



Apra Honors Amanda Whiteside with 2026 Professional of the Year Award

June 25, 2026

Apra is proud to announce that **Amanda Whiteside, Senior Director of Prospect Research and Management at Baylor College of Medicine**, has been selected as the recipient of the **2026 Apra Professional of the Year Award**, funded by the Apra Foundation. Established in 1999, the award recognizes an outstanding prospect development professional whose leadership, innovation, and accomplishments have significantly advanced their organization's mission while going above and beyond the scope of their core responsibilities.

Amanda has distinguished herself as a strategic leader whose vision has transformed prospect development into a driving force behind fundraising success. Throughout her career, she has built innovative systems, empowered colleagues, and created data-driven processes that enable fundraisers to work more effectively and deepen philanthropic impact.

When Amanda joined Baylor College of Medicine, she inherited a small team, aging systems, and an opportunity to reimagine how prospect development could support fundraising. Rather than simply improving existing processes, she redesigned them from the ground up—modernizing prospect management, leading a complex CRM conversion, introducing sophisticated portfolio analytics, and developing innovative affinity scoring models that provide fundraisers with real-time insights into donor engagement and potential.

Her nomination describes Amanda as "the busy architect behind the scenes—building complex structures to support her organization's bold philanthropic ambitions" and credits her with creating systems that "empower fundraisers and elevate philanthropic outcomes."

Amanda's leadership extends beyond technology and process improvement. She has built a high-performing prospect development team, established comprehensive training and onboarding programs, strengthened partnerships across advancement operations, and served as a trusted advisor during periods of organizational change. Her colleagues describe her as "the connective tissue between fundraising leadership and operations leadership"-a leader who translates ideas into action while never losing sight of the people behind the work.

Her commitment to the profession is equally impressive. A dedicated volunteer leader with Apra Greater Houston for nearly a decade, Amanda has served as Treasurer, Vice President, and now President, helping the chapter thrive through changing times while encouraging professional growth and engagement across the community.

The Professional of the Year Award recognizes individuals whose leadership strengthens not only their own organizations but also the prospect development profession as a whole. Amanda Whiteside exemplifies these qualities through her innovative thinking, collaborative leadership, and unwavering commitment to building systems - and teams - that create lasting philanthropic impact.

Apra congratulates Amanda Whiteside on this well-deserved recognition and thanks her for her outstanding contributions to Baylor College of Medicine, the prospect development profession, and the Apra community.