Western Michigan University
Honorary Degree Committee Guidelines and Procedures
Effective October 6, 2015

GUIDELINES:
The Honorary Degree Committee will consist of three board-appointed faculty, chosen by the President upon recommendation of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, who, in turn, will solicit such recommendations from the Faculty Senate and others as necessary. These three faculty members should have expertise and achievements that demonstrate the three pillars of Western Michigan University: learner-centered (one member from either the Undergraduate or Graduate Studies Council), discovery-driven (one member from the Research Policies Council) and globally-engaged (one member from the International Education Council). The President of the Faculty Senate and the Dean of the Graduate College or their designees will also serve on the Honorary Degree Committee.

Appointments of the faculty members on the Committee will be for a three-year term and will be staggered (one new appointment each year) to provide continuity as well as turnover of faculty representation. The chair will be rotated annually by election of the committee and no member will serve in that role more than twice.

All deliberations and recommendations of the committee will be kept strictly confidential.

PROCEDURE:
Nominations will be solicited annually by the Honorary Degree Committee Chair. A call for nominations will be announced to the University community in September. The Committee will review all complete nominations received and will make recommendations to the President no later than December 1.

Any WMU administrator, faculty, staff member or alumni may nominate an individual(s) for consideration by the Honorary Degree Committee. Complete nominations must include the following:

- A description (e.g. dossier, portfolio, resume) of the nominee’s degrees, accomplishments, appointments, intellectual and creative abilities and contributions, honors, previous honorary degrees and other pertinent information.
- A minimum of three letters of nomination, at least one of which must be from a WMU administrator, faculty, staff member or alumni. The letters should describe, in detail, the accomplishments of the candidate, how these accomplishments exemplify the mission of the University and how the candidate’s achievements serve as a model of University ideals and aspirations for its students, faculty, staff and alumni.
The Committee will meet as needed to review the nominations and will inform the President of the names of Candidates under consideration. Nominations deemed by the Committee to warrant further consideration will be forwarded to the Chair(s) or Director(s) of the Department(s) or Program(s) most closely related to the discipline of the candidate, together with the Dean(s) of the appropriate College(s). Both the Chair(s) or Director(s) and the Dean(s) will review the nomination and provide a written recommendation to the Committee regarding whether the scholarly, artistic or professional achievements of the Candidate are sufficient to confer an Honorary Degree.

The Committee will review these recommendations and provide a written evaluation of each Candidate to the President and Board of Trustees. The Committee evaluation, together with any written recommendations from the Chair/Director and Dean of the appropriate college, will be provided to the Provost and President for review and if the President recommends the nomination it will go forward to the Board of Trustees for approval. The Committee will provide one of three summary evaluations: (A) recommend Candidate to receive an Honorary Degree, (B) do not recommend Candidate to receive an Honorary Degree, or (C) do not recommend Candidate to receive an Honorary Degree in the current year, but do recommend retaining nomination for future consideration.

No more than three Honorary Degrees will be conferred in any given year. Nomination materials for Candidates who are not selected to receive an Honorary Degree may be held over and reconsidered annually for up to five years. If the review is not favorable, the Committee Chair will notify the nominator of the decision, including whether the nomination materials will be reconsidered in subsequent years.

If a Candidate is selected for an Honorary Degree, both the nominee and the nominator will be informed by the President that the Board of Trustees has approved the nomination. Honorary degrees will be conferred at a WMU commencement ceremony for the College(s) that contributed to the evaluation of the Candidate. Degrees will be conferred within one year of the Candidate’s selection, if possible. Honorary Degree recipients are expected to attend the commencement ceremony in person, unless travel is prohibited due to illness or other exceptional circumstances. Committee members are also expected to attend the commencement ceremony.