

Proposed Motion on Honorary Degree Policy
First Reading January 26
Vote February 2

Whereas ABOR Policy 2-220D states that:

The universities may award honorary degrees in accordance with criteria and procedures developed by each university. Each university shall provide advance notice to the board and the executive director of the board of the names of the individuals who are to receive the degrees.

And ARS 15-1601b states that:

The universities shall have colleges, schools and departments and give courses of study and academic degrees as the board approves. Subject to the responsibilities and powers of the board and the university presidents, the faculty members of the universities, through their elected faculty representatives, shall share responsibility for academic and educational activities and matters related to faculty personnel. The faculty members of each university, through their elected faculty representatives, shall participate in the governance of their respective universities and shall actively participate in the development of university policy.

Whereas in 2006 the Faculty Senate, Provost, and President collaboratively developed, refined, and formalized the criteria and procedures used for the nomination, review, approval, and bestowing of honorary degrees in alignment with ABOR policy, ARS 15-1601b, and academic custom.

Whereas the 2006 policy was reiterated in 2012 and again in 2024-5 by the Office of the Provost

Whereas the Faculty Bylaws (VIII.1.g) states that one of the explicit functions of Faculty Senate is” (t)o act upon nominations for recipients of honorary degrees, which may be proposed by one or more of the College Faculties.”

Whereas under the 2006 policy aligned with ABOR and ARS 15-1601b, Faculty Senate has confidentially reviewed and approved nominations for honorary degrees brought forward by the Committee on Honorary Degrees in executive session each spring

Whereas a new policy of unclear origin was distributed by email to select members of the University community on November 17, 2025 and was posted on the policy website sometime after December 22, 2025, eliminating the Faculty Senate executive session confidential review and approval, among other changes

Whereas the confidentiality of the Faculty Senate executive session review process has never been violated, has prevented abuse and embarrassment to the University and the Arizona Board of Regents, and has yielded world-class cohorts of honorary doctorates that recognize individuals whose extraordinary achievements reflect the values and excellence of the University of Arizona community and mission

Be it resolved that the Faculty Senate urges President Garimella and his delegates to continue using the procedures for the granting of honorary degrees that have served the University of Arizona well for more than two decades and that are consistent with academic tradition of the faculty approving and recommending all degrees (earned and honorary) through regular and agreed upon protocols

Be it further resolved that the Faculty Senate urges President Garimella and his delegates to refrain from attempting to unilaterally change policy, especially academic and personnel policy without transparency, public review, or consultation with the elected representatives of the faculty required by ARS 15-1601b.