Senate Honorary Degrees Committee

Honorary Degrees Policy
September 2015

Background
In February 1999, the Senate Honorary Degrees Committee approved a list of guidelines for the selection of honorary degree candidates. The Guidelines provide direction regarding items such as a potential candidate’s qualifications, whether degrees will be awarded posthumously or in absentia, and which degrees shall be awarded. The Guidelines have been in use by the Committee when honorary degree nominations are being considered and they are also supplied to all potential nominators as advice when developing nomination packages.

Analysis and Recommendation
While the Guidelines regarding honorary degrees have served the university well over the past decade and a half, the time has now come for them to be reviewed, updated, and codified as policy. New clauses need to be added to address situations considered by the Committee since 1999 and outdated references and statements should be removed. The formalization of the Guidelines will improve communications with the University community and ensure consistency to the honorary degree selection process.

Motion
That Senate approve the changes to the Guidelines for the Selection of Honorary Degree Candidates as outlined in Appendix 1.
Appendix 1 (Marked Copy)

Guidelines for Policy on the Selection of Honorary Degree Candidates

Approved February 1999

1. To be recommended nominated for an Honorary Degree the candidate should have made an outstanding contribution on a national or international scale. The contribution may be to the advancement of the candidate’s discipline or field of work, or it may be to the community, to society, or to the University.

2. Active members of faculty and staff at Queen’s are not to be recommended eligible for honorary degrees. As Honorary degrees have traditionally not been awarded to active members of faculty or staff. Outstanding contributions to Queen's by these individuals may be recognized in other ways. Retired members may, however, be recommended nominated at least three to five years after retirement.

3. By Traditionally, new principals and chancellors are asked to may name the honorary degree recipients for their installations, subject to the approval of Senate. They should be made aware of these guidelines this Policy as soon as planning for an installation begins.

4. Normally, an active politician should not be recommended nominated for an honorary degree. An exception may be made in the case of a person who has been a politician for a considerable length of time and has made a particularly outstanding contribution. This rule does not apply at a special convocation for the installation of the Chancellor or Principal, when the university may wish to recognize a person in a high position.

5. Honorary degrees may be awarded to a group or entity that is not a natural or legal person provided that the group or entity fulfils the requirements for an honorary degree recipient as set out in this Policy. In such cases, the degree is awarded to the group or the entity as a whole and not to the individual members of it.

6. Posthumous honorary degrees will not be recommended awarded. In awarding an the Honorary Degree, the University is honouring the a recipient person and not his or her memory. If, however, a the candidate dies after accepting the Senate invitation to receive the degree but before the convocation at which the degree is to be conferred, the Honorary Degree will be awarded.
7. Only in exceptional circumstances will a degree be awarded in absentia. The Principal shall determine when this would be appropriate.

8. As approved at Senate’s January 28, 1999 meeting, each Faculty will be permitted one honorary degree recipient at spring Convocation ceremonies, except for the Faculty of Arts and Science, which shall be permitted more than one. There shall be one honorary degree recipient at each of the fall Convocation ceremonies. In exceptional circumstances, the Committee may choose to vary the number of honorary degrees conferred each year by one to two degrees in the case of either an exceptionally strong group of candidates or a group of candidates with insufficient qualifications.

9. If a nominee declines the university’s invitation to receive an honorary degree, the Principal shall have the ability to select a replacement from a list of alternates already approved by the Senate Honorary Degrees Committee. The Principal shall also have the ability to extend an invitation to the nominee for the subsequent year.

10. In selecting the candidates for the award of an honorary degree, the Senate Honorary Degrees Committee should endeavor to strike a balance between outstanding Canadians and international nominees, and between some recommendations should also acknowledge that Queen’s has international interests. However, it is desirable to recognize outstanding Canadians. It is desirable to recognize individuals, nominees who have not received honorary degrees from other institutions, but who are clearly worthy candidates, and those who have already received similar recognition.

11. The committee should ensure that such groups as women, visible minorities, Aboriginal persons, racialized group members/visible minorities, persons with a disability, persons identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or queer (LGBTQ), and others who reflect the diversity of Canadian society are regularly included in the recommendations.

12. The following degrees that may be awarded:
   a. Doctor of Divinity (D.D.)
   b. Doctor of Laws (LL.D.)
   c. Doctor of Science (D.Sc.)
In awards to scientists and engineers, the D.Sc. degree should be awarded if the major contribution of the candidate is to pure or applied science. If the major contribution is to public service, the community etc., the LL.D. degree should be awarded. The D.D. degree is awarded on the recommendation of the School of Religion. The DD degree is awarded on the recommendation of the Queen’s Theological College. Honorary degrees of MA and MSc have been awarded to three support staff members, one in 1953, one in 1970 and one in 1979. Since 1979 Senate has awarded only the above degrees.

8. These guidelines are publicly available.
Appendix 2 (Clean Copy)

Policy on the Selection of Honorary Degree Candidates

1. To be nominated for an Honorary Degree the candidate should have made an outstanding contribution on a national or international scale. The contribution may be to the advancement of the candidate’s discipline or field of work, or it may be to the community, to society, or to the University.

2. Active members of faculty and staff at Queen’s are not eligible for honorary degrees, as outstanding contributions to Queen’s by these individuals may be recognized in other ways. Retired members may, however, be nominated at least three years after retirement.

3. By tradition, new principals and chancellors may name the honorary degree recipients for their installation, subject to the approval of Senate. They should be made aware of the Policy as soon as planning for an installation begins.

4. Normally, an active politician should not be nominated for an honorary degree. An exception may be made in the case of a person who has been a politician for a considerable length of time and has made a particularly outstanding contribution.

5. Honorary degrees may be awarded to a group or entity that is not a natural or legal person, provided that the group or entity fulfils the requirements for an honorary degree recipient as set out in this Policy. In such cases, the degree is awarded to the group or entity as a whole and not to the individual members of it.

6. Posthumous honorary degrees will not be awarded. In awarding an Honorary Degree, the University is honouring a recipient and not his or her memory. If, however, a candidate dies after accepting the Senate invitation to receive the degree, but before the convocation at which the degree is to be conferred, the Honorary Degree will be awarded.

7. Only in exceptional circumstances will a degree be awarded in absentia. The Principal shall determine when this would be appropriate.

8. As approved at Senate’s January 28, 1999 meeting, each Faculty will be permitted one honorary degree recipient at spring Convocation ceremonies, except for the Faculty of Arts and Science, which shall be permitted more than one. There shall be one honorary degree recipient at each of the fall Convocation ceremonies. In exceptional
circumstances, the Committee may choose to vary the number of honorary degrees conferred each year by one to two degrees in the case of either an exceptionally strong group of candidates or a group of candidates with insufficient qualifications.

9. If a nominee declines the university’s invitation to receive an honorary degree, the Principal shall have the ability to select a replacement from a list of alternates already approved by the Senate Honorary Degrees Committee. The Principal shall also have the ability to extend an invitation to the nominee for the subsequent year.

10. In selecting the candidates for the award of an honorary degree, the Senate Honorary Degrees Committee should endeavor to strike a balance between outstanding Canadians and international nominees, and between nominees who have not received honorary degrees from other institutions and those who have already received similar recognition.

11. The committee should ensure that such groups as women, Aboriginal persons, racialized group members/visible minorities, persons with disabilities, persons identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or queer (LGBTQ), and others who reflect the diversity of Canadian society are regularly included in the recommendations.

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