

RECOMMENDATION OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON GRADUATE COURSE AND CURRICULUM FOR CHANGES TO THE POLICY ON AWARDING POSTHUMOUS GRADUATE DEGREES

Background:

In January 2013, GFC document 602 was reviewed by a small working group which affirmed the rationale for the original version, but suggested instituting slightly more generous criteria for awarding posthumous degrees given the potential goodwill they can engender, and the comfort they may bring to those who were close to the deceased. The group also suggested placing responsibility for determining “significant progress” toward the completion of a thesis or dissertation with the program faculty.

I. Assumptions:

- A. Separate policies should be developed and followed for the award of posthumous degrees at graduate and undergraduate levels.

Rationale: The award of graduate degrees is based on more than a collection of courses and hence the decision of whether or not a student has completed the majority of the work required for a graduate degree must be based on several criteria and comprehensive faculty review and recommendation. Criteria for posthumous degrees should differ at the master’s and doctoral levels and in turn, distinctions made between master’s programs which do and which do not require the thesis. Finally, the Graduate Faculty Committee must recommend all candidates for graduate degrees and GFC approval should be required for all posthumous degrees as well.

- B. Separate policies should be developed for the award of posthumous degrees at the master’s and doctoral levels.

Rationale: See Rationale for A.

- C. “Certifications of Accomplishment” (as is proposed for undergraduate), should not be awarded at the graduate level.

Rationale: The multiplicity of requirements and the varied number of credits required for specific graduate degrees, make it impossible to establish a median point or criteria for defining “significant accomplishment.”

II. Initiation of Request

A request for the awarding of a posthumous degree may be initiated externally (e.g. by the student’s family ) or internally by the student’s graduate program.

III. Criteria for awarding posthumous graduate degrees

A. Master's Degrees (For Programs not requiring a thesis or master's project): The student's graduate program must recommend the awarding of the degree, and verify the following:

- the student had completed appropriate courses amounting to at least 75% of the credits required for the degree, and
- the student had a minimum grade point average of 3.0

B. Master's Degrees (For Programs requiring a thesis or master's project):

The student's graduate program must recommend the awarding of the degree, and verify the following:

- the student had completed appropriate courses amounting to at least 75% of the credits required for the degree,
- the student had a minimum grade point average of 3.0, and
- the faculty committee supervising the project or thesis has certified that the work done at the time of the student's death reflects substantial progress towards completing the thesis or project

C Doctoral Degrees:

The student's graduate program must recommend the awarding of the degree, and verify the following:

- the student had fulfilled the requirements for dissertator status
- the faculty committee supervising the dissertation has certified that the work done at the time of the student's death reflects substantial progress towards completing the dissertation

Given these criteria, the degree shall be an earned (vs. honorary) doctorate.

D. The Graduate Faculty Committee must nominate the student for the degree, in keeping with the process for conferring all degrees.

IV. Recommendations for Action.

The proposed policy is effective following appropriate administrative approvals.

Committee on Regulations and Requirements of the Graduate School, 1991-1992

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GFC ad hoc working group, January 2013

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