



**Terms of Reference**  
**Awards Committee**  
**AUGUST 2023**

### **Introduction**

The Awards Committee is a non-standing committee established by the Board of Directors to oversee the annual solicitation and evaluation of ACC Awards Program nominations.

The Awards Committee's Chair is the Board of Directors is the Vice-President, Services and Athletics, who has a non-voting role in the annual awarding process but convenes meetings of the committee with the support of the office staff. The Awards Committee operates at arms-length from the Board of Directors to avoid any real or perceived favoritism in the granting of awards. It receives guidance on volunteer recognition programming and related policy matters from the Board of Directors and office staff. It submits recommendations for award nominations to the Board of Directors.

The Awards Committee has the following oversight responsibility, authority and specific duties.

### **ACC National Awards Program**

The ACC national awards are intended to recognize members and non-members who have made significant contributions in furthering the aims and goals of the Alpine Club of Canada and Canadian mountaineering in general.

The eligibility criteria and nomination process for each award are defined on the "Community" page of the ACC website. The Awards Committee is responsible for creating updates for these award descriptions and criteria, subject to approval by the Board.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the Awards Committee is to oversee the ACC National Awards Program. It achieves this by fulfilling two primary roles:

1. Supporting solicitation of nominations;
2. Evaluation of nominations;
3. Suggesting updates and improvements to the Awards Program.



As part of the annual process for soliciting and submitting award nominations, the committee's key role is the objective and independent evaluation of nominations with respect to the established criteria. Following its review, the Committee provides award recommendations to the Board of Directors for review and final approval.

Secondly, acting in its capacity as the custodian of the Awards Program, the Committee provides the Board with recommendations concerning the overall organization and operation of the National Awards program. This includes award criteria, promotion of awards and award recipients, and any other matters that may advance the purpose of the Awards Program and impact its relevance and success.

The Awards Committee's role in leadership of the Awards Program includes the following:

- Fostering communication with section leadership to solicit nominations;
- Fostering continuous program improvement in keeping with the evolution of the Club, its membership, changing societal demographics and other factors

Overseeing the promotion of a balanced program uptake across the ACC by geography and other factors; Making the final evaluation of nominations against awards criteria, and a recommendation of awards to the Board.

The office staff role in the Awards Program, includes but is not limited to:

- Supporting the Board in convening and chairing Awards Committee meetings;
- Processing and recording the annual awards once finalized, creating plaques etc. for distribution at the AGM;
- Overseeing a communications program with members using ACC media such as the Gazette and website. This should follow the annual cycle of the Awards Program.

### **Membership and Terms of Office**

The Awards Committee shall consist of not less than five and not more than seven ACC members in good standing. The committee will strive for balance by region, language and gender and overall diversity.

The primary attributes sought in Awards Committee members are:

Experience in ACC activities, including section-level volunteer experience;

- Demonstrated consistent judgement in executing the responsibilities outlined above;
- Collegial working style.



The Awards Committee manages the recruitment and election of new members to serve on the committee. Additionally, the committee will review and make the final decision on any suggestions for committee membership submitted by the Board of Directors. Members of the Board of Directors may not simultaneously sit on the Awards Committee.

Notwithstanding the above, Awards Committee members serve at the pleasure of the Board of Directors, with the Chair (VP Services and Athletics), as representative. . It is expected that interventions by the Board regarding Awards Committee membership would be rare and be preceded by adequate notice and consultation.

The Awards Committee terms of office should normally be three years with up to two renewals (maximum nine years.) Should a committee member be unable to complete their term, they can be replaced at any point during their term. Renewal of committee members shall be conditional on their performance.

The Committee Chair will notify the Board of Directors on all changes to committee membership.

### **Committee Meetings**

The Awards Committee shall maintain an annual work plan outlining the work it will undertake in the context of its duties and responsibilities, and schedule meetings for the year with the support of the office staff. The work of the committee shall be organized so that its annual report on ACC award recommendations is available to the Board by mid-March, to allow award announcements to be made in conjunction with the ACC Annual General Meeting generally held before the end of May.

Awards Committee meetings will usually include only committee members, and office staff. With the consent of the committee, members may invite outside experts, to participate in meetings in support of specific agenda items.

Committee "meetings" will be conducted via electronic correspondence or teleconferencing.

### **Quorum**

A majority of the members of the committee shall constitute a meeting quorum. The Chair (VP Services and Athletics) is non-voting, does not have a tie-break vote, and does not count toward quorum.

### **Leadership and Management of the Awards Committee**

As the leader of an arms-length committee consisting of senior and experienced Club members with independent voting power, the Chair will foster a consultative and consensus-building environment. Committee members will be fully engaged in all substantive Awards Program matters and the Chair will ensure that all submissions to the Board are subject to prior



committee review. The Chair is encouraged to delegate specific tasks and responsibilities to committee members, as appropriate.

Committee members are expected to:

- do due diligence on matters put before the committee
- evaluate nominations objectively without favouritism or bias
- conduct themselves in a respectful, collegial and supportive manner
- contribute to consensus building wherever possible

### **Award Evaluations**

The committee's key role is objective and independent evaluation of nominations with respect to the established criteria. Under the guidance of the Chair, the committee will strive for consensus wherever possible. That said, each committee member is entitled to an independent vote according to their personal evaluation of the nomination and will not be unduly pressured into changing their vote.

Nominators should be advised that the Awards Committee attempts to evaluate nominations solely on the written submission, without relying on personal knowledge of the individual. In rare cases, the committee may communicate with a nominator to clarify a submission, but it is impractical to do this routinely.

A pass/fail threshold is defined for each award approved directly by the Award Committee. This is typically two-thirds of the voting members of the Awards Committee. The Chair directs their energy to managing a thorough, objective, balanced and respectful evaluation process.

Occasionally, the committee may determine that the contribution described in the nomination better suits an award different from the one for which the individual was nominated. Rather than simply rejecting the original nomination, the committee has the authority to offer an alternative award to the one proposed whenever this is considered more appropriate. The committee should exercise this ability with restraint. In such cases, the committee will communicate the offer to the nominator. It will be the nominator's choice to accept or reject the recommendation. If the alternative award proposal is rejected, the committee's evaluation of the original award category will apply.

If a committee member is nominated for an award, that nomination will be handled separately in confidence by the remaining committee members, following otherwise standard practice.

### **Records and Committee Output**

The Awards Committee shall provide the Board with an annual report detailing the outcome of that year's awards submissions and its recommendations, along with any other commentary or recommendations related to the Awards Program itself. The committee shall keep such records as it finds necessary to the conduct of its work.



## National Office Support

The Awards Program follows a well-established annual cycle. Support requirements involve a variety of specialist skills, peak at known intervals, then diminish substantially in between.

The Executive Director shall assign one or more persons to support the Awards Committee and manage those resources in close collaboration with the Chair of the Awards Committee.

In close collaboration with the Executive Director, or his assigned staff member, the Chair of the Awards Committee prepare and submit to the Board an annual work plan proposal for all VP Services and Athletics functions, including ACC National Office support of the Awards Program in terms of both working hours and financial requirements.

## Operations Manual

These terms of reference serve as an "Awards Program Operations Manual." For institutional memory, requirements and processes involving the ACC Office necessary to support the Awards Program include but are not limited to:

- Preparation of budget requirements and accounting support for the annual Awards Program cycle, both financial and working hours
- Educational, promotional and celebratory articles in ACC publications featuring the Awards Program and specific award recipients
- Annual call for award nominations in the Gazette and website
- Screening of nominations and any required follow-up corrective action prior to the start of the evaluation process
- Compilation of nomination packages and their transmittal to the Chair of the Awards Committee for evaluation by the committee
- Procurement, personalization and distribution of award plaques (or other award-related disbursements) to recipients following approval of awards by the Board of Directors
- Support the Board of Directors in award presentations at the AGM or on other occasions
- Updates and maintenance of awards-related material on the website
- General good record keeping in support of the Awards Program
- Robust archiving of key Awards Program documentation, including all award nomination documents, initially to be located at the Canmore office, with follow up transmittal to the ACC records section of the Whyte Museum



The Chair of the Awards Committee and the Executive Director shall jointly conduct an annual review of Awards Program support operations between the end of each awards cycle and the start of the next.

### **Power and Authority**

The Awards Committee shall not have the power to obligate the Club to any financial outlay, or to commit it to any contract, agreement or other arrangement unless specifically authorized to do so by the Board.

### **Duties and Responsibilities**

The Board delegates the following responsibilities to the Awards Committee, which acts in an advisory capacity to the Board on these matters:

1. Liaise with the Chair, section volunteers and designated ACC staff person(s) on the timing, nature and extent of awards promotion each year with the aim of generating sufficient nominations.
2. Conduct of an annual review of all ACC National Awards nominations received in relation to the specific criteria in place for each award and recommend awards recipients to the Board of Directors.
3. Recommend any changes or clarifications to the award criteria, as appropriate, following its annual review of ACC National Awards nominations.
4. As it deems necessary, the committee may also provide the Board of Directors with any other recommendations concerning the organization, promotion and form of the ACC National Awards Program that it feels will contribute to the future success and relevance of the program.