



Heather A. Edwards, MD

**Candidate for
Nominating Committee
Academic**

What experiences have you had that will allow you to identify a diverse set of candidates for Academy leadership? What are the most important attributes you look for when nominating a member for leadership with the Academy?

A key part of my leadership roles has been identifying and uplifting talented individuals to create diverse leadership teams, both institutionally, as a Division Chief and Chair of Gender Equity, and nationally, with organizations such as the Women's Head and Neck Reconstructive Surgery Consortium, NRG Oncology, and the American Head and Neck Society (AHNS). Through the networks I have built and my national experience in building strong and representative leadership teams, I feel well positioned to facilitate the identification of a diverse group of highly qualified candidates for Academy leadership.

The most important attributes that an AAO-HNS leader should have include a mission-driven approach and the ability to marry a forward-thinking, innovative mindset with a pragmatic approach to problem-solving and advocacy. Successful Academy leaders must also effectively represent our rich and varied membership, including diverse practice types, geographic areas, subspecialties and backgrounds, and be committed to building and sustaining a thriving, equitable, and inclusive culture in otolaryngology.

Please provide a personal statement as to what is your vision for the leadership role for which you are applying, why you are pursuing the elected position, and why you should be chosen.

2024

One of the greatest strengths of the Academy is in the bridges it builds: bringing together, representing and advocating on behalf of otolaryngologists from a wide array of backgrounds, practice settings, specialty focuses, interests and areas of expertise. A key responsibility of the nominating committee is ensuring that Academy leaders continue to represent the richness and diversity of our membership. Our diverse perspectives, experiences, and backgrounds have to be leveraged to create a cohesive strategic vision capable of addressing the evolving challenges of our field.

I have had the opportunity to serve in a variety of leadership roles in local and national organizations, including my role as the Chair of the Gender Equity Advisory Council for the Boston University Medical Group, and my role as the Chair of the Health Equity and Diversity Working Group of the Head and Neck Committee of NRG Oncology. Within these roles, I have come to value the importance of a multiplicity of perspectives and experiences in building a thriving and sustainable culture and shared strategic vision.

As the nominating committee works to build a diverse leadership, it is important to consider not only diversity of backgrounds, but also diverse expertise and experiences related to health care policy and reform, advocacy, outreach, evidence-based research, and addressing health disparities at organizational and systemic levels. These various perspectives and experiences combined will create a leadership that is effective and forward-thinking.

My vision of the role of the nominating committee is to ensure that leadership continues the Academy's legacy of bridging and connecting diverse communities. By fostering an inclusive environment that values diverse perspectives, experiences, skills, areas of expertise, and backgrounds, the committee can build a leadership cadre that reflects the richness of our membership.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Name: Heather Edwards

Current Employment:

Division Chief, Head and Neck Surgical Oncology, Boston Medical Center
 Assistant Professor, Boston University School of Medicine
 Council Chair, Boston University Medical Group Gender Equity Advisory Council

Place of Birth: Fort McMurray, Canada

Education:

5/2007 BAH Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario: Political Studies
 5/2011 MD Schulich School of Medicine at the University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario

Residency and Fellowship:

6/2016 Residency in Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery, University of Toronto
 6/2017 Fellowship in Head and Neck Surgical Oncology, Microvascular Reconstruction and Skull Base Surgery, Harvard Medical School/Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary

Specialty: Head and Neck Surgery

Licensure and Certification:

7/2016-current Massachusetts state medical license #265694
 7/2016-current Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of Canada (FRCSC)
 6/2017-6/2020 Connecticut state medical license #56577
 10/2019-current Fellow of the American College of Surgeons (FACS)
 12/2021-current Diplomate of the American Board of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery (ABOHNS)

Previous Employment:

7/2017-10/2019 Attending surgeon, Smilow Cancer Hospital/Yale New Haven Hospital
 7/2017-10/2019 Attending surgeon, Bridgeport Hospital
 6/2018-10/2019 Yale Cancer Center, Virus and other Infection-Associated Cancers Research Group

Memberships and Offices Held /Academy and other societies:

Regional/institutional

New England Otolaryngological Society

12/2017-current Member

12/2018-12/2022 Executive Committee

National

Miscellaneous

7/2011-9/2019 Member: Canadian Society of Otolaryngology

9/2014-9/2015 Physician Examiner: National Assessment Collaboration (Canada)

11/2016-7/2019 Member: Triological Society

American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery

12/2014-current Member

10/2018-9/2020 Voting member: Head and Neck Surgery & Oncology Committee

10/2021-9/2023 Voting member: Ethics Committee

10/2021-9/2023 Voting member: Microvascular committee

American College of Surgeons

10/2017-10/2019 Associate Fellow

10/2019-current Fellow

American Head and Neck Society

4/2017-current Member

10/2017-current Endocrine Section
 9/2018-current Reconstructive, Mucosal, Salivary and Skin Cancer Sections
 10/2018-11/2018 Abstract reviewer: AHNS 2019 Annual Meeting
 9/2019-current Ethics & Professionalism and Cancer Prevention Services
 9/2020-current Website and Social Media and Diversity Services
 9/2021-9/2023 Quality and Value Committee of the Reconstructive Section
 4/2022-7/2023 AHNS 2023 International Program Committee
 10/2022-1/2023 Abstract reviewer: AHNS 2023 Annual Meeting
 12/2022-12/2025 Vice-Chair: Cancer Prevention Service
 9/2023-current Research Committee of the Reconstructive Section

International

NRG Oncology

12/2021-current Head and Neck Cancer General Committee
 12/2022-current Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee
 1/2023-current Chair, Health Equity and Diversity Working Group, Head and Neck Cancer Committee

Honors/Awards:

2011 Helen Mildred Blythe Allison Undergraduate Award in Medicine
 2011 Norma Heather Fletcher Undergraduate Award in Medicine
 2015 Percy Ireland Resident Research Award
 2017 Triological Society Travel Award
 2018 Darling Research Award (co-author)
 2022 NRG Oncology Early Career & New Investigators Travel Award

Community Service:

University of Toronto

7/2013-6/2014 Post-graduate Medical Education Committee, Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery
 7/2015-6/2016 Resident Selection Committee, Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery

Yale Medical School

7/2017-10/2019 Resident Selection Committee, Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery
 7/2017-10/2019 Clinical Competency Committee, Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery
 9/2017-10/2019 Residency Program Committee, Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery
 11/2018-10/2019 Dept of Surgery Strategic Work Group: Academic Mission
 3/2019-10/2019 Faculty Development and Onboarding Committee, Dept of Surgery

Boston University Medical Group

2/2021-6/2022 Diversity and Racial Equity Champion
 6/2021-10/2023 Medical-Dental Staff Clinicians Council
 8/2023-current Chair: Gender Equity Advisory Council

Boston University

9/2020-9/2021 MD Program Admissions Committee
 9/2020-9/2021 Combined MD/OMFS Program Admissions Committee
 2/2021-current Honors Committee
 5/2021-current School of Medicine Representative: Faculty Council

Regional/Local Hospital Participation:

Yale New Haven Hospital

8/2017-10/2019 Park Avenue Medical Center (Smilow Cancer Hospital) Physicians Advisory Board
 6/2018-10/2019 Specialty Leader (ENT): Mortality Improvement Committee

Boston Medical Center

10/2019-current Cancer Committee
 10/2019-current Disease Team Leader: Disease-based Cancer Committees: Head and Neck
 5/2020-7/2022 Ethics Committee
 6/2020-7/2022 Clinical Ethics Structural Racism Subcommittee

- 9/2020-current Head and Neck Oncology Clinical Trials Committee
- 10/2020-current Distress Screening Subcommittee of the Cancer Committee
- 12/2020-5/2021 Otolaryngology Departmental Second Surge Executive OR Planning Committee
- 3/2021-6/2022 Chair: Otolaryngology Diversity, Racial Equity and Inclusion Committee
- 6/2022-current Member: Otolaryngology Diversity, Racial Equity and Inclusion Committee
- 10/2019-current Resident Selection Committee, Otolaryngology - Head and Neck Surgery

Summation of Published Works Within the Specialty:

48 peer-reviewed publications, with a current primary focus on topics of diversity, equity and inclusion in head and neck oncologic care.