



Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Board Policies Chapter 3 – Educational Policies

3.18 Honorary Degree

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

Part 1. General Provisions.

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.

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

Part 3. Rationale.

Subpart A. To recognize and honor exceptional men and women who have given a substantial part of their lives to serving others and who have distinguished themselves through their professional careers and/or volunteer service;

Subpart B. To establish a public association between Minnesota State Colleges and Universities and such exceptional men and women, thereby providing testimony to the values and quality of the state colleges and universities;

Subpart C. To assist the state colleges and universities with the goals and objectives of their educational programming, their service missions, and their institutional advancement objectives.

Part 4. Guidelines for Selection. Following are commonly used criteria for selecting honorary degree recipients at colleges and universities. They are intended as guidelines:

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

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

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

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

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

Part 5. Presentation of Honorary Degrees. Honorary degrees normally will be given during commencement exercises, and the recipient should agree to be present as a condition of receiving the award. On occasion, honorary degrees may be awarded at convocations or presidential inaugurations.

Part 6. Limitations on the Number of Honorary Degrees. It is expected that colleges and universities granting honorary degrees would limit their usage to no more than two per academic year.

Date of Implementation: 10/16/96

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Date and Subject of Revision: