

**PROTOCOL:**  
**Honorary Degrees, Distinguished Alumnus Awards,  
Distinguished Achievement Awards, and Stephen C. O'Connell  
Distinguished Service Awards**

**I. COMMITTEE**

The Honorary Degrees, Distinguished Alumnus Awards and Memorials Committee consists of eight members elected by the Faculty Senate. Members are selected from diverse fields and hold 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 by the University of Florida and shall initiate or entertain suggestions as to individuals to whom honorary degrees, distinguished alumnus awards, and distinguished awards shall be granted. The Committee meets at least twice a year.

**II. AWARDS**

**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 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 Alumnus or Distinguished Achievement 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."

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. Faculty members, officers, and employees of the university are also ineligible.

Anyone can nominate an individual for an honorary degrees, 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 before a recommendation is made by the Committee on Honorary Degrees, Distinguished

Alumnus Awards and Memorials. 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.

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 Alumnus Awards**

Nominee must be an alumnus 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 on Honorary Degrees, Distinguished Alumnus Awards and Memorials, 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. Nominees must be persons whose distinctive accomplishments merit the special recognition of the university. The nominee need not be an alumnus. Upon approval by the Committee on Honorary Degrees, Distinguished Alumnus Awards and Memorials, 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. Upon approval by the Committee on Honorary Degrees, Distinguished Alumnus Awards and Memorials, the recommendation is forwarded to the president of the university for final approval.

## **III. NOMINATION PACKETS**

The nomination package for the honorary degree, distinguished alumnus award, and distinguished achievement awards 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 that will help the committee understand the significance of this nominee's work, his/her Contributions, and his/her impact on others.

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

The Honorary Degrees, Distinguished Alumnus Awards and Memorials Committee convenes twice a year (fall and spring) to review nominations. After receiving the committee's recommendations, 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 alumni and distinguished service 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 letter from the President, if the nominee accepts the award, they are instructed to contact the Office of the President, indicating their willing 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 Presidential Events and 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 your college, such as Honorary Doctorate Degree Awards, Distinguished Service Award and Distinguished Alumnus Awards. Any Honorary Degree recipients that your college will host will be honored at a university-wide Advanced Degree Ceremony. Any Distinguished Service or Distinguished Alumnus recipients will be honored at the college's commencement ceremony. All award recipients will also be invited to attend the Commencement Dinner, hosted by the President Bernie Machen and Mrs. Chris Machen, at the UF President's House the same weekend as commencement.

The Office of the President 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 Office of the President:

- High resolution photograph (electronic version preferred).
- 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/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 President's Office makes arrangements (and pays for) one night's stay at a local hotel (Hilton) for the recipient).
- Local transportation to/from hotel and commencement dinner/ceremony.

### **DISTINGUISHED ALUMNUS AND DISTINGUISHED SERVICE RECIPIENTS**

Obtain from award recipient the following information for your college's use:

- High resolution photograph (electronic version preferred), for program
- Biography (approximately 500 words or less), for program.
- 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/addresses of guests to be invited to the Commencement Dinner, including the recipient, family/friends, and college faculty (provide to President's Office).
- 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 President's Office makes arrangements (and pays for) one night's stay at a local hotel (Hilton) for the recipient).
- Local transportation to/from hotel and commencement dinner/ceremony.

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

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 President 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 President.

## **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 President’s Office will pay for one night’s stay at a local hotel (Hilton) for the recipient and transportation expenses to/from commencement for the recipient only.
- Invite recipient, family/friends, and faculty to commencement dinner.
- 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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