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Posthumous Degree

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I. REASON FOR THIS POLICY

Institutions in the South Dakota State System of Higher Education are authorized to confer posthumous degrees granted by the South Dakota Board of Regents. Such degrees recognize the meritorious but incomplete earned work of a deceased student.

II. STATEMENT OF POLICY

The University of South Dakota may confer posthumous degrees in recognition of incomplete earned work that represents substantial progress toward degree completion. In instances where the student’s death occurred during or as a result of participation in a university sponsored activities or as a result of active military duty, greater flexibility with regard to progress toward degree may be exercised.

At the time of death the student should have been in the final phases of completing the degree requirements and be currently enrolled in good academic standing. In most cases, to be eligible for the degree, the student would need to have been in the last semester of course work.

Exceptions to this guideline may be made when the student’s death occurred under extraordinary circumstances. Exceptions may also be made in cases where chronic illness prevented current enrollment.

III. DEFINITIONS

Not Applicable.

IV. PROCEDURES

Requests to confer a posthumous degree must be made by the department and approved by the University administration and Faculty Senate. The degree will be conferred by the Board of Regents.

- The student's department or college must initiate the request for the award of a posthumous degree.
- The dean of the student's college should forward a written request to the Office of Academic Affairs explaining why the degree should be awarded. In the case of a graduate student, the written request should originate from the office of the student's academic dean, be routed to the Graduate Dean, and then to the Office of the Academic Affairs. Any information about the student's activities or achievements while attending USD should be included in the request.
- The Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Dean of Students will review the request and forward it, along with a recommendation, to the Faculty Senate.
- Upon approval by the Faculty Senate, the request will be forwarded to the President's office. The President's office will submit a formal request to the South Dakota Board of Regents.
- Upon final approval by the Board of Regents, the Office of Academic Affairs will notify the student's dean.
- A representative of the student's college will contact the student's family to determine whether they wish to come to campus for commencement activities. If not, the college will make arrangements for delivery or presentation of the diploma to the family.
- Names of all recipients of posthumous degrees will be listed, along with degree and major, in the commencement program.
- Special recognition of this student will be made by the President just prior to the individual recognition of all degree candidates present at the ceremony.
- Families who choose to attend commencement activities will be provided reserved seating and the President will note their presence as he or she recognizes the posthumous degree recipients.

V. RELATED DOCUMENTS, FORMS AND TOOLS

Policy was approved at the March 2006 University Senate Meeting.

Example of Formal Declaration follows on next page.

(Example of Formal Declaration)

Declaration

The University of South Dakota Department of _____

And

College of _____

WHEREAS, (Student's Name) was a student at The University of South Dakota Department of _____ in the College of _____ from (Month and Year) to (Month and Year), and

WHEREAS, (Student's Name) enjoyed good academic standing and was completing his or her (Degree Name) in (Major Name) in a timely manner for graduation, and

WHEREAS, (Student's Name) was respected by the Department of _____ community for his or her dedication and hard work toward his or her (associate, baccalaureate, master's or doctoral) degree studies and was within hours of completing the final requirements, and

WHEREAS, (Student's Name) sudden and tragic death in (Month and Year) prevented him or her from completing his (associate's, baccalaureate's, master's or doctoral) degree,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the faculty of The University of South Dakota Department of _____ in the College of _____ recommends that (Student's Name) be granted posthumously the degree of (Degree Name) in (Major Name), to be

awarded at The University of South Dakota commencement exercises scheduled for (Date), in Vermillion, South Dakota.