

R492, Honorary Degrees¹

R492-1 Purpose: To provide guidelines for Utah System of Higher Education ("USHE") degree-granting institutions to award honorary doctorates degrees in the name of the institution or in the name of the State Board of Regents as authorized by the Utah State Board of Regents.

R492-2 References

2.1 Utah Code § 53B-2-103, (Boards of Trustees: Powers and Duties) Degree-granting Institution Board of Trustees

2.2 Utah Code § 53B-2a-105, Technical Colleges

2.3a Utah Code § 53B-16-103, (Granting of Degrees, Diplomas, or Certifications)

R492-3 Policy

3.1 Selected by Institutional Boards of Trustees: Utah Code § 53B-2-103 designates the institutional Boards of Trustees as having the responsibility for "selecting those persons to be the recipients of honorary degrees to be granted by the institution".

3.1a Major Purposes of Honorary Degrees: ~~There are at least three major~~ purposes of honorary degrees includes:

3.1a.1 ~~To Recognize someone a recipient~~ who has achieved ~~distinction excellence~~ and has made ~~unusual-substantial~~ contributions to their professional field, higher education in general, or to a specific educational institution;

3.1a.2 ~~To Bringing honor distinction~~ to both the recipient and the institution; and/or

3.1a.3 ~~To Rewarding~~ past donations and/or ~~to develop~~ ing future donation opportunities (usually combined with the purposes 1 and 2 above in subsections 3.1.1 and 3.1.2).

3.2 Awarding Honorary Degrees: USHE degree-granting institutions may award honorary degrees. USHE institutional boards of trustees are responsible for selecting honorary degree

¹ Approved April 11, 1986; amended March 27, 2025.

recipient(s). Technical colleges, as defined in Utah Code section 53B-2a-105, do not award honorary degrees.

~~3.3 Level of Honorary Degree:~~ In light of these purposes, it seems prudent to authorize the System institutions to award the level of honorary degree which they feel represents the appropriate level of distinction desired. In most cases, this would likely be an honorary doctorate. Since it does not seem appropriate for institutions which do not award the earned doctorate to confer an honorary doctorate in the name of the institution, such institutions shall be allowed to do so in the name of the State Board of Regents.

~~3.4 Conferred in the Name of the Institution or the Board:~~ Utah System of Higher Education institutions which award the earned doctoral degree will award honorary doctorates in the name of the institution as authorized by the Utah State Board of Regents. For those institutions which do not confer the earned doctorate, honorary doctorates will be conferred in the name of the State Board of Regents.

~~3.5 Report-ing RequirementsPlans by May 1:~~ For state coordination and information-sharing purposes, all USHE degree-granting institutions shall annually will report anticipated their plans to confer honorary degree recipientss to the Commissioner's annually Office by May 1.

~~3.6 Not Required to Use Honorary Doctorate:~~ The intent of this policy is not to prohibit two—and four year institutions from using an honorary degree other than the honorary doctorate if they so choose.