

# **PROTOCOL:**

## **Honorary Degrees and Distinguished Awards**

Revised March 18, 2019

### **I. COMMITTEE**

The Honorary Degrees and Distinguished Awards Committee consists of eight members elected by the Faculty Senate. Members are selected from diverse fields and must hold the rank of professor (or its equivalent) or above and shall have a strong record of teaching and research. The Chair of the Committee is elected by the committee. The Committee is responsible for formulating principles covering the conferring of honorary degrees and distinguished awards by the University of Florida. It shall solicit and review nominations of individuals for honorary degrees and distinguished awards. The Committee meets at least twice a year.

### **II. AWARDS**

Because the University of Florida is a public university and part of the State University System, the university's policy is that elected or appointed officials of the State of Florida or the Federal Government to whom the university is directly or indirectly answerable are ineligible for honorary degrees and/or Distinguished Awards. University of Florida faculty members, officers, and employees of the university are also ineligible.

#### **HONORARY DEGREES**

Other than the earned doctorate, the greatest recognition the University of Florida can give an individual is an honorary degree. Such awards are not given lightly, and relatively few are awarded. The awarding of an honorary degree is in recognition of eminent achievement in scholarship or high distinction in public service which exemplifies the purposes and ideals of the University of Florida. More particularly, honorary degrees are awarded for sustained achievements of lasting significance and value, not for a single accomplishment. Preference is given to individuals who are connected in some significant and meaningful way with the State or with the University.

Under no circumstances can a college or other unit of the University of Florida grant an Honorary Degree and only the University can give the Distinguished Awards. However, colleges may provide other recognitions or honors when it is clearly not a University award. Examples of these awards could include "Outstanding Psychology Graduate" or "Distinguished Journalism Alumnus."

Anyone can nominate an individual for an honorary degree. The nomination must be supported by individuals who are prominent in the candidate's field of accomplishment and in a position to judge the candidate's contributions and achievements. For nominees in the areas of scholarship or the creative arts, the appropriate academic authorities on campus are normally consulted, and the results of that consultation summarized by the dean of the appropriate college, before a recommendation is made by the Committee. For nominees in the area of public service and achievement, assessment of a nominee's accomplishments and standing is normally solicited from the appropriate, knowledgeable persons or agencies. Strong support from such knowledgeable

authorities in the different areas is essential for the success of a nomination. All nominees must be vetted by the faculty in the appropriate college(s) or department(s). That vetting may be performed by the entire faculty or by a representative body such as a faculty council. The dean's letter must report on how that vetting was performed and the outcome. After review of all materials, the Committee makes its recommendation to the Faculty Senate. Upon approval by the Senate, the recommendation then goes to the President of the University, who then makes a recommendation to the Board of Trustees for action. The Board has final authority.

## **DISTINGUISHED AWARDS**

### **Distinguished Alumnus/Alumna Awards**

Nominee must be an alumnus or alumna of the University and must have excelled in his/her chosen field or must have performed outstanding service for the University. Generally, the Committee consults with the dean and/or vice president from the area appropriate to the candidate before approval is granted. Upon approval by the Committee, the recommendation is forwarded to the President of the University for final approval.

### **Distinguished Achievement Awards**

This award is given to individuals for exceptional achievements in a chosen profession, for demonstrated leadership, and for other exemplary accomplishments that merit the special recognition of the University. The nominee need not be an alumnus or alumna. Generally, the Committee consults with the dean and/or vice president from the area appropriate to the candidate before approval is granted. Upon approval by the Committee, the recommendation is forwarded to the President of the University for final approval.

### **Stephen C. O'Connell Distinguished Service Awards**

This recognition is awarded to an alumnus or alumna of the University of Florida who has highly distinguished him/herself through exceptional public service to the State of Florida or the nation at large. Such public service is defined as any of the following: service in elected or appointed public office; service in public or private education at any level; service in any judicial system or law enforcement agency; service in any volunteer agency or entity devoted to any aspect of public welfare. Nominee must be widely recognized as a friend of the University. Generally, the Committee consults with the dean and/or vice president from the area appropriate to the candidate before approval is granted. Upon approval by the Committee, the recommendation is forwarded to the President of the University for final approval.

## **III. NOMINATION PACKETS**

A nomination package for an Honorary Degree or Distinguished Award should include the following:

- (1) "Call for Nominations" form
- (2) A description of the individual's intellectual and professional achievements/attributes
- (3) The nominee's vitae/resume/biographical description
- (4) Three or more letters of support (a mixture of internal and external letters is

recommended) that will help the committee understand the significance of this nominee's work, his/her contributions, and his/her impact on others

- (5) Letter of support from the college dean that will host the award recipient, including a statement for honorary degrees nominees about how the nominee was vetted by the faculty of the college or department and the outcome of that vetting.

#### **IV. APPROVAL, ACCEPTANCE AND NOTIFICATION PROCESS**

The Committee convenes twice a year (fall and spring) to review nominations. After recommendation by the Committee, all nominees are presented to the President of the University of Florida for approval. The President's approval is the final step in the approval process for Distinguished Awards. The approval process for Honorary Degrees extends beyond the approval of the President, to include approval by the Faculty Senate and then, ultimately, the approval of the UF Board of Trustees.

After receipt of the award letter from the President, if the nominee agrees to accept the award, they are instructed to contact the Office of the President, indicating their willingness to receive the award. Once the Office of the President receives an acceptance, the hosting college dean is informed of the acceptance by the Director of Commencement. The dean of the hosting college will be responsible for contacting the award recipient to invite them to attend a future commencement.

#### **V. RESPONSIBILITIES OF COLLEGES**

Individual UF colleges will be responsible for hosting the award recipients that are affiliated with their respective college. Any Honorary Degree recipients that a college will host will be honored at a university-wide Doctoral Degree Commencement Ceremony. Any Distinguished Award recipients will be honored at the college's undergraduate commencement ceremony. All award recipients will also be invited to attend the Commencement Dinner, hosted by the President. This dinner will be held the same weekend as commencement.

The Office of the Provost will work with the hosting college to make the appropriate arrangements for the award recipients and their guests that will be participating in the ceremonies. Below is an outline of the responsibilities of the hosting college.

##### **HONORARY DEGREE RECIPIENTS**

Obtain from award recipient the following information and forward to the Office of the Provost:

- High resolution digital photograph.
- Biography (approximately 500 words or less).
- Height and stature (small, medium, large, etc.) of award recipient for proper fit of regalia.
- Highest degree earned by recipient and school from which this degree was earned
- Name as it is to appear on diploma.
- Names with street and email addresses of guests to be invited to the Commencement Dinner, including the recipient, family/friends, and college faculty.
- Number of guests attending the Commencement Ceremony.
- Receipts from recipient for transportation expenses to/from UF.

Make arrangements with the recipient for the following:

- Determine if recipient will need additional hotel rooms and guide recipient to make those arrangements (i.e., additional room nights, or additional rooms for family/friends). The Provost's Office makes arrangements (and pays for) one night's stay at a local hotel for the recipient.
- Local transportation to/from hotel and commencement dinner/ceremony.

### **DISTINGUISHED AWARD RECIPIENTS**

Obtain from award recipient the following information and forward to the Office of the Provost:

- High resolution digital photograph.
- Biography (approximately 500 words or less).
- Height and stature (small, medium, large, etc.) of award recipient for proper fit of regalia.
- Highest degree earned by recipient and school from which this degree was earned.
- Name as it is to appear on certificate.
- Names with street and email addresses of guests to be invited to the Commencement Dinner, including the recipient, family/friends, and college faculty.
- Number of guests attending the Commencement Ceremony.
- Receipts from recipient for transportation expenses to/from UF.

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- Local transportation to/from hotel and commencement dinner/ceremony.

## **VI. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE OFFICE OF THE PROVOST**

While the individual colleges play a critical role in the hosting the recipients as they return to the campus to receive their award, the Office of the Provost will work with the hosting college to make the appropriate arrangements for the award recipients and their guests that will be participating in the ceremonies. Below is an outline of the responsibilities of the Office of the Provost.

### **HONORARY DEGREE RECIPIENTS**

- Make hotel reservations for one room, one night for recipient/family – usually the night of the commencement dinner; forward information to college. The Provost's Office will pay for one night's stay at a local hotel for the recipient and transportation expenses to/from commencement for the recipient only.
- Coordinate with the Office of the President regarding Commencement Dinner invitations.

- Provide details/logistics/instructions to college to forward to recipient regarding their role in the commencement ceremony, as well as what their guests can expect.
- Orders and pays for the regalia of the recipient.
- Coordinates with Registrar's Office to obtain diplomas.

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- Coordinate with the Office of the President regarding Commencement Dinner invitations.
- Provide details/logistics/instructions to college to forward to recipient regarding their role in the commencement ceremony, as well as what their guests can expect.