

**ELIZABETH CITY STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**Policy for Awarding Honorary Degrees**

**Preamble**

This policy shall govern the conferral of honorary degrees at Elizabeth City State University (“ECSU”). Honorary degrees may be conferred for various purposes including: (1) to acknowledge distinguished service and extraordinary achievement in the fields of public affairs, humanities and the arts, scholarship and education, the sciences and philanthropy and social services which exemplify ECSU’s mission and purpose; (2) to pay tribute to meritorious and outstanding service to ECSU, the State of North Carolina, the United States of America or to humanity at large; (3) to honor individuals who have demonstrated the personal qualities and values which ECSU espouses in its mission and goals or (4) to recognize individuals whose character, conduct and concerns are consistent with the fundamental principles underlying ECSU’s educational mission.

**1. Conferral of Honorary Degrees**

All honorary degrees shall be conferred by ECSU’s Board of Trustees (“Board”) in the name of Elizabeth City State University. The number of honorary degrees to be conferred in an academic year shall be determined by Board.

**2. Types of Honorary Degrees that may be Conferred**

The following types of honorary degrees may be conferred and each shall bear a relationship to an academic discipline in ECSU’s curriculum and shall be appropriate to the nature of the achievement which is being recognized:

- A. Doctor of Humane Letters (L.H.D.);
- B. Doctor of Fine Arts (D.F.A);
- C. Doctor of Letters (Litt.D.);
- D. Doctor of Science (Sc.D.);
- E. Doctor of Public Service (D.P.S);

**3. Candidates for Honorary Degrees**

**A. Outstanding Contributions in a Discipline**

Individuals who are of national and/or international stature and have made and been recognized for outstanding contributions to a specific discipline/field may be considered as candidates for an honorary degree. Additionally, candidates must demonstrate intellectual and humane values consistent with the goals of higher education and with the goals and objectives of ECSU, as set forth in ECSU’s Mission Statement.

B. Community Service

Individuals who are noted for community service may be considered as candidates for an honorary degree. Under this policy, community service refers to actions that have significantly affected ECSU or the community at-large (i.e. individuals whose actions have been exemplary or who have made unusual contributions to volunteer organizations).

C. Service to ECSU

Individuals who support and/or advocate on behalf of ECSU may be considered as candidates for an honorary degree.

D. Prominent Public Figures

Prominently known public figures may be considered as candidates for an honorary degree.

**4. Limitations on Eligibility**

Eligibility for honorary degrees shall not extend to the following categories of individuals, except under unusual circumstances in the Board's discretion:

- A. Members of ECSU faculty, administration or staff during the period of employment;
- B. The incumbent chancellor of ECSU;
- C. The incumbent president of the University of North Carolina system;
- D. Incumbent members of ECSU's Trustee Board.

**5. Committee on Honorary Degrees**

The chancellor shall appoint a Committee on Honorary Degrees ("Committee") composed of: two (2) Board members designated by the Board Chairperson; three (3) faculty members recommended by the Faculty Senate and one (1) student recommended by the Student Government Association. The Committee members shall serve for four-year staggered terms and shall be charged with making recommendations to the Chancellor on the conferral of honorary degrees.

**6. Selection Procedures**

A. Nominations

Nominations for honorary degree recipients shall be accepted twice a year and may be submitted from any member of the university community including faculty, staff, students, alumni and friends of ECSU. Nominations must be in writing and submitted to the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. Nominations with supporting materials shall be submitted to the Office of the Provost by September 1 to be considered for conferral during May commencement exercises and by March 1 to be considered for conferral during December commencement exercises.

B. Supporting Documentation

Letters of nomination must be supported by documentation (i.e. curricula vitae, biography, samples or reviews of work, personal testimonies and philosophy, etc.).

C. Committee Recommendations

The Committee shall deliberate on all nominations. All Committee deliberations on nominations shall remain confidential unless disclosure is required by law.

D. Chancellor's Role

All committee recommendations for conferral of honorary degrees shall be reviewed by the chancellor. If the Chancellor concurs with the Committee's recommendation, the recommendation shall be transmitted to the Board by the Chancellor. If the Chancellor disagrees with the Committee's recommendation, the recommendation shall not be advanced to the Board.

E. Board Action

The Board shall review and act on all recommendations for honorary degrees as forwarded by the Chancellor.

F. Board Approved Nominations

If approved by the Board, the Chancellor shall communicate with the prospective honorary degree recipient inviting the nominee to accept the award.

**7. Method for Conferring Honorary Degrees**

A. Ceremonial

Honorary degrees, as authorized by the Board, shall be conferred at university ceremonies (i.e. commencement exercises).

B. No Awards to be Conferred In Absentia

Honorary degrees shall not be conferred in absentia. In the event that an honorary degree recipient is unavailable to receive the degree at a scheduled time, the conferral shall be postponed and rescheduled within a one-year period of Board approval.

C. Conferral of Honorary Degrees

Honorary degrees must be bestowed by the Chancellor and Chairman of the Board of Trustees, or other designee of the Board.

D. Format

There shall be one standard format used for the issuance of honorary degrees. The standard format shall be approved by the Division of Academic Affairs.