Revisions to the Texas A&M University Policy for Awarding Honorary Degrees

Based upon input from the TAMU Committee on Honorary Degrees, the Faculty Senate Academic Affairs Committee recommends the following revisions to the Policy approved by the Faculty Senate in August 1999.

(Additions are underlined; deletions have a strikethrough)

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY POLICY FOR AWARDING HONORARY DOCTORATES

Texas A&M University selectively and judiciously awards honorary doctorates of letters to individuals of exceptional accomplishment in order to bring honor and recognition to Texas A&M University and to identify persons whose accomplishments and attitudes its students may emulate. Service can be considered exemplary for its students' emulation.

I. Criteria

Texas A&M University awards honorary doctorates principally to individuals who have distinguished themselves in sustained scholarly activity in the arts, letters, science, technology, or service to humanity. On occasion an honorary doctorate may be awarded to an individual from industry, or government, communications, or another public arena who has distinguished himself or herself by nationally or internationally significant contributions to society at large and scholarly pursuits in particular. Nationally or internationally, a significant level of achievement is the overriding criterion for all candidates.

Honorary doctorates recognize the individual, not the position or office. Honorary doctorates are not awarded in absentia or posthumously. They are not awarded to current employees of the University, nor to members of the Board of Regents. They are not awarded to current employees of the University, nor to individuals who have direct political, legal, or budgetary authority over the University. In no case shall an honorary doctorate be awarded in consideration of any past, present, or future gift or other benefaction to the University.

By honoring exceptional achievements, we honor the several missions of the University that value these achievements. Associations that are established between the TAMU scholars, students and faculty of the University and persons with outstanding achievements by the awarding of an honorary degree should aid our scholarly community in setting and achieving better and higher goals.

The honorary degrees will be in one of the following areas:

A. Humanities/Social Sciences
B. Basic Sciences - Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics or Physics
C. Applied Sciences - Archeology, Agriculture, Engineering, Geology, Geography, Medicine, Technology, etc.
D. Performing and Fine Arts
E. Secondary Social Institutions: Business, Communications, Education, Military, Religion,
Statesmanship, etc.

F. Service to Humanity

Up to four nominations for honorary degrees to be awarded at the spring graduation will be approved. Each year no more than one nomination will be approved in any one category. So far as possible, there will be an effort to ensure that the persons honored represent a variety of fields of endeavor. No more than four nominations for honorary degrees will be approved in any one year. Normally, honorary degrees will be awarded at one of the spring graduation ceremonies, and the recipient must be present to receive the award. The honorary degree is expected to cement ties between the recipient and one or more academic units of the University. Through an active effort of the committee on honorary degrees nominations will be actively solicited from all academic units in any or all six of the categories. Any persons who have more or less direct influence on the welfare of the university (donors, politicians, regents, etc.) are excluded from consideration.

Files that are not selected in any particular year but are otherwise deemed meritorious will remain eligible for consideration for three years.

II. Selection and Approval

1. The Committee on Honorary Degrees shall consist of nine tenured faculty members with distinguished records of scholarship and publication serving staggered three-year terms. Each year two members shall be appointed by the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate and one by the President for a three year term beginning April 1. The Provost or his/her representative shall serve as an ex officio, non-voting member of the committee. The Committee shall recommend to the President an individual from among its voting membership to serve as Chair of the Committee.

2. Nominations shall be submitted by resolution of the faculty of an academic unit of the University to the Chair of the Committee on Honorary Degrees. Nominations must be received by October 15 of the calendar year preceding that in which the degree is to be awarded; any exception to this procedure requires approval of at least seven voting members of the Committee. A completed nomination packet shall consist of ten copies of the following: a letter of nomination, a letter of support from the appropriate academic unit, and the nominee’s curriculum vitae.

3. Nominations and supporting documents shall be reviewed by Committee on Honorary Degrees. The Committee shall select nominees for further consideration by the Faculty Senate.

4. Nominations for recipients of Honorary Degrees shall be submitted for approval by the Faculty Senate in an executive session at least 120 days prior to the commencement exercise at which the degree is to be awarded.

5. All nominations approved by the Faculty Senate, and the votes they receive in the Faculty Senate, shall be forwarded to the President.

6. The President shall present his/her choice of approved nominees to the Board of Regents.

7. Honorary doctorates shall be awarded only to those nominees approved by the Committee on Honorary Degrees, the Faculty Senate, the President, and the Board of Regents. The names are to be kept confidential until awarding of this degree.
8. Five years from the adoption of this policy the Faculty Senate and the President's Office shall jointly review the list of recipients of honorary doctorates and the functioning of the selection and approval process to determine whether the practice of awarding honorary doctorates at Texas A&M University shall continue.

Revised Document passed by Academic Affairs on January 31, 2000
Amended by the Faculty Senate February 14, 2000