POLICY STATEMENT

An Honorary Degree from Texas Woman’s University recognizes individuals of prominence who exemplify excellence in scholarship and/or leadership and who demonstrate accomplishment in the professions, sciences, arts, humanities, public service, and service to humanity.

Purpose

The purpose of awarding an honorary degree from Texas Woman’s University is to recognize and honor those individuals who meet the criteria through exceptional accomplishment in their respective fields and/or make a positive impact on the university. The awarding of the degree brings distinction to the University by demonstrating the high standards of achievement and emphasis on excellence that characterize Texas Woman’s University, as reflected in the University’s mission.

Criteria

The following criteria shall serve as guidelines for selection of individuals to receive honorary degrees and the awarding of such degrees.

- Texas Woman’s University shall confer honorary degrees only at the highest level for which it is authorized to award earned degrees, the doctoral level.
- Honorary degrees shall be distinguishable from earned degrees and might include but are not limited to:
  - Doctor of Humane Letters (Hon.)
  - Doctor of Fine Arts (Hon.)
  - Doctor of Business (Hon.)
  - Doctor of Social Science (Hon.)
  - Doctor of Letters (Hon.)
  - Doctor of Divinity (Hon.)
  - Doctor of Laws (Hon.)
- Only under exceptional circumstances will Texas Woman’s University grant more than one honorary degree per academic year.
• Honorary degrees are awarded only at commencement, normally at the spring commencement ceremony but at the winter ceremony when appropriate.
• The honorary degree will only be awarded in absentia or posthumously under extraordinary circumstances.
• It is preferable that an honoree have a connection with the State of Texas.
• An honorary degree will not be conferred on any faculty member, administrator, or other official associated with the University until such individuals have been separated from the University for two or more academic years.
• To avoid involving the University in partisan politics, the University will not confer honorary degrees on serving members of the Texas congressional delegation, elected and appointed state officials, members of the state judiciary, or serving members of the TWU Board of Regents until two or more years after they have vacated office or terminated employment.

**Committee Structure**

• The Provost will appoint the chair(s) of the Committee on Honorary Degrees.
• A quorum will consist of seven members.
• The Advisory Committee on Honorary Degrees is the central agency in awarding honorary degrees. The Committee is under the supervision of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and is composed of ten (10) members. Committee members will serve staggered two-year terms as noted below. Committee members will include:
  o A representative from each of the four academic colleges, recommended by the Dean of the College. College of Professional Education and College of Nursing select new representatives in odd years; College of Arts and Sciences and College of Health Sciences select new representatives in even years;
  o A representative of the graduate faculty, recommended by the Chair of the Graduate Council (Odd years);
  o A representative from Staff Council, recommended by the Chair of the Staff Council (Even years);
  o A representative from the Faculty Senate, recommended by the Speaker of the Faculty Senate (Odd years);
  o One graduate student, recommended by the Dean of the Graduate School (Even years);
  o One undergraduate student, recommended by the Associate Vice President and Dean of Students or Vice President of Student Life (Even years);
  o One member of the Advancement team (Alumni Relations, Institutional Development or Marketing) recommended by the Provost (Even years).

**Nominations**

• Nominations are due by September 15 each year. By April 15 of each spring semester the Office of the Chancellor will call for the nomination of individuals for awarding of the honorary degree. A reminder of the September 15 deadline will be issued by August 15 of each year.
Nominations may originate from the faculty, staff, students, alumni or friends of the University through the submission of the following to the Provost’s office:
  o The nomination form (containing basic personal information and contact information of the nominator, nominee, and nominee assistant or family member). The form is found on the Academic Affairs website.
  o The following additional items to complete the dossier:
    ▪ A formal letter of nomination;
    ▪ Curriculum vitae, biography or professional resume;
    ▪ Two letters of support in addition to the formal letter of nomination;
    ▪ Additional pertinent data or relevant information which may be deemed appropriate.

Completion of the nomination by the deadline is the responsibility of the nominator.
Nominations remain in the pool of nominees for three years after which the person may be re-nominated. Credentials may be enhanced at any time during the three-year period.
A letter of acknowledgement will be sent to each nominator by the chair of the Honorary Degree Committee.

Recommendation and Approval

All considerations of candidates for honorary degrees will be, at every level, conducted with confidentiality.
The Advisory Committee on Honorary Degrees shall meet in September shortly after the submission deadline. Each member of the Committee shall be supplied in advance with the materials for each candidate.
The Committee will discuss and deliberate on the qualifications of the candidates. After deliberation, the members of the Committee cast written ballots to determine the acceptability of each nominee. If a quorum is present and 80% of those in attendance vote in favor of the candidate, that candidate’s name will be forwarded to the Provost with the rationale for the Committee’s decision. The committee may also indicate to the Provost a preferred nominee.
By mid-October the Chair of the Committee on Honorary Degrees will submit a written report on the Committee’s action to the Provost for consideration. The Provost will share the recommendation with the Chancellor.
The Chancellor will present recommendations to the Board of Regents at the November meeting.
Honorary degrees will be awarded only at Commencement.
The Chancellor will invite the candidate who has been selected to attend the Commencement ceremonies to receive the honorary degree.
The Board of Regents reserves the authority to grant honorary doctoral degrees outside of the general guidelines it has set out in this policy.

Link

Nomination Form