

**March 27, 2013**

**HONORARY DEGREE  
AS APPROVED BY FACULTY SENATE**

**Introduction and Purpose:** The purpose of this policy is to establish the criteria for the award of honorary degrees to individuals.

**Policy:** Montana State University may award an honorary degree to individuals who:

- have an association with MSU and/or the State of Montana by virtue of birth, education or direct contribution to the well-being of the state's citizens.
- have distinguished themselves in such a manner, and at such a level, as to have won recognition in their respective areas of endeavor at the state, regional or national levels.
- will reflect favorably on MSU, the Montana University System, and the State of Montana.

Long tenure in a position, personal durability and above average service, while praiseworthy do not equate with merit as conceived in these criteria. The renown of the candidates should reflect favorably on MSU and Montana. While most honorary degrees are rightfully conferred in acknowledgment of a full and distinguished career, some honorary degrees may also be conferred on distinguished young achievers.

**Procedures:** Faculty and any other interested persons may nominate qualified individuals for an honorary degree by submitting a letter of nomination and supporting materials to the Honorary Degree Committee.

For nominations to receive a favorable review, supporting materials may include letters of support from nationally or internationally known leaders in the area of endeavor of the nominee, from MSU faculty and students, past and present, and from citizens of Montana who have been impacted by the nominee. Additionally, documentation such as press articles, professional organization honors, and other materials demonstrating the candidate's notoriety usually accompany nominations.

Nominations for an honorary doctorate to be awarded at Spring commencement must be received by November 10th, preceding the commencement date in May. Nominations for an honorary doctorate to be awarded at Fall commencement must be received by April 10th, preceding the commencement date in December. Current employees of the Montana University System are not eligible for this honor.

The Honorary Degree Committee reviews the nominations and provides a list of potential nominees to the President. If approved by the President, the nominees are voted on by faculty senators in closed session during, or immediately prior to, the final week of academic instruction of the semester. The names of honorary degree candidates will remain confidential until approved by the Board of Regents (see below).

The recommendation is forwarded to the Montana Commissioner of Higher Education and the Montana Board of Regents for ultimate approval. To protect the privacy of nominees, all persons involved in the process must maintain complete confidentiality at every step of the nomination and approval process. The President will contact the successful nominees after the Board of Regents has approved their selection.