Honorary Degrees

Policy 103.4

1 Introduction

1.1 The Board of Governors has delegated to the Board of Trustees authority to confer honorary degrees. This policy establishes eligibility requirements and the process for review and approval of nominations.

2 Scope

2.1 This policy applies to all honorary degrees.

3 Definitions

3.1 Board

Means Board of Trustees of Appalachian State University except where expressly indicated otherwise.

4 Policy and Procedure Statements

4.1 The Board may confer honorary degrees on individuals who have made exemplary contributions to Appalachian State University, the State, the nation, or the world. Recipients of honorary degrees will be recognized for their general excellence and for their extraordinary achievements in areas of human endeavor which reflect the ideals and objectives of the University. Individuals who receive honorary degrees will exemplify the University's values, vision and service mission. Honorary degrees may be awarded to outstanding citizens of the State, outstanding alumni of the University, outstanding living benefactors of the University, or individuals of national or international prominence whose contributions have enhanced society as a whole.

4.2 Honorary degrees may be conferred at Commencement, Black & Gold Convocation or at other special events as may be determined by the Chancellor. Only under extraordinary circumstances will honorary degrees be conferred in absentia.

4.3 All nominees for an honorary degree must meet one or more of the following criteria to be considered:

1. Must have made a notable contribution to society and the welfare of humankind.
2. Must have achieved distinguished success in a chosen career field or profession.
3. Must have made eminent achievement in scholarship or public affairs, or provided distinguished service or other contributions to Appalachian State University, the State of North Carolina or the nation.

4.4 No person shall be eligible to be awarded an honorary degree while that person is serving as a member of the Board of Trustees of Appalachian State University, as a member of the Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina, or as a member of the faculty, staff, or administration of The University of North Carolina or of any one of its constituent institutions; and no such person shall be eligible for such an award earlier than at the second Commencement after the termination of any such relationship with The University of North Carolina and/or any one of its constituent institutions. Such degrees should be awarded only in exceptional cases to retired faculty members or staff for career distinction achieved at Appalachian State University. Honorary degrees shall not be awarded to any person seeking or holding an elective State or federal office.

4.5 The procedure for the accepting, screening and approving of nominees and the awarding of honorary degrees is as follows:

1. Nominees must meet established criteria.
2. Individuals may be nominated by faculty, staff, students, alumni or friends of the university. Each nomination shall be presented in written form and shall include the name of the nominator(s), a vitae or brief biography of the proposed recipient, a description of accomplishments making the nominee worthy of an honorary degree, and any other supporting documentation deemed appropriate to assist in the deliberations.
3. Nominations may be received by the Chancellor or the Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor. Nominations for awards to be made during a given academic year (August-May must be received on or before March 1 of the prior academic year.
4. The Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor or that official’s designee will check the credentials and eligibility of nominees.
5. The Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor shall review nominations with an advisory committee known as the Honorary Degree Advisory Committee and composed of the following:
    1. The Dean of the college or school with academic programs most closely related to the type of honorary degree proposed to be awarded;
    2. Vice Provost for Research;

3. A faculty member at large appointed by the Chancellor from nominations made by the Faculty Senate;
4. A Distinguished Professor of the University appointed by the Chancellor from nominations made by the Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor;
5. A staff member at large appointed by the Chancellor from nominations made by the Staff Senate;
6. A student member at large appointed by the Chancellor; and
7. President of the Appalachian State University Alumni Association.

6. The Honorary Degree Advisory Committee shall make recommendations to the Chancellor regarding selection of nominees to receive awards and modification of policies and procedures to improve the substance of the award and the processes for selection. The Chancellor shall select nominees for presentation to the Board and its Academic Affairs Committee.
7. The Academic Affairs Committee will review the nominations with the Chancellor and the Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor, and make recommendations to the Board. The Committee shall evaluate each nomination against the criteria set forth above. Nominations and their consideration shall be confidential until an approved award is announced.
8. Following Board approval, the Chancellor will inform the honoree and announce the conferral. The Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor will plan the awarding ceremony.
9. Nominators and seconders of successful candidates may be invited by the Chancellor to participate in activities honoring the candidate. Individuals must accept the degree in person within three years of approval by the Board of Trustees, unless otherwise approved by the Board of Trustees. Honorary degree recipients must commit to come to Appalachian State University to receive the honorary degree before the award will be announced, unless otherwise approved by the Board of Trustees.
10. An honorary degree recipient may be asked to be a commencement speaker. However, the two roles are separate as to process and should not be considered reciprocal.

5 Additional References

6 Authority

The UNC Policy Manual, Chapter 100.1 Appendix 1 Delegation of Duty and Authority to Boards of Trustees

7 Contact Information

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8 Original Effective Date

June 1, 1990

9 Revision Dates

January 13, 1997
December 9, 2016