

Posthumously Awarding Degrees

PURPOSE

The University desires to provide appropriate recognition of a student's academic achievement when the student's progress would have likely fulfilled the requirements of an undergraduate or graduate degree. This policy establishes standard requirements and procedures for awarding a posthumous undergraduate or graduate degree for those unfortunate occasions when students die during their enrollment at Winston-Salem State University but are close to the completion of all requirements of the degree being pursued.

POLICY

Winston-Salem State University may award undergraduate and graduate degrees posthumously. The Board of Trustees upon recommendation from the Chancellor may award a degree posthumously to any student who meets the eligibility requirements below. A certificate of attendance may be awarded posthumously by the Board of Trustees to a student who has completed at least one year of attendance at Winston-Salem State University but who does not qualify for a posthumous degree.

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for the award of a posthumous degree, the student generally must have met the following conditions:

Undergraduate

- The student was in good academic and disciplinary standing
- The student was within 12 credit hours of completion of all requirements or was in the final term of completing of requirements

Graduate

- The student was in good academic and disciplinary standing
- *Non-Thesis Program*-the student had completed all course work and was eligible to take comprehensive exams
- *Thesis Program*-the student had completed all course work for the program and was making sufficient progress toward completion of the thesis or project at the time of death.

Exceptions to these guidelines may be made when the student's death occurred during or as a result of participation in university-sponsored activities, or when chronic illness prevented current enrollment.

EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES

Cases that do not meet the above specified criteria may be considered when extraordinary circumstances prevail. For example, the student died while carrying out a heroic deed, or while performing outstanding service to the University or community, or after having completed an outstanding academic record, piece of original research, or creative project; and other exceptional cases. In such cases, the appropriate faculty, department head, dean, and the Provost

will be consulted prior to a recommendation being prepared for consideration by the Chancellor and Board of Trustees.

PROCEDURES

1. The deceased student's department chairperson, faculty member, or an immediate family member may request that the degree be awarded posthumously. The written request (in the form of a letter) must be sent to the student's department chairperson and received within twelve (12) months of the student's death. The student must have been continuously enrolled at Winston-Salem State University until the onset of terminal illness, injury or death.
2. The department faculty and chair will review the transcript of the student to determine if the student's overall record merit further consideration and recommendation that the posthumous award be granted. A written letter of recommendation from the department indicating that the student has met the criteria with supporting documentation will be forwarded to the college/school dean for review.
3. The dean will review the supporting documentation and will verify compliance with University policy governing the awarding of degrees posthumously. The dean will forward the recommendation to the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs.
4. The Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs will review the dean's recommendation and will forward the approved recommendation to the Chancellor for approval.
5. The Office of the Chancellor will notify the school/college dean and the registrar of the approval of the degree and present it at the next Board of Trustees meeting for approval. Upon approval by the Board, the dean will notify the family of the student of the approval and will arrange for the family to attend the spring commencement ceremony. The Office of the Registrar will prepare the diploma for the commencement ceremony. If the family chooses not to attend the commencement ceremony, the degree will be mailed to the family.
6. The Registrar will update the student's record in the system to reflect that the student was awarded the degree posthumously without meeting the requirements for the degree.

Effective Date: This policy becomes effective upon adoption by the Board of Trustees.

Adopted: This the 18th day of March 2011.

F. Scott Bauer
Chairman, Board of Trustees
Winston-Salem State University

Debra B. Miller
Secretary, Board of Trustees
Winston-Salem State University