

AWARDING OF HONORARY DEGREES

Honorary degrees may be awarded at commencement or some other equally appropriate time. The names of persons receiving honorary degrees must be approved by the Governing Board.

1. Policy

- a. Honorary degrees shall be awarded by the individual college awarding the degree, upon approval of the Governing Board of the Contra Costa Community College District.
- b. Honorary degrees shall be awarded at commencement exercises or other equally appropriate time. The degree shall be conferred by the college President.
- c. Colleges should confer no more than one exceptional or significant achievement honorary degree per academic year.
- d. The final recommendation comes from the college President to the Chancellor.
- e. Any member of the college community may propose a candidate for an honorary degree; however, letters of endorsement for a nominee should not be solicited, as that activity could place the Governing Board, the Chancellor and the colleges in a difficult position if the Governing Board does not approve the nomination.
- f. All nominations shall be kept in the strictest confidence prior to submission to the Governing Board which will consider nominations in closed session pursuant to Education Code Section 72122.
- g. All honorary degrees will clearly state that the degree being conferred is an honorary degree to avoid confusion with the academic degrees conferred by the colleges.
- h. Posthumous honorary degrees may be awarded to a deceased current student who had completed more than 50% of a certificate or degree. When hearing of a student death, the college President will make a recommendation to the Chancellor to be considered by the Governing Board. The words "awarded posthumous" will appear on the certificate/diploma and will be noted on the transcript. The college President (or designee) will contact the student's family to invite them to a private diploma presentation or offer to mail the diploma directly to the family.

2. Purposes for Which Honorary Degrees May be Conferred

- a. To recognize excellence and exceptional achievement in significant areas of human endeavor, which reflect the mission, goals, objectives and ideals of the college and District.
- b. To honor meritorious and outstanding service to the college District, to the college individually, to the communities the college serves, to the State of California, to the United States, or to humanity at large.
- c. To recognize men and women whose lives and significant achievements should serve as examples of the Contra Costa Community College District's aspirations for its diverse student body.
- d. To provide recognition and closure to a grieving family, the college can confer an honorary posthumous degree/certificate on a deceased current student.

3. Criteria for the Awarding of Honorary Degrees

- a. Honorary degrees may be awarded to recognize achievements in all parts of the world.
- b. Posthumous honorary degrees/certificate can be conferred to a current student who had completed 50% or more of a certificate or degree.
- c. Nominees for honorary degrees must be distinguished in their respective fields, and the contributions of persons nominated should be widely recognized. Nominees must have demonstrated intellectual and humane values that are consistent with the aims of higher education and with the highest ideals of the nominee's chosen fields.
- d. Service or benefaction to the college and/or District does not in itself justify the awarding of honorary degrees. However, nothing in this criteria shall preclude nominees who are benefactors of the college and/or District.

4. Limitations on Eligibility

Honorary degrees shall not be awarded to the following (except posthumously):

- a. incumbent Governing Board members;
- b. current employees of the college or District; or
- c. anyone who has already been awarded an honorary degree by a college within the Contra Costa Community College District.

5. Procedures for Selecting Honorary Degree Recipients

Each college within the District should develop its own procedures (in consultation with local faculty/academic senates) for selecting honorary degree recipients within the guidelines established herein.

The utmost care must be taken through all steps of the procedure to ensure confidentiality prior to submission to the Governing Board. A breach of confidentiality could seriously embarrass the Contra Costa Community College District, the college, or the nominee.

Historical Annotation:

Adopted 4/30/03 as Board Policy 1014: renumbered to Board Policy 1018 and distributed on 10/18/10

Revised 11/14/12 and renumbered to Board Policy 4013

Revised: 05/10/23