The Hancher-Finkbine Medallion Award Criteria

The following criteria applies to students, faculty, and alumni for the Hancher-Finkbine Medallion.

The criteria for nomination and selection are inscribed on the Medallion itself – Learning-Leadership-Loyalty. The suggestions below are intended to make more concrete some of the ways in which these general criteria might exhibit themselves in an individual.

An individual who exemplifies the characteristic of Learning should:

... be possessed of a keen mind which consciously cultivates and hones through reading, listening, and reflection;

...be intellectually curious, not only in their own field of specialization, but also in the other areas important to an educated person;

...give evidence of independence in study and thought. In class and conversations the individual should demonstrate or accept conclusions or a point of view only when persuaded that its validity is buttressed by adequate evidence;

...demonstrate in written work and spoken dialog that is imbued with the spirit of scholarship in one’s academic interest;

...provide outward evidence of intellectual capacity by having earned marks in academic work which show beyond question that teachers have respect for their ability.

For instance:

- Describe how the nominee is passionate about their academic field.
- Give an example of how the nominee has been intellectually alert and curious in their area of specialization or in another area important to an educated person.
- Give an example of how the nominee has thought critically about an issue or area of interest.
- Provide evidence of how the nominee has challenged themselves academically.

The Committee deliberately chose not to set a minimum grade point average (gpa) which the nominees must meet, on the grounds that grades alone are not sufficiently valid measures of learning.

An individual who exemplifies the characteristic of Leadership should:

...give evidence of willingness to assume responsibility in classes by participating in class discussion, raising relevant questions, and generally demonstrating active involvement in the work of the course;

...assume, if called on, positions of responsibility in organizations and groups of which they are a member and perform their duties with diligence;
...make their influence felt on the side of reason and good will, on public issues or issue affecting the life of the University;

...carry their academic work, from time to time, beyond the minimum level established by instructors - by reading additional works, performing additional experiments - that is, by “walking the extra mile”;

...volunteer, on occasion, to take on additional tasks, not form motives of self-aggrandizement but because they feel it will advance the objectives or social welfare of the group;

For instance:

- Describe how the nominee demonstrates active involvement in class and/or performs above and beyond minimum instructor expectations (leadership in the classroom).
- Describe how the nominee has assumed positions of responsibility in an organization and/or been diligent in performing their duties in an organization (leadership outside of class).
- Provide evidence of how the nominee has volunteered to take on an additional task to advance the objectives of a group.
- Public issues often have a direct effect on the University. How has the nominee made their voice heard on public issues that affect the University?

The Committee believes that leadership can be both overt and subtle and that it should not be measured solely in terms of the amount of public exposure gained through holding office on University committees, in student organizations, or social groups.

An individual who exemplifies the characteristic of Loyalty should:

...give evidence in everyday behavior that adheres to the standards expected of the liberally educated individual;

...measure utterances and actions, not solely from the standpoint of personal conviction and self-interest, but in the context of the best interests of the University as a whole;

...stand firm for personal convictions, if they will pass the tests of reason and good will, even though it may be at the cost of losing group approval;

...exhibit reasoned devotion to the basic values and ideals of American constitutional government as they understand them;

...operate within the framework of a “loyal opposition” on those issues where personal convictions brings themselves into conflict with prevailing opinion.

For instance:

- Provide evidence of how the nominee has stood firm on personal convictions at the cost of losing group approval or bringing themselves into conflict with the prevailing opinion.
- How has the nominee been an active participant in the civic life of the University?
- “More than anything else, being an educated person means being able to see connections so as to be able to make sense of the world and act within it in creative ways. All the other qualities I’ve described here—listening, reading, writing, talking, puzzle-solving, seeing through other
people’s eyes, empowering others, leading—every last one of them is finally about connecting. A liberal education is about gaining the power and insight and the generosity and finally the freedom and the wisdom to connect. If one could pick just one phrase that would answer the question of what it means to be a liberally educated person, surely this would be it: ‘Only connect.’” - Cronon (1998) “Only Connect…” The Goals of a Liberal Education

How does the nominee meet this description of a liberally educated individual?

In awarding the Hancher-Finkbine Medallion, the Committee is earnestly searching for individuals who already exhibit or give promise of developing these characteristics. The Committee feels strongly that the award should not be based on popularity, nor should it be a reward for unthinking conformity. On the contrary, the creative individuals, the “off-beat” personality, and the maverick, provided the individual measures up to the criteria suggested, should not be discriminated against in making nominations. The search is for individuals of established ability and promising potential.

Established 1964