

POLICY & Procedures

Approving Authority: Senate

Responsible Executive: President

Responsible Administrator: University
Registrar - Secretary to Senate

Title:

Honorary Degrees

Policy

1.0 Scope and Interpretation

The *University Act of British Columbia* gives Senate the authority to grant degrees, including Honorary Degrees. This Policy, enacted by Senate, outlines the criteria and principles by which nominees are evaluated for the award of an Honorary Degree.

2.0 Definitions

2.1 **Committee** – Committee means the *Senate Committee on Honorary Degrees and Other Forms of Special Recognition*, or the Committee tasked by Senate with responsibility for recommendations for, and matters related to, Honorary Degrees.

3.0 Policy Statement

3.1 **Criteria** - An Honorary Degree Recipient is selected for excellence, eminence and accomplishment in scholarship, research, teaching, the creative arts, business or other fields of service to the public, and:

- i) Has established a regional, provincial, national or international reputation for excellence in their field of endeavor;
- ii) Has made a notable contribution in the service of humanity, and;
- iii) Is a role model exemplifying the vision and mission of the University.

3.2 Nominations may be made by members of the Committee, the University Community or the public.

3.3 Normally, two Honorary Degrees will be conferred at the regular convocation. In exceptional circumstances, the Committee may recommend that Senate approve the awarding of up to three

Honorary Degrees at a single regular convocation. All Honorary Degree recipients should be afforded the opportunity to address graduates.

- 3.4 To the extent possible, the Committee will strive to ensure that over any two to three year period, recommended recipients reflect a diversity of backgrounds and contributions.
- 3.5 Honorary Degrees must be explicitly accepted by a nominee and therefore may not be conferred on those who, because of incapacity or death, are unable to accept the honour.
- 3.6 Except in unusual circumstances, and with the approval of Senate, Honorary Degrees must be received in person at a convocation ceremony. Should a person become incapacitated or die after acceptance of an Honorary Degree but before conferral, the President as Chair of Senate will have the discretion to determine whether and how the Honorary Degree may be conferred.
- 3.7 **Special Convocations** – in the event of a Special Convocation, the Committee will be convened and may draw from the pool of Senate approved candidates from the most recent nomination and selection cycle, may draw from the historical pool of candidates approved by Senate within the previous two years or, may determine that a separate call for nominations is needed.
- 3.8 In exceptional circumstances, Senate may entertain a motion to rescind an Honorary Degree. Such a motion would require two thirds support of Senate to be passed.

4.0 Roles and Responsibilities

- 4.1 Senate is the approving authority for this Policy and for the Procedures enacted under this Policy.
- 4.2 The President, as Chair of Senate, has the discretion to make reasonable interpretations and non-substantive amendments to the Procedures, to address unique circumstances and in the interests of giving effect to the timely and appropriate application of the Policy.
- 4.3 The Registrar, as Secretary to Senate, oversees the confidential nomination process. In order to ensure alignment of the Honorary Degree process with convocation planning and protocols, the Ceremonies and Protocol Officer, or designated representative from the Office of Advancement, acts as Recording Secretary for the Committee and for the Honorary Degree selection process.
- 4.4 All Committee deliberations are to be held in closed sessions and members and committee participants are required to maintain strict confidentiality through the nomination and selection process.

Procedures

- 1.0 **Call for Nominations** – An annual call for nominations will be made each fall for nominees to be awarded Honorary Degrees at the next regular spring convocation.
 - i) The call for nominations shall be prepared by the Recording Secretary and issued by the Office of the Secretary of Senate. The notice is to be forwarded to Senate, the

Board, Undergraduate and Graduate Student Societies, the Alumni Council and the University Community, and is to be made publically available on the University website.

- ii) Nominations may be submitted at any time to the Secretary of Senate, but nominators should be informed that their nomination may not be considered for the next upcoming convocation if the Committee has already convened or Senate has already approved recipients for that convocation.

2.0 **Nominations in Writing** - All nominations must be in writing and must provide the following information:

- i) Name and current contact information for the nominee
- ii) Curriculum vitae or similar biographical and professional information that provides information such as reference articles, lists of publications, awards and accomplishments
- iii) A brief statement outlining why the nominee should be considered and how the nominee meets the criteria outlined in the Policy
- iv) Name and contact information of the nominator

3.0 **Acknowledgement of Nominations** – The Recording Secretary shall ensure that all nominations are acknowledged in writing, by the President.

4.0 The Recording Secretary shall prepare and distribute confidential meeting packages to the Committee. The Secretary of Senate shall convene the Committee, and the Committee shall:

- i) Review and evaluate the nominations against the criteria outlined in the Policy
- ii) Generate a ranked list of no more than six (6) nominees to be recommend to Senate for approval

5.0 The Recording Secretary shall prepare DRAFT citations for each of the recommended nominees and the Secretary of Senate shall present the ranked list and citations to Senate at the next regular Senate meeting.

6.0 Each nominee requires the majority support of Senate, and so each must be presented for approval in a separate motion according to the ranked order.

7.0 Once nominees are approved, the Recording Secretary will arrange for the President to speak with the approved nominees in ranked order to determine willingness to receive an honorary degree. The President will continue to contact and offer the honor in accordance with the approved ranked list until the approved number of recipients, as per s. 3.3 of the Policy, have confirmed acceptance and attendance. The Recording Secretary will prepare correspondence and ensure that the offer and acceptance are confirmed in writing by the President.

- 8.0 The Recording Secretary, or the University Ceremonies and Protocol Officer, if not acting as the Recording Secretary, will make all arrangements with the Honorary Degree Recipients up to and including the recipients' attendance at and participation in convocation.

- 9.0 Each Nominee approved by Senate, who is not awarded an honorary degree in the next convocation, shall be added to a list of approved nominees from which the Committee may draw in making recommendations to the Senate in subsequent years. Such nominees remain on the list of approved candidates for three years. If not awarded an honorary degree in that three year period the nominee's name will be removed from the list.

- 10.0 Nominees whose names are not recommended to Senate by the Committee or are recommended but are not approved by Senate, shall not be kept on an active or approved list from year to year.