

**UNIVERSITY of PUGET SOUND**  
Est. 1888

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
**COMMITTEE ON HONORARY DEGREES**

I. ESTABLISHMENT

The Committee on Honorary Degrees was established by the Faculty Bylaws: Article V, Section 7.A., adopted by the Board of Trustees in September 1978.

A. The Committee on Honorary Degrees:

- (1) The Committee shall consist of the Dean of the University (ex officio), two appointed faculty members, two trustees, two students, and two alumni.
- (2) The duties of the Committee shall be to recommend criteria for honorary degrees, and recommend candidates for election.
- (3) The basic document concerning honorary degrees is found in "Policy and Procedure for the Granting of Honorary Degrees," as approved by the Faculty Senate and Board of Trustees.

II. POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR THE GRANTING OF HONORARY DEGREES

Though not part of the Faculty Bylaws, the faculty and trustees have mutually agreed that this document\* provides the essential guidelines within which the committee will function.

A. The Committee on Honorary Degrees shall consist of nine members:

- (1) Two faculty members, appointed in the same manner as members of other standing faculty committees.
- (2) Two trustees, appointed by the Chairman of the Board of Trustees.
- (3) Two students, who shall be appointed annually by the ASUPS president, one of whom will be the senior class senator.
- (4) Two alumni to be appointed by the Alumni Council Executive Committee.
- (5) The Dean of the University, ex-officio.

B. The term of office for the trustees and faculty members shall ordinarily be for three years, beginning on July 1 and ending on June 30. The chair shall be determined in the manner of all other board committees.

C. Nominations for possible candidates may be made at any time by any member of the faculty, administration, students, alumni, and trustees. The committee shall also solicit nominations for, consider, and recommend Commencement Speaker candidates.

---

\*Ratified by the faculty, May 25 and December 5, 1972; by the Trustees on October 16, 1972. Revised October 24, 1980 and February 22, 1984 by the Board of Trustees. Subsequently revised by the Faculty Senate and the Board of Trustees, October 2006 and October 2009.

- D. Nominations shall be in writing, with as much supporting data as possible. The nominations shall be sent to the Office of the President.
- E. At appropriate intervals the president shall present all such nominations to the Committee on Honorary Degrees.
- F. Meetings of the Committee on Honorary Degrees shall be called by the chair at his or her discretion. The chair shall also convene a meeting upon the request of the president, dean of the university, or any two members of the committee.
- G. The Committee shall make recommendations on all nominees for election to honorary degrees. The committee's recommendations, with supporting commentary, shall be submitted to the Faculty Senate. Candidates for the Commencement Speaker shall be submitted directly to the president.
- H. The Faculty Senate shall submit its recommendations on all nominees with supporting commentary to the president of the university.
- I. The president shall forward the Senate's report to the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees, along with his or her own recommendations and commentary on the candidates, for final action.
- J. Election to the honorary degrees shall be made by the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees from candidates so recommended.
- K. The president's office shall conduct all official communications with elected candidates. Upon the candidate's acceptance the degree shall be conferred at a Commencement or other suitable occasion as soon after election as possible. The degree may be awarded in absentia at the president's discretion. Whenever possible the university shall provide transportation and hospitality for candidates at the time the degree is awarded.

### III. DEFINITION AND PURPOSE OF THE HONORARY DEGREE

- A. The academic degree is earned by successful completion of courses of study. The honorary degree is an awarded degree given to individuals to recognize and commend outstanding achievement in the areas of life that the University of Puget Sound holds in esteem. By tradition the warrant for honorary degrees comes from the university's right and duty to recognize and commend outstanding achievement beyond the academic processes for earned degrees.
- B. In the nomination of recipients for honorary degrees, the university shall search for citizens whose accomplishments clearly merit extraordinary honor with reference to the mission of the university. The stated mission of the University of Puget Sound is "to develop in its students capacities for critical analysis, aesthetic appreciation, sound judgment, and apt expression that will sustain a lifetime of intellectual curiosity, active inquiry, and reasoned independence. A Puget Sound education, both academic and co-curricular, encourages a rich knowledge of self and others, an appreciation of commonality and difference, the full, open, and civil discussion of ideas, thoughtful moral discourse, and the

integration of learning, preparing the University's graduates to meet the highest tests of democratic citizenship. Such an education seeks to liberate each person's fullest intellectual and human potential to assist in the unfolding of creative and useful lives.”

#### IV. GUIDELINES TO AID THE COMMITTEE IN ITS SELECTION OF CANDIDATES

- A. Candidates for the honorary degree will generally be of two types:
- (1) People of notable academic reputation.
  - (2) People who have made an outstanding contribution to the betterment of the regional, national, or global community through one of the main areas of public life such as business, government, labor, education, the arts, or religion.
- B. Candidates shall be selected by reference to the following:
- (1) Nominees should normally be people who value liberal arts education, have evident sympathy with the academic life, and who fully support the values for which it stands.
  - (2) In general, nominees should be people who will feel honored by the university, rather than someone who will merely bring notoriety to the university, and with whom the graduating class would feel honored to share their Commencement.
  - (3) People who, by virtue of the honor afforded them by the university, will extend Puget Sound's reputation as a national liberal arts college that stands with distinction among the most highly regarded colleges in the nation.
  - (4) Selection of honorary degree candidates should reflect the university's commitment to a diverse and talented national student body. Although regional and Methodist-affiliation are elements of historical importance to the university, the search for candidates should not be regarded as having boundaries of creed or geography
  - (5) The choice of prominent persons solely on the basis of publicity or personal contacts should be avoided.
  - (6) Political figures should be neither chosen nor excluded for narrow partisan reasons.
  - (7) Controversial figures may be chosen when they have a history of exemplifying in some special way the values for which the university stands.
  - (8) While a close relationship to the university may be an important criterion in the selection of candidates for the honorary degree, alumni status should neither privilege nor exclude a nominee.

- (9) The number of honorary degrees awarded in any one year, exclusive of the Commencement Speaker, shall not normally exceed three, it being understood that no obligation exists to grant any.
- (10) In rare situations, the committee may elect to recommend an honorary bachelor's degree to a student who, unable to earn the degree through the normal pattern of coursework, is judged to have fulfilled all requirements for the degree through distinguished experience or service.