

New York University

University Policies

Title: Statement of Policy on Honorary Degrees
Effective Date: November 26, 1968
Supersedes: N/A
Issuing Authority: Office of the President
Responsible Officer: Chief of Staff and Deputy to the President

Purpose of this Policy:

This policy was adopted by the Board of Trustees, November 25, 1968, to establish consistent procedures for honorary degrees.

Scope of this Policy:

This policy applies to the NYU Board of Trustees and the academic community.

Procedures for Implementation:

The University grants honorary degrees to signalize respect for individuals who have made outstanding contributions to mankind or who exemplify ideals and purposes for which the University stands. The following guidelines have been followed in making selections:

1. In selecting candidates for honorary degrees at Commencement, the Board of Trustees seeks to present a balanced group that demonstrates the breadth of the University's interests and concerns. At the same time, the number of candidates selected is kept relatively small (between six and eight in recent years) in order not to dilute the significance of the degree or to prolong the Commencement ceremonies.
2. One criterion for awarding honorary degrees is to signalize areas of unusual distinction within New York University.
3. The University has a deliberate policy of honoring alumni who have achieved outstanding positions and have made unusual contributions to their professions. There is an equal policy against awarding an honorary degree to any Trustee, administrative officer, or faculty member engaged in regular full-time service in the University.
4. The University prefers to award honorary degrees to those who have not already received a host of degrees from other institutions but are on the threshold of general recognition. In certain instances, however, such as those involving national leaders of great distinction,

the fact that an individual has received a number of degrees from other institutions is not a deterrent to his or her being awarded a degree by New York University.

5. Recommendations for honorary degrees are received from Trustees, faculty, staff members, and other friends of the University. They are filed on a standard form, the contents of which are summarized by the Secretary of the University for consideration by the Board of Trustees.
6. The degrees granted at Commencement are planned months in advance and involve the concurrence of the entire Board of Trustees. The University considers it appropriate also to grant degrees on particular occasions during the year for the purpose of celebrating an event within the University or for honoring a particularly distinguished visitor to the University. These degrees need be approved only by the designated committee of the Board of Trustees.
7. An informal procedure for consultation with appropriate deans and senior faculty members, through the offices of the President and the Secretary, has been regularly followed in the past, particularly when it is desired through an honorary degree to recognize outstanding achievement in a particular area of academic activity. This procedure is to be continued with respect to honorary degrees awarded at times other than at Commencement.

Related Policies: N/A

Notes

1. Dates of official enactment and amendments:
2. History:
3. Cross References: