

## ACADEMIC COUNCIL REPORT

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### SESSION:

Public  
Non-Public

  

Decision  
Discussion/Direction  
Information

  
  

**TO:** Academic Council

**DATE:** March 28, 2023

**FROM:** Lauren Turner, University Secretary

**SUBJECT:** Review of Honorary Degrees Procedure and Committee Terms of Reference

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### GNC MANDATE:

- Section 1(a) of the GNC Terms of Reference provides that the Committee has, amongst others, the responsibility to:
  - Advise Academic Council on the establishment, terms of reference, composition, membership and retirement of its committees, including its own; and
  - Propose, oversee, and periodically review the governance policies of Academic Council and its committees and make recommendations to Academic Council for development and revision when appropriate

### BACKGROUND:

It is a good governance practice to regularly review the key governance documents of the University. In addition, a review of the Terms of Reference (TOR) and Procedure for Honorary Degrees (Procedure) is part of the By-Law 2 Implementation plan.

### CONSULTATION:

Revisions to the TOR and Procedure are presented to Academic Council (AC) for input.

A short summary of the proposed revisions are as follows:

#### TOR

- made explicit the mechanism by which faculty and student members are included in the Committee
  - GNC recommended drawing from AC rather than electing members to the Committee

- proposed for inclusion based on GNC discussion: addition of a staff member to the Committee
- removed duplicate content found in the Procedure

#### Procedures

- removal of content duplicated in the TOR
- removal of specific timelines to allow discretion to the Committee to meet at such times as best facilitate its work
- reference to multiple convocations instead of one to align with University practice
- questions posed to solicit feedback on presentation and hosting
- per GNC feedback, rules around alumni eligibility added
- minor grammatical fixes

#### **NEXT STEPS:**

The consultation on the TOR and Procedure will be as follows:

- ✓ GNC (consultation) – March 21, 2023
- AC (consultation)
- ALT (written consultation)
- Online Consultation (written consultation)
- GNC (approval - procedure)
- AC (recommendation for approval – TOR)
- Board (approval – TOR)

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#### **SUPPORTING MATERIALS:**

- Honorary Degrees TOR – revised Feb 17 2023
- Honorary Degrees Procedure – revised Feb 17 2023

## **Terms of Reference – Honorary Degrees Committee**

### **1. TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Honorary Degrees Committee is the body responsible for recommending honorary degree recipients to the President and Vice-Chancellor. The Committee's responsibilities include:

- reviewing honorary degree submissions;
- considering submissions against the criteria set out in the Honorary Degrees Procedures;
- recommending to the President and Vice-Chancellor a list of names of potential honorary degree recipients and the type of degree appropriate; and
- recommending to the President and Vice-Chancellor the convocation at which the degree should be conferred and the convocation speaker.

### **2. MEETINGS**

The Honorary Degrees Committee will meet at least once per year at the call of the Chair. The meeting(s) will be scheduled at such time as best supports the deliberative work of the Committee.

### **3. MEMBERSHIP**

- The President and Vice-Chancellor (Chair)
- The Chancellor
- The Provost and Vice-President Academic
- The Vice-President, Advancement
- Three faculty members drawn from Academic Council
- One student representative drawn from Academic Council
- One administrative staff member drawn from Academic Council
- The Secretary, Academic Council (ex-officio, non-voting)

### **4. QUORUM**

Quorum requires that a majority of the Committee members entitled to vote be present.



Classification	1599.04
Parent Policy	N/A
Framework Category	Academic
Approving Authority	Academic Council
Policy Owner	President
Approval Date	TBD
Review Date	To be assigned
Last Updated	Editorial Amendments, February 18, 2020
Supersedes	N/A

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## HONORARY DEGREES

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### 1.1 CRITERIA

Honorary degrees are to recognize persons who have:

- made an outstanding intellectual and/or scholarly contribution in their chosen field of academic eminence; or
- provided outstanding service and/or contributions to greater society through non-academic achievements and/or public service; or
- made major contributions in areas relevant to the mission of the University and/or to Durham Region/Northumberland County.

### 2.0 DEGREES CONFERRED

Academic Council may award either of the following honorary degrees:

#### 2.1 Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa* (LLD)

Awarded for outstanding achievement in the social sciences in the broadest sense, or significant community contributions at the local, national, or international levels.

#### 2.2 Doctor of Science, *honoris causa* (DSc)

Awarded for outstanding achievements in the pure and applied sciences and engineering, usually through research.

### 3.0 ~~COMMITTEE ON HONORARY DEGREES~~ COMMITTEE

~~Academic Council shall establish a Committee on Honorary Degrees to be comprised of:~~

- ~~The Chancellor~~
- ~~The President (Chair)~~
- ~~The Provost~~
- ~~The Vice-President of Advancement~~
- ~~Three faculty members~~
- ~~One student representative~~
- ~~The Secretary, Academic Council (ex officio, non-voting)~~

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Approved by Academic Council, December 2005

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The ~~Committee on~~ Honorary Degrees Committee is charged with reviewing all nominations and recommending to the President a list of names of potential degree recipients, the type of degree in each case, the appropriate convocation at which the degree should be granted, and the choice of convocation speaker. The Committee shall operate in accordance with its Terms of Reference.

#### 4.1 GUIDELINES

- 4.2 Faculty and staff at the University are not eligible for nomination until at least three years after retirement. Alumni are not eligible until at least three years after graduation.
- 4.3 A nominee may not be an active Canadian politician.
- 4.4 The nominee must be living (if the candidate was to pass away after accepting the nomination, but prior to its award, the degree would be awarded posthumously).
- 4.5 Nominations that reflect the diversity of Canadian society are encouraged.
- 4.6 The University shall be under no obligation to award an honorary doctorate in any year.
- 4.7 Normally not more than one honorary degree will be awarded at each distinct convocation ceremony, although a second single degree may be awarded in exceptional circumstances.
- 4.8 The Committee shall direct particular focus to individuals who have not received honorary degrees from other institutions, but who are clearly meritorious candidates.

#### 5.1 SELECTION PROCESS

- 5.2 The Committee on Honorary Degrees shall call for nominations for honorary degrees ~~in~~ September of each year. The call shall set out the deadline for nominations.
- 5.3 Nominations may be received from members of the university community and the community at large.
- 5.23 Nominations should include appropriate background information, such as basic personal information, a summary of the nominee's achievements and other appropriate supporting documentation.
- ~~5.3 All nominations must be forwarded to the Committee on Honorary Degrees on or before October 31.~~
- 5.4 The Committee shall meet ~~in November of each year~~ to develop a list of worthy candidates to serve for each of the convocation ceremonies(s) of the coming year.
- 5.6 Recommendations of the Committee on Honorary Degrees will be forwarded to the President for his/her/their consideration. Names of candidates endorsed by the Committee will be kept on a reserve list for three years.
- 5.7 Recipients will be selected by the President from among the approved candidates on the reserve list. Candidates chosen shall be contacted directly by the President.
- 5.8 The outcome of the Committee's deliberations shall not be released out of respect for the nominee and to ensure the integrity of the process.
- 5.9 If the nominee declines the invitation or is unable to be present at the respective convocation, the President may approach the next nominee on the approved list.

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5.10 In the event that an individual declines acceptance of an honorary degree that has been approved by the Committee, or where the conferring of an approved degree has not been scheduled within three years of approval by the committee, the Honorary Degree will be deemed to be cancelled.

5.11 Confidentiality at all points in the nominating process is critical. No discussion concerning nominees shall take place outside of those directly involved in the evaluation process or the formal evaluation meetings. Discussion and voting will be in executive session by all evaluating groups.

5.12 Whenever possible, names of Honorary Degree recipients should be reported to Academic Council before being announced to the media.

5.13 Due to the confidential nature of the proceedings, nominators will be contacted after nomination consideration only if the candidate is selected to receive an honorary degree.

## 6.0 CONVOCATION PROCEEDINGS

6.1 The President will identify someone to present each nominee at convocation. This will normally be a University faculty member and frequently the individual who nominated the recipient.

6.2 Each honoree, and especially those from out-of-town, will be hosted by a University faculty or staff member, usually the individual performing introductions at convocation. He/she/The host will be responsible for ensuring that the honoree(s) are met at airports, escorted to and from campus events and generally made to feel welcome and appreciated.

6.3 Nominees will normally address convocation but, in some cases, may not be asked to do so.

6.4 Speeches should be brief (not to exceed ten minutes) and introductions should be confined to three minutes. All speeches should be directed to the graduating class.

6.5 The University will normally host either a luncheon or a dinner for honorees, their immediate families, and special friends.

Commented [LT1]: Question: Should presenters continue to be restricted to faculty?

Commented [LT2]: Is the concept of "hosting" still relevant?