



**University Senate  
Executive Committee**

**Response to Charge S-1405 on Procedures for Selecting Commencement Speakers and  
Honorary Degree Recipients**

**A. Charge**

**S-1405 Procedures for Selecting Commencement Speakers and Honorary Degree Recipients:** Consider, and make recommendations to ensure that, the procedure for selecting Commencement speakers, as well as those who receive honorary degrees, seeks and provides sufficient opportunity for input from the Rutgers community.

**B. Summary**

The University Senate Executive Committee, on behalf of the University Senate, examined the guidelines (both prior and current) in place at Rutgers for selecting honorary degree recipients and commencement speakers. The committee also examined those policies established at 15 fellow Association of American Universities (AAU) or Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC) members. At most of these institutions, the responsibility for selecting honorary degree recipients rests with the administration. At several, however, the process includes substantial participation by the faculty or university senate or faculty council. Where specified, commencement or convocation speakers are selected from those receiving honorary degrees or are nominated by students or the university community in a separate process.

Given the unique position of the Rutgers University Senate as the sole shared-governance body with university-wide representation of all constituencies (faculty, staff, students, alumni and administrators), as well as our desire to further integrate the Senate with its unique perspective into the fabric of the University, the Executive Committee recommends the establishment of the Rutgers University Senate Committee on Honorary Degrees, with membership to include representatives of each campus and constituency, jointly selected by the Senate leadership and university upper administration. As is current practice, commencement speakers will be selected from among those receiving honorary degrees, but the Executive Committee also recommends that Rutgers consider the feasibility of decoupling the awarding of honorary degrees from the selection of commencement speakers.

**C. Background**

The selection of Condoleezza Rice as honorary degree recipient and speaker at the 2014 Rutgers University–New Brunswick and Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences (RBHS)

commencement resulted in much controversy throughout the University community. In response to the announcement, the faculty, students, and governing bodies at Rutgers engaged in spirited discussion and debate regarding Dr. Rice's selection. The controversy generated considerable media attention, much of which was negative.

In consideration of this specific controversy, the University Senate community, in concert with the New Brunswick Faculty Council and other groups, found that an issue of equal or greater disquiet to Condoleezza Rice's selection was the selection process itself. It was evident that appropriate input from the University community had not been solicited, and that, had it been, a less controversial figure would likely have been selected. Such decisions, when made through a process lacking transparency and open consultation, or outside of the traditional Rutgers procedures for selecting commencement speakers and honorary degree recipients, essentially deny the opportunity for free and open discourse within the University community on a matter which has national or global implications for the reputation of Rutgers generally.

Until 2012, a Faculty Committee on Honorary Degrees, which included representatives from all three campuses appointed by the president, was tasked to solicit nominations for the honorary degree recipients and commencement speaker about 18 months in advance of commencement, and then to confidentially prepare a slate of candidates. The composition of this committee was changed in 2013 to include the University president, the New Brunswick and RBHS chancellors, a member of the Board of Governors, a member of the Board of Trustees, and two professors. Please note that the selection committee at Rutgers, regardless of structure, serves to advise the Board of Governors. Any confidential slate of candidates prepared by the selection committee is forwarded to the Board of Governors for final selection.

The questions remain: Does the current process provide sufficient input from students who are the celebrants of commencement, and the faculty who shepherd them through the educational process? And, if not, how may this be remedied? In an attempt to determine answers to those questions, the University Senate Executive Committee decided at its March 2014 Committee meeting that the Senate would call for a review of the process and procedures relating to selection of commencement speakers and honorary degree recipients, and the charge that appears at the beginning of this report was issued.

## **D. Discussion**

### *Rutgers policy for selection of honorary degree recipients and commencement speakers*

In guidelines in place prior to 2013<sup>1</sup>, a committee entitled the "Faculty Committee on Honorary Degrees" solicited nominations for honorary degree recipients and commencement speaker approximately 18 months in advance of university commencement, which, until 2014, included the celebration of candidates from the Camden, Newark, and New Brunswick campuses. The committee reviewed the nominations and, in consultation with the President, presented a final slate for review by the Board of Governors' Committee on University Relations and Honorary

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<sup>1</sup> Appendix I: Guidelines on Honorary Degrees and Commencement Speakers (prior to 2013).

Degrees.<sup>2</sup> The board committee then made a final recommendation on the honorary degree candidates and commencement speaker to the full Board of Governors for final approval. Members of the Faculty Committee on Honorary Degrees included faculty representatives of each campus and several students. Faculty participation on this committee dwindled in recent years. For example, the number of faculty participants declined from 16 in 2009 to 8 in 2013.

In 2013, membership of the selection committee, now entitled the “Committee on Honorary Degrees,” changed, although committee responsibilities and process did not. The following January, it was announced that Camden and Newark would hold commencement celebrations separate from that of New Brunswick/RBHS. At present, the Committee on Honorary Degrees includes the University president, the New Brunswick and RBHS chancellors, a member of the Board of Governors, a member of the Board of Trustees, and two faculty members. This committee serves to select the honorary degree recipients awarded at the Rutgers University–New Brunswick and RBHS commencement and, as previously, to advise the Rutgers Board of Governors. Modifications were also made to the Guidelines on Honorary Degrees as posted to the Rutgers Office of the Secretary of the University website<sup>3</sup>. In the current Rutgers guidelines<sup>4</sup>, a deadline for nominations is not specified, and a paragraph in the previous policy that addressed the selection of the commencement speaker<sup>5</sup> has been deleted.

Given that Camden and Newark now have separate commencement ceremonies, they have developed their own processes for selecting commencement speakers and honorary degree recipients. For the 2014 and 2015 commencement ceremonies in Camden, the vice chancellor solicited nominations for honorary degree recipients from the Camden community in January of 2014<sup>6</sup>. The chancellor appointed a committee consisting of the vice chancellor as well as faculty representing each academic unit (law school, nursing school, business school, and the school of arts and sciences). The committee vetted four or five nominees, and presented a ranked list to the chancellor, who then forwarded his recommendation(s) for the honorary degree recipient (who is also commencement speaker) to the Board of Governors. For the 2014 ceremony at Rutgers-Newark, the chancellor solicited nominations from among the campus academic and administrative leadership. Two outstanding candidates were identified: one was found to have been awarded an honorary degree by Rutgers previously; the nomination packet for the second was reviewed and approved by the Rutgers University-Newark Honorary Degrees Committee. This committee included seven faculty members as well as the vice chancellor for public affairs. The nomination proceeded from there in accordance with the University system-wide nomination process described above. The Newark chancellor has plans to reconstitute this same committee for the commencement ceremony in 2015.

### *Guidelines for honorary degree recipients formulated by AAUs and members of the CIC*

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<sup>2</sup> The Board committee that currently recommends honorary degree recipients and commencement speakers to the full board is the Committee on Alumni and University Relations.

<sup>3</sup> Revised policy: Guidelines on Honorary Degrees (2013). <http://universitysecretary.rutgers.edu/honorary-degree-nomination/honorary-degree-nomination-process>

<sup>4</sup> Appendix II: Revised policy: Guidelines on Honorary Degrees (2013)

<sup>5</sup> From Appendix I: “Commencement Speaker. Since the commencement speaker will also be awarded an honorary degree, nominations for a speaker should follow the same guidelines as honorary degree candidates.”

<sup>6</sup> <http://fas.camden.rutgers.edu/2014/02/18/call-for-honorary-degree-recipient-nominations/>;

<http://news.rutgers.edu/news/announcing-rutgers-camden-commencement-and-honors-convocation-ceremony-and-call-honorary-degree/20140123>

A survey of policies posted to the websites of a group of universities that includes fellow members of the AAU and CIC showed that procedures for selection of honorary degree recipients and commencement speakers at those institutions vary.<sup>7</sup> At most universities, the honorary degree process is coordinated by the university administration, such as the office of the secretary of the university, the office of the vice president or provost, the Board of Trustees, or the Board of Regents. In most cases, the selection committee includes faculty and administrators in varying ratios, and is representative of the schools or colleges that comprise the university. Some, including the University of Michigan, include students and alumni. At most of the universities surveyed, the nomination committee serves to advise the chancellor, university president, or governing board. In several of the universities reviewed, however, a senate or faculty council committee gathers nomination materials and forwards nominations to the senate or council for action, or to the chancellor, president, and/or governing board directly.

Specifically, the Ohio State University Senate, subject to the authority of the board of trustees, has the power to recommend to the board the candidates for honorary degrees. The selection committee consists of seven regular, tenure-track faculty members, with no more than two faculty members from the same college. Each member serves a term of five years. The duties of this committee are to establish nomination procedures and criteria, receive and review nominations, and report to the university senate, which then votes by ballot, the results of which are advisory to the president. The president then forwards the name(s) of suitable candidates to the board of trustees.

At the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, the Senate Committee on Honorary Degrees, consisting of seven senators (five faculty and two students), meets twice a year and recommends candidates to the senate for approval prior to forwarding to the provost or chancellor. Commencement speakers at Illinois are not necessarily recipients for honorary degrees. Other institutions that require approval of a faculty body (senate or faculty council) prior to administrative review include the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (here, faculty senate members vote by secret ballot) and Indiana University. Undesirable aspects of policies that require approval by a substantial membership include possible issues with confidentiality, and the voting process, which may prove cumbersome.

The process at the University of Illinois-Chicago, a public research institution, is more defined. There, the Senate External Affairs Committee serves as advisory to the Chancellor and Board of Trustees. The nominating committee consists of the chair of the Senate External Affairs Committee, three senior faculty selected by the Senate, one representative of the provost's office, and one student. The process follows a specific timeline of several years. No more than three honorary degrees are awarded each year. The senate committee forwards nomination packets to the office of the chancellor, who reviews the list of nominees, and consults with the president, trustees, and key advisors to ensure that the final nominees are acceptable. The desired candidates are then forwarded to the board of trustees for approval.

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<sup>7</sup> Appendix III: Honorary Degree and Commencement Speaker Selection Processes: Universities representing the Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC) and Public AAUs

The Senate All-University Awards Committee at the University of Minnesota has greater representation. In addition to seven faculty members, the committee consists of the chair, three students, two representatives of civil service, five alumni, two academic professionals, and six administrators who serve *ex officio*. This committee meets and reviews potential honorary degree recipients six months prior to commencement. The approval process proceeds from the awards committee to the president and then to the board of regents.

*Guidelines for commencement speakers formulated by AAUs and members of the CIC*

The processes used to solicit speakers for commencement at surveyed institutions is less evident. Where specifically stated on university websites, commencement speakers may be chosen from among the honorary degree recipients by the president, chancellor, or governing body, or may be selected in a process different from that for honorary degrees. At Michigan State University, nominations for commencement speakers are solicited from among the student body, and pools of nominees are shared with the university president, who then makes the final decision. At the University of Chicago, convocations are held four times per year, and it is customary that speakers at each event are selected by college deans from among the faculty of the University. At the University of Illinois-Chicago, each college selects a separate commencement speaker.

## **E. Recommendations**

It is clear that, given recent changes in University structure and the replacement of a university-wide commencement by three separate campus-based commencements, a new policy inclusive of adequate representation of faculty, students, staff, and alumni is needed. In keeping with the desire for free and open discourse within the Rutgers community, the Senate makes the following recommendations for a revised policy for selection of honorary degree recipients and commencement speakers:

1. In light of Rutgers' commitment to robust shared governance as presented in the 2014 Rutgers University Strategic Plan, the Rutgers policy should follow a model similar to that of several fellow AAU/CIC institutions by establishing a University Senate Committee on Honorary Degrees. The Senate is the one shared-governance body with university-wide representation of all constituencies (faculty, staff, students, and alumni), and is well suited to address such issues of university-wide importance.
2. The committee roster for the University Senate Committee on Honorary would consist of faculty, administrators, student leaders, staff, at least one alumnus, and the Executive Secretary of the Senate, with the membership being representative of all four campuses. The committee is best co-chaired by two of the University Senate Executive Committee's faculty members, each from a different campus. Since terms for Senators are limited, we recommend that members' terms are for a period of one academic year, with the possibility of serving an unlimited number of additional terms.
3. Other than the co-chairs, committee members may or may not be selected from among the Senate body, and will be jointly approved for inclusion by the Senate leadership (Senate chair and vice chair) and the administration. University Policies enabling the Senate, and Senate bylaws, will

be amended to reflect addition of this committee.

4. The Office of the Secretary of the University will solicit nominations for honorary degree recipients and commencement speaker from the entire University community on an ongoing basis, directing that all nomination packets, regardless of who prepared the nomination, will be sent to the Executive Secretary of the Senate for consideration by the Senate Committee on Honorary Degrees.<sup>8</sup> The nomination process, nomination criteria, forms, and links should be posted on the website maintained by the Office of the Secretary of the University. Nominators are free to indicate for which of the campus commencements they believe their nominee would be most appropriate, although this is not required.
5. The Senate Committee on Honorary Degrees will meet twice yearly (mid-spring and mid-fall) to review nomination materials compiled by the University Senate office. Strict confidentiality regarding the names and credentials of nominees shall be observed. Confidentiality agreements will be executed, signed, and maintained.
6. For the New Brunswick/RBHS commencement, the packets of committee-approved candidates will be ranked and submitted in a timely fashion to the New Brunswick and RBHS chancellors who, in consultation with the president, will forward their selection(s) to the Board of Governors' Committee on Alumni and University Relations. As is current practice, the Committee on Alumni and University Relations will forward the names of honorary degree recipients to the Board of Governors for approval.
7. For Camden and Newark campuses, the respective Newark or Camden committee on honorary degrees shall be given an opportunity, through their campus representative(s) on the Senate Committee on Honorary Degrees, to select from the list of vetted nominees those honorary degree recipients considered suitable for their campus. As in current practice in Newark and Camden, the campus committee shall review, rank, and forward names to the campus chancellor, who will then forward the names of nominees to the Rutgers Board of Governors for approval. Strict confidentiality regarding the names and credentials of nominees shall be observed by the campus committees.
8. To ensure a smooth and thorough process, the Committee on Honorary Degrees will prepare a brief report of the nominees for the Senate leadership (Senate chair and vice chair) and the president, and that report will remain confidential, and will require no response or input.
9. Other aspects of the selection process (criteria, confidentiality, exceptions, nomination form, and notice to successful degree recipients by the president) will remain as in the current policy and shall apply to all parties and campuses involved in the process.
10. Currently, commencement speakers are chosen from the pool of honorary degree candidates. As long as these candidate packets are reviewed by a committee that has appropriate constituent representation, this process may continue. However, given that three commencement speakers are needed each year, the University administration should consider the feasibility of

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<sup>8</sup> This should include nominations made by members of the Rutgers governing boards. Although the final decision rests with the Board of Governors, we believe it is very important that the Board hear the advice of the Rutgers community, through the Senate Committee on Honorary Degrees, before making their decision.

decoupling the awarding of honorary degrees from the selection of commencement speakers. Under such a model, the New Brunswick and RBHS campuses combined, and the Newark and Camden campuses individually, may each continue/devise a process for selecting their commencement speaker (for recommendation to the Board of Governors), who may or may not be selected from the pool of honorary degree recipients, as they see fit. These processes should follow certain fundamental guidelines to ensure appropriate input and representation of faculty, students, administrators, staff, and alumni.

11. A charge will be issued to the University Senate's University Structure and Governance Committee to work with the University administration to specify details of the processes, including which parties and offices shall be responsible for each step of the process, how they shall be performed, and on what schedule. The current policy, modified to include greater representation of faculty and students, in place at Rutgers may remain until this process can be evaluated, implemented, and completed.

**Rutgers University Senate Executive Committee members:**

Ann Gould, Chairperson, SEBS, Faculty  
Martha Cotter, Vice Chairperson, At-Large NB, Faculty  
Robert Barraco, Alumni Association  
Robert Boikess, SAS-NB, Faculty  
Natalie Borisovets, Libraries, Faculty  
Sherry Burrell, At-Large Camden, Faculty  
Amoli Joshi, SPH, Student  
Jerome Langer, RWJMS, Faculty  
George Meggali, NCAS Student  
Jon Oliver, NB Staff  
Jane Otto, Libraries, Faculty  
Robert Puhak, FAS-N, Faculty  
Karen Thompson, PTL-NB, Faculty  
Vetri Velan, Engineering, Student



## GUIDELINES ON HONORARY DEGREES AND COMMENCEMENT SPEAKERS

### **Honorary Degrees and Commencement Speaker**

The university's Faculty Committee on Honorary Degrees (Committee), appointed by the President and consisting of representatives from all three campuses, meets each fall to consider nominations of individuals to receive honorary degrees and to select a commencement speaker. Because this process involves extensive administrative planning and coordination of schedules with the recipients, the Committee begins its work approximately 18 months in advance of the commencement date. For example, the Committee that met in fall 2008 selected the honorary degree recipients and speaker for University Commencement 2010.

The Committee invites nominations from any member of the university community or the public and pares down the list of nominees over the course of several meetings to produce a slate of candidates. In consultation with the President, the Committee then presents a final slate for review by the Board of Governors' Committee on University Relations and Honorary Degrees. The board committee then makes a final recommendation on the honorary degree candidates and commencement speaker to the full Board of Governors for their approval.

### **Criteria for Awarding an Honorary Degree by Rutgers University**

The nominee for an honorary degree from Rutgers University:

1. Must evidence outstanding achievement in the humanities, arts, or sciences, or in a profession; in government, public affairs, education, or religion; in industry or commerce; or in an auxiliary field or endeavor.
2. Must evidence distinguished service and performance in his or her accomplishments that support the ideals of Rutgers and serve as an example to our students, our alumni, and society.
3. Must evidence in his or her life a commitment of service to humankind.

Honorary degrees will be bestowed by the President at the University Commencement ceremony, or by the President, or a designee, at other university commencement ceremonies or special events. Degrees may be awarded in four categories based on the specific criteria listed below:

#### **Doctor of Laws**

Distinguished service to state or to nation, to learning or to humankind, coupled with intellectual gifts and moral qualities that entitle the recipient to rank with persons of culture and high principle.

#### **Doctor of Letters or Doctor of Fine Arts**

Distinguished service to letters, art, music or education, coupled with intellectual and moral qualities that are widely recognized.

#### **Doctor of Science**

Distinguished service to science, coupled with personal qualities and a kind of learning that entitle the recipient to recognition by a learned educational body of high standing.

#### **Doctor of Humane Letters**

Distinguished service of a general nature, coupled with personal qualities and a kind of learning that entitle the recipient to recognition by a learned educational body of high standing.

## **Commencement Speaker**

Since the commencement speaker will also be awarded an honorary degree, nominations for a speaker should follow the same guidelines as honorary degree candidates.

## **Confidentiality**

Nomination information submitted will be kept confidential. Confidentiality at all points in the nominating process is crucial. No discussion concerning nominees should take place outside of those directly involved in the evaluation process or the formal evaluation and selection meetings. The President, or a designee, is responsible for contacting the candidates once the Board of Governors has approved a slate of candidates.

## **Exceptions**

At Rutgers, honorary degrees are not awarded posthumously, unless the offer has been made and accepted prior to the individual's death. Also, honorary degrees are not awarded to the following:

- Current faculty or staff
- Current holders of political office, except that an honorary degree shall be awarded to the Governor of the State of New Jersey in the year the Governor takes office
- Current university governing board members

Except in extraordinary circumstances, persons who have spent the greater part of their careers as members of the Rutgers faculty or administration will not be considered. However, persons otherwise associated with the university such as alumni, former governors and trustees, or distinguished visiting faculty will be considered.

Exceptions to these procedures, including the deadlines contained herein, may be made at the discretion of the President and the Board of Governors.

## **PROCEDURES**

### **Nomination Form**

Nominations must be made using the Honorary Degree and Commencement Speaker Nomination Form available online at <http://ruweb.rutgers.edu/governance/secretary/hondegrees.shtml>.

Nominators should include with their nomination form a curriculum vitae, if available, or biographical information and any other supporting materials. A well-written nomination form is often more persuasive than a lengthy curriculum vitae. The Committee may, at its discretion, request additional information from a nominator.

### **Holdover Nominations**

Past nominees must be renominated each year; there will be no nominations held over from prior years. Therefore, if you have nominated someone in the past and would like that person to be reconsidered, please renominate the individual.

### **Deadline for Submission of Nominations**

Typically, nominations need to be received by the Office of the Secretary the first week of October. Each fall, the Secretary of the University will announce a call for nominations and provide the university community with a deadline for submissions. Please keep in mind that because this process involves extensive administrative planning and coordination of schedules with the recipients, the Committee begins its work approximately 18 months in advance of the commencement date.



## **GUIDELINES ON HONORARY DEGREES**

### **Honorary Degrees**

Rutgers University invites nominations from any member of the university community or the public. A committee headed by the University President considers the nominations of individuals to receive honorary degrees. The President presents a final slate of candidates for review by the Board of Governors' Committee on Alumni and University Relations, which then makes a final recommendation on the honorary degree candidates to the full Board of Governors for their approval.

### **Criteria for Awarding an Honorary Degree by Rutgers University**

The nominee for an honorary degree from Rutgers University:

1. Must evidence outstanding achievement in the humanities, arts, or sciences, or in a profession; in government, public affairs, education, or religion; in industry or commerce; or in an auxiliary field or endeavor.
2. Must evidence distinguished service and performance in his or her accomplishments that support the ideals of Rutgers and serve as an example to our students, our alumni, and society.
3. Must evidence in his or her life a commitment of service to humankind.

Honorary degrees will be bestowed by the President at the University Commencement ceremony, or by the President, or a designee, at other university commencement ceremonies or special events. Degrees may be awarded in four categories based on the specific criteria listed below:

#### **Doctor of Laws**

Distinguished service to state or to nation, to learning or to humankind, coupled with intellectual gifts and moral qualities that entitle the recipient to rank with persons of culture and high principle.

#### **Doctor of Letters or Doctor of Fine Arts**

Distinguished service to letters, art, music or education, coupled with intellectual and moral qualities that are widely recognized.

#### **Doctor of Science**

Distinguished service to science, coupled with personal qualities and a kind of learning that entitle the recipient to recognition by a learned educational body of high standing.

#### **Doctor of Humane Letters**

Distinguished service of a general nature, coupled with personal qualities and a kind of learning that entitle the recipient to recognition by a learned educational body of high standing.

### **Confidentiality**

Nomination information submitted will be kept confidential. Confidentiality at all points in the nominating process is crucial. No discussion concerning nominees should take place outside of those directly involved in the evaluation process. The President, or a designee, is responsible for contacting the candidates once the Board of Governors has approved a slate of candidates.

## Exceptions

At Rutgers, honorary degrees are not awarded posthumously, unless the offer has been made and accepted prior to the individual's death. Also, honorary degrees are not awarded to the following:

- Current faculty or staff
- Current holders of political office, except that an honorary degree shall be awarded to the Governor of the State of New Jersey in the year the Governor takes office
- Current university governing board members, except that an honorary degree shall be awarded to the Chair of the Board of Governors at the conclusion of his or her term as chair of the Board

Except in extraordinary circumstances, persons who have spent the greater part of their careers as members of the Rutgers faculty or administration will not be considered. However, persons otherwise associated with the university such as alumni, former governors and trustees, or distinguished visiting faculty will be considered.

Exceptions to these procedures may be made at the discretion of the President and the Board of Governors.

## The Nomination Process

Nominations will be accepted on an ongoing basis and should be forwarded to the Secretary of the University. If you have nominated someone in the past and would like that person to be reconsidered, please renominate the individual.

Nominations must be made using the standardized Honorary Degree Nomination Form available online at <http://ruweb.rutgers.edu/governance/secretary/hondegrees.shtml>.

Nominators should include with their nomination form a curriculum vitae, if available, or biographical information and any other supporting materials. A well-written nomination form is often more persuasive than a lengthy curriculum vitae. Submit nominations and supporting documentation electronically to [secretary@oldqueens.rutgers.edu](mailto:secretary@oldqueens.rutgers.edu) or by U. S. Postal Service or campus mail to:

Secretary of the University  
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey  
7 College Avenue  
Winants Hall, Room 112, College Avenue Campus  
New Brunswick, NJ 08901-1260

**Appendix III.  
Honorary Degree and Commencement Speaker Selection Processes  
Universities representing the Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC) and Public AAUs**

**Indiana University (AAU, CIC)**

**Responsible office** University Faculty Council, Office of University Ceremonies

**Links**

**Guidelines:**

<http://www.iu.edu/~ufc/docs/policies/HonoraryDegree.pdf>  
[http://ceremonies.iu.edu/medals/honorary\\_degrees.shtml](http://ceremonies.iu.edu/medals/honorary_degrees.shtml)

**Past recipients:**

<https://honorsandawards.iu.edu/university/honorary-degrees.shtml>

**Recommendation process**

Honorary Degrees Committee forward nominees to the Faculty Council for a vote. After approval by the University Faculty Council, the nominations are transmitted to the President of the University for submission to the Board of Trustees for formal action

**Composition of selection committee**

Honorary Degrees Committee (HDC; standing committee of the University Faculty Council); membership is composed of four members of the University Faculty Council selected by the Nomination Committee, and four members from outside the Council selected by the President. The chairperson is one of the four Council members selected in consultation with the President; faculty council votes 1 to 2 years prior to commencement

**Nominations**

All nominations are referred to the Honorary Degrees Committee

**Selection of commencement speaker**

Process unknown; commencement ceremonies at each campus; Bloomington campus has ceremonies in December and May

**Michigan State University (AAU, CIC)**

**Responsible office** Office of the Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies

**Links**

**Guidelines:**

[http://commencement.msu.edu/speakers\\_and\\_honorary\\_degrees](http://commencement.msu.edu/speakers_and_honorary_degrees)  
<http://vprgs.msu.edu/guidelines-nominations-honorary-degrees>

**Honorary degree nomination materials:**

<http://vprgs.msu.edu/sites/default/files/Honorary%20Degree%20Nomination%20Form%20Spring%202014%20check%20boxes.pdf>

**Past degree recipients:**

<http://vprgs.msu.edu/msu-honorary-degree-recipients-alphabetical-list>

**Past speakers:**

<http://commencement.msu.edu/general-information/speakers/past-speakers>

**Recommendation process** Faculty Committee on Honorary Degrees advises the president

**Composition of selection committee** Faculty Committee on Honorary Degrees: 11 members (9 faculty, 2 administrators); terms of 3 years

**Nominations** Solicited university-wide, coordinated through the dean's office of the nominating college. Deadline in September

**Selection of commencement speaker** Separate process: students nominate speakers to the office of the president; president also has option of designating speakers for the commencement ceremonies to receive honorary degrees

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### Northwestern University (Private AAU, CIC)

**Responsible office** Office of the Provost

**Links**

**Guidelines:**  
<http://www.northwestern.edu/provost/committees/honorary-degrees/>

**Past recipients:**

<http://www.northwestern.edu/provost/committees/honorary-degrees/honorary-degree-recipients.html>

**Commencement speaker selection:**

<http://www.northwestern.edu/newscenter/stories/2013/06/commencement-speaker-selection-process.html#sthash.0uMMIcBc.dpuf>

**Recommendation process** Recommendations of the Committee on Honorary Degrees are reviewed and voted on by the Faculty Senate each fall. The Senate then transmits its recommendations to the Board of Trustees for final approval. Once the Board of Trustees approves the recommendations from the Faculty Senate, formal invitations are issued to the individuals

**Composition of selection committee** Committee on Honorary Degrees: 9 faculty, 3 *ex officio* staff; term of 1 year

**Nominations** Nominations are received by the Provost's office (Secretary, Committee on Honorary Degrees) from the university community; nominations should be received by August the year prior to commencement

**Selection of commencement speaker** It is Northwestern tradition that the commencement speaker also be awarded an honorary degree from the University. So after the president makes a selection and availability is confirmed, the speaker's name is forwarded to the University's honorary degree committee for review and on to the faculty senate and the executive committee of the Board of Trustees for approval

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### Ohio State University (AAU, CIC)

**Responsible office** University Senate serves as advisory to the President/Board of Trustees

**Links** **Guidelines:**

<http://senate.osu.edu/?page.id=219>

**Honorary degree nomination materials:**

<http://senate.osu.edu/?page.id=3401>

**Past degree recipients:**

<http://senate.osu.edu/?page.id=3115>

**Past speakers:**

<http://library.osu.edu/find/collections/the-ohio-state-university-archives/buckeye-history/commencement-addresses/alphabetical-listing-of-speakers/>

**Recommendation process** After consultation with the University Senate, the President makes a recommendation to the Board of Trustees

**Composition of selection committee** Honorary Degrees Committee: 7 tenure-track faculty that are members of the University Senate; no more than 2 from the same college; terms of 5 years. Duties and responsibilities:

- (1) Establish definite standards of scholarly attainment
- (2) Establish procedures for the nomination of potential candidates for honorary degrees
- (3) Receive nominations concerning persons who might be considered for an honorary degree
- (4) Review thoroughly the achievements and qualifications of all persons nominated (each forwarded packet must receive no fewer than 4 votes)
- (5) Report to the university senate for its consideration: voting by senate membership by ballot; advisory to the President

**Nominations** Solicited university-side, number of nominees forwarded to the president is limited to 8 per calendar year

**Selection of** Process unknown

**commencement speaker**

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**Pennsylvania State University (AAU, CIC)**

**Responsible office** Office of the Vice President for Administration

**Links** **Guidelines and past recipients:**  
<http://www.psu.edu/ur/poole/honorary.html>

**Recommendation process** Process unknown; very little information on the process posted to the website

**Composition of selection committee** Process unknown

**Nominations** Honorary Degree nominations are accepted throughout the year by the Office of the Vice President for Administration

**Selection of** Process unknown

**commencement speaker**

**Purdue University (AAU, CIC)**

**Responsible office** Board of Trustees

**Links**

**Guidelines:**  
<http://www3.ag.purdue.edu/dean/facultyinfo/Documents/Hon%20Doc%20Process%20at%20Purdue.pdf>

**Past recipients:**

[http://www.science.purdue.edu/Alumni/recognition/honorary\\_doctorates/index.html](http://www.science.purdue.edu/Alumni/recognition/honorary_doctorates/index.html)

**Recommendation process**

Candidates for an Honorary Doctorate are first identified by their department, and then endorsed by their college or school. Next, an “all-University committee” discusses candidates and finally the President and Board of Trustees give approval

**Composition of selection committee**

“All University” committee, but composition is unknown

**Nominations**

All nominations for honorary degrees are reviewed by the appropriate faculty, the dean of the college/school, and the University Committee on Faculty Promotions

**Selection of commencement speaker**

Process unknown

**Rutgers University (AAU, CIC)**

**Responsible office** Secretary of the University

**Links**

**Guidelines (includes links to guidelines and nomination forms):**  
<http://universitysecretary.rutgers.edu/honorary-degree-nomination/honorary-degree-nomination-process>

**Past degree recipients:**

<http://universitysecretary.rutgers.edu/degrees>

**Recommendation process**

New Brunswick/RBHS: Committee on Honorary Degrees advises the President who advises the Board of Governors

Camden: an honorary degree committee advises the Chancellor who advises the Board of Governors

Newark: Rutgers-Newark Honorary Degree Committee advises the Chancellor who advises the Board of Governors

**Composition of selection committee**

New Brunswick/RBHS: Committee on Honorary Degrees: members include the University president, the New Brunswick and RBHS Chancellors, a member of the Board of Governors, a member of the Board of Trustees, and 2 faculty members

Camden: honorary degree committee appointed by the Chancellor consisting of the Vice-Chancellor as well as faculty representing each academic unit

Newark: 7 faculty and the Vice-Chancellor for Public Affairs

**Nominations** For the 2014 commencement ceremony: solicited by each campus individually

New Brunswick/RBHS: nominations solicited from the university community and public by the Secretary of the University, nominations accepted on an on-going basis

Camden: Vice-Chancellor from the Camden community

Newark: Chancellor from the academic and administrative leadership

**Selection of commencement speaker** Commencement speaker chosen from among those selected for honorary degrees

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**University of Chicago (Private AAU, CIC)**

**Responsible office** Office of the Secretary

**Links** **Past recipients:**

<http://convocation.uchicago.edu/page/honorary-degrees>

**Past speakers:**

<http://convocation.uchicago.edu/page/speakers>

**Committee members:**

<https://sof.sites.uchicago.edu/page/2013-2014-committee-honorary-degrees>

**Recommendation process** Degrees are conferred by the Board of Trustees upon recommendation of the Council of the University Senate

**Composition of selection committee** The Committee on Honorary Degrees: 10 faculty, 2 *ex officio* (President, Provost); serve 3-year terms. The committee is associated with the Council of the University Senate, but the relationship is not clear

**Nominations** University faculty nominate candidates at the level of degree-granting units

**Selection of commencement speaker** Convocations are held at the end of each academic quarter. Convocation speakers are members of the faculty. University faculty nominate candidates at the level of degree-granting units. Departmental honorary degree committees collect letters of recommendation from outside scholars as well as complete bibliographies of the candidates. They make their recommendations to the divisional committees, which then make their recommendations to the deans

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**University of Illinois at Chicago (public research institution)**

**Responsible office** Senate External Affairs Committee serves as advisory to the Chancellor/Board of Trustees

<b>Links</b>	<p><b>Guidelines:</b>  <a href="http://www.uic.edu/depts/senate/HonoraryDegreeGuidelines.pdf">http://www.uic.edu/depts/senate/HonoraryDegreeGuidelines.pdf</a></p> <p><b>Past degree recipients:</b>  <a href="http://www.uic.edu/depts/ovcsa/commencement/honorary_degrees.shtml">http://www.uic.edu/depts/ovcsa/commencement/honorary_degrees.shtml</a></p> <p><b>Past speakers:</b>  <a href="http://www.uic.edu/depts/ovcsa/commencement/commencement_speakers.shtml">http://www.uic.edu/depts/ovcsa/commencement/commencement_speakers.shtml</a></p>
<b>Recommendation process</b>	<p>Senate Committee on External Affairs and Public Service prepares packets and advises the Chancellor, who with the President, trustees, and key advisors, ensures that the nominee(s) are acceptable. Chancellor advises the Board of Trustees.</p>
<b>Composition of selection committee</b>	<p>The Senate Committee on External Affairs and Public Service includes: chair and 4 senior faculty selected by the Senate; 1 representative of the provost's office; 2 students; Associate-Chancellor (<i>ex officio</i>); serve a term of 5 years</p>
<b>Nominations</b>	<p>Members of the university community are solicited; nomination packets are forwarded to the Senate office in fall; recommendations are made in year 2 for awarding in years 3 or 4; no more than 3 degrees are awarded per year</p>
<b>Selection of commencement speaker</b>	<p>Each college selects a separate speaker</p>

**University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (AAU, CIC)**

<b>Responsible office</b>	Senate Committee on Honorary Degrees
<b>Links</b>	<p><b>Nomination process:</b>  <a href="http://www.senate.illinois.edu/hd_criteria.asp">http://www.senate.illinois.edu/hd_criteria.asp</a></p> <p><b>Nomination materials:</b>  <a href="http://www.senate.illinois.edu/hd_form.pdf">http://www.senate.illinois.edu/hd_form.pdf</a></p> <p><b>Past recipients:</b>  <a href="http://commencement.illinois.edu/ceremonies/honors_awards.html">http://commencement.illinois.edu/ceremonies/honors_awards.html</a></p> <p><b>Senate bylaws:</b>  <a href="http://senate.illinois.edu/bylaws_hd.asp">http://senate.illinois.edu/bylaws_hd.asp</a></p>
<b>Recommendation process</b>	<p>Senate Committee on Honorary Degrees forwards names to the Senate for approval; Senate advises the Provost/Chancellor who advises the President</p>
<b>Composition of selection committee</b>	<p>Senate Committee on Honorary Degrees (7 senators; 5 faculty, 2 students); 2-year terms</p>
<b>Nominations</b>	<p>Nominations are forwarded to the Chair of the Senate; ongoing process. Senate guidelines emphasize recommendations by departments and other academic units. A nomination coming to the Committee from a member of the Board of Trustees, an alumnus/alumna or</p>

friend of the University will be referred to the proper academic unit for support of the faculty

**Selection of commencement speaker** Process unknown, but not necessarily recipient of an honorary degree. Minutes of one Senate meeting stated that the Senate EC acted on behalf of the Senate to award the commencement speaker an honorary degree.

**University of Iowa (AAU, CIC)**

**Responsible office** Board of Regents

**Links**

**Guidelines:**  
<http://www.uiowa.edu/~honorary/index.html>  
<http://www.uiowa.edu/~honorary/policy/>

**Nomination materials:**

<http://www.uiowa.edu/~honorary/nomination-form/index.html>

**Past recipients:**

<http://www.uiowa.edu/~honorary/recipients/index.html>

**Recommendation process** Honorary Degrees Selection Committee advises the Provost, President, and Board of Regents

**Composition of selection committee** The Honorary Degree Committee consists of the following voting members: 5 associate/full professors (selected by the Faculty Senate to ensure ethnic and gender balance); 2 associate/full professors selected by the Provost; 1 *ex officio* from the Provost's Office; members serve 3-year terms. The Faculty Senate Committee on Committees shall appoint the chair of the Honorary Degree Selection Committee from the list of seven faculty appointees.

**Nominations** Nominations should be sent to the Honorary Degree Selection Committee; nominations close 9 months prior to commencement

**Selection of commencement speaker** Process unknown

**University of Maryland at College Park (AAU, CIC)**

**Responsible office** Board of Regents

**Links**

**Guidelines:**  
<http://www.president.umd.edu/policies/iii300anew.html>

**Past degree recipients:**

<http://www.lib.umd.edu/univarchives/macmil/honorarydegrees1.html>

**Past speakers:**

[http://www.commementation.umd.edu/information/information\\_pastspeakers.cfm](http://www.commementation.umd.edu/information/information_pastspeakers.cfm)

<b>Recommendation process</b>	President nominates the Committee on Honors and Prizes, who advises (in succession) the: University President, Chancellor, Board of Regents
<b>Composition of selection committee</b>	Committee on Honors and Prizes; voting members include faculty and administrators
<b>Nominations</b>	Committee on Honors and Prizes solicits nominations from the campus community
<b>Selection of commencement speaker</b>	Process unknown

**University of Michigan (AAU, CIC)**

**Responsible office** Board of Regents

**Links**

**Guidelines:** <http://president.umich.edu/about/committees/honorary-degree-committee/>

**Honorary degree nomination materials:**

<http://president.umich.edu/about/committees/honorary-degree-committee/honorary-degree-nomination-submission/>

**Past degree recipients:**

<http://president.umich.edu/about/committees/honorary-degree-committee/history-of-the-honorary-degree-at-the-university-of-michigan/>

**Past speakers:**

<http://president.umich.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2014/06/speakers1990-2013.pdf>

<http://president.umich.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2014/06/speakers1930-1989.pdf>

<http://president.umich.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2014/06/speakers1878-1929.pdf>

**Recommendation process** Honorary Degree Committee, who advises the University President and the Board of Regents

**Composition of selection committee**

Honorary Degree Committee, appointed by the Board of Regents on recommendation of the University President; members include the Dean of graduate Studies, chair, 7 members of the University Senate; faculty representing the Ann Arbor (5), Dearborn (1), and Flint (1) campuses; 2 students; 2 alumni; 6 administrators including President (*ex officio*); 3 year term; meets twice yearly for a March deadline

**Nominations** Solicited university-wide

**Selection of commencement speaker**

Selected by the president, usually from among pool of those who receive honorary degrees

**University of Minnesota, Twin Cities (AAU, CIC)**

**Responsible office** University Senate

**Links**

**Guidelines:**

- <http://uawards.umn.edu/>
- <http://www1.umn.edu/usenate/committees/alluhonors.html>
- [http://www1.umn.edu/usenate/alluhonors/hd\\_guidelines.pdf](http://www1.umn.edu/usenate/alluhonors/hd_guidelines.pdf)

**Board of Regents policy**

<http://regents.umn.edu/sites/default/files/policies/Awards.pdf>

**Honorary degree nomination materials:**

[http://uawards.umn.edu/uawards/award\\_pages/hd.html](http://uawards.umn.edu/uawards/award_pages/hd.html)

**Past recipients:**

[http://uawards.umn.edu/uawards/recipients/hd\\_rec.html](http://uawards.umn.edu/uawards/recipients/hd_rec.html)

**Committee charge:**

<http://www1.umn.edu/usenate/charges/alluhonorsch.html>

**Recommendation process** Senate All-University Awards Committee advises the University President who advises the Board of Regents

**Composition of selection committee** Senate All-University Awards Committee: members include the chair, 7 faculty 2 representatives of civil service, 5 alumni, 2 academic professionals, 3 students, and 6 *ex officio* as specified by vote of the Senate; decisions are made 6 months prior to ceremony

**Nominations** Nominations are solicited from current employees or alumni of the university by the Director of University Awards and Honors on behalf of the Senate All-University Awards Committee

**Selection of commencement speaker** Process unknown

**University of Nebraska-Lincoln (CIC)**

**Responsible office** Faculty Senate

**Links**

**Guidelines:**

<http://www.unl.edu/facultysenate/honorary-degrees-committee>

**Recommendation process** The Honorary Degrees Committee of the Faculty Senate recommends candidates to the Faculty Senate; members vote by secret ballot; names of those receiving simple majority vote are forwarded to the President of the Senate to the Chancellor for submission to the Board of Regents

**Composition of selection committee** The Honorary Degrees Committee shall consist of 7 members: 5 faculty members appointed by the President of the Faculty Senate; 1 faculty member appointed by the Dean of Libraries; and the Chancellor, or designee; committee members serve 3-year terms

**Nominations** The Honorary Degrees Committee shall invite nominations from colleges and appropriate administrative units

**Selection of commencement speaker** Process unknown

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**University of Pennsylvania (Private AAU)**

**Responsible office** Office of the University Secretary

**Links** **Guidelines:**  
<https://secure.www.upenn.edu/secretary/HDhome.html>

**Honorary degree nomination materials:**  
<https://secure.www.upenn.edu/secretary/HonoraryDegrees.php>

**Past recipients:**  
<https://secure.www.upenn.edu/secretary/honorary.html>

**Past speakers:**  
<https://secure.www.upenn.edu/secretary/speakers38.html>

**Recommendation process** University Council Honorary Degrees Committee advises the Trustee Committee on Honorary Degrees and Awards

**Composition of selection committee** The University Council Honorary Degrees Committee includes 8 faculty, 2 graduate/professional students, 2 undergraduate students and staff liaisons

**Nominations** Nominations are solicited university-wide by the selection committee

**Selection of commencement speaker** Administered through the Office of the Secretary and advisory to the University President

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**University of Wisconsin-Madison (AAU, CIC)**

**Responsible office** Secretary of the Faculty

**Links** **Guidelines:**  
<https://www.secfac.wisc.edu/committees/honorarydegrees/NominatingProcedures.htm>

**Past recipients:**  
<https://www.secfac.wisc.edu/committees/honorarydegrees/PastRecipients.asp>

**Past speakers:**  
<http://www.commencement.wisc.edu/past-ceremonies/>

**Recommendation process**      Committee on Honorary Degrees advises the Chancellor who advises the Board of Regents

**Composition of selection committee**      Committee on Honorary Degrees: 28 members including the Chancellor, University President, 16 faculty selected by the faculty [four from each division], 10 faculty or administration appointed by the Chancellor; deadline is October

**Nominations**      Nominations are solicited from faculty and staff with an April deadline (year prior to commencement)

**Selection of commencement speaker**      Process unknown; commencement speakers include chancellors and do not appear to be recipients of honorary degrees