



COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

Honorary Degree Policy

Policy Number 1-05

Commonwealth University of Pennsylvania

Approved by University Senate, 4/10/2025

Issued by President Bashar W. Hanna as Policy 1-05 on 4/21/2025

Responsible Office: Academic Affairs

Previous Policy: PRP 3920

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to define the process for granting of honorary degrees.

2. Scope

The policy governs the granting of honorary degrees and impacts Academic Affairs, Strategic Communications, and Alumni Relations

3. Definitions, Roles and Responsibilities

3.1. Definitions

3.1.1. Honorary degree: an award which reflects the mission of Commonwealth University in the areas of intellectual pursuit, culture and the arts, or public service. Such degrees should be awarded only to those individuals whose life and works exemplify the concepts of excellence, service and integrity.

3.1.2. University: shall mean Commonwealth University of Pennsylvania

3.1.3. Occasion: Honorary degrees will be awarded during Commencement ceremonies of Commonwealth University.

3.2. Roles and Responsibilities

3.2.1. The Committee for Recommending Honorary Degree Recipients shall consist of a total of twelve individuals distributed among the following constituencies:



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- 3.2.1.1. Four faculty members chosen through a nomination and election process determined by APSCUF to represent: the College of Arts, Humanities, Education and Social Sciences; the College of Health, Science and Technology; the College of Zeigler College of Business; and the nonaligned faculty.
- 3.2.1.2. The Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs or designee shall serve as permanent Chairperson of the Committee for Recommending Honorary Degree Recipients.
- 3.2.1.3. The Executive Director for Strategic Communications or designee.
- 3.2.1.4. Two members of the Council of Trustees including the Chairperson or designee and one other member.
- 3.2.1.5. One student appointed by Student Government by the student government presidents.
- 3.2.1.6. One alumnus/alumna of the university (or legacy universities) appointed by the alumni association presidents.
- 3.2.1.7. One member of the non-instructional staff appointed by AFSCME.
- 3.2.1.8. One member of the non-instructional staff appointed by SCUPA.
- 3.2.2. Each member of the Committee for Recommending Honorary Degree Recipients will serve for a period of two years.
- 3.2.3.3.2.3 The Committee for Recommending Honorary Degree Recipients may from time-to-time modify the existing criteria.
- 3.2.4. Except in extraordinary cases meriting special consideration, honorary degrees will not be awarded to active members of the Council of Trustees, or employees of Commonwealth University. At least one year must elapse following association with the University before former trustees or employees may be considered for an honorary doctorate.
- 3.2.5. In general, no more than two honorary degrees will be awarded during any one academic year, except by petition to the Board of Governors under special circumstances.



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4. Policy

- 4.1. Commonwealth University wishes to recognize the outstanding achievements and contributions of individuals to the institution, to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, to society, or to a particular academic discipline, by awarding an honorary degree.
- 4.2. Recipients of honorary degrees will have made noteworthy contributions to Commonwealth University, to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, or to society in general and will have demonstrated either meritorious achievement or scholarship in the arts and humanities, science and technology, the social sciences, education, the health profession, commerce, trade or industry.
- 4.3. Commonwealth University intends to grant the following honorary degrees:
 - 4.3.1. Doctor of Law (L.L.D.) - Distinguished service to the State, to learning, to the art of living or to mankind - a service of superior character and leadership.
 - 4.3.2. Doctor of Science (Sc.D.) - Specific attainments and contributions in the field of science.
 - 4.3.3. Doctor of Letters (Litt.D.) - Specific attainments, contributions, and recognition in the field of literature, journalism and the drama, as a scholar, creative artist or writer of great talent and originality.
 - 4.3.4. Doctor of Pedagogy (Pd.D.) - Special and advanced qualities, attainments, contributions and recognition as a creative and experienced educator.
 - 4.3.5. Doctor of Commercial Science (D.C.Sc.) - Creative leadership in commerce, trade, industry or in the broad field of business.
 - 4.3.6. Doctor of Fine Arts (D.F.A.) - Specific attainments and creative contributions in the fine and performing arts.
 - 4.3.7. Doctor of Humane Letters (L.H.D.) - Specific attainments in the humanities and the social sciences or noteworthy contributions to the well-being of humanity.
- 4.4. Procedure for Selecting Honorary Degree Recipients
- 4.5. The names of individuals to be considered for receipt of honorary degrees may be submitted to the Committee for Recommending Honorary Degree Recipients by any member of the Commonwealth University community including the following:



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4.5.1. Council of Trustees

4.5.2. Alumni

4.5.3. Administration

4.5.4. Faculty

4.5.5. Staff

4.5.6. Students

4.6. Nominations must be submitted to the chairperson of the committee by January 31 if the individual is to receive consideration for a spring commencement ceremony of that year. All nominations must be made in writing and should be supported by complete biographical information. Letters of nomination and biographical data will be distributed to committee members for their consideration.

4.7. Following committee deliberation, no more than three names will be submitted to the President of Commonwealth University for consideration. The President will select from among those names presented by the committee and present his/her recommendation for consideration by the Council of Trustees. The Council of Trustees will accept or reject the names presented by the President.

4.8. A nomination shall remain in an active file for a period of three (3) years should it not receive the necessary support. During that time, it may be selected by majority vote of the Committee for reconsideration. Should the nomination not gain the necessary support during the three-year period, it shall be withdrawn.

5 Compliance and Enforcement

5.1 Exceptions to this policy may be proposed to the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs.

7. Additional Information

5.2 Supporting Documents

5.3 History

5.3.1 [Indicate whether the policy is a new policy, or whether it supersedes an existing policy. Include the effective date of the original policy as well as the date(s) of any subsequent amendments (if known).]



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5.3.2 Effective Date – [Date Approved by the University Senate or Issued by the Office of the President as an Interim Policy]

5.3.3 Revised - [Date of Revision]

5.3.4 Next Review Date - [Date of Revision]

5.4 **Related Policies** - Replaces Bloomsburg University PRP 3920 Honorary Degrees

5.5 **Contacts for Additional Information and Reporting**

Office of the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs,
provost@commonwealthu.edu, 570-389-4308