

Senate Honorary Degrees Committee Honorary Degree Criteria and Procedures

I. General Principles

In conferring honorary degrees, Dalhousie University (“the University”) seeks to honour individuals whose accomplishments and achievements demonstrate a standard of excellence that will inspire our graduates and the University community and will reflect favourably on the public reputation of the University. The awarding of an honorary degree honours both the individual and the University and contributes to the recognition and celebration of excellence in society in a manner that reflects the University’s character and values within the community and the world.

II. Criteria for Selection

The role of the Senate Honorary Degree Committee (“the Committee”) is to recommend, at least annually, outstanding candidates for honorary degrees across a range of academic disciplines and non-academic areas of achievement. The Committee will seek to nominate candidates who have demonstrated:

- i. Inspirational leadership in, or service to, society;
- ii. Outstanding contributions to, or leadership in, a field or discipline of study or a non-academic area of achievement; or
- iii. Significant pattern of outstanding achievement at, or contributions to, Dalhousie University.

Particular consideration will be given to those candidates whose contributions or leadership have not yet been widely recognized, but which merit such recognition. Every effort will be made to select candidates who reflect Canadian society and the University’s commitment to diversity including, but not limited to racially visible persons, aboriginal persons, persons with disabilities and women.

III. Exclusions

1. Honorary degrees shall not be awarded to individuals who may exert a real or perceived influence on:
 - i. Public policy, laws, or public funding directly affecting the University; or
 - ii. The University’s institutional autonomy.
2. The following are categories of individuals who have a deemed conflict of interest that would render a candidate ineligible to receive an honorary degree:
 - i. Current members of the faculty, staff, the Board of Governors or Senate or their immediate families. These individuals may not be considered for nomination until a minimum of one year has passed since their active connection with the University has ended;
 - ii. Current students;
 - iii. Individuals actively serving as federal Members of Parliament;
 - iv. Individuals actively serving as provincial Members of the Legislative Assembly in provinces where the University has a campus; and
 - v. Individuals actively serving as municipal politicians in counties where the University has a campus.

Elected officials not falling into category 2(iii), 2(iv) or 2(v) will be carefully evaluated to determine

whether the candidate may exert a real or perceived influence on the University as set out in Section 1 herein.

3. Honorary degrees are not normally granted in absentia or posthumously.
4. Candidates who have accepted an invitation to receive an honorary degree but have cancelled an invitation twice without reasonable cause.

IV. Degree

Doctor of Laws (LL.D.): Awarded for outstanding achievement or leadership in a field, discipline of study, or non-academic endeavour or for exceptional service to the University or the community at large.

V. Procedures for Nominations

1. At least once annually, the Secretary of Senate will issue a call for nominations which will be broadcast widely by the University Secretariat to the university community, using traditional means and any additional avenues suggested by members of the Senate Honorary Degrees Committee ("the Committee").
2. Nominations may be made by any member or constituent group from the University community, or by an external nominator. Any potential conflict of interest with respect to the nominee (association or connection with the nominee) should be disclosed as part of the nomination submission.
3. All nominations must be made in writing using the form specified by the Committee, and signed by a nominator and two additional individuals supporting the nomination. Nominations may be submitted at any time to the Secretary of Senate, University Secretariat.
4. To assure the confidentiality of the process, nominators shall keep the nomination confidential from the nominee.
5. The Secretary of Senate or his/her delegate will review nominations submitted to ensure that they meet the criteria set above before they are considered by the Committee. Names of nominees who meet the criteria will be added to the list of potential candidates for a period of three years from the date of nomination, at which time, if the nominee has not been selected for recommendation to Senate, the name will be removed from the list. If the person is subsequently re-nominated, the name will again be added to the list for an additional three-year period, provided that they continue to meet the criteria.
6. The Committee will review the active list of nominations as required to meet the annual convocation cycles and will recommend prospective candidates who meet the established criteria. The Committee will regularly review the criteria and pattern of nominations and awards to ensure alignment with the goals of the Committee and the University.
7. All decisions of the Committee will be by majority vote.
8. Committee deliberations are confidential and conducted in-camera. The Committee will forward its recommendations to Senate for its consideration in a closed session.

9. Candidates approved by Senate will be contacted directly by the President and invited to receive an honorary degree. Upon acceptance of this invitation, the names and the ceremonies at which the honorary degrees will be awarded will be confirmed to the Office of the Registrar by the President on a confidential basis and will remain confidential until such time as a public announcement has been made by the President. Where possible, honorary degree recipients will be selected to receive their degrees at the Convocation which most closely aligns with their field of achievement.

VI. Criteria for Revocation

1. The Senate Honorary Degrees Committee (“the Committee”), may recommend to Senate that an honorary degree, and all privileges and rights connected with the honorary degree, be revoked where the holder of the honorary degree:
 - a. has been convicted of any criminal offence (and all appeal options have been exhausted) which shall be held by the Committee to be of an immoral, or scandalous or disgraceful nature; or
 - b. has had their name removed for misconduct by a properly constituted legal authority from any official register of members of the profession to which they belong; or
 - c. has engaged in conduct which, in the reasonable opinion of the Committee, constitutes a significant departure from generally-recognized standards of public behavior and which is seen to undermine the public reputation of the University, and/or is inconsistent with the University’s character and values within the community, and/or constitutes a breach of any agreement made with the University as a condition of the conferment of the honorary degree.
2. The Committee may consider the revocation of an honorary degree based on a written request for revocation made by any person in writing to the Chair of Senate. The Chair of Senate may also initiate a request for revocation, based on information available to the Chair. If the Chair of Senate determines that there may be reasonable grounds for revocation of an honorary degree as set out in V1. 1. the request will be forwarded by the Chair of Senate to the Committee for its consideration.
3. The Committee will review the information provided in support of a request for revocation and if, in the opinion of the Committee, the grounds for revocation are considered to be insufficient or spurious, the Committee, after consultation with the Chair of Senate, will send a reply to the person who made the request to that effect.
4. If the Committee determines that there may be reasonable grounds for revocation of the honorary degree, the request will proceed as follows:
 - i. The Chair of the Committee will send a written notice advising the person, on the basis of the allegations of fact set out in the notice, that revocation of their honorary degree is under consideration. The notice will advise the person that, within the time prescribed in the notice, they may make representations respecting the matter under consideration or any allegation of fact set out in the notice. The notice will also indicate that the revocation process will continue, even if the person omits to reply within the prescribed time.
 - ii. If the person elects to make representations respecting the potential revocation or any allegation of fact set out in the notice, the person or his or her

representative may, within the time prescribed in the notice or as otherwise authorized by the Committee Chair, make representations in writing.

- iii. If, within the time prescribed in the notice or authorized by the Committee Chair, the person fails to reply to the notice, the Committee will review the matter in accordance with the procedures provided for in (iv).
- iv. If the person has made representations, the Committee will be provided with all relevant documentation. After due consideration, the Committee will prepare for the Chair of Senate a report that contains its recommendation with respect to whether or not to revoke the person's honorary degree.
- v. On receiving the report referred to in 4. iv, the Chair of Senate may:
 - (i) where the recommendation is not to revoke the honorary degree, advise the person in question that their honorary degree remains as awarded; or
 - (ii) where the recommendation is to revoke to the honorary degree, request that the Committee report be presented to Senate for a decision on the revocation.

5. All decisions of the Committee will be by majority vote.

6. Committee deliberations are confidential and conducted in-camera. The Committee will forward its recommendations to Senate for its consideration in a closed session.

VI. Suspension of Provisions

1. The Senate may suspend the provisions of these Criteria and Procedures by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting at a meeting.

Approved by Senate: February 10, 2014

Amended: June 9, 2014

Amended: April 13, 2015

Amended by Senate: November 25, 2019

Amended by Senate: February 10, 2020