Honorary Degree Policy

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SECTION I. CRITERIA

The University grants honorary degrees on a selective basis, to recognize exceptional contributions to the University or the broader community that are consistent with the mission and convictions of the University. These contributions may be manifested through scholarships, artistic expression, public service, professional achievement, or other significant work that advances the common good.

Candidates for honorary degrees are not required to meet the University's usual degree requirements. Degrees may be awarded posthumously.

SECTION II. PROCESS

Honorary degrees may be granted only with the prior approval of the University's Board of Trustees or the Executive Committee of the Board. Nominations for honorary degrees may be made by any member of the University community. Nominations by the faculty should be submitted in accordance with the Faculty Handbook. Nominations must include a letter demonstrating that the candidate meets the University's criteria for honorary degrees as well as supporting documents, such as a curriculum vita. The expectation is that such nominations will be made at least at least six months prior to the time of conferral of the degree. Exceptions to this timing may be made at the discretion of the president.

Nominations are submitted to the president, who will solicit advice from the University Tenure and Promotion Committee and the President's Cabinet. Following such consultation, the president will determine whether or not to seek approval for granting the degree and may submit the nomination to the Board or Executive Committee accordingly.

If awarded, the degree may be conferred at a prominent public event, such as commencement, dedication of a building, or major address. At the discretion of the president, candidates who are not selected to receive an honorary degree may be considered for another University honor (such as the St. Thomas Aquinas Medallion or the Distinguished Service Award).

SECTION III. TYPES OF HONORARY DEGREES

The degree granted will be according to the area of significant contributions of the recipient as follows:

Doctor of Humane Letters (L.H.D.) – human welfare or the humanities
Doctor of Laws (LL.D.) – government or public service
Doctor of Letters (Lett.D.) – literature or the creative or performing arts
Doctor of Science (Sc.D.) – science, medicine and other health professions, engineering, or technology