

POL 01.25.01

Honorary Degree Policy of the University of North Carolina at Pembroke

Authority: Board of Trustees

History: First Issued: February 22, 2002. Revised: April 28, 2011. Last Revised:

Related Policies:

- [UNC Code 100.1 Appendix 1 - Delegations of Duty and Authority to Boards of Trustees](#)

Additional References:

- Honorary Degrees Awarded

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1. PURPOSE

1.1 The honorary degree is a traditional means of the academic university to recognize distinguished individuals who have made significant contributions to the University over an extended period of time or whose outstanding personal or professional endeavors complement the University's role and mission. The university community must view candidates as unique, recognizable figures whose public recognition brings honor on the University of North Carolina at Pembroke.

1.2. It has become traditional in higher education to present individuals who demonstrate outstanding achievement in areas of human endeavor with a degree, honoris causa, at ceremonial occasions of the institution (e.g., convocations and commencements). Often, an individual so honored will be the featured speaker at the ceremony.

1.3 Because the quality of achievement to be acknowledged is rare, and because the honorary degree is the most prestigious recognition the institution can bestow, honorary degrees are awarded in very small numbers. In most instances, only one honorary degree will be conferred at a given ceremonial occasion, typically Spring commencement or Fall Convocation. In rare instances, more than one individual may be honored. There will be times when no appropriate candidate is nominated or selected and no honorary degree is awarded.

2. EXCLUSIONS

2.1 The University of North Carolina at Pembroke will not award an honorary degree to:

2.1.a. Any person who is serving as a member of the University of North Carolina Board of Governors;

2.1.b. Any member of the Board of Trustees of any constituent institution of the University of North Carolina;

2.1.c. The Governor of North Carolina;

2.1.d. Any other elected or appointed official or state employee concerned with the function or control of the University;

2.1.e. Any current candidate for such elected office; or

2.1.f. Any currently-employed member of the faculty, staff, or administration of any constituent institution of the University of North Carolina, including the University of North Carolina at Pembroke.

2.2 Members of the faculty, staff, administration, or governing bodies of any of the constituent institutions of the University of North Carolina who have retired or separated from the University may be considered, although typically only at some time beyond such retirement or separation.

3. CRITERIA

3.1 Candidates must be evaluated against the general criteria set forth in the purpose statement cited above:

3.1.a. They must have made significant contributions to the University over an extended period of time or must have outstanding personal or professional accomplishments that complement the University's role and mission.

3.1.b. Candidates must be viewed by the University community as unique, recognizable figures whose public recognition brings honor on the University of North Carolina at Pembroke.

3.2 In addition, candidates must exhibit exemplary character and integrity and meet at least one of the following criteria:

3.2.a. Candidates will have rendered special service to the University or to the State of North Carolina.

3.2.b. Candidates will have distinguished themselves in their profession and will have had their contributions acknowledged by fellow professionals.

4. NOMINATIONS

4.1 Any member of any University constituency (e.g., students, faculty, staff, alumni, or members of the wider community) may propose for consideration the name of a person who might merit an honorary degree. A call for nominations may be published by the University in any form judged to be useful for soliciting appropriate candidates.

4.1.1 Candidates for honorary degrees may be proposed at any time. Because the approval process entails several stages of review, substantial lead time (typically six months or more) is needed for the consideration of any candidate. Nominations must be received no less than 60 days before the date of the anticipated award ceremony. Nomination proposals will be kept on file for possible future consideration for three years. A candidate may be proposed again after three years.

4.1.2 The nomination proposal should include a letter of nomination, signed by the nominator, with information to justify the nomination. A résumé or curriculum vitae of the candidate and a brief statement summarizing the accomplishments of the nominee should accompany the letter of nomination. That statement should be approximately 300 words in length. The name of the nominee should be clearly indicated at the beginning of the summary statement. The nomination packet will include the letter of nomination, résumé and the summary statement, and the Candidate Evaluation Form (See Attached). These materials will accompany the candidate's nomination throughout the process. The Candidate Evaluation Form will establish the record of evaluation for each step of the review.

4.1.3 A letter acknowledging receipt of the nomination package will be sent to each nominator, but no information about the status of the nomination or its approval beyond this acknowledgement will be provided.

4.1.4 Nominations are to be addressed to the Provost of the University of North Carolina at Pembroke. Staff in the Office of the Provost will note when each nomination is received and maintain files of nominations. Files will be closed to examination except for purposes relevant to the approval and award process.

4.1.5 Because the final decision to award a degree is the responsibility of the Board of Trustees, the awarding of the degree is not confirmed until the Board of Trustees has made its decision. Confidentiality is of paramount importance in the nomination and approval process. Official notification of the decision to award an honorary degree is the responsibility of the Chancellor.

4.1.6 Materials relevant to the nomination, beyond those provided in the nomination package, shall be collected from public sources rather than from the nominee. Because nominees typically will be eminent persons, such materials should be readily accessible. Alternatively or in addition, materials already available to the University for other purposes may be used.

5. DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

5.1 The Board of Trustees, the Chancellor, and the faculty of the University (represented by the Faculty Senate) are all partners in decisions to award honorary degrees. The final decision to confer an honorary degree rests with the Board of Trustees. To preserve confidentiality, consideration of nominations will take place in executive session. The review process will begin with a review by the Honorary Degree Committee and follow the path described below.

5.1.1 Honorary Degree Committee. The Honorary Degree Committee is composed of the Provost who chairs the Committee, Chairperson of the Faculty Senate or a designated Senate member,

President or Representative from the Student Government Association, President of the Alumni Association or a designated member of the Alumni Association, and the Chairperson of the Graduate Council. The Committee will initiate the Candidate Evaluation Form for each candidate. The Provost shall forward the review materials including the Candidate Evaluation Form, and the Honorary Degree Committee's recommendation directly to the Chancellor. The Chancellor may direct the Provost to either cease deliberations or forward the materials to the Faculty Senate for its review.

5.1.2 The Faculty Senate Review. The Provost will present the recommendation of the Honorary Degree Committee to the Faculty Senate in executive session. The presentation will include the candidate's evaluation materials and any dissenting opinions from the Honorary Degree Committee. The Faculty Senate will vote on the candidate. The recommendation of the Senate and any dissenting opinions from the Senate will be recorded on the Candidate Evaluation Form and presented by the Provost to the Deans.

5.1.3 The Deans' Review. The Provost will present the candidate and evaluation materials to the Deans for a recommendation. The Provost will record the deliberation of the Deans and his/her own recommendation on the Candidate Evaluation Form and submit the evaluation materials to the Chancellor. The Provost should also include a recommendation of the degree to be awarded.

5.1.4 The Chancellor's Review. The Chancellor will convene the Provost, a representative of the Board to Trustees, the Faculty Senate Chair and the Secretary of the Board of Trustees to review the honorary degree application. If the Chancellor's review committee determines the candidate meets the Honorary Degree Criteria, the Chancellor will forward a recommendation and the evaluation materials to the Board of Trustees.

5.1.5 The Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees will review the nomination and evaluation materials against the honorary degree criteria and will approve or disapprove the recommendation.

5.2 Honorary doctoral degrees differ from recognized earned doctorates, both as a means to differentiate the two and to emphasize the special illustrious character of the honorary degree. The Board of Trustees will also decide which degree to award. Honorary degrees usually conferred include:

5.2.1

Label	Title	Description
L.L.D.	Doctor of Laws	Outstanding public service or enterprise
Sc.D.	Doctor of Science	Distinction in any area of science (including social science)
Litt.D.	Doctor of Literature	Literary creativity or scholarship
D.F.A.	Doctor of Fine Arts	Distinction in fine arts

D.Mus.	Doctor of Music	Distinction in musical composition, performance, or scholarship
D.D.	Doctor of Divinity	Distinction in theological scholarship or pastoral work
L.H.D.	Doctor of Humane Letters	Outstanding citizenship

6. NOTIFICATION

6.1 The Chancellor, acting for the University, will notify the candidate that the University wishes to confer an honorary degree and will invite the candidate to attend the appropriate ceremonial occasion to receive the degree. (Note that the candidate may choose to decline the offer of the degree.)

6.1.1 The candidate must be present to receive the honorary degree; no honorary degree will be presented in absentia unless posthumously. Should the candidate not be able to attend the proposed ceremony, the candidate may be invited to attend the next succeeding appropriate occasion to receive the degree. Such an invitation is at the sole discretion of the Chancellor.

6.1.2 The Office of the Chancellor cooperating with, and delegating to, other appropriate units of the University will arrange the candidate's travel to the University, the accommodations during the candidate's visit, the academic regalia for the candidate (if needed), the hood appropriate to the honorary degree to be conferred, and the appropriately inscribed diploma. The Office of the Chancellor will also identify a representative of the University to present the candidate for the degree at the ceremony. The Office of the Chancellor will also assure that the candidate is included in appropriate ways in campus events associated with the ceremony at which the honorary degree is to be conferred.

6.1.3 The Office of the Chancellor will also arrange appropriate notification to the print and broadcast media, to be released near the time of the conferral of the degree. Other publicity efforts may be warranted, as well.