

## Honorary Degrees & Other Distinctions

Noting that the University's Acts, Section 18e, gives it the power, right and duty "to confer **Honorary Degrees and other distinctions, provide all that degrees and other distinctions so** conferred shall be conferred and held subject to any provisions which are or may be made in reference thereto by the University"

### **And**

that the Academic Board has the authority to recommend to the Council with respect to the award of any person of an Honorary Fellowship or Honorary Degree or title of **Professor Emeritus (Statue 16d)**

For the initial purpose of considering nominations for the award of Honorary Degrees, there shall be established an Awards Committee whose recommendations would be submitted to the Council through the Academic board for its approval.

## **BACKGROUND**

Honorary Degrees are awarded in order to

1. Recognize major contributions, locally, regionally, and internationally, in areas relevant to the University, through significant research or a career in dedicated academic or administrative service.
2. Acknowledge significant contributions to society through, inter alia, scholarship, humanitarianism, sports, the arts, business and industry

The awardees are expected to forge deeper relations with the University, and may be required to serve from time to time as guest speakers and guest lecturers, mentors, and in other capacities to advance the University's goals and objectives.

Every care should be taken to ensure the integrity of these awards while ensuring that they are free from political, racial, economic and any other bias or any interference.

The main criteria for the award is notable achievement in academia, the arts and letters, the professions, business or public service and significant and outstanding contributions to society.

The degree is usually not awarded post humously and also cannot ordinarily be awarded in absentia.

## **CATEGORIES**

The committee recommends that honorary degrees be awarded as follows

Doctor of Laws – D.LLD

Doctor of Letters – D.Litt.

Doctor of Science – D.Sc.

Any others not listed that the Committee shall deem appropriate and with the approval of the Council through the Academic Board.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

The following categories of persons would be eligible for nominations of the award of an Honorary Degree.

1. Persons who have achieved eminence in the academic disciplines, locally regionally and internationally.
2. Persons who have made long and outstanding, and widely recognized contributions to the areas served by the University. Such contributions should not only be financial.
3. Persons who have made outstanding contributions in disciplines other than those being delivered by the University and who have received international recognition therefor.
4. Persons who have served the University, country or community with devotion and distinction'
5. Persons who have made seminal and outstanding contributions to the welfare and development of the University, while contributing significantly to inter-institutional collaboration or to enable the University to access significant resources in the achievement of its mission.
6. Persons who have made a significant contribution to the development of the country, in profession, industry, and service to communities.

## **Non – Eligibility**

The following persons are not eligible to receive an Honorary Degree.

1. Officers and Members of the University who are in its paid service.

2. Sitting Members of the Council
3. Practicing politicians, political party executives, those entered in national election list and active partisan campaigners.
4. Persons who have been convicted of a grievous crime and whose actions and reputations might compromise the University.
5. Students at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

## **CEREMONY**

The committee recommends that a limited number of Honorary Degrees be conferred at any time. No more than 10 except in special justified circumstances. The awards will generally be presented at the annual graduation ceremony, with the awardees being asked to give the feature address (es). The awardee should wear a gown provided by the University which they can purchase if they so desire. Awardees should also receive a medal or award and a testamur bearing the seal of the University

## **STANDING COMMITTEE FOR HONORARY DEGREES**

A Standing Committee for Honorary Degrees (SCHOD) shall be appointed by the Vice Chancellor that will have responsibility for soliciting and screening of nominees for the award of Honorary Degrees. The procedure shall be as follows.

At the commencement of each academic year, the Chair will write Deans, Directors and the University Librarian, inviting the submission of nominees. Any UA staff can initiate the nomination process, by completing the nomination form and submitting it to the Secretary, who shall be appointed by the members of the Standing Committee, and Chair of the Standing Committee by July of a given year, for consideration of the award of the award for that year.

The Standing Committee shall consist of:

- A. The Deputy Vice-Chancellors
- B. The Deans in their official capacity, Directors of IDCE & UGBC, and the University Librarian
- C. One representative of the Guyana Guild of Graduates/ Alumni Association
- D. One Professor elected by the Academic Board

The Vice-Chancellor and other officers not captured in A-D of the University may attend without voting.

The meeting will be quorate in the presence of one-third (1/3) of the membership. The decision shall be by the majority with the chairperson having the casting vote in the event of a tie. The Secretary, of the Committee shall inform the Academic Board of the nominees recommended for the award. The Academic Board shall consider and endorse the recommendations for approval by the Council.

The Committee shall not normally accept a nomination after four (4) previous unsuccessful nominations unless there has been a long interval (5 years) since the most recent nomination and a significant change in the case.

The Committee shall strive for a balance in the awards among the Sciences, Arts, Humanities, Industry, Business and Sport. They shall also seek diversity and inclusivity. The proceedings of the Committee shall be kept strictly confidential.

### **Withdrawal**

The University Act, Section 15, advises that “the Academic Board shall have power to deprive the person on whom the University has conferred any Degree, Diploma or other academic distinction who shall have been convicted of a crime, or in its opinion shall have been guilty of dishonourable or scandalous conduct, or any Degree, Diploma or any other academic distinction conferred by the University, and of all privileges enjoyed by him in the virtue thereof, subject to such right of appeal to the Council and from the decision of the Council to the Chancellor as may be provided by the Statues. The Academic Board shall have the power to restore to any person and Degree, Diploma or other academic distinction of which he may have been deprived in any case where it considers it fit to do so”.

### **Arrangements for the Ceremony**

It is recommended that Honorary Degrees be generally conferred at the time of the annual Graduation Ceremony and that the format of the Graduation Ceremony be revised in the interest of brevity, and in order to take on board the granting of honorary degrees and other awards.

### **Awards to Academic Staff**

The committee noted with some dismay that since 1987 provision has been made for granting of U.G. Research awards to academic staff have fallen into oblivion. The committee guided by discussions with the various Faculties of the University makes the following recommendations.

1. That the awards for research rules which already exist be resuscitated and that the value of the prize be substantially increased to reflect the realities of the present day;

2. and at the same time, the value of the cash award would be enhanced by the addition of a Plaque or medal of lasting value.
3. That the University inaugurate a concomitant award for teaching, in the same broad areas as those for research awards, namely; agriculture, technology and natural sciences, human and social sciences.
4. That in addition to the awards for research and teaching, consideration be given to awards for academic staff at the professional level, who have demonstrated outstanding productivity in research or teaching. The Committee recommends named - chair awards to this category of academic.

### **Awards to Non-Academic Staff**

With respect to awards to non-academic staff, the committee looked at similar awards at other universities in the similar category and it is noted that these awards went beyond the mere considerations of long service to take in the ideas of excellence of service and a sound, demonstrable contribution to the advancement of the University

### **Posthumous Awards**

Although this category was not included among the categories mentioned in the proposal, the committee examined the implications of the granting of Posthumous Awards, and it recommends that consideration be given to this category on the condition that a strict time limit be maintained between the passing of the personality and the granting of the award. The time limit recommended is “**not more than a year**”, from the time of consideration.

### **Honoring Outstanding Alumni:**

The Committee noted that the U.G. Guild of Graduates in Guyana had put in place a structure through which outstanding Alumni might be selected for awards. The committee acknowledge the work of the Guild and consider broadening the selection process to involve the overseas Guilds of Graduates, some of which are particularly strong. It felt that there was an urgent need for strengthening liaison between these Guilds and widening the net to include those countries where there is no Guild, but where University of Guyana graduates are nevertheless making an outstanding contribution to the communities.

The committee recommends that the Honoring of Outstanding Alumni should be taken on board in collaboration with the University of Guyana Guild of Graduates/ Alumni Association.

A University orator should be identified and appointed to create and read citations of special awardees.

## **Honoring Outstanding Contributors to the U.G.**

In a similar mode, it is recommended that the University identify for special citation and the awards of a Plaque, those corporate bodies or agencies that have been useful and particularly helpful over the years.

Selection might be made not simply according to the size of the financial and technical assistance granted but also according to the consistency and frequency of the help given. This should be considered in tandem with the University's branding policy and naming policy.

### **Others who can be honoured for special celebrations.**

1. Honoring of past Chancellors, Pro Chancellors, Vice-Chancellors, Deputy Vice-Chancellors, Registrars and other distinguished statutory officers.
2. Honoring the very first graduates of the university
3. Honoring of Outstanding Alumni
4. Honoring outstanding Contributors to the University of Guyana
5. Publication of a history of the University of Guyana.
6. A year of special Activities and Events beginning in 2002. These might include fundraisers such as a Special benefit cricket match, a Ball, a Concert, a Raffle, (this time properly publicized and managed), launching of a documentary film on the University of Guyana, a special reunion during the week of the graduation.

### **Notifications and Arrangements**

Once approved, all Nominees will fall under the auspices of the Office of the Vice-Chancellor who will collaborate with the Chancellor and or the University of Guyana Graduation Committee<sup>1</sup> for notification and logistical arrangements.

---

<sup>1</sup> If the Honorary degree is being conferred outside a normal Graduation, the Graduation Committee will not be consulted.