

**MORGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
POLICY OF THE AWARD OF HONORARY DEGREES**

Upon approval by the Board of Regents, it is the policy of Morgan State University to award honorary degrees on a selective basis to individuals who have distinguished themselves in their community or profession. The purpose of this policy is the recognition of individuals who have made significant contributions to society which are consistent with the values for which Morgan State University stands.

I. HONORARY DEGREE RECIPIENTS

Prospective recipients of honorary degrees shall be:

- A. Distinguished individuals who have risen to a position of eminence in their chosen field or who have acquired a national or international reputation in a selected field or endeavor;
- B. Individuals who have compiled a distinguished record of excellence and/or achievement or distinguished public service to the University, State, nation, or international community.

II. HONORARY DEGREE COMMITTEE ("COMMITTEE")

The President or Designee shall appoint a Committee to recommend candidates for honorary degrees.

- A. Committee Selection, Appointment and Term- On or about July 1 of each year, the President or Designee shall appoint the Committee for a term of three years. The Committee shall consist of one faculty member from each of the academic units, that have faculty, a representative of the student body, the Chair of the University Council, and a representative from other campus units as identified by the President.
- B. Selection of Honorary Degree Candidates
 - 1. Notice- The President or Designee shall issue a University-wide notice inviting nominations of honorary degree

candidates. At a minimum, the notice shall indicate the deadline by which nominations must be made and advise those interested of the necessary content of the nomination (for example, a statement or letter of justification on the suitability of the nominee for receipt of an honorary degree.)

2. Nomination Review- The Committee shall review all nominations and may submit the names of additional candidates. In reviewing the suitability of the candidate, the Committee may include additional information about the nominee from the person who submitted the nomination. Academic credentials of the nominee shall not be investigated. In considering candidates for honorary degrees, consideration may be given to, but is not limited to: prominent educators; distinguished alumni; civic leaders; statespersons; and other persons deemed to have made significant contributions to the University and/or society.
3. Committee Recommendation to President- By majority vote, the Committee shall select and forward to the President a minimum of three names and a maximum of five names of recommended honorary degree recipients for each commencement. In that recommendation, the Committee shall recommend the type of degree to be awarded; an earned doctorate shall not be awarded as an honorary degree. The Committee recommendation shall include the following:
 - a. Type of honorary degree to be awarded.
 - b. Biographical sketch of the proposed recipient.
 - c. Justification for the awarding the degree.
4. Presidential Review of and Addendum to Recommended Nominations
 - a. The President may accept or reject all or any part of the Committee recommendation and/or include additional candidates for an honorary degree.

- b. In order to determine a nominee's availability for receipt of an honorary degree and willingness to accept an honorary degree, the President or designee may contact nominees to unofficially advise them of their nomination for honorary degree and to ascertain their availability and acceptance of the degree if it were offered. The nominee would be advised that the nomination for an honorary degree is subject to approval by the Board of Regents and that disapproval by the Board should in no way be considered a reflection of the qualifications or eligibility of the candidate for receipt of an honorary degree.

5. Submission of Recommended Nomination for Honorary Degree to the Board of Regents -The President shall make best efforts to submit recommendations for award of honorary degree(s) to the Academic and Student Affairs Committee of the Board of Regents for review by the regular meeting of the Board in February for Spring commencements but no later than the regular meeting of the Board in May; and by the regular meeting of the Board in August for Fall commencements, but no later than the regular meeting of the Board in November.

III. BOARD OF REGENTS REVIEW OF HONORARY DEGREE CANDIDATES

- A. Honorary degrees shall be awarded upon recommendation of the President if approved by the Board.
- B. The Academic and Student Affairs Committee shall review the recommendations and submit the nominees to the full Board for final review and approval.
- C. The Board shall award no more than five (5) honorary degrees per academic year.
- D. Honorary degrees shall not be awarded to University officials, faculty, and staff, while they are employed at the University.
- E. In order for the honorary degree to be conferred, the honorary degree recipients must attend the degree conferring ceremony, except honorary degrees which are conferred posthumously, which may be received by a representative of the deceased.

- F. The President shall send a formal letter notifying the honorary degree candidate of the Board's approval to award the honorary degree and request a written response confirming acceptance from the candidates within ten (10) days of receipt of the letter.
- G. The identity of any honorary degree candidate shall remain confidential until the candidate submits the written response required in Paragraph III, F.
- H. A formal citation shall be prepared and read during the awarding of the degree. The list of candidates and honorary degrees will be listed in the printed program for the ceremony in which the degree is awarded.
- I. If the President concludes that an honorary degree recipient no longer meets the criteria or upholds the standards for which the degree was awarded; or if the President learns that the honorary degree recipient has engaged in conduct that is antithetical to the mission or values of the University, the President reserves the right to recommend to the Board of Regents that an Honorary Degree be rescinded and the Board will consider the recommendation.

This revised policy amends and supersedes the Board of Regents policy approved on February 4, 2020.