

## UNIVERSITY RULE

### **11.07.99.M1      Awarding Honorary Doctorate Degrees**

*Approved March 23, 2000*

*Revised October 13, 2004*

*Revised December 15, 2011*

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*Next scheduled review: June 9, 2028*

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#### **Rule Statement**

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Texas A&M University selectively and judiciously awards honorary doctorates of letters to individuals of exceptional academic, scholarly, artistic and/or philanthropic accomplishment in order to bring honor and recognition to Texas A&M University and to identify persons whose accomplishments and service to humanity can be considered exemplary.

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#### **Official Rule/ Responsibilities/ Process**

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##### 1. GENERAL

Professional associations that are created by the process of awarding of an honorary degree are a means of aiding the University's community in setting and achieving its mission. The Committee on Honorary Degrees will actively solicit nominations from all academic units. Candidate nominations that are not selected will be communicated in a timely manner to the nominator and nominating body, together with guidance as to whether the committee sees merit in considering the nomination in subsequent award cycles.

##### 2. CRITERIA

Texas A&M University awards honorary doctorate degrees principally to individuals who have distinguished themselves in sustained scholarly activity in the arts, letters, science, technology, or service to humanity. An honorary doctorate also may be awarded to an individual from industry, government, communications, or another public arena who has distinguished himself or herself through nationally or internationally significant contributions.

##### 3. RESTRICTIONS

3.1 Honorary doctorates recognize an individual, not an office or position. So far as possible, there will be an effort to ensure that the persons honored represent a variety of fields of endeavor. No more than four honorary degrees will be approved for any one commencement. Honorary degrees are particularly encouraged at the spring

graduation ceremonies but are regarded as a valuable component of every commencement, enriching all participants. In all cases, the recipient must be present to receive the award.

3.2 Honorary doctorates are not awarded:

3.2.1 in absentia

3.2.2 posthumously

3.2.3 to current employees of the University

3.2.4 to individuals who have direct political, legal, or budgetary authority over the University

3.2.5 in consideration of any past, present, or future gift or other benefaction to the University.

4. SELECTION AND APPROVAL OF RECIPIENTS

4.1 The Committee on Honorary Degrees shall consist of nine tenured faculty members with distinguished records of scholarship and publication serving staggered three-year terms. Each year two members shall be appointed by the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate and one by the President for a three-year term beginning September 1. The Provost or his/her representative shall serve as an ex officio, non-voting member of the committee. The Committee shall recommend to the President an individual from among its voting membership to serve as Chair of the Committee.

4.2 Nominations shall be submitted by resolution of the faculty of an academic unit of the University to the Chair of the Committee on Honorary Degrees. Nominations must be received by October 15 or March 15 for consideration for the subsequent semester(s) commencement; any exception to this procedure requires approval of at least seven voting members of the Committee.

4.3 A completed nomination packet shall consist of ten copies of the following: a letter of nomination, a letter of support from the appropriate academic unit, and the nominee's curriculum vitae. Letters of recommendation are optional and must be solicited in strictest confidence, especially with regard to the nominee and general public.

4.3.1 Responsibilities of the Committee on Honorary Degrees include the following: (a) a call for nominations should be issued by September 1 and February 1 and distributed to all academic units and faculty members; periodic meetings with Deans and similar groups are encouraged to ensure the regular flow of strong nominations; (b) the committee must classify each nomination as approved (for any commencement during the next 12 months) or declined, (c) When nominations are declined, the results will be communicated in a timely fashion to the nominator and the academic unit.

4.4 Nominations and supporting documents shall be reviewed by the Committee on Honorary Degrees. The Committee shall select nominees for further consideration by the Faculty Senate.

4.5 Nominations for recipients of Honorary Degrees shall be submitted for approval by the Faculty Senate in an executive session at least 120 days prior to the commencement exercise at which the degree is to be awarded.

- 4.6 All nominations approved by the Faculty Senate, and a record of the vote by the Faculty Senate, shall be forwarded to the President.
- 4.7 The President shall present his/her choice of approved nominees, through the Chancellor, to the Board of Regents.
- 4.8 Honorary doctorate degrees shall be awarded only to those nominees approved by the Committee on Honorary Degrees, the Faculty Senate, the President, and the Board of Regents. The names will be made public with the appropriate graduation ceremony announcement.
- 4.9 Five years from the adoption of this rule the Faculty Senate and the President's Office shall jointly review the list of recipients of honorary doctorates, and the functioning of the selection and approval process to determine whether the practice of awarding honorary doctorates at Texas A&M University shall continue.

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**Related Policies, Statutes or Rules**

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[System Policy 11.07, Granting of Honorary Degrees](#)

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**Contact Office**

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[Office of the Provost & Executive Vice President](#)