



**APPALACHIAN STATE
UNIVERSITY NRHH:
ALPHA SIGMA UPSILON
CHAPTER
OTM WRITING GUIDE**





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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

This is a guide to help anyone interested in writing OTMs or recognizing an amazing leader on campus. It may even be for someone who has no idea what an OTM is. This may be you and that is okay! We're about to go through every single part of OTMs. By the time you finish this guide you are going to be an OTM expert!

WHAT IS AN OTM?

OTM stands for "of the month". This is a way for leaders on campus and programs on campus to get recognized for being absolutely incredible. The OTM addresses what the leader has done or what program occurred **THAT MONTH**. These recognized individuals and programs that OTMs discuss are read about all across the state and possibly the country. Writing OTMs is a way for Residence Life to acknowledge the hard work and efforts that students and other personnel exhibit everyday. OTMs are voted on by the campus of a school and have the opportunity to be read, judged, and voted on at the state, regional, and possibly national levels.

WHY SHOULD I WRITE AN OTM?

OTMs are a great opportunity for you to recognize a leader on campus that has really impacted you in a way that makes them feel extra special and appreciated. OTMs also help share ideas for programs and ways to demonstrate leadership skills to those reading them. Having an OTM written about you can be motivating and encouraging, so by writing OTMs you are helping an individual to stay motivated and continue being an exemplary leader on campus.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- OTMs should be **300 words or more**. The more words, the better! Remember, you are recognizing someone for something totally great that they have done. Really go into detail about why this person deserves recognition when writing your OTM.
- An OTM cannot exceed 600 words.
- There should be very few grammar errors, if any at all.
- Please submit your OTM by **11 PM on the 30th of that month**.
- Please **vote for OTMs** during the voting period. You want to vote on your own so it can have a better chance at winning, but be sure to vote on other people's OTMs as well! Who knows, maybe you'll learn something about someone when reading an OTM.

CREATING AN OTM

- You want to write an OTM about someone who has done something incredible and made an impact on you or others that month. OTMs can also be about amazing programs.
- First, you will need to **create an OTM account** at otms.nrhh.org.
- Then, determine what **category** your OTM will fit in to. We will discuss categories more in the next few slides.
- Start off writing your OTM in a **Word Document**. The OTM website doesn't have spell check or grammar check, so you will want to use MS Word to catch any mistakes, because we all make them!
- The **introduction** to your OTM should be a brief overview of the person/program you are writing about. This should only be a one to two sentence paragraph.
- The **main body** of your OTM should be about the incredible thing(s) that the person has done and the impact they are making.
- Lastly, you should **conclude** your OTM with a one to two sentence paragraph summing up why the person/program should win the OTM of that category.

TIPS FOR WRITING OTMS

- **Be knowledgeable and informative!** Go into every single detail of the person/event that you're writing about. Be sure to stay focused!
- **Make your OTM fun to read.** No one wants to read a boring story. Make it a narrative and really fluff it up with good details about the person/program.
- **Have a good hook!** Remember how our high school English teachers always preached on grabbing the reader's attention right away? Well, the same goes for OTMs. You want to draw people in from the start so that they will continue to read your OTM.
- **When writing about a program, add new information to every section.** You can't give too much information/too many details.
- **Don't be afraid to ask an NRHH Executive Board Member for help.** They can provide guidance, advice, and help during this process.

GENERAL OTMS

- This category of OTMs is written about one person or a group of people.
- It describes how a person/group made an impact that month.
- This person/group should be extraordinary
- Their positive impact should have been made **that month**
- The general OTM categories are: Advisor, Executive Board Member, Residential Community, Organization, Resident Assistant, Spotlight, Student, First Year Student, Residence Life Faculty/Staff, Institution Faculty Staff

ADVISOR

- Directly advises a residence hall or organization
- Made a difference/amazing contribution that month

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER

- Executive Board Member within a university residence life organization
- Their word within executive board and across campus

RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITY

- Can be a hall, floor, neighborhood
- How has the community supported others?
- Cannot be an official campus organization
- Should illustrate team work and how several people can contribute to a whole and achieve goals
- Should be month specific

ORGANIZATION

- Contributed to student leadership, recognition, or other aspects of residence life
- Month specific
- Recognizes the organization **as a whole**
- Emphasize their success and how they've helped the campus in general as well as the residence life community.

RESIDENT ASSISTANT

- Residence hall staff
- Gone above and beyond the duties of their job and impacted those on their hall that month
- Supports residence and residence hall community
- Should include accomplishments as an RA

SPOTLIGHT

- Doesn't fall within any of the other categories
- Worthy of recognition
- Month specific

STUDENT

- Month specific
- Made contributions to their hall, floor, building, residence life organization, etc.
- Exemplifies leaderships; role model
- Motivates, creates/helps plan programs, volunteers
- Academics, leadership, involvement, and more
- Balances their roles

FIRST YEAR STUDENT

- New student who excels in adapting to their new environment in the residence hall
- Actively involved in the community
- Positively impacts those around them
- Month specific
- Academics, leadership, involvement
- Contributes to the floor, hall, residence life organization, etc.

RESIDENCE LIFE FACULTY/STAFF

- Helps residents within the residence life/housing community
- Month specific

INSTITUTION FACULTY/STAFF

- Month specific
- Helps students with academics
- Professors, instructors, Graduate/Teacher Assistants, Counselors, any other staff involved with academic affairs
- Made a contribution to residence life inside and outside of the classroom

PROGRAM OTMS

- For **that month**
- Specific writing structure
 - 5 things to write about:
 1. Origin of the program (200 words)
 2. Short description of the program (400 words)
 3. Goals of the program (200 words)
 4. Evaluation of the program (200 words)
 5. How the program can be implemented on other campuses (200 words)
- Be specific!
- Must have at least half the minimum word count done for each box.
- 5 Types: Community Service, Diversity, Educational, Passive, Social

“TO KNOWS” WHEN WRITING A PROGRAM OTM

- Person in charge
- Target population (should be a numerical value)
- Number of people in attendance
- Amount of people needed to plan and organize the program
- Time needed to organize and plan the program
- Date that the program occurred
 - If this was an ongoing program you should list all of the dates
- Cost of the program

COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM OTM

- Service/philanthropic program
- Benefits a charity, group, or some types of organization
- Examples include: drives, fundraising, charity runs, book fairs, other specific events
- Focuses on residents
- Gives back to the broad community

DIVERSITY PROGRAM OTM

- Promotes and educates about diversity, understanding, and awareness
- Illustrates the importance of diversity and the importance of addressing it in the residence halls
- Educates about how to address and embrace diversity in residents

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM OTM

- Program that occurred that specific month
- Meant to educate students about an idea/topic/issue
- Programs that promote academic success
- Programs that teach residents skills

PASSIVE PROGRAM

- Doesn't require anyone to actively run the program
- Usually ongoing
- Month specific
- Bulletin boards, newsletters, pamphlets, etc.

SOCIAL PROGRAM

- Focuses on resident interaction and socialization
- Can be floor specific to campus wide and anywhere in between

SUBMIT AN OTM

Create an OTM Account

- Go to otms.nrhh.org
- On the left hand side of the page select “Create New Account”
- Select Appalachian State University
- Fill out the information
- A campus administrator will confirm your request for an account and you can begin submitting amazing OTMs!
- By creating an account, you can simply login each time to submit an OTM and all of the general data will already be entered for you

Submitting With an OTM Account

- Go to otms.nrhh.org and login to your account
- Submit your OTM under the appropriate category (General or Program) and then the appropriate sub-category
- Complete the form and hit submit! Thank you for submitting an OTM! 😊

DEADLINES

**All OTMs are due by the
30/31 of each month at
11:55 PM!**