**External Affairs Style Guide**

*This style guide addresses common issues faced in editorial and development writing at Weill Cornell Medicine, as well as some exceptions to Associated Press Style, on which our guide is based.*

**AP Style Guide**: <https://www.apstylebook.com/cornelluniversity/>

**Academic/medical degrees:** Use the title "Dr." before a full name in first reference for anyone who holds an M.D. or a Ph.D., and before last name only in all subsequent references. If including a list of doctors, can write as Drs. X, Y and Z. Do not use M.D./Ph.D. Try to use “She received a medical degree from” instead of “She received an M.D. from.” Use the same rule for bachelor’s, master’s and doctorate degrees.

**Exception is to use M.D./Ph.D. etc. for donor walls, formal programs and invitations (see below entry “Event Invitations and Programs”).**

**Use periods for M.D., Ph.D., M.B.A. and all other degrees**

**Academic titles (endowed)**: Capitalize and spell out formal titles, such as chancellor, chair, etc. *only* when they precede a name, such as Chairman Jessica M. Bibliowicz, but not in other uses, such as Dr. Olivier Elemento, director of the Englander Institute for Precision Medicine. Capitalize formally named professorships, such as the O. Wayne Isom Professor of Cardiothoracic Surgery. If the named professorship does not include the person’s specialty – for example, the Greenberg-Starr Professor or the Gladys and Roland Harriman Professor of Medicine – use descriptors to clarify (neurologist, cardiologist, etc.).

**Academic titles (unendowed)** Lower case, i.e., associate professor of neuroscience. In a list of titles, include formal titles first, then nonformal titles. For example: Dr. Carl Nathan, chairman of the Department of Microbiology and Immunology, the R.A. Rees Pritchett Professor of Microbiology and a professor of microbiology and immunology, and of medicine. Unendowed titles can be omitted when referring to Weill Cornell Medicine faculty who have multiple formal titles. For example: Dr. John Leonard, senior associate dean for innovation and initiatives, executive vice chair of the Weill Department of Medicine and the Richard T. Silver Distinguished Professor of Hematology and Medical Oncology.

**Academic titles – how to order:**

* + Weill Cornell Medicine institutional titles
    - Order sequentially based upon hierarchy: dean, chair, chief\*, director\* (see second bullet, below), endowed professorship, unendowed professorship (professor, associate professor, assistant professor, instructor, postdoctoral associate)
      * TIP: VIVO (<http://vivo.med.cornell.edu/>) and the directory (<https://directory.weill.cornell.edu/>) should be upto-date on titles. If you need title confirmation, spot something that doesn’t look right, contradicts other intel, or you can’t find someone in the system, reach out to Faculty Affairs at 646-962-8770 or email Gordon Davidescu at [gzd2001@med.cornell.edu](mailto:gzd2001@med.cornell.edu) (<https://directory.weill.cornell.edu/person/profile/gzd2001>)
      * Asterisked titles (above): These titles may not be reflected in VIVO or in the directory. See entry below about departmental, institute and center titles
      * Postdoctoral associates are always Weill Cornell Medicine employees and are managed by the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs in the Weill Cornell Graduate School of Medical Sciences.
    - Titles for new recruits/faculty promotions
      * Assistant Professor (Interim)
        + All new faculty members are given the interim title of assistant professor until the Board of Fellows officially votes to approve a permanent appointment. As a result, we are unable to say publicly that a faculty member holds that title until the board officially approves. To get around this, use the word “recruit.”

Dr. Jen Smith was recruited to Weill Cornell Medicine as the Bruce Webster Professor of Internal Medicine; Dr. Jen Smith was recruited to Weill Cornell Medicine as a professor of cell and developmental biology.

* + - * Faculty promotions
        + Similarly, all faculty promotions have to be approved by the Board of Fellows. We are not permitted to use the new title until it is officially approved. There are no alternatives or work-arounds.
  + Weill Cornell Medicine departmental/institute/center titles
    - Many departments offer faculty leadership roles that are department-specific. These include chief and vice chair positions. Refer to the individual departments’ websites or reach out to department administrators/communications and marketing specialists for guidance/confirmation.
    - Similarly, leadership positions in institutes or centers are typically not considered institutional titles and as such would be not managed by Faculty Affairs, as well as logged in VIVO or the directory. Refer to institute/center websites for guidance.
      * Exceptions: Institutes and centers that function as their own departments: Feil Family Brain and Mind Research Institute; Sandra and Edward Meyer Cancer Center; Ronald O. Perelman and Claudia Cohen Center for Reproductive Medicine

**Alumni:** Use degree and class year in parentheses on first reference **for prose**. For example, Dr. John Leonard (M.D. ’75). Exception is to use John Leonard, M.D. ’75 for donor walls, formal programs and invitations (see below entry “Event Invitations and Programs”).

**Associations, Centers and Institutes:** When referring to a formal association, center or institute (Meyer Cancer Center, Englander Institute for Precision Medicine, and others, use formal endowed name (Sandra and Edward Meyer Cancer Center, Caryl and Israel Englander Institute for Precision Medicine) on first reference. In subsequent mentions, truncated upper-case endowed names (Meyer Cancer Center, Englander Institute) are acceptable. Also, in subsequent mentions, when referring to the center or institute, lower-case the c and the i.

* **Development only:** In subsequent mentions, when using the word “center” or “institute” to refer to a previously stated Weill Cornell Medicine center or institute, you may capitalize the first letter (Center, Institute).

**Black (adj.)** Use the capitalized term as an adjective in a racial, ethnic or cultural sense: *Black people, Black culture, Black literature, Black studies, Black colleges.*

*African American* is also acceptable for those in the U.S. The terms are not necessarily interchangeable. Americans of Caribbean heritage, for example, generally refer to themselves as *Caribbean American*. Follow an individual’s preference if known, and be specific when possible and relevant. *Minneapolis has a large Somali American population because of refugee resettlement. The author is Senegalese American.*

Use of the capitalized *Black* recognizes that language has evolved, along with the common understanding that especially in the United States, the term reflects a shared identity and culture rather than a skin color alone.

Also use *Black* in racial, ethnic and cultural differences outside the U.S. to avoid equating a person with a skin color.

**Black(s), white(s) (n.)** Do not use either term as a singular noun. For plurals, phrasing such as *Black people, white people, Black teachers, white students* is often preferable when clearly relevant. *White officers account for 64 percent of the police force, Black officers 21 percent and Latino officers 15 percent. The gunman targeted Black churchgoers.* The plural nouns *Blacks* and *whites* are generally acceptable when clearly relevant and needed for reasons of space or sentence construction. *He helped integrate dance halls among Blacks, whites, Latinos and Asian Americans.* *Black* and *white* are acceptable as adjectives when relevant.

**Board of Fellows:**  Weill Cornell Medicine Board of Fellows. Second reference: Board of Fellows, the board. Usage examples:

* Jessica M. Bibliowicz, Chairman of the Weill Cornell Medicine Board of Fellows or Board of Fellows Chairman Jessica M. Bibliowicz
* Sanford I. Weill, Chair Emeritus of the Weill Cornell Medicine Board of Fellows or Board of Fellows Chair Emeritus Sanford I. Weill
* Board of Fellows Vice Chair Robert J. Appel or Robert J. Appel, Vice Chair of the Weill Cornell Medicine Board of Fellows (same for other vice chairs)
* Board of Fellows member Ronay Menschel
* Board of Fellows student member Jeremy T. Chang
* Couple (only one is a board member): Joan Weill and Board of Fellows Chair Emeritus Sanford I. Weill; Stephen Friedman and Board of Fellows Vice Chair Barbara Friedman

**Boards:** When referring to boards, capitalize the following: Fellow, Board of Fellows, Board of Directors, Board of Trustees, Executive Committee, etc., but do not capitalize “member.” Do not capitalize when used as a verb. For example, “Mrs. Bluth chaired the Orange County Beautification Executive Committee.” Do not capitalize board on second reference. **Speeches and remarks for Development only:** Board may be capitalized if it applies to Weill Cornell Medicine board, Cornell University board and NYP board (He serves on the Board of Weill Cornell Medicine.)

**Campaign:** Do not capitalize “campaign”: this includes when attached to campaign name and when referring to it without the full name (the campaign, this campaign, a campaign, etc.). Put the name of the campaign in italics: the *Driving Discoveries, Changing Lives* campaign.

***We’re Changing Medicine* campaign:** Official name of the campaign is We’re Changing Medicine.

* How to use in prose: the *We’re Changing Medicine* campaign (italicized), the campaign (second reference). Additional campaign messaging used in promotional materials: Because we can. Because we must. Change it with us. (Refer to Sullivan campaign guidelines for typography, color palette, etc. for previous.) Do not capitalize campaign on second reference.

**Clinical Scholar Award, Research Scholar Award, Education Scholar Award:** Spell out on first reference, with parenthetical abbreviation following – Clinical Scholar Award (CSA). May use abbreviation on subsequent references. May also say: Scholar Awards (capped) on second reference when writing about the awards as a whole.

**Clinical trials:** Phase 3, not Phase III

**Commas:** Do not use Oxford comma (i.e., correct version would be “He was tall, dark and handsome”). Consult the punctuation guide in the AP Stylebook for help in determining when to use commas.

**Composition titles:** Apply these guidelines to titles of books, movies, radio and television programs, etc.: put quotation marks around the names of all such works except the Bible and books that are primarily catalogs of reference material (i.e., encyclopedias, handbooks, etc.). Examples: “Good Morning America,” “War and Peace.” Do not italicize or use any other style elements around journal or magazine titles.

**Coronavirus:** In stories, do not refer simply to coronavirus without the article “the.” Not: She is concerned about coronavirus. Referring to simply “the coronavirus” is acceptable on first reference in stories about COVID-19. While the phrasing incorrectly implies there is only one coronavirus, it is clear in this context. Also acceptable on first reference: “the new coronavirus” or “the new virus” for the virus, “COVID-19” for the disease caused by the virus. Passages and stories focusing on the science of the disease require sharper distinctions.

**COVID-19**: COVID-19, which stands for coronavirus disease 2019, is caused by a virus named SARS-CoV-2. When referring specifically to the virus, “the COVID-19 virus” and “the virus that causes COVID-19” are acceptable. But, because COVID-19 is the name of the disease, not the virus, it is **not** accurate to write “a new virus called COVID-19.”

**Dates**: For prose, abbreviate longer months (Jan., Feb., Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec.) when they are followed by a date. For example: The meeting is on Jan. 20 (no “th,” “rd” or “st” ending).

* For speeches and remarks, spell out full name of longer months and add the “th”, “rd” or “st” ending. For example, the first meeting is on January 20th and the next meeting is on February 3rd.
* When referring to just the month (no day), spell out the entire word: The meeting will be held in October. This applies to prose as well as remarks.

**Dean:** Dr. Augustine M.K. Choi, the Stephen and Suzanne Weiss Dean of Weill Cornell Medicine and provost for medical affairs at Cornell University (first reference). Subsequent reference: Dean Choi, the Dean (capitalized), Dr. Choi, Dean Augustine M.K. Choi (photo caption, for example).

**Department and division names:** Capitalize department and division names, regardless of whether they have donor names attached (Weill Department of Medicine is capitalized, as well as the Department of Neurology). This rule applies to all institutions.

**Doctors (two in one sentence):** Dr. Leonard Girardi and Dr. Robert Brown, not Drs. Leonard Girardi and Robert Brown. On second reference, can say: Drs. Girardi and Brown.

**Events Invitations and Programs:** Capitalize both endowed titles and unendowed academic titles, using M.D., Ph.D. and D.Phil. when listing speakers/participants. Please note these exceptions are for lists only; bios should follow standard style guide above.

**Front line**: two words (hyphenated when used as a compound modifier, as in front-line worker)

**Fundraising, fundraiser:** one word

**Health care:** two words (hyphenated when used as a compound modifier, as in health-care leader)

**Inc. and Ltd.:** Do not use a comma before either, even if the comma is included in the formal name

**Jr.**: Do not precede with a comma, for example: Dr. Antonio M. Gotto Jr.

**Magazine and journal names:** Capitalize the initial letters of the name, but do not place it in quotes and do not italicize. Lowercase “magazine” and “journal” unless it is part of the publication’s formal title: Harper’s Magazine, Newsweek magazine, Journal of the American Medical Association.

**Middle initials:** Avoid use of middle initials in body copy whenever possible. Make exceptions for leadership, faculty and donors who request the middle initial (Augustine M.K. Choi, Barbara L. Hempstead, Sanford I. Weill, Jessica M. Bibliowicz, Maurice R. Greenberg. Dr. Richard T. Silver).

**Minority/minorities:** Try to avoid use. Be specific whenever possible.

**Names of institutions:** When writing about an individual who graduated from a school that has since changed its official name (for example, SUNY at Stony Brook is now Stony Brook University), use the current name of the institution. “He graduated from Stony Brook University in 1977.” When referring to NYP/WCM in the context of someone who began his or her career in the days of New York Hospital, say: “She began her medical career in 1978 at what is currently NewYork-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center.”

**New York:** New York City, New York state (lower case s)

**Nicknames:** In quotes, as part of name. For example: Dr. Jean “Bill” Pape

**Percent:** Spell out, except in charts or graphics

**Phone numbers:** Use hyphens. For example: 646-962-9476. An exception to this is the Dean’s Council Directory, which uses periods instead of hyphens.

**Stimson Society:** Lewis Atterbury Stimson Society (on first reference), Stimson Society on second and subsequent reference

**Titles of lectures or talks:** Place in quotes, as in “The New Biology of Diabetes”

**Unofficial names of centers or departments:** Only use institutional designations. For example, the Weill Cornell Brain and Spine Center is not an official institutional name. It is the Department of Neurological Surgery.

* For list of official names of centers and institutes, go to <https://research.weill.cornell.edu/about-us/academic-units/centers-and-institutes>

**Weill Cornell Medicine** – never WCM or Weill Cornell, even on second reference, for all printed and online materials. May say “Weill Cornell” in remarks, though it is not preferred.

**Weill Cornell Medicine/ Weill Cornell Medical College/Weill Cornell Graduate School of Medical Sciences**

* + Weill Cornell Medicine
    - Weill Cornell Medicine is our master brand, and should be used when referring to the institution as a whole: its faculty (physicians and bench scientists); departments, divisions, centers, institutes and buildings; and the institution’s clinical and research activities. Examples:
      * Our scientists conduct research at Weill Cornell Medicine.
      * Dr. John Smith is a researcher at Weill Cornell Medicine.
      * Dr. Jane Smith is on Weill Cornell Medicine’s faculty.
      * Dr. Jane Smith, an assistant professor of physiology and biophysics at Weill Cornell Medicine.
      * Our doctors deliver patient care at Weill Cornell Medicine.
  + Weill Cornell Medical College and Weill Cornell Graduate School of Medical Sciences
    - Weill Cornell Medical College refers only to the medical education component of Weill Cornell Medicine.
      * Fred Doe is a third-year medical student at Weill Cornell Medical College
      * Emily Doe is a graduate of Weill Cornell Medical College
      * Weill Cornell Medical College Class of 2017
      * Dr. Jen Smith teaches at Weill Cornell Medical College
    - Weill Cornell Graduate School of Medical Sciences refers only to the graduate education component of Weill Cornell Medicine. This encompasses our Ph.D. and M.S. programs.
      * Fred Doe is a doctoral (or graduate if pursuing M.S. degree) student at the Weill Cornell Graduate School of Medical Sciences.
      * Emily Doe is a graduate of the Master of Science in Health Sciences for Physician Assistants Program in the Weill Cornell Graduate School of Medical Sciences.
      * Weill Cornell Graduate School of Medical Sciences Class of 2017
      * Dr. Jen Smith teaches at the Weill Cornell Graduate School of Medical Sciences
  + **Weill Cornell Medicine’s Physician Organization**
    - Refers to our growing network of expert physicians
    - Use this when referring to our overarching clinical activities, physician practices and physician organization leadership
      * Weill Cornell Medicine’s Physician Organization is opening a new primary care practice
      * Weill Cornell Medicine’s Physician Organization is adding 30 new physicians at NewYork-Presbyterian Lower Manhattan Hospital to its ranks
      * Dr. Robert Min, president and CEO of Weill Cornell Medicine’s Physician Organization
    - Weill Cornell Medicine physicians (lower case) is acceptable when referring to physicians in the physician organization (second reference)

**Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar**

* + Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar
    - Weill Cornell Medicine’s medical school in Qatar, established with Cornell University and the Qatar Foundation
      * Use rebranded name in all instances, even when describing its education mission. Officials at Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar also tend to use WCM-Q at second reference. Try to avoid since we don’t abbreviate our name.
    - Editorial guidelines describing the relationship between Weill Cornell Medicine, Cornell University and Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar
      * Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar is an international location of Weill Cornell Medicine
        + Never describe Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar as a campus, branch or branch-campus of Weill Cornell Medicine, as these terms relate specifically to academic accreditation and may inadvertently give the impression that Qatar is accredited by the Liaison Committee on Higher Education.
      * Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar is a campus of Cornell University
        + It is fair to say that Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar is a campus of Cornell University, as is Weill Cornell Medicine, Cornell Tech, ILR, etc.
      * Graduates of Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar receive Cornell University medical degrees

**Years:** Use figures, without commas or apostrophes: 1975, the 1970s.