



ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY # 30-01 HONORARY DEGREE POLICY

Policy Title: Honorary Degree Policy

Policy Type: Administrative

Policy Number: 30-01

Approval Date: 09/24/2026

Responsible Office: Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Responsible Executive: Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Applies to: University Community

POLICY STATEMENT

Norfolk State University has the authority to recognize individuals who have made outstanding achievements and contributions to the institution, to the Commonwealth, to an academic field or to society by the awarding of an honorary degree. Other than the earned doctorate, it is one of the highest recognitions the University can bestow on an individual and, as such, it is not given lightly and relatively few are given.

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DEFINITIONS

Honorary Degree: A way of honoring individuals for distinguished service, scholarship, and other accomplishments in the service of humanity, whether in scientific, social, academic, creative, business, public, or other appropriate spheres.



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CONTACTS

The Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs officially interprets this policy. The Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs is responsible for obtaining approval for any revisions as required by BOV Policy # 01 (2014) Creating and Maintaining Policies through the appropriate governance structures. Questions regarding this policy should be directed to the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

STAKEHOLDERS

Constituents of the University who have made significant contributions to the University and the community at large

POLICY CONTENTS

Honorary degrees are awarded for sustained achievement of lasting significance and value, and not for a single accomplishment. The recipient of an honorary degree will forever be associated with the institution; therefore, honorary degree recipients should be individuals

1. Who reflect the high ideals of Norfolk State University
2. Who exemplify the concept of excellence, service, and integrity, and
3. Whose lives will inspire others and be exemplary of the University's aspirations for its graduates.

Nominees may be individuals recognized for distinguished service, scholarship, and other accomplishments in the service of humanity, whether in scientific, social, academic, creative, business, public, or other appropriate spheres. The authority to confer the honorary degree rests with the Board of Visitors, as recommended by the University President, but various constituents are free to nominate suitable, deserving candidates for consideration and screening.

PROCEDURES

The Honorary Degree Committee is responsible for the initial screening of nominees for the honorary degree. The committee is appointed by the Faculty Senate. It shall consist of no fewer than four persons. The president of the Faculty Senate shall designate the chair of the Committee.

I. Honorary Degree Committee

1. The nomination and the deliberation process will be conducted with the strictest confidentiality.
2. The Committee shall recommend candidate(s) to the University President.
3. The President may support, alter or reject the list of names. When the President is satisfied with the list, it is transmitted to the Academic and Student Affairs Committee of the Board of Visitors.
4. The list of nominees will be subject to final approval by the full Board of Visitors.



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II. Timeline for Honorary Degree Nominations

NOTE: The appointment of the Honorary Degree Committee by the Faculty Senate must be made by August of each calendar year. Service on the Committee is a two-year appointment.

TIMELINE	CALENDAR	
	May Graduation	December Graduation
Memorandum to campus community from the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs requesting <i>formal</i> nominations	September 15	February 28
Nominations with supporting material due in the Office of Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs	October 1	March 15
List of nominees with supporting material forwarded to the Honorary Degree Committee for screening	October 15	March 30
List of recommendations sent to the President by the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs	November 1	April 15
Presentation of nominee to the Board of Visitors by the President	December	May

III. Limitations

1. The University shall not grant an honorary degree to current members of the faculty, administration, Board of Visitors, administrators of the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia.
2. An honorary degree may not be awarded posthumously.
3. The honorary degree may only be conferred at Fall or Spring Commencement Exercises.

EDUCATION AND COMPLIANCE

The Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs shall be responsible for designating a person who will train the members of the Honorary Degree Committee on the requirements of this policy by mid-September or prior to the Committee commencing its work, whichever comes first. Records of training will be maintained in the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

To ensure conformity to the requirements of this policy, the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs will monitor for compliance with this policy. Violations of this policy will be reported to the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs as needed.

Noncompliance with this policy will undermine recognition of assiduous contributions to the University.



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PUBLICATION

This policy shall be widely distributed to the University community. To ensure timely publication and distribution thereof, the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs will make every effort to

- Communicate the policy in writing, electronically or otherwise, to the University community within 14 days of approval;
- Submit the policy for inclusion in the online Policy Library within 14 days of approval;
- Post the policy on the Academic Affairs website; and
- Educate and train all stakeholders and appropriate audiences on the policy contents.

Failure to satisfy procedural requirements does not invalidate this policy.

REVIEW SCHEDULE

- Next Scheduled Review: 03/01/2029
- Approved by: President's Cabinet
- Approval Date: 01/13/2015; 11/04/2021; 09/22/2026
- Revision History: April 16, 2018; 04/16/2021; 09/24/2026
- Supersedes: The previous policy 30-01 Honorary Degree Policy

RELATED DOCUMENTS

There are no related documents associated with this policy.

FORMS

There are no forms associated with this policy and procedures.