



Award FAQs

Parker J. Palmer Courage to Teach Award

The Parker J. Palmer *Courage to Teach Award*

Background

Why did the ACGME establish the Parker J. Palmer Courage to Teach Award?

The ACGME recognizes that program directors face many challenges in administering a residency program. Those finding innovative ways to teach residents and to provide quality health care while remaining connected to the initial impulse to care for others in this environment should be celebrated.

Who is Parker J. Palmer?

Parker J. Palmer is a highly respected writer and traveling teacher who works independently on issues in education, community, spirituality, and social change. In 1998, "The Leadership Project," a survey of eleven thousand educators, named Palmer as one of the thirty "most influential senior leaders" in higher education and one of ten key "agenda-setters of the past decade" "He has inspired a generation of teachers and reformers with evocative visions of community, knowing, and spiritual wholeness." Palmer is senior associate of the American Association for Higher Education and senior adviser to the Fetzer Institute, for whom he designed the Teacher Formation Program for K-12 teachers. Author of such widely praised books as *The Company of Strangers*, *The Active Life*, *To Know As We Are Known*, *The Courage to Teach*, he holds a PhD from the University of California at Berkeley. He lives in Madison, Wisconsin.

Why the "Courage to Teach"?

An excerpt from **Good Teaching**

A Matter of Living the Mystery

By Parker Palmer

COURAGE TO TEACH®

"The word "courage" comes from a root that means "heart," and I like to transpose the words. How can we develop and sustain, in ourselves and each other, the heart for good teaching (assuming that the mind is already available)? Good teaching requires courage—the courage to explore one's ignorance as well

as insight, to yield some control in order to empower the group, to evoke other people's lives as well as reveal one's own. Furthermore, good teaching sometimes goes unvalued by academic institutions, by the students for whom it is done, and even by those teachers who do it. Many of us "lose heart" in teaching."

"How shall we recover the courage that good teaching requires? In its original meaning, a "professor" was not someone with esoteric knowledge and technique. Instead, the word referred to a person able to make a profession of faith in the midst of a dangerous world. All good teachers, I believe, have access to this confidence. It comes not from the ego but from a soul-deep sense of being at home in the world despite its dangers. This is the authority by which good teachers teach. This is the gift they pass on to their students. Only when we take heart as professors can we "give heart" to our students—and that, finally, is what good teaching is all about."

How do I make a nomination?

Your nominee must meet the eligibility requirements. There will be no exceptions.

Eligibility Requirements

- Current program director for ACGME-accredited residency or fellowship
- Currently directs a program that has at least a 4-year cycle
- Has at least five years' experience as a program director
- Participates in a national program director's association—if one exists for the specialty

Criteria for Selection

Program directors must:

- meet eligibility requirements
- embody Parker J. Palmer's "courage to teach" philosophy
- integrate ACGME core competencies
- demonstrate excellent leadership and mentorship practices
- teach excellent patient care and safety practices
- encourage and achieve program development/innovation
- be a strong role model, promoting ethics of reflection and humanism

Application Instructions

Three components are required for application:

1. A completed application form
2. Three letters of support
3. A current curriculum vitae

About the Letters of Support

- Letters should be addressed to ACGME Awards Committee.
- One of the letters must be from current residents/fellows.

- The two other letters may be from faculty, department chairs, other institutional representatives, review committee members, etc.
- Comments from a group, e.g. faculty, residents, etc. should be compiled into one “group letter.” We will not accept more than three letters of support for each nominee.
- The letters should show how the nominee has the “courage to teach”—how he or she brings both intellect and heart to the dual vocations of being a teacher and physician.
- The letters should show the impact of the nominee’s accomplishments in educating residents/fellows, i.e. in the following areas:
 - ACGME core competencies
 - leadership/mentorship
 - patient care and safety
 - program development and innovation
 - role modeling behaviors, including reflection and humanism

Where do I send the material?

The application form may be downloaded from the ACGME website and emailed along with support letters and curriculum vitae to: DeLonda Dowling at ddowling@acgme.org.

If you have any questions, you may contact DeLonda Dowling at ddowling@acgme.org (by phone at 312/755-5059) or Amy Dunlap at adunlap@acgme.org (by phone at 312/755-5075). All materials (application form, support letters, and curriculum vitae) must arrive by email in one PDF. To do this, assemble all materials and scan. The resulting PDF can then be emailed. Material received in piecemeal will not be accepted.

What is the deadline for nominations?

The deadline is **Thursday, March 15, 2012**, by 5:00 p.m. CST. Nominations received after that date will not be accepted.

How many nominees will be selected to receive the award?

A total of ten program directors will be selected.

What is the award that will be given?

Each program director will receive a check for \$1,000 and a plaque. Travel expenses will be paid by the ACGME for each recipient and a guest to travel to the ACGME Annual Educational Conference to receive their award.

When will the award winners be announced?

Selections will be made by the ACGME Awards Committee at its September 2012 meeting; afterwards, the ACGME CEO will notify the recipients. The recipients will be acknowledged at the March 2013 ACGME Annual Educational Conference. Award announcements will be published in a press release and the ACGME Bulletin, as well as posted on the ACGME website.