1. **PURPOSE:** The honorary doctorate degree will be the highest honor bestowed by the University among the various awards given beyond the granting of earned degrees. The purpose of the nomination should be motivated principally as a tribute to worthy individuals as defined below. The honorary degree is not equivalent to, nor a replacement for, an earned degree.

   A. The honorary degree would be used to:

      1) Recognize and honor exceptional men and women who have given a substantial part of their lives to serving others and who have distinguished themselves throughout their professional careers and/or volunteer service.
      2) Establish a public association between Winona State University (WSU) and such exceptional men and women, thereby providing testimony to the values and principles of WSU.
      3) Assist WSU with its goals and objectives in areas of educational programming, service, and institutional advancement.

2. **ELIGIBILITY FOR THE HONORARY DEGREE:**

   A. An honorary degree may be granted to:

      1) A graduate of WSU who has achieved distinction in his or her profession.
      2) A citizen who has made an outstanding contribution or rendered an outstanding service to WSU, the Minnesota State College and University System (MnSCU), or the State of Minnesota;
      3) An outstanding national figure who has made a recognized public or scholarly contribution.
      4) A figure whose personal status will enhance the reputation of WSU and MnSCU. All eligible categories and selections are to serve as models for WSU and MnSCU constituencies.

   B. The following shall not be eligible while serving as:

      1) Current employees of WSU.
      2) Current members of the MnSCU Board of Trustees.
      3) Incumbent officers of federal, state, or local government.

3. **GUIDELINES FOR SELECTION:**

   A. Primary consideration shall be given to substantial evidence that outstanding achievement and contribution have been accomplished by the nominee. Substantial
evidence includes a significant degree of creativity, resourcefulness, humanitarian concern, personal dedication, intellect and other qualities consistent with the intent of the honorary doctorate degree. Therefore, careful distinction shall be made between the extraordinary effort of talented, selfless and energetic individuals who have performed beyond the call of duty in service to WSU and humankind and those normal expectations in fulfilling service, employment or professional requirements.

B. Only secondary consideration will be given to biographical information which details accomplishments not associated with the primary reason for the nomination.

4. GUIDELINES FOR PRESENTATION:

A. Following approval by the President of WSU, honorary doctorate degrees will only be conferred during the University’s commencement exercises. Names of potential recipients will not be published until the President has given approval to award the honorary degree.

B. Degrees to be awarded may be selected from the following categories and will be based upon their appropriateness to the intended recipient's field(s) of contributions, achievements, service, and distinctions:

1) Honorary Doctor of Fine Arts (Hon. D.F.A.)
2) Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters (Hon. LH.D.)
3) Honorary Doctor of Laws (Hon. LL.D.)
4) Honorary Doctor of Education (Hon. D.Ed.)
5) Honorary Doctor of Science (Hon. Sc.D.)
6) Honorary Doctor of Literature (Hon. Litt.D.)

C. The honorary degree should not be awarded in absentia (unless significant extenuating circumstances justify awarding the degree without the recipient being present at commencement exercises), and an invitation to a candidate should be conditional until the candidate's acceptance of the invitation by a commitment to attend commencement exercises.

D. No more than two honorary degrees will be conferred in any academic year and no more than one per commencement ceremony.

5. NOMINATION PROCESS:

A. The procedure for nominating candidates for the honorary doctorate degree is as follows:

1) The Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs (P/VPAA) shall solicit nominations for honorary degrees from members of the WSU community by October 1 each year.
2) Nominations may be made by an individual or group. Nominations shall be written and include:
a) A biographical statement containing name, address, professional title, place of birth, educational background, and other honorary degrees, if any.

b) Appropriate written documentation for the nomination, including a concise enumeration of primary contributions that qualify the individual for the honorary degree.

c) A minimum of three written references from knowledgeable people in academia, public or private sectors who are familiar with the nominee's contributions.

6. SELECTION PROCESS:

A. The procedure for selecting recipients for the honorary degree is as follows:

1) Nominations must be sent by November 1 to the P/VPAA.
2) The P/VPAA shall, by November 15, assign each of the nominations to the appropriate academic unit for faculty review;
3) The academic unit leader is responsible for soliciting and documenting a faculty response to the nomination letter and returning this recommendation to the P/VPAA by December 15;
4) The P/VPAA will, during the month of January, schedule meet-and-confer sessions with the University's constituent groups for the purpose of reviewing the nominations and faculty responses and soliciting input and feedback;
5) The P/VPAA must convene by February 1 the All-University Committee on Honorary Degrees (comprised of representatives of all constituency groups, a majority of whom are faculty members) for consideration of all nominations receiving favorable support.
6) The All-University Committee on Honorary Degrees must by February 15 deliver to the President and the University's constituent groups its recommendation on each candidate being considered for the honorary degree.
7) The President shall review and approve/disapprove the recommendations of the committee and constituent groups by March 1.
8) If a nominee(s) is selected by the President as the recipient of the honorary degree, public announcement of the award will be made and the degree will be conferred at the spring commencement ceremony.

This WSU regulation supersedes WSU Regulation 3-23, dated August 13, 2007.
Authority References:
MnSCU Board Policy 3.18, Honorary Degrees
MnSCU Board Procedure 3.18.1, Honorary Degrees

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