

**Florida Gulf Coast University
Office of Academic Affairs**

The Awarding of Honorary Degrees

Purpose

The conferral of honorary doctoral degrees provides an opportunity for Florida Gulf Coast University to recognize worthy persons who have made outstanding contributions to the public good. The honorary doctorate is the highest academic recognition that Florida Gulf Coast University can bestow on an individual.

Eligibility and Selection Criteria

Ever mindful of its mission, Florida Gulf Coast University grants honorary degrees to persons whose achievements are in concert with the mission of the University. Recipients of honorary degrees will be forever associated with the University; therefore, recipients of an honorary degree from Florida Gulf Coast University must be of sufficient stature and character so as to honor the University.

Specific criteria for an honorary degree at FGCU include at least one of the following:

- Distinguished record of scholarship.
- Outstanding contributions to society through humanitarian efforts, public service, education, or artistic achievement.

Ordinarily, honorary doctoral degrees are not awarded to current members of the University faculty, staff, Board of Trustees, or any elected official or state employee who has direct oversight of the University. Former members of the Board of Trustees and emeriti faculty should only be considered for honorary degrees on an exceptional basis. Prospective benefactors of the University should clearly meet the criteria for an honorary degree.

Nomination Process

Nominations for honorary degrees are encouraged from all constituents of the University. For full consideration, the nominator must supply the following information by the stated deadline:

- Letter of nomination that summarizes the candidate's qualifications for this honor.
- Brief curriculum vitae of the nominee (resume or biographical description).
- Other supporting evidence as appropriate (e.g., letters of support, publications, materials).

- Contact information for the nominee.

Nominations and supporting materials for fall Commencement must be received in Academic Affairs no later than October 1. Nominations and supporting materials for spring Commencement must be received in Academic Affairs no later than February 1.

Selection Process

The Committee on Honorary Degrees is comprised of the following individuals:

- Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs or designee.
- One faculty member from each unit, appointed by the Faculty Senate. Faculty members shall be appointed for two-year staggered terms. Members may serve no more than two consecutive terms on the committee.
- An Academic Dean or Chair/Director, appointed by the Provost
- Assistant Vice President of Research or designee, appointed by the Provost
- Representative from the President's Office, appointed by the President

The committee will publicize criteria and guidelines for nominations at least three weeks prior to the nominations deadline. The committee will review nominations and identify individuals who meet the criteria for an honorary degree. The committee shall recommend candidates and appropriate degree(s) to the University President by November 1 for fall Commencement and by March 1 for spring Commencement. The committee will include a written rationale for each individual who is being recommended for an honorary degree. Ordinarily, the Committee on Honorary Degrees will submit no more than five recommendations to the President. There should be no communication with the prospective honorary degree recipient(s) until after the President has made the final decision on conferral of honorary degrees. The President's Office shall contact the selected recipient(s) concerning acceptance and conferral of the honorary degree. Candidates who have been approved by the President, but are unable to come to Florida Gulf Coast University to receive the honorary degree, will be invited to accept the honorary degree during the next academic year.

Awarding of an honorary degree is a special honor. In cases where nominees fail to satisfy minimal eligibility requirements, the President, with consultation from the Committee on Honorary Degrees, reserves the right not to award an honorary degree.

Honorary Degrees Offered at FGCU

- Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters (L.H.D.)¹
- Honorary Doctor of Letters (Litt.D)²
- Honorary Doctor of Laws (L.L.D.)³
- Honorary Doctor of Science (Sc.D.)⁴
- Others as approved by the Committee on Honorary Degrees

Procedures for Awarding Honorary Degrees

1. Honorary degrees shall be awarded at Commencement.
2. Ordinarily, honorary degrees shall not be given in absentia. In exceptional cases, an honorary degree may be awarded posthumously.
3. The candidate shall be presented with the University diploma carrying the title of the degree, a citation indicating the reasons for the award, and a doctoral hood bearing the colors of the University.

Process for Amending Honorary Degree Guidelines

Proposed amendments to the *Awarding of Honorary Degrees* document should be submitted in writing to the Committee on Honorary Degrees. The Committee on Honorary Degrees will submit recommendations to the Provost. The Provost, in consultation with Deans' Council and the Faculty Senate, will review the proposed changes. The Provost will submit the revised *Awarding of Honorary Degree* document to the President for final review and approval.

¹ *litterarum humaniorum doctor, honoris causa*-awarded for outstanding achievement in the humanities and the social sciences.

² *litterarum doctor, honoris causa*-awarded for outstanding contributions to the field of literature, journalism and drama.

³ *legum doctor, honoris causa*-awarded for outstanding community contributions at the local, national, or international level in business, industry, government, and public office.

⁴ *scientia doctor, honoris causa*-awarded for outstanding achievement in the pure and applied sciences, health professions and technology