



Policy Chapter: Chapter 4 Administration

Policy Number and Title: 04.003 Honorary Degree Awards

I. Policy Statement

The award of an honorary degree by a university is an extension of its role as the unique institution in society devoted to the discovery, transmission, and preservation of knowledge. The University of North Texas may award an honorary degree to individuals who, by their extraordinary achievements, add substantial knowledge to or better society as a whole, whether through the professions, arts, humanities, science, or service.

II. Application of Policy

All University.

III. Policy Definitions

None.

IV. Policy Responsibilities

A. Criteria and Guidelines

1. Eligibility Criteria

- a. Eminence, in the course of a career, in intellectual, scholarly, or creative activity; in public service; or in an artistic, literary, governmental, financial, or other endeavor; or
- b. National or international recognition and contributions that have enhanced society as a whole, or that have brought significant enrichment or benefit to particular groups; and
- c. Noteworthy association or relationship with UNT, or a particularly close nexus between the individual's achievements and the mission or life of the University.

2. Guidelines

- a. For Individuals whose accomplishments are most closely related to the arts, humanities, business, public service, and similar endeavors, the honorary degree shall be Bachelor of Arts or Doctor of Humane Letters, *honoris causa*.
- b. For individuals whose accomplishments are most closely related to science or technology, the honorary degree shall be a Bachelor of Science or Doctor of Science, *honoris causa*.
- c. A Bachelor of Arts or Science may be awarded in rare and exceptional circumstances when the Honorary Degree Committee determines that this honor is more appropriate than a Doctor of Humane Letters or Doctor of Science.

- d. No more than three honorary degrees will be awarded during any academic year, except under extraordinary circumstances as determined by the President.
- e. Faculty members, administrators, members of the Board of Regents and other officials associated with the University who meet the criteria of this policy may be awarded an honorary degree only after being separated from the University for two or more calendar years.
- f. An emeritus faculty member of UNT may be awarded an honorary degree only if they have been recognized for outstanding achievement beyond their academic discipline or has pursued a meritorious second career.
- g. Individuals holding a political office are not eligible for honorary degrees while they are in office.
- h. Honorary degrees will be awarded based on distinct achievement and not upon *quid pro quo* arrangements, either for contributions promised or received, or for any other arrangement that may benefit the University or an official of the University.
- i. Honorary degrees may be awarded posthumously only in exceptional circumstances.

B. Nomination Process

- 1. Nomination may be made by any member or members of the University community (faculty, staff, students, alumni) and must be submitted, in writing, to the Office of the President, according to a calendar set by that office. Nominations must include:
 - a. A description and explanation of the nominee's accomplishments;
 - b. An explanation of how the accomplishments are connected to the goals and mission of UNT and meet the criteria for receipt of an honorary degree; and
 - c. The nominee's curriculum vitae or other significant biographical information.
- 2. Letters in support of the nomination shall not be considered.
- 3. In no instance shall the individual nominated for an honorary degree be notified of their nomination.

C. Approval Process

- 1. The Office of the President will forward all nominations to the chair of the Honorary Degree Committee.
- 2. The chair will conduct a preliminary review to determine whether the nomination merits review by the full Honorary Degree Committee.

3. The Honorary Degree Committee will review all nominations forwarded by the committee chair and submit final recommendations to the President. The committee may recommend only those individuals who meet the criteria set out in this policy.
4. Candidates recommended by the Honorary Degree Committee and approved by the President will be submitted to the Board of Regents for consideration.
5. Only the Board of Regents may approve conferral of an honorary degree.
6. The President will officially notify the individual upon whom an honorary degree will be conferred.
7. The President will determine when and where the honorary degree will be conferred.

D. Honorary Degree Committee

1. The Honorary Degree Committee shall be comprised of seven (7) members. The members shall consist of two (2) faculty members, one (1) of whom will be selected by the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate, and one (1) by the Vice President for Research and Innovation; one (1) graduate student selected by the Associate Vice President for Research and Innovation, Graduate Studies and Student Research; one (1) undergraduate student selected by the Vice President for Student Affairs; one (1) staff member selected by the Staff Senate; one (1) member selected by the Vice President for University Advancement; and the chairperson of the committee. Faculty members will serve staggered three-year terms; all other members serve staggered two-year terms. Members may be reappointed for up to three terms. The Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs shall serve as chair of the committee.
2. In considering nominees, the committee may consider only the information contained in the letter of nomination, or publicly available information. In no instance may the committee members solicit information from a nominee or consider letters in support of the nomination.
3. All committee members shall maintain the strict confidentiality of the nomination and deliberation process, and shall not disclose the names of individuals nominated or recommended for honorary degrees.

E. Recognition of Honorary Degree Recipients

1. Honorary degrees will be awarded at commencement, except in extraordinary extenuating circumstances as determined by the President. Recipients, or the recipient's representative when a degree is awarded posthumously, must be present at the ceremony at which the degree is awarded and may or may not be asked to present a commencement address.
2. In the event that an approved nominee (or the appropriate representative when a degree is awarded posthumously) cannot be present at the commencement for which the degree is approved, the individual may remain eligible to receive the degree for

three years from the date of approval without the need for re-review by the Honorary Degree Committee.

3. The university may reimburse recipients for expenses incurred to attend the recognition ceremony; however, no honorarium will be provided to a recipient of an honorary degree.

V. Resources/Forms/Tools

None.

VI. References and Cross-References

[UNT System Regents Rule 04.400, Honorary Titles and Degrees](#)

VII. Revision History

Policy Contact:	Chief of Staff, Office of the President
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