UNIVERSITY POLICY
HONORARY DEGREES

POLICY
It is the policy of Slippery Rock University to award honorary degrees on a selective basis to distinguished individuals who merit special recognition for genuine achievement and distinction in a field or activity consonant with the mission of the University. Only the Council of Trustees may authorize the award of an honorary degree.

RATIONALE
Honorary degrees have been awarded by American colleges and universities since early colonial times as a way of recognizing persons of achievement. They have customarily been awarded to prominent alumni/alumnae of the granting institution and to professional and civic leaders, national and state leaders in public affairs, prominent educators and distinguished contributors to the arts, sciences and humanities.

CRITERIA / RESTRICTIONS
A. An honorary degree may be awarded to a person of great accomplishment and high ethical standards who satisfies the following criteria:
   - Eminence, in the course of a career, in some field of scholarship, in public service, or in an artistic, literary, governmental, religious, financial, or other endeavor;
   - Outstanding contribution to the University and/or commonwealth; and
   - A significant reason for recognition by Slippery Rock University, in the form of an association or relationship with the University or a nexus between the individual's achievements and the mission or life of the University.

B. In recognition of its commitment to gender equality and social, economic, national, racial and cultural diversity, the University is committed to awarding honorary degrees to recipients who reflect the diversity of interests, backgrounds and concerns reflected in the University community and the society and world it serves.

C. The University shall not grant an honorary degree to current members of the faculty, administration, staff or Council of Trustees.

D. Generally the University shall not grant an honorary degree to individuals currently serving in the legislature or executive branches of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania or as members of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education or its Board of Governors. Special exception may be made for an outstanding individual whose public service or commitment to the welfare of public higher education is both distinguished and worthy of such recognition. In such matters, the Council of Trustees, by majority vote, shall make the determination.

E. Consistent with current Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) policy, recommendations of individuals for any honorary degree should be submitted to the Council of Trustees through the University President. Normally no more than two (2) honorary degrees may be awarded during any calendar year. Honorary degrees may be awarded at any commencement, convocation or other appropriate University function, though the University may choose not to grant an award in every calendar year. The Chancellor of PASSHE shall be notified of the identity, qualifications and degree to be awarded at least 30 days prior to the actual awarding of the degree, as required by PASSHE policy.
F. Except in exceptional cases, honorary degrees are not bestowed posthumously.

DEFINITIONS
Honorary degree designations are limited to degrees not given in course as earned degrees by any institution of postsecondary education authorized by the Commonwealth to grant such degrees, and may include but are not limited to the following:

- Litt.D. - Doctor of Letters (litterarum doctor, honoris causa)
- L.H.D. - Doctor of Humane Letters (litterarum humaniorum doctor, honoris causa)
- LL.D. - Doctor of Laws (legum doctor, honoris causa)
- Sc.D. - Doctor of Science (scientia doctor, honoris causa)
- D.P.S. - Doctor of Public Service (doctor beneficiorum publicorum, honoris causa)
- Ped.D. - Doctor of Pedagogy (doctor institutionis, honoris causa)

PROCEDURES
1. Anyone is free to submit a nomination of an honorary degree candidate, though a nomination does not guarantee selection or approval. The University Cabinet will vet honorary degree nominations and recommend candidate(s) to the President.
2. Nominations of honorary degree candidates must be submitted in writing and should include the candidate's name; current position or affiliation; the rationale in support of the nomination; Slippery Rock University connection, if any; and, whenever possible, information about special outreach to or other means of contacting the nominee.
3. Nominations must include at least two letters of support. Normally, nominations or letters of support cannot come from the nominee or nominee’s family.
4. Nominations can be submitted through the President’s Office or via any member of the University Cabinet.
5. Honorary degrees are awarded by the Council of Trustees upon recommendation of the President. The President will submit the names of individuals recommended for honorary degrees to the Council of Trustees for approval.
6. The chancellor shall be notified at least 30 days before an honorary degree is to be awarded of the identity, qualifications and citation to be attached to such degree.

PROHIBITION ON FEES AND HONORARIA
Except under unusual circumstances when the President determines otherwise, an honorary degree recipient shall not receive a speaker’s fee or honorarium for accepting an honorary degree or delivering a commencement address or the equivalent.

PRESENCE AT COMMENCEMENT OR OTHER OFFICIAL CEREMONIES
No honorary degree shall be conferred unless the recipient is present.

SCOPE
The policy applies all faculty, staff and students.

RESPONSIBILITY
Responsibility for implementation of this policy resides in the President’s Office.

Authority for creation and revision:
University Cabinet: Oct. 22, 2015