

Award: Outstanding Resident Teacher Application Form

Basic Information

Your name:

Cali Johnson

Your title:

Assistant Professor of Surgery

Your institution:

University of Utah

Your email address:

cali.johnson@hsc.utah.edu

Name of nominee:

Sasha Acher

Nominee's institution:

University of Utah

Nominee's title:

General Surgery Resident

Nominee's email address:

Alexandra.Acher@hsc.utah.edu

Has the nominee completed at least two years of surgical residency?

Yes

Short Essays

Why do you think the nominee deserves this award?

Dr. Acher has a passion for learning and an infectious personality that inspires people to work hard, try their best, and find joy in their work. Her desire for continuous improvement radiates from even small interactions, and this impacts both peer and junior learners who are fortunate enough to work with her. While she seeks excellence in patient care and effort from those who work with her, her most striking quality is her compassion for others and her non-judgmental attitude. She leads by example and embodies the idea that a leader is not defined by rank or hierarchy, but by observing those who willingly follow her lead. Her curiosity for learning makes her an excellent student, but transforms her role as a teacher to someone that others want to emulate.

- Cali Johnson, MD, EdD

How has the nominee demonstrated passion and enthusiasm for teaching?

As the director of resident education for my section, I can resolutely attest to Dr. Acher's commitment to teaching. Her passion and enthusiasm for resident and student education is unparalleled compared to other residents that I have seen. Whether a mid-level surgical resident, or a brand new MS3 in July, Dr. Acher has a unique ability to explain complex surgical and medical topics with clarity. Moreover, Dr. Acher strikes a perfect balance between providing a safe, positive learning environment while still maintaining the ability to 'push' her students to the limits of their knowledge. When Dr. Acher was chief on our service, the corresponding 3rd year resident had known clinical and technical shortcomings. Dr. Acher worked tirelessly with the PGY3, helping to refine their clinical acumen by running mock scenarios, and helping to improve their technical skills by spending 'off service time' teaching in the laparoscopic box trainer. In this way, Dr. Acher took on responsibilities that one would expect from a professional colleague. At our end of rotation meeting to evaluate the residents, we all agreed that the PGY3 had greatly improved compared to previous evaluations. I believe that the PGY3 in question has avoided remediation in large part due to the commitment, passion and ability to educate put forth by Dr. Acher.

-Jennwood Chen, MD

How has the nominee demonstrated a commitment to maintaining a positive, productive learning environment?

As an Educational Chief resident for 2022-2023, Dr. Acher was responsible for the structure and content of the weekly general surgery conference time. The curriculum is based on three tiers of learning priorities, which include oral boards preparation, Absite preparation, and rotation specific education. She specifically selected an evidence based program that is based off of a positive learning environment, engaged faculty participants, and repetition of content in various formats. The education curriculum was designed with feedback from residents regarding the weak spots of our previous education curriculum and is meant to prepare residents not only for the Boards exams but also more importantly for their ultimate clinical competency. Importantly, she also included a humanism curriculum that occurs every month, which is meant to be space where residents and faculty can explore topics of death, medical complications, dehumanization in medicine, and the other facets of medicine which can be morally distressing or bring up ethical considerations.

How has the nominee demonstrated being able to provide effective feedback to learners?

I have witnessed Dr. Acher providing both in the moment, immediate feedback to address misunderstandings and lack of

knowledge for students, as well as more in-depth summative feedback for students who have excelled or may still be struggling at the end of the rotation. Specifically, she has been able to help students identify their own weaknesses and make individual plans for improvement.

Dr. Acher does a remarkable job at meeting students and trainees where they are in knowledge and engagement. In so doing, she is able to bring them forward by encouraging them to engage in the clinics, ORs, and at the patient's bedside. As a very effective student of surgery, she knows what it takes to make her learners active participants in the learning process. As a surgeon who realizes the fulfillment of learning surgery and in caring for surgical patients, she is able to infuse this fulfillment in others by enriching their surgical education and making them see for themselves the immense rewards derived from being a surgeon.

- Robert Glasgow, MD

Please give an example of the nominee role modeling professionalism.

On the vascular surgery service, I have had the honor to observe Dr. Acher in various clinical and educational settings. She is an extremely talented surgeon and critical thinker, but remains humble with a constant aim for improvement. On numerous occasions I have challenged her to move beyond her comfort zone to reach growth as an independent surgeon. She accepted this responsibility with great care, ensuring that she understood the objectives, aware of her own limitations, and always keeping the situation patient centered. She moves fluidly through both a student and a teacher role, taking time to teach as she works and provide clinically relevant instruction after a hard surgery. She carries a strong, but respectful demeanor in the operating room and on clinical rounds. Specifically, I have seen her professionalism stand out when carrying for complex patients and ensuring that all members of the team approach their tasks from a patient-centered perspective and work together to restore patients back to their most functional roles in society.

- Cali Johnson, MD, EdD

Please complete the following:

Please list any education or teaching awards the nominee has received.

Resident of the Year, University of Utah Burn Intensive Care Unit, 2018 - 2019

Dr. Dale G. Johnson Award for Intern Excellence in Pediatric Surgery, University of Utah, 2016 - 2017

Please list the nominee's education-related activities (e.g., lectures, programs, presentations, curricula, innovations for teaching or assessment, education-related research).

As a visiting research fellow, Sasha mentored medical students who were involved in the Shapiro Research Program at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health. She oversaw student-led qualitative and quantitative research, working with them to define their research questions, acquire and organize appropriate data, perform their analyses, and prepare their presentations. This was a 2 year long commitment where she worked weekly one on one with students enrolled in the research program.

Please list the nominee's leadership roles in courses or groups related to surgery and surgical education, including involvement in national committees related to surgical education.

Dr. Acher am one of the Education Chiefs for the 2022-2023 academic year. She organized and designed our entire educational curriculum the the general surgery residents for the 2022-2023 academic year. This includes 3 hour block time once a week, with sessions on Absite preparation, oral board reviews, humanism in medicine, clinical skills labs, and monthly "exceptional" case conference.

File Uploads

Please upload the nominee's CV

- [Alexandra-Acher_CV.pdf](#)

Please upload a teaching statement from the nominee about their passion, enthusiasm, and commitment to teaching.

- [ASE_Statement_Acher.pdf](#)

Please upload a letter of recommendation from a learner.

- [Acher-LOR.pdf](#)

Please upload documentation of teaching competency in the form of an aggregate evaluation report (from MedHub, New Innovations, etc) from learners over the past year.

- [Acher_Student-Evals.pdf](#)