



Policy AC024: Honorary Degrees

Recommended for Approval by:

A blue ink signature of Scott E. Miller, written over a horizontal line.

Scott E. Miller, VP for Academic Affairs and Provost

Approved by:

A blue ink signature of Dale-Elizabeth Pehrsson, written over a horizontal line.

Dale-Elizabeth Pehrsson, President

Effective Date: 07/01/2022

A. Intent

To establish the conditions under which an honorary degree may be awarded.

B. Definition(s)

None.

C. Policy

Consistent with the Board of Governors policy, Pennsylvania Western University reserves the right to award honorary degrees to deserving individuals.

Nominees for an honorary degree are expected to have a record of distinguished service, creativity, scholarship, or other individual accomplishment in the service of humanity. This may be in the scientific, social, academic, creative, business, public or other appropriate sphere. Other criteria include possessing a record of work and accomplishments that reflects the values of PennWest, and the potential to deliver a meaningful message that will inspire University graduates and the broader University community.

Normally two such degrees will be conferred during the calendar year, one each at the December and May undergraduate commencement ceremonies. The honorees may be asked to deliver an address to the graduates and the University community.

Honorary degrees may not be awarded to currently serving trustee members, administrators or faculty members except in extraordinary cases meriting special consideration. Honorary degrees may not be awarded to former trustees, administrators, or faculty members until they have been separated from the University for at least six months.

Individuals approved for award in existing pools from California University, Clarion University, and Edinboro University shall carry forward to and become the initial pool of approved candidates for

Pennsylvania Western University.

Honorary degrees from PennWest may be withdrawn or revoked by the President following consultation with the Council of Trustees and Chancellor of the State System, in cases where behaviors or actions by the recipient are in conflict with the values and ideals of the University or which may bring the University into disrepute.

D. Procedure(s)

1. A Committee on Honorary Degrees will be established, to be chaired by the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, or designee. Membership will include the Senior Vice President for Advancement, or designee; an academic dean; a department chairperson; and two additional faculty members. The dean, department chairperson and faculty members will be recommended by the Provost and approved by the President.
2. The Provost will issue a call for nominations to the University community in May of each year, prior to the end of the spring semester, with a nomination receipt deadline of July 1. Alternative timing and frequency may be established as warranted by the Provost.
3. The Committee will meet in September of each year to review and approve nominations based on the criteria and guidelines stated in this policy.
4. The Committee recommendations will be forwarded by the Provost to the President for approval. The names of nominees approved by the President will be presented to the Council of Trustees for approval and, following such approval, be included in the pool of possible awardees for forthcoming years.
5. The President will select the recipients for each commencement ceremony from among the list of approved nominees, but is not required to make an award each year.
6. The President will notify the Chancellor at least 30 days before an honorary degree is to be awarded of the identity, qualifications, and citation to be provided with the degree.

E. Related policies

Honorary Degrees, PASSHE Policy 1984-12-A

F. Contact Information

For additional information, please contact the Office of the Provost.

G. Policy Review Schedule

All policies will be reviewed every two years or on an as needed basis if a change in BOG, PASSHE or Pennsylvania law would create the need for an immediate change.