Honorary Doctorate Policy and Procedure

UW Regent Policy 4-20, Honorary Doctorate Degrees
UW Regent Policy 4-6, Granting of Degrees, Certificates, Honors, and Awards

An honorary doctorate is one of the highest awards given by the university and the University of Wisconsin System. Eligible candidates have shown outstanding service to humanity globally, nationally, or locally. The UWL Alumni Foundation in collaboration with the Chancellor's Cabinet look for achievements and service that have enhanced lives through contributions to scholarship or through artistic talent and creativity, and, importantly, evidence of a dedication to the Wisconsin idea, broadly construed.

Contents:

1. **Policy**
2. **Procedure**
3. **Confidentiality**
4. **Eligibility**
5. **Revocation**

Awarding
The UWL Alumni & Friends Foundation is responsible for the process of awarding such degrees.

Other participation

- Chair: Chief of Staff
- The Chancellor or designee
- The Vice Chancellors of the cabinet as appointed by the chancellor

Functions

- Nominates candidates for honorary doctorates from the university.
- Reviews and recommends changes to the policies and procedures.

Procedures

- Prior to public announcement by the administration, all matters relating to degrees are to remain highly confidential.

Policy

The University of Wisconsin-La Crosse awards an honorary doctorate in recognition of a career of

extraordinary accomplishment. In many cases, there will be some single, supreme achievement for which a candidate is best known, but an honorary degree is not given to celebrate a deed alone or upon the simple meeting of a set of minimum standards. The honor is conferred upon a person with uncommonly meritorious activity exhibiting values that are esteemed by a great university.

Procedure & Timeline

The following is the generally recommended timeline and procedure for a spring commencement honorary doctorate. However, the University may request Board of Regent approval at any time for a winter or spring ceremony provided the agenda item is sent to the regents at minimum one month prior to the regent meeting and the regent approval occurs at minimum, two months prior to the commencement ceremony. All procedures must align with Board of Regent Policies.

1. **September:** Call for *eligible candidate nominations is sent to all university employees, community members, and alumni by the UWL Alumni & Friends Foundation, with a notice to the UW System Board of Regents.
2. **Ongoing w/December 15 deadline:** Campus and community partners submit *eligible candidate nominations through the online form. Candidate ideas received by December 15 are included in the pool of candidates to be considered for a degree starting in the next academic year. Ideas are accepted on a rolling basis, review is ongoing, and candidates may ultimately be selected several years after submission.
3. **January-April:** The UWL Alumni Foundation considers candidates and sends preliminary nominations to the chancellor.
4. **May-June:** The Foundation prepares and sends full nominations to the chancellor.
5. **May-June:** The Chancellor sends recommendations to the Board of Regents for their summer meeting.
6. **October-December:** Invitations are sent by the Chancellor to the honorary degree candidate representative(s) to attend spring commencement.
7. **May:** Commencement and degrees are bestowed.

Note on Confidentiality

Submission of a nomination does not ensure its successful outcome; therefore, it is of utmost importance that potential candidates not be informed that a nomination is under consideration.

Preliminary consideration of candidates for honorary doctorate is conducted with the high degree of confidentiality appropriate to matters of personnel. Only the chancellor may authorize the public announcement of honorary doctorate recipients.

***Conditions of Eligibility**

I. Although a Wisconsin connection is not a prerequisite to an honorary doctorate, the committee is obliged to give preference in its nominations to persons who are connected in some significant way with the state or with the university.
II. The Foundation will not recommend an honorary doctorate for an emeriti faculty or staff member solely based on their performance during their time at UWL.
III. The Foundation will not recommend awarding honorary doctorates to serving members of the Wisconsin legislature or the Wisconsin congressional delegation, elected and appointed officials, members of the state judiciary, serving members of the University of Wisconsin System Board of Regents, or anyone currently employed by any university of the UW System or by UW System administration. Such persons are eligible for consideration five years or more after they have vacated office or terminated employment.
IV. UW System policy generally limits the number of honorary degrees any individual may receive from universities within UW System to one.
V. The Foundation seeks to avoid involving the university in partisan politics.
VI. The Foundation will not award an honorary doctorate solely in recognition of past or prospective gifts to the university.
VII. The Foundation will not accept self-nominations.

Revocation of Honorary Doctorate

The university reserves the right to request the revocation of the Honorary Doctorate from an individual under the following circumstances, as determined by the University Board of Regents in its reasonable discretion:

- If the individual is deemed to be in violation of the law.
- If the individual participates in actions of such severe moral turpitude that it generates negative publicity of a substantial nature and duration, potentially causing significant damage to the University's reputation.