



University College of the North

Policies & Procedures Manual

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ACADEMIC

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Honourary Degrees

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Learning Council

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POLICY STATEMENT

The conferring of honorary degrees provides the University College of the North (UCN) with an opportunity to convey to the world our values and principles by recognizing the contributions and accomplishments of exceptional individuals. The Doctor of Letters Honoris Causa conferred at each Convocation also provides our graduating students with exemplary role models and meaningful messages that will carry them into their futures.

PURPOSE OF POLICY

The honorary doctorate degrees are the highest academic award granted by UCN. The conferring of honorary degrees recognizes demonstrated excellence in the advancement and betterment of society. Recipients must be distinguished, with outstanding achievements both relevant and appropriate to UCN, and exemplified qualities reflected in the UCN Mission Statement and the Seven Sacred Teachings.

PROCEDURES

1. Honorary degrees shall be awarded on a highly selective basis to distinguished individuals who have made an outstanding contribution on a national or international scale. The contribution may be to the advancement of the candidate's discipline or field of work, or it may be to the community, to society, or to UCN. See Nomination Process for further procedures thereof.
2. Active members of faculty and staff at UCN are not eligible for honorary degrees, as outstanding contributions to UCN by these individuals may be recognized in other ways. Retired members may, however, be nominated at least three years after retirement, if they meet the criteria for an honorary degree for significant contributions made above and beyond their work at UCN.
3. Normally, an active politician should not be nominated for an honorary degree. An exception may be made in the case of a person who has been a politician for a considerable length of time and has made a particularly outstanding contribution.

4. Members of Governing Council and the Council of Elders are not eligible to receive an honorary degree during their term on the Council. Nominations of former members shall not normally be considered until three (3) years have passed from the end of their term on the Council, and if they meet the criteria for an honorary degree for significant contributions made above and beyond their work at UCN.
5. Honorary degrees may be awarded to a group or entity that is not a natural or legal person, provided that the group or entity fulfills the requirements for an honorary degree recipient as set out in this Policy. In such cases, the degree is awarded to the group or entity as a whole and not to the individual members of it.
6. Posthumous honorary degrees will not be awarded. In awarding an honorary degree, UCN is honouring a recipient and not his or her memory. If, however, a candidate dies after accepting the Learning Council invitation to receive the degree, but before the convocation at which the degree is to be conferred, the honorary degree will be awarded.
7. Only in exceptional circumstances will a degree be awarded in absentia. The President and Vice-Chancellor shall determine when this would be appropriate.
8. In selecting a recipient for an honorary degree, the Learning Council should endeavor to strike a balance between outstanding Canadians and international nominees, and between nominees who have not received honorary degrees from other institutions and those who have already received similar recognition.
9. The Learning Council shall ensure that such groups as Indigenous persons, women, racialized group members/visible minorities, persons with disabilities, persons identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and or queer (LGBTQ2S), and others who reflect the diversity of Canadian society are regularly included in the recommendations.
10. A maximum of two honorary degrees may be awarded annually with the expectation that where there are two, one shall be offered at the convocation ceremony in The Pas and the other in Thompson. Recipients of honorary degrees will normally be expected to address the convocation. Notwithstanding, circumstances may dictate awards at other times or at other events, which shall be at the discretion of the Learning Council.
11. The Learning Council reserves the right to not award an honorary degree in any given year. The number of honorary degrees awarded shall not be permitted to become so large as to diminish their significance.
12. The honorary degree shall be styled *Doctor of Letters Honoris Causa* (Hon. D.Ltt), awarded for distinguished achievement in scholarship in the arts, humanities, and social sciences, and for creative works in the arts and performance. Arrangements for the award of honorary degree parchment and for the participation of the honourees in the ceremony shall be made by the Registrar.

Nomination Process

1. The Tri-Council Executive Officer shall call for nominations for the award of honorary degrees.

2. UCN employees, students, alumni, members of the Governing Council, Council of Elders, and the general public may make nominations for the candidates of the honorary degree.
3. Nominators should not discuss nominations with the nominees. The Learning Council will contact the nominator if further information is required.
4. Nominators should begin by completing all sections of the nomination form and refer to the criteria set out in this policy, stating clearly and concisely why the nominee is deserving of the award. Incomplete nomination forms will not be forwarded to Learning Council or to any committee created by Learning Council to vet nominations. Note that additional information and documentation to support the nomination may be included with the nomination form.
5. Supporting documentation will include, but is not limited to:
 - Nominees' name, contact information, and degrees held, if any;
 - Contributions or special accomplishments on which the recommendation is made;
 - Three letters of support, to be provided by the nominee;
 - A short, 200-word, biography of the nominee.
6. The final nominations deadline is on or about October 15 for awarding degrees at the following Convocation.
7. Nominations will remain active for a minimum of one year, and individuals can be re-nominated where appropriate.

Criteria

The Learning Council will review each nominee in terms of whether they personify the core values of UCN, and exemplify the personal and professional characteristics to which UCN's students should aspire. An honorary degree is awarded to someone who:

- is a scholar of notable significance, pioneering or revolutionizing a field;
- has made a significant contribution to UCN that is widely recognized by peers in the field of endeavour and the public;
- has made a significant contribution to the community, province, nation, or the world; and/or, brings honour to Canada on the world stage.

Assessment

1. Nominations will be evaluated by the Learning Council. Learning Council may establish an ad hoc or standing committee to evaluate nominees for honorary degrees.
2. Deliberations of the Learning Council with respect to this process shall be confidential.
3. The Learning Council shall make the final selection for candidates for honorary degrees. Selection of successful candidates shall be by secret ballot and shall require a two-thirds affirmative vote of Learning Council members present, and discussion shall take place in camera.
4. The names and documentation of confirmed nominees will be sent to the Governing Council for approval.

5. The Vice-President of Academic and Research will communicate with successful nominees and with the nominators of unsuccessful nominees.
6. The Learning Council may, upon recommendation from the President, revoke an honorary degree conferred by UCN based on the conduct of the recipient subsequent to the degree being conferred, or prior to the degree being conferred if UCN was unaware of the conduct at the time that the decision to award the honorary degree was made.

Guidelines for Nominators

1. The Learning Council encourages members of the UCN community and the general public to submit nominations of exceptional and distinguished individuals for an honorary degree.
2. Nominations must be submitted to the Learning Council in strict confidence and therefore not be discussed with the nominee.
3. Nominations may be submitted to the Tri-Council Office at any time throughout the year and will be reviewed at Learning Council meetings as appropriate and in keeping with the award deadlines.

Recipient Rights and Responsibilities

1. A recipient must attend the public convocation to receive their honorary credential.
2. A recipient must sign a release allowing University College of the North to issue a press release and, however the institution sees as appropriate, publicize the awarding of the honorary credential.
3. A recipient will be invited to address the convocation but is not required to do so.
4. A recipient has the right to determine what name or version thereof will be used in official communications and will be printed on the award.

Revocation of an Honorary Credential

An honorary credential may be revoked by the Learning Council, and any such decision shall require a two-thirds affirmative vote of Learning Council members present, and discussion shall take place in camera. The Learning Council will take into consideration the reputational damage to the institution of revoking an honorary credential as well as the reputational damage of failing to revoke an honorary credential.