American Society for Indexing

COMMITTEE REPORT

## Please return this report electronically no later than Tues., May 11, 2021.

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Name of Committee: Excellence in Indexing Award Committee Date: 12 May 2021

Name of Chair: Meghan Brawley Email: meghan.m.brawley@gmail.com

Name of Board Liaison: Meghan Brawley Email:

Other Committee Members (names and email addresses). Add second sheet if necessary.

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Jan Wright jancw@wrightinformation.com

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT OF ACTIVITY SINCE: **February 1, 2021**

(Use as much space as desired.)

STATEMENT TO BE COMMUNICATED PUBLICLY

The committee met to consider the submissions for the Excellence in Indexing Award. As has happened before, no award will be given this year. The committee recognizes the hard work of the indexers, and the quality of their indexes. However, the standards for the EI Award are extremely high, according to the purpose of highlighting “models of excellence in indexing.” To this purpose, a winning index must be an exemplar of best indexing practices such that it can be studied by other indexers. The committee commends the indexers’ for their work, especially with difficult subjects, and hopes to see them submit again in the future.

DISCUSSION FOR BOARD EYES ONLY

The committee discussed the difficulties in selecting an EI recipient, to include a low submission rate and errors and insufficiencies possibly compounded by the increasing pressures on indexers. A lack of internal consistency and confusion at the metatopic were the biggest issues this year, and as these contribute significantly toward usability and elegance, it was decided they were too big to overlook.

The committee recognizes that since the award was inaugurated, the environment in which indexers work has changed significantly. Deadlines are shorter, pay has not increased proportionately, and publishers continue to make changes to the index without consulting the indexer. While the award was conceived to help publicize the importance of indexes and indexers to publishers, the committee feels it’s unfair to continue to penalize indexers for conditions far outside their control by maintaining an award with standards increasingly difficult to reach.

REQUESTED BOARD ACTION:

The committee requests the board reconsider the EI Award in its totality; rather than offering an award for an exemplary index, the committee would like to change the EI Award (probably to include renaming) to one that is more aligned to a “best in show” process, with the option to give a judge’s star or other signifier indicating an exemplary index when one appears.

The hope is this will increase submissions and goodwill, as well as draw attention to very good work by indexers. Additionally, highlighting exemplary work will continue to serve as a way to reward excellent indexing, and the award can continue to be a form of publisher education.

Things to consider include

* the monetary award. It is currently $1000. Should it be decreased, with some held in reserve for indexes awarded a star, or should it remain the same?
* the name