

# Honorary Degree Policy

## ROWAN UNIVERSITY POLICY

**Title:** *Honorary Degree Policy*

**Subject:** Board of Trustees Honorary Degree Program

**Policy No:** BT:2022:01

**Applies:** University-Wide

**Issuing Authority:** President

**Responsible Officer:** Chief of Staff

**Adopted:** 10/2017

**Last Revision:** 07/27/2022

**Last Reviewed:** 07/27/2022

### I. PURPOSE

This policy outlines the process for nominations of individuals who meet the criteria below to receive an honorary degree at the main commencement ceremony or during other special ceremonies as determined by the Board of Trustees. The University is cognizant of the fact that the granting of honorary degrees can bring much deserved recognition to chosen individuals. It is equally important to note that such awards can bring distinction and honor to the University. The selection of candidates for honorary degrees and the ceremonies in which these honors are granted must therefore be conducted with great care and respect for all involved.

Nominations will be considered on a rolling basis.

### II. ACCOUNTABILITY

Under the direction of the Chief of Staff and Board Liaison, shall implement and ensure compliance with this policy.

### III. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all candidates selected for an honorary degree.

### IV. REFERENCES

1. [Honorary Degree Nomination Form](#)

### V. POLICY

1. Criteria for Awarding an Honorary Degree
  - a. The honorary degree shall be granted in recognition of two or more of the following criteria:
    - i. The nominee has demonstrated outstanding achievement in his or her respective field;
    - ii. The nominee has made a substantial contribution(s) to Rowan University; and/or
    - iii. The nominee will bring substantial prestige to the University by receiving this award.
2. Confidentiality

The honorary degree nomination and deliberation processes shall remain confidential. Nominees must not be notified of their nomination. Once approved by the Board of Trustees, the President or his designee will contact successful candidates of this honor.
3. The Guidelines for Candidates for Honorary Degree

- a. The nomination for an honorary degree may be submitted to the Office of the President by any member of the faculty, staff, student body, Board of Trustees or an alumnus of Rowan University. While nominations may be submitted by persons other than those listed, such will require the co-sponsorship of a representative of one of the aforementioned groups.
- b. Nominations shall be made only through the completion of the regular nomination form which may be secured from the Office of the President of Rowan University.
- c. In addition to the awarding of honorary degrees at Commencement, the Selection Committee may recommend recipients to the Board of Trustees at any time for other special occasions.
- d. Candidates for honorary degrees shall not be denied consideration for possible selection on the basis of race, creed, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, gender, or membership in other protected classifications under applicable law.
- e. Current University employees are not eligible to receive an Honorary Degree. Employees must be separated from the University for a period of at least 5 years before they are eligible for nomination.
- f. Nominations will be received by the President's Office, and will be promptly forwarded to the Selection Committee who may conduct its business through confidential electronic correspondence.
- g. The Selection Committee will make a recommendation to the Executive Cabinet, who will review the recommendation(s) and determine whether the nomination will be forwarded to the President.
- h. If approved, the President will forward the nomination to the Honorary Degree Committee, who will make its recommendation(s) to the Nominations and Executive Committees, and then to the Board of Trustees at its next meeting.
- i. Honorary degrees may be awarded at special events or ceremonies other than commencement. If the President wishes to recommend an individual for consideration of an honorary degree at time other than commencement, he will do so by making the recommendation directly to the Executive Committee. If approved, the nomination will then be considered by the full Board of Trustees.
- j. Under special circumstances, the President may make a recommendation directly to the Executive Committee for an honorary degree to be awarded at commencement. If approved, the nomination will then be considered by the full Board of Trustees.
- k. One of the conditions for the awarding of the honorary degree is that the candidate be present at Commencement or the designated special ceremonial event. Honorary degrees are not awarded in absentia. Posthumous honorary degrees are an exception to this criterion.
- l. Honorary Degrees may not be awarded to the same individual more than once.

#### 4. Selection Committee

- a. The Rowan University Honorary Degree Selection Committee shall be comprised of the following representatives:
  - i. The President's Chief of Staff (convener, permanent member – without vote);
  - ii. The President of the Rowan University Alumni Association, or a member designated by the Association's President;
- b. The President of the University Senate, or a person designated by the President of the Senate;
- c. The President of the organization which is recognized as the faculty and professional staff bargaining agent, or a person designated by the President of the organization;
- d. The President of the Student Government Association, or a member of the SGA designated by the Association's President;
- e. A graduate student attending Rowan University;
- f. A representative from University Advancement;
- g. A representative from University Relations; and
- h. A representative from the President's Office.

#### 5. Review for Character

Under extraordinary circumstances, the Executive Cabinet may consider whether a prior Honorary Degree conferral should be rescinded due to conduct unbecoming a recipient of an Honorary Degree. Such review may be undertaken at the request of the Board of Trustees or President's Office.

