

Distinguished Educator in Anesthesiology Award: time for a relaunch

Back in 2018, discussions between the leadership groups of both the ASA and the SEA brought into being the ASA-SEA Distinguished Educator Award. At that time, there was a widely held opinion that those actively participating and leading in the field of anesthesiology education needed to be recognized for all the efforts they made preparing the wide spectrum of learners for their future careers in anesthesiology.

Six years on, that belief is still as strong, although many would feel that education has been further squeezed by the pressures that influence how we undertake our clinical practice. It was envisaged that sponsorship by both the ASA and the SEA would give the award the gravitas needed for those in receipt to feel appreciated by their peers while signaling to their institutions their extra worth. It was hoped that recipients would use the award to aid in their efforts to get promoted or simply validate the efforts made over their careers.

The original iteration of this award was drawn up by a small task force of board members from the SEA with senior representation from the ASA. Applicants were asked to fill out an electronic self-nomination form asking them to detail their accomplishments in a variety of educational domains (e.g., educational scholarship, leadership, advanced training, teaching skills and awards). A criteria-based scoring system was developed, refined, and tested before the application process went live in 2019. The first cohort of awardees received their certificates at the ASA 2019 Conference in Orlando, FL.

That first cohort numbered 50 (out of 62 applicants). Subsequent numbers have dwindled to 12 (from 30) in 2020, 11 (from 12) in 2021, 4 (from 10) in 2022 and 6 (from 8) in 2023. This year's number of applicants has so far remained in single digits. The total number of successful applications numbers only 83.

It is obvious that this award needs resuscitation for it to remain relevant. A none-too-serious survey of one academic center revealed a frightening lack of knowledge about the very existence of the award and a general feeling by those who had heard of it, that it was too difficult to attain. So, to reiterate:

What is the Distinguished Educator in Anesthesiology Award?

It is a national award, co-sponsored by the ASA and SEA, which celebrates anesthesiologist educators who are, or have been, dedicated to teaching and advancing anesthesiology and/or other health care education.

Why should I apply for this award?

At the very least, it is an award which gives you recognition for the efforts you have made in your teaching career. It can also be used to help you gain academic promotion...after all, it's a national, peer-reviewed award made by serious people. The aim is to get a critical mass of recipients who can then meet, collaborate, and mentor junior educators with the aim of further improving the delivery and quality of anesthesiology education.

Who generally applies for this award?

Most applicants appear to have a wholly academic practice but there are also some private-practice anesthesiologists. Most applicants see themselves as clinician-teachers and are midway through their careers.

How do I apply?

The application process is through an on-line portal. [LINK](#)

What do I need to do?

The process requires applicants to provide an education-focused copy of their CV where reviewers can assess the quantity and quality of their education-based achievements. The application is divided into several criteria which are assessed quantitatively and qualitatively. Not all criteria need to be met but expertise must be demonstrated in at least one area. Support from a senior departmental leader or equivalent, along with that from an ASA/SEA member should be made available in the form of their email contact details.

Anything else?

Applicants must be members in-good-standing of either the ASA or SEA.

There is no fee for the application.

Applications are open year-round with public announcement of successful awardees at the annual meeting, although individuals should be informed as soon a decision has been made by the committee.

[List of awardees from SEA records](#)

This year, the award committee has undergone an overhaul, and the on-line application is also in the throes of further revision. This has made the process a little more complicated and slower than usual but please bear with it!

We would urge everyone who teaches anesthesiology to review the application. It will at least guide you to fill the gaps in your own practice and hopefully encourage you to aim at successfully applying sometime soon.