

Committee for Honorary Degrees and Commencement Speakers

1. The Committee for Honorary Degrees and Commencement Speakers will be appointed by the President.
2. The Committee is composed of the Deans of colleges, self-standing schools, and the library; at least four faculty members; and one or more members from University Advancement.
3. Terms for the faculty members shall be two years with a maximum of two consecutive terms. Faculty members will rotate on alternate years to allow for staggered entry/exit from service on the committee. Faculty may return to serve on the committee after sitting out a 2-year term upon completing a single-term service or completing two consecutive terms of service.
4. The committee will be chaired by the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs or his/her designee.
5. As a minimum, this committee will meet once a year, in the fall semester, to discuss recommendations for the conferral of honorary degrees and request for commencement speakers.
6. In the spring semester, the Provost Office shall ask the university community for nominations for honorary degree candidates and candidates for commencement speakers, to be reviewed the following fall. A nomination must be in the form of a letter supplemented by supporting material(s). The nomination letter shall explain the reasons for recommending the prospective candidate.
7. The committee will complete its work by August 31st annually and submit to the President no more than three (3) nominations for each type of candidate - honorary degree recipients and commencement speakers.
8. The University of West Georgia may recommend to the Board of Regents one honorary degree for each semester concluding with commencement.
9. Nomination Criteria

A candidate nominated for an honorary degree may also serve as the speaker for the commencement at which he or she is to receive the honorary degree. However, a candidate may be nominated separately as a commencement speaker without the conferral of an honorary degree.

a. Honorary Degrees. The basic criteria for an honorary degree recipient shall be notable achievement in an academic field, the arts and letters, the professions, or public service.

b. Commencement Speakers. The basic criteria for commencement speakers shall be notable achievement in an academic field, the arts and letters, the professions, or public service, as well as an expectation of strong public speaking skills.

10. Each nomination recommended to the President will have well-delineated accomplishments defining why the nominee should serve as commencement speaker or the University of West Georgia should award an honorary degree to the nominee.
11. Current elected or appointed officials of the state of Georgia (including Regents) to whom the University System and/or the universities are directly or indirectly answerable are ineligible for honorary degrees.

The same exclusion applies to current elected or appointed national office holders and persons who are announced candidates for elective office in the state or nation.

12. Current faculty members, administrative officers of the USG universities and the System, and other university and System employees are also ineligible; other special awards, such as institutional teaching or service awards, or emeritus titles, are the appropriate means of recognizing special achievements by such persons.
13. Honorary degrees are subject to approval by the Board of Regents (BOR Policy Manual 3.8.8).

Approved May 18, 2017

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