

**MINNESOTA STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**Agenda Item Summary Sheet**

**Committee:** Academic and Student Affairs

**Date of Meeting:** November 18, 2008

**Agenda Item:** Proposed Amendment to Policy 3.18 Honorary Degrees

- Proposed Policy Change       Approvals Required by Policy       Other Approvals       Monitoring
- Information

**Background Information:**

The Board of Trustees approved policy 3.18 Honorary Degrees on October 16, 1996.

Changes were made to make Minnesota State Colleges and Universities policy consistent with national practice. The proposed revisions remove procedural language from the policy. A new procedure has been developed to provide guidance to the colleges and universities on implementing the remaining policy language.

**Cite policy requirement, or explain why item is on the Board agenda:**

First reading to change policy 3.18 Honorary Degrees based on regular review of policies.

**Scheduled Presenter(s):**

Linda Baer, Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs  
Mike López, Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs  
Manuel López, Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Quality

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
MINNESOTA STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES  
ACTION ITEM**

*First Reading*

**PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO POLICY 3.18 HONORARY DEGREES**

**1 INTRODUCTION**

2 The Office of the Chancellor is submitting an amendment to Policy 3.18 Honorary Degrees.

**4 BACKGROUND**

5 Policy 3.18 was originally adopted in 1996. The proposed amendment was developed as a part  
6 of the policy review process.

7  
8 These documents come out of a routine five-year review of all board policies. Major changes to  
9 the policy comprise eliminating much of the language because it is more appropriately placed in  
10 the procedure document, and generally clarifying language and correcting format. The proposed  
11 procedure is modeled after general national practice. It establishes the specific degrees that may  
12 be awarded, places limits on the number of honorary degrees that may be awarded, and provides  
13 colleges and universities with maximum flexibility to develop their own internal procedures and  
14 processes.

**16 CONSULTATION**

17 Consultation for the policy and procedure amendments has occurred as follows:

- 19 • This proposed policy amendment was developed by a committee of system employees  
20 and students.
- 21 • Reviewed at Academic & Student Affairs Policy Council – 11/27/07; 9/22/08
- 22 • Reviewed at Academic & Student Affairs Leadership Council - 11/3/08; Planned for  
23 review at Academic and Student Affairs Leadership Council – 1/6/09
- 24 • Mailed out for review and comment – October 2008
- 25 • Reviewed at IFO Meet and Confer – 10/10/08
- 26 • Reviewed at MSUAASF Meet and Confer – 10/17/08
- 27 • Planned for review at MSCF Meet and Confer – 12/4/08

**29 RECOMMENDED COMMITTEE ACTION**

30 The Academic and Student Affairs Committee recommends that the Board of Trustees adopt the  
31 following motion:

**33 RECOMMENDED MOTION**

34 The Board of Trustees approves the amendment to Policy 3.18 Honorary Degrees.

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
MINNESOTA STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES**

*First Reading*

**BOARD POLICY**

Chapter 3. EDUCATIONAL POLICIES

Section 18. HONORARY DEGREES

**3.18 Honorary Degrees**

Honorary degrees offered by colleges and universities shall be guided by the following policies.

**Part 1. General Provisions Purpose.** The purpose of this policy is to establish the rationale for honorary degrees, authorize colleges and universities to grant honorary degrees, and provide for standards and guidelines under which honorary degrees will be conferred.

**Subpart A.** ~~The Board of Trustees grants to each college and university the authority to award honorary degrees. The decision to use such authority shall be determined by the college or university President.~~

**Subpart B.** ~~A college or university choosing to award an honorary degree shall establish its own internal process for determining honorary degree recipients. This process is to include appropriate consultation. That process must involve faculty and other members of the college or university community. Any campus committee formed as a part of the honorary degree process should contain a majority of faculty members.~~

**Part 2. Honorary Degrees Definition.** An honorary degree is a degree title awarded as an honor rather than as the result of matriculating and studying for several years, but for an outstanding contribution in some field.

**Subpart A.** ~~Colleges may select from the following categories of honorary degrees based upon the intended recipient's field(s) of contributions, achievement, service, and distinction:~~

- ~~1. Associate of Arts~~
- ~~2. Associate of Science~~
- ~~3. Associate of Applied Science~~

**Subpart B.** ~~Universities may select from the following categories of honorary degrees based upon the intended recipient's field(s) of contribution, achievement, service, and distinction:~~

- ~~1. Doctor of Fine Arts~~
- ~~2. Doctor of Humane Letters~~
- ~~3. Doctor of Laws~~
- ~~4. Doctor of Literature~~
- ~~5. Doctor of Music~~
- ~~6. Doctor of Pedagogy~~
- ~~7. Doctor of Science~~

1 **Part 3. Rationale.** The rationale for honorary degrees is to  
2

- 3 1. recognize and honor persons who have made exceptional men and women who have  
4 given a substantial part of their lives to serving others and who have distinguished  
5 themselves through their professional careers and/or volunteer service contributions to a  
6 specific field or to society in general;  
7
- 8 2. ~~to~~ establish a public association between Minnesota State Colleges and Universities and  
9 such exceptional ~~men and women~~ persons, thereby providing testimony to the values and  
10 quality of the state colleges and universities; and  
11
- 12 3. ~~to~~ assist the state colleges and universities with the goals and objectives of their  
13 educational programming, their service and outreach missions, and their institutional  
14 advancement ~~objectives~~.  
15

16 **Part 4. Guidelines for Selection Authorization.** ~~Following are commonly used criteria for~~  
17 ~~selecting honorary degree recipients at colleges and universities. They are intended as guidelines:~~  
18 Colleges and universities may confer honorary degrees according to procedures established by  
19 and the approval of the chancellor.  
20

21 **Subpart A.** ~~Eminent contribution to the college or university, the system, the community, the~~  
22 ~~State of Minnesota, or society;~~

23 **Subpart B.** ~~Eminent achievement in a particular field of endeavor;~~

24 **Subpart C.** ~~Personal status that will enhance the reputation of the college or university (or~~  
25 ~~the system) and serve as an example to its students and its alumni;~~

26 **Subpart D.** ~~Potential for contribution to the goals or welfare of the college or university;~~

27 **Subpart E.** ~~While recipients may be alumni, former employees, former Board of Trustees~~  
28 ~~members, or public officials, they may not be (at the time of the award) current employees,~~  
29 ~~incumbent members of the Board of Trustees, or incumbent officials of federal, state or local~~  
30 ~~government.~~

31 **Part 5. Presentation of Honorary Degrees Internal Process.** ~~Honorary degrees normally will~~  
32 ~~be given during commencement exercises, and the recipient should agree to be present as a~~  
33 ~~condition of receiving the award. On occasion, honorary degrees may be awarded at~~  
34 ~~convocations or presidential inaugurations. A college or university choosing to award an~~  
35 ~~honorary degree shall establish its own internal process for determining honorary degree~~  
36 ~~recipients consistent with the chancellor's procedure.~~  
37

38 **Part 6. Limitations on the Number of Honorary Degrees Limits to Eligible Recipients.** ~~It is~~  
39 ~~expected that colleges and universities granting honorary degrees would limit their usage to no~~  
40 ~~more than two per academic year.~~  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45

- 1        1. Honorary degrees may not be conferred on currently serving faculty or staff members  
2            within the Minnesota State Colleges & Universities system, current members of the  
3            Board of Trustees, or current holders of elected political office.
- 4
- 5        2. Honorary degrees shall not be awarded posthumously.

*Date of Implementation: 10/16/96,*

*Date of Adoption: 10/16/96,*

*Date & Subject of Revisions:*