



ACGME Barbara Ross-Lee, DO Humanity in Leadership Award Frequently Asked Questions



Why did the ACGME establish the Barbara Ross-Lee, DO Humanity in Leadership Award?

The award was created to recognize Sponsoring Institutions, programs, specialty organizations, and non-profit organizations that cultivate leadership grounded in humanistic values in graduate medical education (GME). Awardees exemplify innovative and creative strategies that foster empathy, integrity, and ethical behavior, advancing the development of compassionate leaders and providing replicable models for others. The award highlights the importance of humanity in care and education, and demonstrates that GME can play a vital role in shaping organizational culture and leadership in medicine.

Who is eligible for the award?

Sponsoring Institutions

- Sponsoring Institutions must be ACGME accredited and have a status of Continued Accreditation.
- Nominees must not have been a previous recipient of this award, although different programs within a previously recognized Sponsoring Institution remain eligible to apply.

GME Programs

- GME programs being nominated must be ACGME accredited and have a status of Continued Accreditation.
- Nominees must not have been a previous recipient of this award, although different programs within a previously recognized Sponsoring Institution remain eligible to apply.

Specialty Organizations

- Nominations must be for a national or regional humanistic leadership development initiative.
- Nominees must not have been a previous recipient of this award.

501(c)(3) Non-Profit Organizations

- Nominations must be for a national or regional humanistic leadership development initiative being conducted in a GME setting.

What kinds of projects are eligible?

A project may be a test, activity, or initiative that fosters humanity in leadership development, emphasizing compassion, ethical practices, and professional integrity as essential qualities for leaders dedicated to excellence in patient care and the well-being of others.

How are nominations submitted?

Submit the [online application](#) and email the four **signed** support letters according to the directions on the form. All materials (support letters) must arrive by email in **one PDF (portable PDF files are not acceptable)**. To do this, assemble all materials, scan them, then email the resulting PDF. **Material received in piecemeal or that includes unsigned letters will not be accepted.** Direct any questions to acgmeawards@acgme.org or 312.755.5059. **Note: Do not email the nomination form; only the support letter PDF should be sent via email.**



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Are signatures generated by DocuSign acceptable?

Yes. Otherwise, signatures should be handwritten on the letters or use other platforms that generate electronic signatures.

Who should the letters of support come from?

- A current resident/fellow
- A program director
- The designated institutional official or chair of the Graduate Medical Education Committee
- Another person(s) involved in GME who can attest to the nominee's impact on promoting humanistic leadership and values in medical education

What is the deadline for nominations?

All nominations (including support letters and completion of the online form) must be submitted before **5:00 p.m. Central on Wednesday, March 18, 2026**. Nominations received after the deadline and/or submitted piecemeal will not be considered.

How many awards will be granted?

Up to four winners will be selected.

How will nominations be judged?

Awards Committee reviewers will consider the extent to which projects/initiatives are:

- **Innovative:** Demonstrate new or creative approaches to developing leaders who embody humanistic values in care and education. Innovations may include curricular, technological, policy, or other strategies that advance empathy, ethics, and respect, and expand integration into the field of medicine.
- **Replicable and Scalable:** Show potential for expansion or adaptation across different settings, described in sufficient detail for implementation elsewhere.
- **Impactful:** Show measurable outcomes or meaningful progress in promoting leadership and humanistic principles within medical education, using both quantitative and qualitative measures.
- **Alignment with Priority Areas:** Address one or more of the following:
 - Increasing opportunities for development and retention of strong, humanistic leaders at all stages of the physician pathway, from pre-medical to faculty appointment.
 - Assuring learning environments foster empathy, ethical behavior, and respect for all.
 - Encouraging the growth of humanistic values and leadership within a particular medical specialty.
 - Contributing to shaping an organizational culture that prioritizes humanity in care and education.
- **Clear Goals and Mission:** Have well-defined objectives and a mission that supports leadership and humanistic principles.



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- **Assessment of Impact:** Include evaluation of effectiveness based on stated aims and population served, with plans for ongoing monitoring and improvement.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** The project should involve collaboration among learners, faculty members, and institutional leaders to ensure broad buy-in and integration.
- **Evidence-Based Approach:** Informed by research or recognized best practices in leadership development and humanistic education.
- **Sustainability:** Demonstrate potential for long-term impact and continued relevance beyond initial implementation.

What is awarded?

- Two representatives from the winning organization will receive travel expenses courtesy of the ACGME to the 2027 Annual Educational Conference, which will take place February 25-27 in San Antonio, Texas.
- Conference registration will be waived for the two representatives.
- The awardee will receive one plaque.

In addition, each awardee will receive an expenses-paid retreat experience unlike any other. New and former awardees will meet in a setting designed to support and honor them and their work and create a space that invites but does not intrude, fostering a sense of community. The retreat is typically held the second or third week of May, beginning on a Wednesday afternoon and ending on a Friday afternoon. Some former awardees have had this to say about their retreat experience:

"In a job where there are so many competing demands, it was refreshing to work at a completely different pace! Just GO... Our world does not allow for us to do these things often enough in this digital, instant access age... JUST GO... you won't be sorry you did!" - Nedd Brown, EdD, Courage to Lead Awardee

"This was amazing and should be continued. Self-work is not self-ish. The more I am ok, the healthier and more insightful I am, the better leader I become." - Sandi Moutsios, MD, Courage to Teach Awardee

"I am more than the tasks I accomplish. I will continue to marinate and percolate on this experience for a very long time. I'm leaving full, not exhausted nor emotionally drained." - Kelly Corning, Debra L. Dooley GME Program Coordinator Excellence Awardee

When will the award winner be announced?

The selections will be made by the ACGME Awards Committee at its fall 2026 meeting, and shortly thereafter the recipients will be notified. Award announcements will then be published in a press release, the *Journal of Graduate Medical Education*, and the ACGME e-Communication, as well as on the ACGME website and social media accounts.

When will the award be presented?

Awards will be presented at the 2027 ACGME Annual Educational Conference.