

Saint Meinrad Distinguished Alumni Award

Criteria and Process (Version 3)

Purpose of the Distinguished Alumni Award

Background

In 1989, a task force of the Alumni Association proposed a Distinguished Alumni Award Program and written Guidelines for awarding it, which was approved by the President-Rector.¹ There appears to be no written record at that time as to a detailed purpose for conferring such an Award.

In 2001, the committee for the Distinguished Alumni Award made recommendations to the Alumni Board of Directors regarding new criteria for conferring the award. These recommendations eventually led to the revised requirements for the award, which are in writing and stand today. Yet no written purpose was proposed at that time. Thus, this document formalizes in writing a detailed purpose of having the Distinguished Alumni Award.

Purpose Statement

The purposes of the Saint Meinrad Alumni Association Distinguished Alumni Award are fourfold, namely, to recognize an alumnus/alumna:

1. who, by his/her witness to and promotion of Gospel values in life and work, underscores Saint Meinrad's influence on the Christian community at large,
2. who, by a life of exemplary service to the Church, his/her community, and in his/her ministry or profession, brings to life the essential role of Saint Meinrad in offering theological training and development as well as formation programs,
3. who has nurtured the growth of the Alumni Association, including deepening the relationship between Alumni and the Monastic Community, and
4. for being a source of encouragement and inspiration to Saint Meinrad Seminarians of today (and those of the future), the monks, permanent deacon candidates, ministerial students, alumni, youth of the One Bread, One Cup program, benefactors, and friends of Saint Meinrad.

Criteria for Conferring the Award

The intent of the criteria is to acknowledge that the Distinguished Alumni Award (DAA) is an institutional award, and the highest honor Saint Meinrad bestows on its alumni. Thus, the lifework of the recipient will have been - and even when conferred posthumously - continues to be witness to the mission and values of Saint Meinrad, the Roman Catholic Church, and the diocese/community within which the recipient lives and works.

¹ Adapted from "History of Saint Meinrad Seminary Alumni Association".

Criteria from 2001

In 2001, the committee for the Distinguished Alumni Award provided recommendations to the Board for new criteria for conferring the honor. These recommendations eventually led to the following revised requirements for the award:

1. A recipient should be one who has attended the minimum of the equivalent of one academic year and left in good standing.
2. A recipient should exemplify Gospel values in life and work.
3. A recipient should be one who is an actively practicing Catholic in good standing with the Roman Catholic Church.
4. A recipient should be one who has provided exemplary service in life and/or profession.
5. The Award may be given posthumously.

Revised and Updated Criteria for Consideration of a Nominee for Conferral of the DAA

1. A nominee will have attended Saint Meinrad for a minimum of the equivalent of one academic year and left in good standing.
2. A nominee will be an actively practicing Catholic in good standing within the Roman Catholic Church as documented by a letter from the nominee's bishop, religious superior, or pastor.
3. A nominee has, and continues to, witness to Gospel values in life and work as documented by letters of support from Saint Meinrad alumni who can reference (among other things): their personal and/or profession interactions with the nominee; awards and accolades the nominee has received; Church and Civic honors bestowed on the nominee; etc.
4. A nominee will have provided an exemplary life of service which also reflects and upholds the core values and mission of Saint Meinrad.
5. A nominee will have demonstrated ongoing engagement with Saint Meinrad during his or her ministry and/or career.
6. Nominations of individuals must be made on an annual basis. Any nominee for the award will be considered for the Award only from that year's pool of nominees. If a nominator so chooses, he or she can again submit the name of a candidate (with supporting materials) to be considered for inclusion in another year's pool of nominees for the Award.
7. No "self-nominations" will be considered.
8. The focus of the Award is on living alumni but may, from time to time, be conferred posthumously.

Selection Process

The intent of the selection process is to establish a rigor and uniformity which appreciates that the Distinguished Alumni Award is an institutional award, and the highest honor Saint Meinrad bestows on its alumni. In so doing the selection process seeks to further increase the prestige and notoriety of the Distinguished Alumni Award among all Saint Meinrad stakeholders.

Revised and Updated Selection Process

On or around the Annual Alumni Reunion:

Call for nominations for the Distinguished Alumni Award (DAA) and beginning of the process to acquire supporting documentation by the Nominator (with the assistance of the Alumni Department as appropriate). Submission of nominations closes on October 31.

Fall Meeting of Alumni Board of Directors:

Board receives a report from the Director of Alumni Relations regarding the status of the nomination process and the Board appoints the chairperson and members of Distinguished Alumni Award Selection Subcommittee. By December 31 the subcommittee will organize itself and develop its workplan for completing its assigned task.

November 1 – December 31:

Once paperwork has been completed for each nominee, the Alumni Department will assemble a list of those nominees who meet the conferring criteria and forward the list of nominees to the President-Rector of the Seminary and School of Theology for screening. This entire process is to be completed by December 31 by which time the screened list of nominees will be forwarded to the President of the Alumni Board of Directors.

January 1 – March 31:

The DAA Selection Subcommittee of the Alumni Board of Directors reviews the list of nominees and the supporting documentation for each, considers nominees in relations to the Criteria for Conferring the Distinguished Alumni Award, selects that year's prospective recipient², and recommends that individual to the Alumni Board of Directors.

Spring Alumni Board of Directors Meeting:

The Alumni Board of Directors considers and approves the recommendation of the DAA Selection Subcommittee. Following this meeting the Award recipient will be notified of his/her selection and requested to attend the Annual Alumni Reunion that year at which he or she will be presented with the Distinguished Alumni Award.³

² It is acceptable that from time to time more than one prospective recipient may be recommended to the Alumni Board of Directors.

³ Should a recipient know at that time that he/she is unable to attend the Alumni Reunion due to a schedule conflict, the award will be presented to the recipient at the Alumni Reunion the following year. In such a case, and only if one Award recipient was recommended by the Selection Subcommittee to the Alumni Board of Directors, the Board will determine next steps related to a selecting (or not) another Award recipient for the current year.

April – June:

A communications plan and related materials intended to announce and celebrate the Distinguished Alumni Award Recipient(s) is to be prepared by the appropriate staff for release following the Alumni Reunion.⁴

Annual Alumni Reunion Dinner:

Announcement, recognition, and celebration of the Distinguished Alumni Award Recipient.

Submissions may be made via postal mail with your name, the name of the person being nominated, and the documents listed above or by using the online form at alumni@saintmeinrad.edu Some documents, such as letters of support, may be sent directly to the Alumni Office by the individual composing the document.

Postal address:
Alumni Office
200 Hill Dr.
St. Meinrad, IN 47577

⁴ It is important that the communication strategies be widely broadcast and celebrate the Award recipient and his/her life of service as a witness to the mission and values of Saint Meinrad. Such strategies could include (but not be limited to): interviews with the recipient that would be published in *On the Hill*, the recipient's Diocesan publication (as well as the publications of any Diocese that would have students in formation in the School of Theology at the time) and the School of Theology student publication; news releases to other appropriate religious and secular media; opportunities for the recipient(s) to communicate directly to and develop deeper connections with the students of Saint Meinrad's educational programs and ministries; etc.