



## **GUIDELINES ON HONORARY DEGREES AND COMMENCEMENT SPEAKERS**

### **Honorary Degrees and Commencement Speaker**

The university's Faculty Committee on Honorary Degrees (Committee), appointed by the President and consisting of representatives from all three campuses, meets each fall to consider nominations of individuals to receive honorary degrees and to select a commencement speaker. Because this process involves extensive administrative planning and coordination of schedules with the recipients, the Committee begins its work approximately 18 months in advance of the commencement date. For example, the Committee that met in fall 2008 selected the honorary degree recipients and speaker for University Commencement 2010.

The Committee invites nominations from any member of the university community or the public and pares down the list of nominees over the course of several meetings to produce a slate of candidates. In consultation with the President, the Committee then presents a final slate for review by the Board of Governors' Committee on University Relations and Honorary Degrees. The board committee then makes a final recommendation on the honorary degree candidates and commencement speaker to the full Board of Governors for their approval.

### **Criteria for Awarding an Honorary Degree by Rutgers University**

The nominee for an honorary degree from Rutgers University:

1. Must evidence outstanding achievement in the humanities, arts, or sciences, or in a profession; in government, public affairs, education, or religion; in industry or commerce; or in an auxiliary field or endeavor.
2. Must evidence distinguished service and performance in his or her accomplishments that support the ideals of Rutgers and serve as an example to our students, our alumni, and society.
3. Must evidence in his or her life a commitment of service to humankind.

Honorary degrees will be bestowed by the President at the University Commencement ceremony, or by the President, or a designee, at other university commencement ceremonies or special events. Degrees may be awarded in four categories based on the specific criteria listed below:

#### **Doctor of Laws**

Distinguished service to state or to nation, to learning or to humankind, coupled with intellectual gifts and moral qualities that entitle the recipient to rank with persons of culture and high principle.

#### **Doctor of Letters or Doctor of Fine Arts**

Distinguished service to letters, art, music or education, coupled with intellectual and moral qualities that are widely recognized.

#### **Doctor of Science**

Distinguished service to science, coupled with personal qualities and a kind of learning that entitle the recipient to recognition by a learned educational body of high standing.

#### **Doctor of Humane Letters**

Distinguished service of a general nature, coupled with personal qualities and a kind of learning that entitle the recipient to recognition by a learned educational body of high standing.

## **Commencement Speaker**

Since the commencement speaker will also be awarded an honorary degree, nominations for a speaker should follow the same guidelines as honorary degree candidates.

## **Confidentiality**

Nomination information submitted will be kept confidential. Confidentiality at all points in the nominating process is crucial. No discussion concerning nominees should take place outside of those directly involved in the evaluation process or the formal evaluation and selection meetings. The President, or a designee, is responsible for contacting the candidates once the Board of Governors has approved a slate of candidates.

## **Exceptions**

At Rutgers, honorary degrees are not awarded posthumously, unless the offer has been made and accepted prior to the individual's death. Also, honorary degrees are not awarded to the following:

- Current faculty or staff
- Current holders of political office, except that an honorary degree shall be awarded to the Governor of the State of New Jersey in the year the Governor takes office
- Current university governing board members

Except in extraordinary circumstances, persons who have spent the greater part of their careers as members of the Rutgers faculty or administration will not be considered. However, persons otherwise associated with the university such as alumni, former governors and trustees, or distinguished visiting faculty will be considered.

Exceptions to these procedures, including the deadlines contained herein, may be made at the discretion of the President and the Board of Governors.

## **PROCEDURES**

### **Nomination Form**

Nominations must be made using the Honorary Degree and Commencement Speaker Nomination Form available online at <http://ruweb.rutgers.edu/governance/secretary/hondegrees.shtml>.

Nominators should include with their nomination form a curriculum vitae, if available, or biographical information and any other supporting materials. A well-written nomination form is often more persuasive than a lengthy curriculum vitae. The Committee may, at its discretion, request additional information from a nominator.

### **Holdover Nominations**

Past nominees must be renominated each year; there will be no nominations held over from prior years. Therefore, if you have nominated someone in the past and would like that person to be reconsidered, please renominate the individual.

### **Deadline for Submission of Nominations**

Typically, nominations need to be received by the Office of the Secretary the first week of October. Each fall, the Secretary of the University will announce a call for nominations and provide the university community with a deadline for submissions. Please keep in mind that because this process involves extensive administrative planning and coordination of schedules with the recipients, the Committee begins its work approximately 18 months in advance of the commencement date.