

JOINT COMMITTEE FOR HONORARY DEGREES

GUIDELINES FOR THE AWARDING OF HONORARY DEGREES

A. PREAMBLE

An honorary degree is the highest honour bestowed within the power of the University, and recognizes the significant contributions of individuals to local, national and international communities.

In conferring honorary degrees, Saint Mary's University seeks to recognize extraordinary achievement, and to honour individuals whose accomplishments demonstrate personal and professional qualities that are consistent with the mission and values of Saint Mary's University. Recipients should provide, through example, inspiration to graduates of the University and to the University community. Individuals receiving an honorary degree become ambassadors for the University; thus, through their association and engagement should enhance the reputation of Saint Mary's University.

Honorary degrees are to be awarded to distinguished individuals and in recognition of a lifetime of extraordinary achievements in their field. Such success shall be judged by the recognition that the candidate's peers accord to the candidate's contribution to letters, arts, law, music, education, science, philosophy, commerce, theology or other field of learning or endeavour. The Committee may also recommend this honour to those whose outstanding contributions to their fields or to society have not yet been widely recognized.

B. GENERAL

1. Eligibility and Exclusions

- Canadians and non-Canadians are eligible to be nominated.
- Active members of staff, faculty, Senate and the Board of Governors are not eligible to be nominated. Nominations for a person in this category may be considered after the nominee has been inactive in their university role for a period of at least 24 months.
- Politicians currently in elected office, or civil servants who may be concerned with the function or role of the University, are not eligible for honorary degrees.
- Normally, honorary degrees are not awarded posthumously or in absentia.

2. Degrees Awarded

Saint Mary's University confers the following honorary degrees:

2.1. Doctor of Civil Law, Honoris Causa

Awarded for significant and extraordinary contributions or service to society, the University or community as a whole; or, to a profession or discipline concerned with service to the community.

2.2. Doctor of Letters, Honoris Causa

Awarded for significant and extraordinary contributions to academic life, knowledge or society in the areas of the humanities, literature, or the creative or performing arts.

2.3. Doctor of Science, Honoris Causa

Awarded for significant and extraordinary contributions to academic life, knowledge or society in the areas of pure and applied science, engineering, and/or social science.

2.4 Doctor of Commerce, Honoris Causa

Awarded for significant and extraordinary contributions to academic life, knowledge or society in the areas of commerce, economics, industry, and/or business.

3. Criteria

Candidates must meet one or more of the following criteria:

Eminence in a field of activity or profession

Exceptional record of distinction and achievement in an academic field, in the creative or performing arts, or in a profession or discipline.

Outstanding public or community service

Distinguished service to the community, locally, nationally, or internationally, or exceptional accomplishments having contributed to Canadian culture and society.

Significant connection or benefaction to the University

Extraordinary contribution to the development of the University or magnanimous contribution to the University, creatively, materially, or financially.

If a candidate meets one or more of the above criteria, other relevant factors include:

- A candidate for an honorary degree must have demonstrated personal and professional qualities that are consistent with the mission and goals of Saint Mary's University.
- A candidate's distinguished record of achievement and service should be complemented by personal moral integrity.
- Individuals who receive an honorary degree from Saint Mary's University are recognized to support the values of advanced learning and the pursuit of knowledge.
- Balance and diversity: the Committee will strive to ensure that nominations are appropriately diverse and reflective of the University and community that it serves. Dimensions of diversity considered by the Committee shall reflect a wide range of human qualities and characteristics and include (but are not limited to) ethnicity, race, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, and religion.

C. PROCEDURES

4. Nominations

- An annual call for nominations will be issued to the University community from the University Secretary.

- Nominations for honorary degrees shall be submitted to the University Secretary on the required Nomination Form, by the deadline date specified in the call for nominations.
- Nominations may be made by any member or constituent group from the University community, or from external nominators. Nominations are normally not accepted from family members of the nominee. Self-nominations will not be accepted for consideration.
- Nominations submitted outside the time frame specified in the annual call for nominations will be reviewed by the Committee at its next regular meeting.
- Nominations must be complete in accordance with section 5 of these guidelines. Incomplete submissions will be returned to nominators and may be resubmitted for consideration at the next regular meeting of the Committee.

5. Documentation

The following items shall be included with the nomination:

5.1 Nomination Form

The nomination form may be accessed from the Board of Governors website at:

<https://www.smu.ca/webfiles/HonoraryDegreeNominationForm.pdf>

Each nominator must complete and sign a confidential Nomination Form containing a statement explaining why the University should award a degree to the nominee based on the criteria set out above.

5.2 Resume or Curriculum Vitae (C.V.)

Each nomination should be accompanied by the nominee's resume. The resume or C.V. is important for nominations for the honorary degree, and should include the full list of positions held, awards received, and other appropriate information (e.g. publications if the nomination is made in recognition of contributions to an academic discipline).

Where a resume or C.V. is not available, a comprehensive biography and/or other sources of information which outline the candidate's achievements should be included with the nomination.

5.3 Letters of support

A minimum of two, and no more than three letters of support must be submitted from individuals knowledgeable about the candidate's accomplishments and related impact. Letters should:

- Augment, rather than simply reiterate, the material contained in the other documentation;
- Speak to the broader context of the candidate's achievements;
- Indicate the relationship, if any, between the letter writers and the candidate and the basis for their knowledge of the candidate's achievements.
- When individuals are approached to write letters of support it is important that they be informed of the need to maintain confidentiality in accordance with section 7 of these guidelines.

The University Secretary will review submissions and may return a nomination to the nominator for further information or may forward it as is to the Committee for consideration.

6. Evidence of institutional support

Prior to sending a recommendation forward to Senate, via the University Secretary the Joint Committee will consult with the Office of the Dean from the appropriate faculty to discuss endorsement of the nomination. A letter of support and/or endorsement from a Dean and/or Dean's Office should accompany the Joint Committee's recommendation to Senate.

7. Confidentiality

It is extremely important that all involved in the submission of nominations recognize that this is a confidential process. In particular, nominees should not be informed that they are under consideration.

The only names ever to be made public are those who are offered the award by the President of the University and who accept the award.

The President will determine at what point a name is made public.

8. Selection

The Committee meets at least once in each of the fall and winter semesters to consider nominations. When the Committee deems it necessary to obtain additional information about a candidate, it may postpone a decision on the nomination in order to consult further with the nominators or others as appropriate.

The Committee will forward its recommendations to a closed session of Senate and in accordance with the Bylaws of the Senate. Senate will inform the University Secretary of the outcome after Senate has received and voted on the recommendations. Recommendations accepted by the Senate will be sent to the Board of Governors for final approval.

Following the Board's approval of a nomination, an offer to receive the honorary degree will be extended to the nominee through a letter from the President.

9. Time Limits and Standing List

Materials relating to nominations not selected by the Committee for recommendation will be destroyed by the University Secretary.

The Committee shall maintain a Standing List, to include nominations that the Committee wishes to consider at a later date. The Standing List shall also include those nominations approved by the Board but for which the conferral of the degree is pending.

Nominations not approved by the Committee for recommendation but returned to nominators for further information are held active for a period of three years from the time of first nomination. Nominators may be invited to add to or revise the dossier each year, but at the expiry of three years without recommendation, the nominee shall be removed from the Standing List.

Offers of honorary degrees are not intended to be open-ended. Normally, candidates will be requested to communicate their acceptance of the University's offer within three months of receipt, and to attend a convocation ceremony to receive the degree within two years.

10. Revocation of Honorary Degrees and/or Removal from the Approved Honorary Degree Nominees List

On recommendation of the Committee, the Board may revoke an honorary degree from an individual or remove an individual from the HD Nominees List if any of the following becomes known to the Committee, and it is satisfied that:

- the individual has been convicted of a indictable offence; or
- the individual, in the reasonable opinion of the Board, after investigation, has obtained the Honorary Degree or been added to the HD Nominees List by fraud, deception, or any other inappropriate means;
- the individual has been removed for misconduct by a properly constituted legal authority from any official register or roll of members of the profession to which the individual belongs; or
- there are other extenuating factors that, in the reasonable opinion of the Committee, justify the revocation.

Approval Authority: Joint Committee on Honorary Degrees

Office of Responsibility: University Secretary