



POLICY & PROCEDURE DOCUMENT

NUMBER: 1.41412

DIVISION: Academic Affairs

TITLE: Honorary Degrees

DATE: October 1, 2012

REVISED: November 1, 2015, October 7, 2019

Authorized by: ~~David D. Lee, Provost and VP for Academic Affairs~~ Cheryl Stevens, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

I. Purpose and Scope

Western Kentucky University awards honorary degrees to individuals who have made exemplary contributions to the University, the state, the nation, or the world. Recipients of honorary degrees are recognized for their general excellence and for their extraordinary achievements in areas of human endeavor which reflect the ideals and objectives of the University. Individuals who receive honorary degrees will exemplify the University's values, vision and service mission. Honorary degrees may be awarded to outstanding citizens of the Commonwealth, outstanding alumni of the University, outstanding living benefactors of the University, or individuals of national or international prominence whose contributions have enhanced society as a whole.

II. Policy

1. The Board of Regents of Western Kentucky University has exclusive authority to authorize the awarding of honorary degrees on behalf of the University. The Board will act only upon the recommendation of the President and with the advice of the Honorary Degree Review Committee.
2. Honorary degrees that may be awarded include
 - a. Doctor of Business Leadership
 - b. Doctor of Fine Arts
 - c. Doctor of Letters

- d. Doctor of Humanities
 - e. Doctor of Laws
 - f. Doctor of Public Service
 - g. Doctor of Science
3. Honorary degrees may only be awarded to living individuals, and may not be awarded to members of the Board of Regents or members of the faculty and staff of the University during their term of service or employment.
 4. Honorary degrees may be conferred during any appropriate function of the University, including commencements and special events or ceremonies.
 5. Due to the highly selective nature of honorary degrees, no more than four will be conferred in any one academic year.
 6. The Honorary Degree Review Committee is convened by the Vice Provost (or designee) and is comprised of the Chair of the University Faculty Senate, the Chair of the Staff Council Senate, the Vice President for Development and Alumni Relations Philanthropy and Alumni Engagement, the Vice President for a representative from Public Affairs, and four University Distinguished Professors selected by the Provost (or designee). The Committee will select the Chair.

III. Procedure

1. A call for nominations will be made by the Office of the Provost at the beginning of each fall semester. For full consideration, nominations should be submitted by September 10. Any nomination received after September 10 will normally be held for consideration until the following year. The subsequent timeline is attached as an Appendix to this policy.
2. Nominations for possible recipients of honorary degrees may be made by students, faculty, staff, administrators, alumni, or friends of the University and should be directed to the Office of the Provost. Nominations should not exceed three pages in length and should include, at a minimum, a statement explaining the nominee's eligibility for this exceptional honor, the relevance of their endeavors to WKU, and which of the available honorary degrees (see II.2) appears to be most appropriate. Letters of support from individuals other than the nominator, but within the University, may also be included in the nomination.
3. CONFIDENTIALITY IS A CRUCIAL ELEMENT OF THE NOMINATION PROCESS. Under no circumstances should the nominee be informed that his or her name has been put forward. The nominator should not solicit letters of support on behalf of the nominee from people outside the University..
4. The Honorary Degree Review Committee will review the nominations and, after careful consideration, submit a written recommendation to the Provost (or designee) as to which nominee(s) should be considered for an honorary degree., and suggestions for an appropriate venue for conferral of the degree. Every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality during the review process.

5. The Provost (or designee) will evaluate the recommendations of the Honorary Degree Review Committee and will recommend any candidate(s) for honorary degrees to the President.
6. The President will evaluate the recommendations of the Provost and will recommend any candidate(s) for honorary degrees to the Board of Regents for approval.
7. Upon approval of the Board of Regents, the President will, on behalf of the Board of Regents, inform successful nominees of the University's desire to confer an honorary degree upon them. The Office of the President will ~~assist in~~ discuss with the honoree suggestions for an appropriate venue and make necessary arrangements for the degree to be conferred

IV. Reason for Revision

November, 2015

Non-substantive changes as part of the five year policy review per Policy 0.000V Policy on Policies.

October, 2019

Changes made to clarify the process of contacting the nominee(s) and selecting appropriate venue for recognition/degree conferral, and appropriately align the process with the quarterly Board of Regents meeting schedule.

APPENDIX – TIMELINE

- August 20: Call for nominations sent from Academic Affairs
- August 30: ~~Vice~~ Provost (or designee) ~~Convenes~~ **Selects** Review Committee and schedules a date/time to convene the committee on or shortly after September 11. The Review Committee will select a chair and set a date prior to September 20 to review nomination materials.
- September 10: Nominations due to Academic Affairs
- September 20: Review Committee submits recommendations to the Provost **(or designee)**
- September 26: Provost submits recommendations to the President
- October: **President reviews Provost's recommendation and contacts** ~~Successful candidate~~ **nominee(s) contacted by President to confirm acceptance of the honorary degree. President (or designee) notifies the Provost (or designee) of acceptance or decline.**
- ~~Dec~~ **Feb/Mar** BOR Meeting: President submits formal recommendation to Board of Regents **in collaboration with the Provost (or designee).**
- ~~December Commencement: Honorary Degree(s) conferred (or later)~~
- March:** Following Board of Regents approval, President (or designee) contacts the honorary degree recipient(s) to make formal arrangements for recognition/degree conferral.

*****NOTE: If any of the dates above fall on a weekend or holiday, the task will be due the next business day.**