



**RESOLUTION TO MODIFY HONORARY DEGREES AND COMMENCEMENT  
SPEAKERS POLICY, 3356-10-5**

**WHEREAS**, University Policies are being reviewed and reconceptualized on an ongoing basis;  
and

**WHEREAS**, this process can result in the modification of existing policies, the creation of new policies, or the deletion of policies no longer needed; and

**WHEREAS**, action is required by the Board of Trustees prior to replacing and/or implementing modified or newly created policies, or to rescind existing policies.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Trustees of Youngstown State University does hereby approve the modification of the University Policy stated above and attached hereto.

**Board of Trustees Meeting  
December 12, 2024  
YR 2025- 37**

**3356-10-05    Honorary degrees and commencement speakers.**

Responsible Division/Office: Academic Affairs  
Responsible Officer: Provost and VP for Academic Affairs  
Revision History: October 1997; July 2009; June 2011;  
June 2013; December 2015; December 2020;  
March 2021; December 2024  
Board Committee: Academic Excellence and Student Success  
**Effective Date: December 12, 2024**  
Next Review: 2029

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- (A) Policy statement. The board of trustees shall review and authorize the list from which commencement speakers and honorary degree candidates will be recommended by the academic events committee of the academic senate to the president. The board of trustees may also recognize and authorize board members to receive honorary degrees for exceptional service to the university. The board of trustees shall grant honorary degrees in recognition of a significant impact on the university, on the community, state or nation, or on society. Such degrees will be conferred at commencements, special convocations, and other events. The honorary degree shall be clearly designated on the diploma as “Honorary degree of” followed by the name of the degree.
- (B) The following honorary degrees are those usually awarded at Youngstown state university:
- (1) Bus. D. (doctor of business), customarily awarded to a person making a unique contribution in the business community.
  - (2) LL.D. (doctor of laws), customarily awarded to a person distinguished in general service to the state, to learning and to mankind.
  - (3) LH.D. (doctor of humane letters), customarily awarded to a person distinguished in the humanities.
  - (4) Sc.D. (doctor of science), customarily awarded to a person distinguished in the sciences.
  - (5) Lett.D. (doctor of letters), customarily awarded to an acknowledged scholar in a particular discipline.

- (6) Mus.D. (doctor of music), customarily awarded to a distinguished performer or composer.
- (C) Procedures for selecting and approving candidates.
  - (1) Criteria for nomination of commencement speakers and honorary degree candidates are determined by the provost/vice president for academic affairs, subject to board of trustees' approval.
  - (2) Faculty, staff, board of trustees members and/or anyone associated with the university may submit nominations for commencement speakers and/or honorary degree candidates to the academic events committee of the academic senate or directly to the provost/vice president for academic affairs.
  - (3) Per the academic senate bylaws, the academic events committee of the academic senate "shall be responsible for making recommendations concerning policy governing academic events such as graduation ceremonies, honors convocations, inaugural ceremonies, and recommend candidates for honorary degrees and commencement speakers to the university's president."
  - (4) The academic events committee will review the credentials of all the nominated candidates and will submit a list of no less than fifteen and no more than twenty recommended candidates for approval by the board of trustees during its regular June meeting. The list may be amended and reapproved by the board at any time throughout the year.
- (D) Selection of the commencement speaker.
  - (1) The provost, in consultation with the president, shall select a commencement speaker from the board-approved list.
  - (2) The president will inform the board of the selection of the commencement speaker no later than the board meeting preceding the commencement ceremony.
- (E) Selection of the honorary degree recipient.

- (1) Only the board of trustees is authorized to approve the awarding of an honorary degree.
- (2) The provost, in consultation with the president, shall recommend candidates for an honorary degree from the approved list for recognition at an appropriate event.
- (3) The board shall approve the awarding of the degree no later than the board meeting preceding the event at which the honorary degree is to be conferred.
- (4) In addition to the process set forth above, the board of trustees will choose to award an honorary degree to a trustee whose service has been exceptional and who serves to completion the full term as appointed by the governor. Such honorary degree may be awarded at a board of trustees meeting in special recognition of such trustee.