



Senate Committee on Honorary Degrees and Other Forms of Recognition Terms of Reference

The Senate Committee on Honorary Degrees and Other Forms of Recognition (“the Committee”) shall:

1. recommend to the Senate candidates for honorary degrees;
2. recommend to the Senate additions to the convocation roll;
3. recommend to the Senate changes to the criteria and qualifications for candidates for honorary degrees or for candidates for addition to the convocation roll;
4. recommend to the Senate that it revoke an honorary degree; and
5. make recommendations to the Senate on any other matters concerning forms of recognition which the Senate may refer to the Committee.

Senate standing and *ad hoc* committee meetings are normally closed. A committee may determine that the whole or part of any committee discussion or document presented to the committee shall be held in confidence.

Composition

- the Chancellor, Chair (*ex officio*, voting)
- the President or nominee (*ex officio*, voting)
- 6 members, at least 2 of whom must be members of Senate, who are either faculty members, a professional librarian or a continuing sessional instructor (voting)
- 1 Alumni Association representative (voting)
- 1 student member of Senate (voting)
- Executive Director, Community and Government Relations (*ex officio*, non-voting)

Total membership – 11 (10 voting)

The secretary of the committee is the Associate University Secretary.

Criteria for the Selection of Candidates for Honorary Degrees

1. By awarding honorary degrees, the university attempts to recognize extraordinary achievement in community, national or international service, and honour individuals whose accomplishments are of such excellence that they provide, through example, inspiration and leadership to the graduates of the university.
2. Candidates for honorary degrees must normally have an exceptional record of distinction and achievement in at least one of:
 - a. scholarship,
 - b. research,
 - c. teaching,
 - d. the creative arts, or

- e. public service.
- 3. The Committee may recommend a candidate for an honorary degree if that candidate's distinction and achievement, though not fitting the categories listed above, manifests outstanding personal qualities that the Senate may wish to recognize and whose acceptance of an honorary degree would bring acclaim to the university.
- 4. In making its recommendations, the Committee should attempt to reflect regional and cultural diversity and the character and diversity of the university itself. For each regular convocation, the Committee should try to recommend at least one candidate who has or had some connection with British Columbia or the university.
- 5. Normally, individuals holding political office or a current appointment at the university are not eligible for consideration for honorary degrees.
- 6. When the Senate decides to have a special convocation, it may establish special criteria for candidates for honorary degrees and the number of honorary degrees to be awarded at that special convocation.
- 7. On occasion, candidates for honorary degrees may be selected so as to reflect a theme that, in the opinion of the Senate, is of importance to the university.

Approval by Senate for Conferral of Honorary Degrees

- 8. Recommendations of candidates for honorary degrees will be considered at the closed meetings of the Senate.
- 9. The Committee will recommend to the Senate that it approve the conferral of an honorary degree on a candidate.
- 10. If the Senate approves the recommendation from the Committee for conferral of an honorary degree, the candidate will be added to a pool (list) of candidates who should be offered honorary degrees.
 - 10.1 If an approved candidate accepts an honorary degree, the receipt of the honorary degree shall be scheduled at a time that is mutually convenient to the university and the candidate, provided that it is no longer than three years after placed in the pool.
 - 10.2 When necessary, the Committee may recommend that the Senate approve the convocation at which a candidate is to receive an honorary degree at the same time conferral of the honorary degree is approved.
- 11. A person recommended to the Senate for an honorary degree shall be placed in the pool only if two-thirds of the Senate members present vote in favour of approving the conferral of an honorary degree. Recommendations not meeting this requirement will automatically be referred back to the Committee.
- 12. The Secretary of the Committee shall maintain the pool of the candidates the Senate has decided should be offered honorary degrees. The Committee shall regularly provide the Senate with the list of names of candidates in the pool.

13. If a candidate who has been added to the pool is not awarded an honorary degree within three years of being placed in the pool, that candidate is automatically removed from the pool unless the Senate, normally on the recommendation of the Committee, decides that the candidate should remain in the pool for up to three more years.

Awarding of Honorary Degrees

14. Except in unusual circumstances and only at the discretion of the Senate, a candidate for honorary degree must attend a convocation ceremony to receive the honorary degree in person.
 - 14.1 If, after having indicated a willingness to accept an honorary degree, a candidate becomes incapacitated or dies, the honorary degree may be awarded at the discretion of the Chair of the Senate acting on behalf of the Senate.

Revoking an Honorary Degree

15. Senate may revoke an honorary degree in rare and exceptional circumstances in which:
 - (a) the recipient's words or actions, or the maintaining of an of an honorary degree, is inconsistent with the university's mission, institutional plans, or values, or brings the university into disrepute; or
 - (b) the recipient's words or actions have caused egregious harm to individuals, groups, or land.
16. Individuals who have a concern about an honorary degree recipient may submit a signed written statement of concern to the University Secretary.

Procedures for Nominating Candidates for Honorary Degrees

17. Members of convocation and members of the university community may send nominations for candidates for honorary degrees directly to the Committee; others who wish to nominate candidates must do so jointly with a member of convocation.
18. Nominations for candidates for honorary degrees should be in writing and should be sent to the Secretary of the Committee. Recommendations must include:
 - a. a nomination letter including detailed specification and documentation of the candidate's distinctions and achievements;
 - b. the current name and contact information of the candidate;
 - c. the candidate's curriculum vitae; and
 - d. two letters of support for the candidate.

Procedures of the Committee

19. The Secretary of the Committee shall acknowledge the receipt of each nomination of a candidate for an honorary degree or revocation submission in writing.

20. The deliberations of the Committee shall take place in camera and are confidential to the Committee. The Committee shall not disclose to anyone, except by making a recommendation to the Senate, what it decides about any of the submissions it receives.
21. Members of the Committee who are involved in a nomination or revocation submission shall withdraw from the room when that candidate is under consideration by the Committee.
22. The Committee shall use criteria approved by the Senate for selecting nominees, or revoking degrees, for recommendation to the Senate.
23. Normally the Committee shall consult with the appropriate Chair, Director, or Dean if the proposed candidate is recommended on the basis of distinction in an academic area represented at the University.
24. When the Committee recommends a candidate for an honorary degree to the Senate, it shall provide Senate with the nomination information and any other information the Committee deems appropriate.
25. The Committee shall meet at least twice annually.
26. Committee Procedures for the Revocation of an Honorary Degree
 - 26.1 If on first reading the information provided is deemed insufficient to meet the requirements under section 15.00, no further steps will be taken.
 - 26.2 The Committee will carefully consider all information provided to them, and may request additional information, documents, or additional written expert advice from any person.
 - 26.3 The Committee will make reasonable efforts to contact the honorary degree recipient (or, if that is not possible, their family or other representative) to request a response in writing. The Committee will inform the recipient (or their representative) of the concerns that have been raised and give them an opportunity to reply and submit any relevant information in writing.
 - 26.4 The Committee will decide on their recommendation to Senate by majority vote. The Committee may recommend that Senate revoke the honorary degree and will present the reasoning for this recommendation, and the information that the Committee relied upon, in writing.
 - 26.5 Recommendations of revocation of an honorand will be considered at the closed meetings of the Senate.

Approved and Revised by Senate:

June 12, 1974
April 1, 1981
May 9, 1984

January 7, 1987
October 5, 1994
October 7, 1998
October 3, 2001
January 9, 2004
February 5, 2005
May 6, 2011
December 6, 2013
October 1, 2021
November 1, 2024