



## Conferral of Honorary Degrees Policy

Effective Date: February 15, 1989

Approval: April 14, 2016

Maintenance of Policy:  
University President and Vice  
President for Advancement

**PURPOSE:** The University of Dayton chooses to recognize and honor individuals of extraordinary achievement, distinguished service, or exemplary character by awarding honorary doctorate degrees appropriate to their accomplishments. The University uses such occasions to make a public statement about its mission, aspirations and institutional values.

**SCOPE:** Faculty, Staff, and Students

### POLICY:

The University awards honorary degrees:

1. To recognize superior leadership or achievement in a chosen field of endeavor or in the face of extraordinary circumstances;
2. To acknowledge a selfless spirit of service that has contributed significantly to improving the world, the Church, the Miami Valley, or the individual's particular community;
3. To express appreciation for exceptional generosity that has advanced the Vision of the University of Dayton to be a national leader in Catholic higher education; or
4. To publicly identify and recognize worthy role models for students, faculty, alumni, and the community to emulate in their own lives.

The recipients of honorary degrees, although chosen for any of the reasons listed above, must exemplify the Catholic and Marianist traditions of leadership and service. They have been determined to be living role models, working tirelessly for the good of fellow human beings. The University uses the bestowing of honorary degrees to demonstrate and reinforce the importance of taking an active role in community leadership and service.

### REFERENCE DOCUMENTS:

1. Code of Regulations of University of Dayton Section 7 (j)

### POLICY HISTORY:

Approved as amended  
April 14, 2016

Approved as amended  
June 12, 2000

Approved in original form  
February 15, 1989

### POLICY (continued):

Honorary degrees are typically awarded at major University events and ceremonies including convocations, symposia, public lectures and commencements. Relating the experiences of honorary degree recipients to graduating students serves as a capstone to the University's efforts to develop in students the knowledge, skills, motivation, and religious and moral convictions that will compel them to join others in addressing critical issues facing our society.

### NOMINATION PROCEDURE:

Honorary degrees are awarded by the Board of Trustees upon recommendation of the President. The President appoints a standing committee that will serve at his discretion and will provide him with advice relative to the selection of such recipients.

#### The Honorary Degree Committee

The Honorary Degree Committee is comprised of representatives of the faculty, students, alumni, Marianist Community, and administration. Membership on the Honorary Degree Committee usually runs for a period of three years, with renewal at the discretion of the President. A committee Chair is appointed by the President from among the committee members.

The President is an ex-officio member of the committee. The Vice President for University Advancement or his/her designee serves on the committee as the President's designee, assisting the committee in its deliberations and in any other way necessary.

The committee solicits nominations for honorary degrees from the entire University community. Nominees usually are not persons actively engaged at the University in full time, contractual, or salaried positions or currently members of University Boards, Councils, or Committees. They may be local, national, or international, according to the guidelines in the following section.

The committee conducts its meetings as needed and makes its suggestions to the President one year prior to awarding the degree. Because the committee's work is advisory in nature, the deliberations of the committee will remain confidential and reported only to the President.

#### The President and the Board of Trustees

The President receives the report of the Honorary Degree Committee.

The President confers with the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees about the nominees. In addition to those submitted by the Honorary Degree Committee, nominations can be made by the President and members of the Board of Trustees, independent of the committee's recommendations.

### POLICY (continued):

After consulting with the Executive Committee, the President makes recommendations to the Board of Trustees. The Board makes the final decisions on the awarding of honorary degrees.

#### President's Office Staff

The President's office staff handles all the hosting details of the honorary degree process, sending the invitations to the nominees, collecting the citations, and organizing the ceremonies at which the degrees are awarded. Members of the Honorary Degree Committee may be asked to assist in this process.

### GUIDELINES FOR CONFERRING HONORARY DEGREES:

Prospective recipients of honorary degrees can be classified many ways: leaders in their respective fields, nationally-recognized persons, former elected officials, philanthropists, outstanding organizational leaders, distinguished alumni, dedicated servants to the University, and others. The rationale for recognizing an individual with an honorary degree as listed in the "Purpose" section should always be kept in mind when nominating honorary degree candidates. However, we must also recognize that the University's standard procedure for bestowing honorary degrees may not always be appropriate, depending on the stature of the recipient.

In general, these guidelines should be followed for various classifications of honorary degree recipients:

**Nationally-recognized persons** - Recipients who are nationally known persons, former elected officials, and/or recognized leaders in their fields generally prefer to use occasions such as this as an opportunity to make a public address. Because the University has chosen to focus their commencement ceremonies on the graduates rather than on speeches, recipients of honorary degrees bestowed at commencement ceremonies do not have that option.

As an alternative, honorary degree recipients who are recognized national leaders should receive their degrees in a separate ceremony, perhaps tied to a significant event at the University or in the recipient's field, or in conjunction with a University function (e.g., the Distinguished Speaker Series). This will enable them to make a public address and perhaps reach a broader audience than if the degree were conferred at commencement.

Although the cost, in both money and effort, of such an event should not be taken lightly, conferring honorary degrees to these types of individuals in a special ceremony will both ensure their acceptance of the honor and focus some national attention on the University of Dayton.

**Outstanding Organizational Leaders** - Honorary degree recipients who are chosen as a result of the contributions they and their organizations have made to the University of Dayton and/or their communities should be recognized in a way that brings appropriate recognition to both. As with national leaders, this may be difficult to accomplish if the degree is given at commencement exercises, so perhaps a separate ceremony is most appropriate in these cases. An effort should be made to tie the awarding of the degree to a special event at the University or at the recipient's organization.

POLICY (continued):

Philanthropists, Distinguished Alumni, Dedicated Servants to the University - For most of these honorees, bestowing their degree at commencement exercises is very appropriate. However, there will be some individuals for whom it will be more meaningful to confer their degrees at a special event, such as a ribbon-cutting for a University facility.