The 2022 Teacher of Courage and Conscience Award

Purpose:
A recent poll by the National Education Association found that 55% of teachers now plan to leave the profession earlier than expected. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to unprecedented levels of burnout among educators. On its own, the pandemic has challenged teachers to learn new modes of instructional delivery, to give up free periods to cover for sick colleagues, and to help their students process an ongoing national trauma, all while managing a heavier workload and in many cases, greater home responsibilities than ever before. Layer on top of this, the growing politicization of K-12 education, and it is of little surprise that so many educators are “looking for the exit.” The contention playing out in school board meetings over masking in schools, calls to ban books, and teaching about race, racism, and the history of slavery in the U.S. has led many educators to question whether and how they can continue in the profession. Given this backdrop, it has never felt more important to honor the work of exemplary educators, who are persisting in the profession and embracing the challenges of the day with courage and conviction. The Villanova Department of Education and Counseling is therefore pleased to release our call for our annual Teachers of Courage and Conscience Award.

This award honors educators who are creatively envisioning and bravely enacting alternatives to the rote learning experiences that have become the standard fare in far too many classrooms across our region; educators who are teaching their students not just the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in college or careers, but about the pressing issues of our time and the responsibilities of democratic citizenship; and educators who are igniting students’ curiosity, encouraging them to become engaged civic actors, and inspiring them to lead lives that matter. Recipients of the award are well-respected by their colleagues, beloved by their students, and recognized as teacher activists or agents of change in their local community. Through this award and the attendant ceremony, our Department strives to celebrate and connect these teacher leaders with one another.

Qualifications
Candidates must be K-12 public or private school teachers engaged in the following activities:
* work to improve access to high-quality education for those students who are currently least well-served in our region;
* advocate for the education profession;
* encourage student curiosity and love of learning, use effective teaching strategies, and engage students in meaningful problem-solving, knowledge-production, or artistic work;
* embody and put into practice the values of Villanova University: Veritas, Unitas, Caritas.
**Nomination and Submission Guidelines**
Nomination can be made by filling out [this form](#). You will be asked to include the candidate’s name, school, and contact information, as well as your contact information and a brief overview of your reasons for recommending this candidate. Submissions are due by April 8th, 2022.

**Timeline**
The deadline for nominations is **April 8, 2022**. A committee including former award recipients, academics, educators, and administrators from K-12 schools in the Southeastern PA region will meet to evaluate submissions. Finalists will be announced in early May. These finalists will be presented with the award and a token of our appreciation, at an event in May.

Information about past winners can be found on the [Villanova Department of Education and Counseling](#) website.

Please contact Jerusha Conner at [jerusha.conner@villanova.edu](mailto:jerusha.conner@villanova.edu) with any questions.