How to Initiate the Process  
For Nomination for Fellowship in APS  
A Note from Ellen Zweibel

Ellen Zweibel is the Vice Chair of the DPP Executive Committee and Chair of the Fellowship Committee. This is one of three such messages she is writing this year. The other two are a discussion of how to prepare an effective nomination package, which is published in the DPP Newsletter and on the DPP Website, and a message to department chairs and program directors urging them to consider coordinating a nomination. If you would like to be sure your chair or director receives the letter, please send Ellen their name and email address. She is also happy to address your questions or concerns.

If you are interested in being nominated for Fellowship this year, approach someone to start the process. It could be a potential sponsor, or someone who might coordinate but not sponsor your nomination, such as your program manager or department chair. This self-initiation step is not uncommon and perfectly acceptable. In fact, having APS Fellows on staff boosts the status of an institution, so your colleagues should thank you for stepping forward.

When you have this conversation, be prepared to articulate how the nomination process works and what you see as the strengths of your case. Review recent Fellowship citations in your field to help frame your contribution. Be ready to suggest names of potential sponsors or recommenders. Once the process is underway, work with your nominator to prepare a CV that supports the nomination by including appropriate material on the major strengths of your case. For example, if you are highlighting research accomplishments, you might call out highly cited papers, invited talks of special significance, patents, or other evidence of impact. If you have made major contributions to education in plasma science, highlight educational materials, mentorship of students, or other aspects of your role. Be prepared to help with the wording of your citation.

If you are interested in being nominated for Fellowship but don’t feel ready this year, consider having this conversation anyway, but orient it towards your professional development (if whomever you approach about nomination thinks you aren’t ready, turn the discussion in this same direction). For example, depending on where you work, this might lead to carving out a visible leadership role in some part of a large experiment, receiving support to develop an undergraduate lab in plasma physics, etc. Whatever the outcome, it shows you value your own work, have strategic goals and are planning for the future.

Finally, if you are nominated but not selected, don’t be discouraged. Remember that the majority of nominations do not go through. Talk to your nominator about how to strengthen the package for next year (nominations are active for 2 years) and reflect upon the fact that you have advanced your name and made yourself better known.