
HONORARY DEGREE POLICY AND PROCEDURES THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT GREENSBORO

(Adopted by Faculty Council, April 16, 1985)

(Guidelines Approved by the Board of Trustees, February 13, 1986)

(Amended by Faculty Council, November 14, 1989)

(Amended by the Board of Trustees, November 21, 1996)

(Amended by the Chancellor, December 1, 2009)

(Amended by the Board of Trustees, December 6, 2012)

(Revised by the Board of Trustees, XXXX X, 2018)

I. Purpose

The award of honorary degrees serves to recognize extraordinary individual achievements, to highlight the institutional values and the contributions that the individual makes to the University community or the broader society; and to provide positive acknowledgement of the importance of these contributions to the University, its mission, its principles and its people. The process of selection of honorary degree awardees shall reflect our values, which include opportunity and excellence for a diverse student body, experiential learning, undergraduate research, the practice of teaching, the use of impactful pedagogy, engagement in research and creative activities that advance our disciplines, addressing societal challenges and contributing to the larger pursuit of intellectual inquiry, while acknowledging that we are intricately tied to our local and regional community and that we share a place, fate, and a responsibility for being an active partner in the future of both.

II. Selection Criteria

The Board of Trustees seeks the broadest spectrum of achievements recognized inclusive of all callings, careers and services which impact both the individual and the broader community whether local, regional, national or international. Affiliation with the University is important, but lack thereof shall not be a disqualifying factor in the award of an honorary degree. The following factors represent the crucial criteria for consideration for the review of nominees for an honorary degree:

- A. Achievements of extraordinary and lasting distinction in an activity consonant with the mission of the University: the advancement of learning in the liberal arts, sciences, and technology and for the public welfare; distinguished contribution in elective or appointive office; or career service notable for demonstrated qualities of intellect and character;
- B. Sound justification for recognition by the University of such achievement and distinction: either an association of the individual with the University, or a recognizable relationship of a nominee's achievement to the mission of the University;
- C. High qualities of personal and professional character and competence;

- D. Appropriateness of recognition at a ceremony attended by undergraduate and advanced degree candidates reflecting a diversity of interests and concerns; and
- E. Current employees are not eligible. Provided the above factors are met,¹ a former employee may be considered for an honorary degree after five years of separation from UNC Greensboro,

III. Honorary Degree Types

The University recognizes the following honorary degree titles. These titles include, but are not limited to, the following:

- A. Doctor of Laws (LL.D.): contributions to government or public service.
- B. Doctor of Letters (Litt.D.): contributions to literature or the creative or performing arts.
- C. Doctor of Science (Sc.D.): contributions to any field of science, social science, engineering or technology.
- D. Doctor of Humane Letters (LH.D.): contributions to the humanities or to human welfare.

IV. Procedures

The procedures for proposing and awarding Honorary Degrees are as follows:

- A. The solicitation for nominees for honorary degrees shall normally be undertaken in the fall semester of each academic year.
- B. Nominations shall be solicited in writing for review by the University Committee on Honorary Degrees from all members of the campus community. All nominations shall be made in writing in accordance with application guidelines and in strict confidentiality.
- C. The University Committee on Honorary Degrees shall establish its own procedures regarding the consideration of either prior nominees or honorees already approved and maintained in a pool for a period of no more than two years. The Committee, in consultation with the Office of General Counsel and any other relevant office, shall establish a process to assure that nominees are reviewed prior to the Committee making its nominations to the Board of Trustees.
- D. The University Committee on Honorary Degrees shall present its nominations for honorary degrees to the Board of Trustees. The Committee's recommendation shall be presented by the Provost, acting as Chair, shall be based on the Committee's deliberations, and shall represent the majority consensus of the Committee.

¹ For purposes of this policy, the five-year separation period starts at the date of separation from full-time employment.

- E. The Board shall consider only those nominations recommended by the Committee.
- F. Awardees are expected to be present to receive an honorary degree, although it is within the Board's discretion to make an award in absentia.
- G. Normally the University will present at least one honorary degree each year.
- H. Honorary degrees shall be awarded only at a Commencement.
- I. The Committee may maintain in its pool for consideration any person recommended but not selected for a period of two years.
- J. The Board on its own motion may revoke, or the Committee may recommend revocation of, an honorary if the honoree's reputation changes substantially so that the continued use of that name may compromise the public trust, dishonor the University's standards, or otherwise be contrary to the best interests of the University. However, caution must be taken when, with the passage of time, the standards and achievements deemed to justify the award of an honorary degree may change and observers of a later age may deem those who have conferred a naming honor at an earlier age to have erred. Honor should not be altered simply because later observers would have made different judgments.

V. Honorary Degree Committee Membership

The University Committee on Honorary Degrees shall be appointed by the Chancellor. Its membership shall include five (5) faculty members appointed by the faculty senate and four (4) members appointed by the Chancellor (to include, without limitation, individuals from amongst the faculty at various ranks, the Deans or other administrators or other members of the community. All appointments should take into consideration community participation and diversity (broadly defined). The Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor shall serve as the Chair. Terms shall be staggered as four-year (academic year) appointments. Each member including the Provost shall have one vote.

VI. Nomination and Approval of Honorary Degrees by the Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees is the final authority in granting the honorary degree. The usual process for the cycle of determining recipients for honorary degrees shall be coordinated with the meeting schedule of the Board. It may be that individuals nominated in one year may be proposed for an honorary degree in the next academic year depending on the number of nominations and other considerations.

The Committee will submit a recommendation to the Board of Trustees of which nominees should receive honorary degrees. The Board of Trustees shall grant final approval of honorary degree recipients.