



2026 ACSM PRESIDENT'S CUP

Guidelines for ACSM Regional Chapters

Overview

The President's Cup is a research competition held annually during the ACSM Annual Meeting. The President's Cup is organized with the assistance of the Student Affairs Committee and ACSM staff. Each regional chapter will select one student based on the quality of presentation at their regional chapter annual meeting and this student will represent the chapter in the President's Cup competition at the ACSM Annual Meeting. A panel of judges, using an established judging rubric, will select the ultimate winner.

Purpose

The purpose of the President's Cup is to provide students with the opportunity to travel to the ACSM Annual Meeting to showcase their work with the hopes of stimulating positive critiques of their projects, fostering potential collaborations, and increasing student involvement in ACSM. This document has been created to aid in judging, as well as provide guidance, structure, and uniform instructions for the regional chapters to use when selecting their student winner.

Procedure

ACSM will provide a \$1,200 stipend to each regional chapter winner. The purpose of this is to support student attendance and travel to the ACSM Annual Meeting to present their work at the national-level competition.

Note: *When selecting the President's Cup winner for your regional chapter, please make note of the mandatory requirements and the suggestions below.*

ACSM Regional Chapter Meeting President's Cup Competition

I. Mandatory Regional Chapter Requirements

- A. Each regional winner must be a current member of both ACSM and their affiliated ACSM regional chapter.
- B. Each regional winner must be a student enrolled in a program at the time of the regional chapter meeting. However, if the student were to graduate before the ACSM Annual Meeting, they are still eligible for the national-level competition.
Note: student can be either an undergraduate or graduate at the national-level competition, but regional chapters can limit to just graduate students if they wish.
- C. Each regional winner must be able to attend the 2026 ACSM Annual Meeting in Salt Lake City, UT (May 26-29, 2026) for the national President's Cup competition.
- D. Current Student Affairs Committee and/or ACSM BOT members are NOT eligible for the President's Cup competition.

- E. Past President's Cup regional and national winners are NOT eligible for the President's Cup competition.
- F. Each regional winner will be required to deliver an oral presentation (with PowerPoint slides) at the 2026 ACSM Annual Meeting. Individuals who have won their regional competition with a different format will be required to reformat the same presentation into a PowerPoint. Thus, winners need to plan accordingly.
- G. The type of project conducted by the student must align with the mission of ACSM, which is- *To educate and empower professionals to advance the science and practice of health and human performance.*

II. Suggested Requirements

A. Submission Process:

To improve the clarity of the requirements of students wishing to participate in the President's Cup competition, it is recommended that each regional chapter include a statement in the abstract submission instructions/process that indicates that **if the student is chosen as the regional chapter winner, they must attend the 2026 ACSM Annual Meeting to present their work in the national competition.**

B. Judging Criteria:

Regional chapters have the liberty to select the winner they feel best represents their chapter based on their own judging rubric. However, it is recommended that each of the following categories be evaluated on a scale of 1 (Unsatisfactory) to 10 (Exceptional), which is consistent with the standardized rubric used to judge the national competition.

- a. Significance: How well the project relates to the mission statement of ACSM, which is: *To educate and empower professionals to advance the science and practice of health and human performance.*
- b. Innovation: The novelty of the project, especially relating to the use of new methodologies, studying of under investigated populations and/or addressing emerging problems relating to exercise and sports medicine.
- c. Project Design: The ability of the methodologies used to address the research question and hypothesis. Additionally, the appropriate use of experimental design and statistics to test the hypothesis.
- d. Ability to Respond to Questions: Ability of the student to demonstrate knowledge of the literature related to their field of study as well as demonstrate critical thinking for future studies.
- e. Presentation Design and Presentation Skills: Clarity of the presentation materials/design and description of research project.

Although the national competition allows different types of presentations, each regional chapter can decide which types of presentations they are willing to include in their own competition. These different types of presentations at the national-level are simply to allow for flexibility across regional chapters and include:

- a. Original Research
- b. Case Study
- c. Experiential-Learning

C. Judges: If possible, it is recommended that there be an odd number of judges, who have a mix of both basic and applied/clinical science backgrounds/expertise, including a student

judge from the Student Affairs Committee.

III. Communication with the ACSM National Organization

- A. After selecting a winner, each regional chapter must notify ACSM within 7 days: Dr. Adam Ibrahim (aibrahi5@uwyo.edu), Chair of the Student Affairs Committee, and August Rayce (arayce@acsm.org), ACSM staff liaison, of the chosen winner's name along with their contact information.
- B. Each regional winner will be contacted by August Rayce (arayce@acsm.org) from the ACSM national staff. The student will be required to complete appropriate tax forms and paperwork, along with providing a digital headshot photo in a timely fashion before the stipend will be approved. Note: If the student does not present their work during the President's Cup Competition at the 2026 ACSM Annual Meeting, they must return the \$1,200 stipend.
- C. Additionally, each regional winner will provide the Chair of the Student Affairs Committee with:
 1. A digital copy of the winning abstract. Note: this will be utilized by our judges prior to the national President's Cup competition for scientific review.
 2. Various details regarding the winner's affiliation, program of study, and faculty mentor (i.e., program/department/laboratory) will be required to assist ACSM with promotion of the contest to our members (social media, ACSM News, etc.).
 3. Notification of any other abstract(s) or session(s) accepted for presentation during the Annual Meeting itself. This will help coordinate schedules to avoid overlapping presentation times with the president's cup.

ACSM Annual Meeting National President's Cup Competition

- I. The national President's Cup competition will occur at the 2026 ACSM Annual Meeting. The official time and location will be provided to all regional winners by the Student Affairs Committee at a later date.
 - A. Judging Criteria:
 1. Each student's presentation (5 minute oral presentation w/ 5 minute Q&A) will be independently evaluated by 5 judges in 5 different categories on a scale of 1 (Unsatisfactory) to 10 (Exceptional).
 2. Judges will utilize the specific judging rubric based on the category in which the abstract most closely aligns with (note: see attached for the specific judging rubrics):
 - a. Original Research
 - b. Case Study
 - c. Experiential-Learning
 - B. Judges:
 1. 5 judges will review the national competition poster presentations:
 - a. 2 with a basic science background
 - b. 2 with an applied/clinical science background
 - c. 1 student from the Student Affairs Committee
 2. Judges will select 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place based on total points across all 5 judges. Ties will be resolved by consensus discussion between judges.

C. Prizes:

1. For each ACSM Regional Chapter Meeting President's Cup Competition student winner, a \$1,200 stipend for the national ACSM Annual Meeting will be awarded. This payment will be sent prior to the meeting after the W9 is received. If the student does not compete, they must return the stipend.
2. The 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place National President's Cup Competition winners will be presented with medallions and a photo opportunity with an ACSM President or Past-President.