ineligible Nominees: Students,

5. First Year Student: The First Year Student category recognizes students (including transfer students) in their first year at the university. In addition to the normal challenges of adapting to a new environment, these nominees have taken an active role in their communities and positively impacted those around them. Submissions in this category may emphasize academics, leadership, involvement, and much more.

   a. Is the nominee in his or her first year at the university?
   b. Has the nominee taken on leadership roles or responsibilities within their community?
   c. Specific examples of unusual or extraordinary tasks addressed by the nominee?
   d. All fields completed, spelling/grammar/word counts accurate?

   Acceptable Nominees: Students (including transfers) in their first year at the university.
   Ineligible Nominees: Housing staff members; campus-wide Executive Board Members; multiple people.

6. Organization: Any organization that has actively contributed to the student leadership, recognition or other aspects of residence life. Emphasis should be placed on the successes of the organization as a whole, not just a few members and should detail how they have helped the campus in general.

   a. How did the organization actively contribute to student leadership within housing?
   b. How did the entire organization work together in their efforts?
   c. Specific examples of unusual or extraordinary tasks?
   d. All fields completed, spelling/grammar/word counts accurate?

   Acceptable Nominees: Area Councils, Executive Boards, Advisory Councils, NRHH Chapters, Campus Organizations that have positively impacted housing
   Ineligible Nominees: Staff, Faculty, RA's

7. Resident Assistant: Resident Assistants work very hard in creating a community, a home away from home, within the residence halls. Did your RA or a fellow staff member do something extra special and totally amazing? Did they do something ABOVE-AND- BEYOND? Only Resident Assistants are eligible for this category. The OTM should focus on the nominee's accomplishments within the RA role, but may also include other roles or responsibilities taken on during the month of nomination, such as involvement in other organizations.

a. Is the nominee currently employed as an RA/MA staff member?
b. How has the nominee impacted residents in their community during the month of nomination?
c. What additional responsibilities outside of his/her job requirements has the nominee taken on?
d. Specific examples of unusual or extraordinary tasks addressed by the nominee?
e. All fields completed, spelling/grammar/word counts accurate?

Acceptable Nominees: Resident Assistants
Ineligible Nominees: Everyone else; Senior Staff; multiple people.

8. Spotlight: Candidates in this category can include a maintenance worker, a food service worker, a professor, a student body Senator, a housing employee, or anyone who does not fit within the other categories. They must have clear contact with or influence in the residence halls. These nominees are not students, but still impact the on-campus living community and often go unrecognized. Spotlight OTM nominees can't be eligible for nomination in any other category.

a. Is the nominee ineligible for nomination in every other category?
b. How has the nominee positively impacted the on-campus living community?
c. What is this nominee's role in the lives of students? (Who are they?)
d. Specific examples of unusual or extraordinary tasks addressed by the nominee(s)?
e. All fields completed, spelling/grammar/word counts accurate?
f. The Spotlight OTM category exists to recognize those individuals or groups that do not fall into any other

Acceptable Nominees: Housekeepers, Maintenance, Dining Services, Campus Police, etc.
Ineligible Nominees: Undergraduate students, organizations, advisors, etc.

9. Student: Students within the residence halls include any resident and Hall E-board members. Be sure to include all activities and positions this person may have, along with their academics and other extra efforts within the residence halls. The Student OTM category recognizes the exceptional performance of a student living on campus during the month of nomination. This OTM may address several areas of the student's life, including academics, leadership, involvement, and more. It is important to emphasize what the nominee has done during the month of nomination to distinguish it from other months and how that has impacted others, if applicable.

a. What has the nominee done during the month of nomination to distinguish it from other months?
b. Has the nominee taken on leadership roles or responsibilities within their community?
c. Has the nominee maintained a healthy balance between academics and other activities?
d. Specific examples of unusual or extraordinary tasks addressed by the nominee?
e. All fields completed, spelling/grammar/word counts accurate?

Acceptable Nominees: Students living on campus.
Ineligible Nominees: RA/MA staff members; campus-wide Executive Board Members; multiple people.

Writing the OTM

There are not many limitations on OTM's. Let your CREATIVITY run wild. Go the extra mile for the person or group that already went there. In a general OTM, you have 600 words to use. It is recommended that you have an introduction, body, and conclusion, just like an English Paper. The introduction should give a complete background about the person, group, or program that is being written about, and why they are so AMAZING. The body will give all the details. Make sure you are THOROUGH. The conclusion should summarize the body, cap things off, and leave the reader with a lasting impression of why he/she/they are so AMAZING.

Like an English paper, AVIOD spelling and grammatical errors like the plague. You will not be "docked" for these, but it will help the OTM look more professional, easier to read and follow, and more thoughtful. If the OTM is hard to decipher, it is twice as hard to judge.

LASTLY and MOST IMPORTANTLY, make your OTM MONTH SPECIFIC. What is month-specific you may ask? Month-specific is writing the OTM with events that happened with in that certain month. For example, if you are writing about how SUPER your RA was during October, make sure to include only those things that happened in October, and not things that happened the month or year before. An OTM, a.k.a. Of the Month, needs to be only about the month it is written for.

TIPS FOR BEING THE BEST BY FAR
- Structure your OTM with an introduction, body and conclusion. It will help your OTM flow better
- Write a minimum of 400 words. OTMs shorter than that are overlooked by selection committees (and you won't get points if they are too short).
- Remember to be month specific and illustrates how the nominee went above and beyond. If the OTM is not month specific, it won't make it to the regional level. Quotes can be helpful, as well.
- Be creative! Theme your OTM. If you use your creativity, your OTM is more likely to stand out and be chosen.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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."
- Don't leave any fields on the OTM blank. This information is helpful for when an OTM wins an award, as the winner usually receives a certificate congratulating them.
- Always proofread your OTM before submitting it. Make sure the category is correct.
- Complete the "blurb" section, which should effectively summarize the OTM in 3 to 4 sentences.
- Don't write an OTM to win an award, but rather to recognize someone for a job well done.
- Have fun, and never hesitate to recognize someone for his or her accomplishments.

Program: _____

Name of Individual(s)/ Organization who hosted: _____

_____

Category:

Social Program   Educational Program   Community Service Program   Diversity Program

Goals of Program:_____

_____

_____

_____

Target Population:_____   Time Needed to Plan:_____

Attendance:_____   Date of Program:_____

Number of People to Organize:_____   Cost of Program:_____

Origin of Program:_____

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_____

Description of Program: _____

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Goals of Program: _____

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Positive and lasting effects of the program: _____

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Short Evaluation of the program:_____

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How could this program be adapted to other campuses:_____

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Short Summary of the OTM:_____

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_____

Name of Individual(s)/ Organization:_____

Category:

Social Program   Educational Program   Community Service Program   Diversity Program

Advisor   Community   Executive Board Member   Faculty/ Staff

First Year Student   Organization   Resident Assistant   Spotlight

Student

Individual(s) on campus positions: _____

_____

Month Specific Accomplishments: _____

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Short Summary of the OTM:_____

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