



## Frequently Asked Questions

### Understanding the Spirit of POD Award Criteria and Nomination Process

#### **What does it mean to “embody the spirit of POD”?**

This phrase refers to the ethos and principles that define the POD Network at its best—and that characterized Bob Pierleoni himself. Nominees should consistently demonstrate qualities such as generosity of spirit, kindness, compassion, sincerity, inclusiveness, and civility. These interpersonal values are at the heart of the award, and no nominee can be selected without strong evidence of consistent, continuous, and sustained alignment in this area.

#### **What counts as a history of serving the organization?**

The Spirit of POD Award is akin to a lifetime achievement award, and nominations should reflect a substantial and sustained record of service to the POD Network.

Importantly, service should not be limited to a single burst of activity but should demonstrate a consistent pattern of commitment over time. The most compelling nominations will go beyond general claims and provide specific, illustrative examples of how the nominee has served the organization and made a difference through that service.

#### **What does “sustained participation in POD above and beyond routine ways” mean?**

To meet this criterion, nominees should show ongoing engagement with the POD Network—not sporadic or occasional involvement. In addition, their participation should go beyond what is typical for conference attendees or contributors (e.g., presenting at conferences or publishing in *To Improve the Academy*).

Examples of meaningful participation might include:

- Organizing programs or initiatives
- Contributing to the organizational work of POD's Committees and Special Interest Groups
- Supporting the growth of POD through informal or behind-the-scenes roles

Successful nominations demonstrate and describe how the nominee's involvement was both sustained and distinctive—not just that they participated, but how and why that participation mattered. If necessary, the POD office ([podoffice@podnetwork.org](mailto:podoffice@podnetwork.org)) can help verify the 10-year membership requirement.

### **How is “innovative leadership” defined for this award?**

Leadership can take many forms. While formal roles (e.g., committee chair, Core Committee member, Executive Committee service) are certainly valid, they are not required. Nominees may demonstrate leadership through ideas, initiatives, mentoring, or advocacy that has helped shape POD's direction or impact.

What matters most is not the title held, but the substance and impact of the nominee's leadership. Strong nominations will describe:

- What the nominee led
- How they led it
- Why it was meaningful, innovative, and/or equity-minded

### **What qualifies as a substantial contribution to the profession?**

Nominees should have made noteworthy contributions to the broader fields of professional, faculty, instructional, and/or organizational development. These contributions may have occurred within or beyond POD, including other national or international venues, professional associations, or institutional initiatives.

Substantial contributions might include:

- Publications
- Presentations
- Workshops or professional development programs
- Thought leadership that shapes the field

The strongest nominations describe these contributions in context and offer insight into their scope, reach, or impact, helping reviewers understand what makes the nominee's work truly substantial.

## **Which nomination letter format is better?**

There's no single "best" format—choose the one that best captures your nominee's contributions. Both approaches are equally valid and have been used successfully in the past. What matters most is that the nomination presents a compelling, well-supported case that clearly aligns with the award criteria.

Here's a breakdown to help you decide:

### **Option A: Cover Letter + Supporting Letters**

This format includes a brief overview letter (typically 1–2 pages) followed by several short letters from individual colleagues (usually 4–5 letters).

Best for:

- Showcasing the nominee's broad impact across different roles, contexts, or communities
- Including multiple, distinct voices and perspectives
- Highlighting personal stories or anecdotes from diverse colleagues

Keep in mind: This format works well when each contributor can speak to a unique aspect of the nominee's contributions. However, avoid duplication—ensure each letter adds something new to the overall case.

### **Option B: Integrated, Multi-Author Letter**

This format presents one longer letter (typically 5–10 pages) written collaboratively by a team of nominators, weaving together their perspectives into a cohesive narrative.

Best for:

- Telling a unified, in-depth story of the nominee's impact
- Creating a seamless and synthesized argument aligned with the award criteria
- Situations where the writing team has time and coordination capacity to develop a single voice

Keep in mind: This format requires thoughtful organization but can be especially powerful when the nominee's story spans a long period or involves interconnected contributions.