
Effective: October 10, 2022

**University Governance
COMMENCEMENT POLICY**

Approved: October 10, 2022

PURPOSE

This policy combines and updates the following:

- Commencement Committee (University Governance)
- Commencement Speaker Committee (University Governance/Faculty Senate)
- Honorary Degree Committee (Administrative Policy)

SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to identify when commencement ceremonies are offered, who is eligible to participate in commencement, the steering committee to provide overall direction of the commencement, sub-committee to work on logistics and sub-committee to identify speakers and honorary degree recipients.

RESPONSIBLE AREA

Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

A. Ceremony

Formal commencement exercises are held in December and May of each year.

- December ceremony is limited to undergraduate degree candidates who will complete their degree requirements in the fall or winter sessions, and graduate degree candidates who will complete their degree requirements in the summer or fall sessions.
- May ceremonies are limited to undergraduate degree candidates who will complete their degree requirements in the spring or summer sessions, and graduate degree candidates who will complete their degree requirements in the spring semester.

B. Eligibility to Participate in Commencement

Students intending to participate in Commencement must complete an Application for Graduation in the semester they plan to complete their degree. The Application for Graduation is available on the Commencement website. The deadline to submit graduation applications is published on the fall and spring semester calendars on the Registrar's Office website.

Commencement Related Committees

1. Commencement Steering Committee

Charge: To provide guidance and recommendation to President's Cabinet on the commencement exercises including formal program.

Term Length: Two years for representatives

Membership

1. Provost or Designee, serving as chairperson
2. President's Designee
3. Assistant to the Provost
4. V.P. for Student Affairs or designee
5. One Faculty representative from the Graduate Coordinators Committee
6. One Faculty representative from APSCUF
7. Lead Marshall
8. One Graduate Student representative selected by the Dean of College of Graduate Studies
9. The Student Government President or designee
10. Chair, Commencement Logistics Committee
11. Chair, Commencement Speaker and Honorary Degree Committee
12. Chief of Police or their Designee

2. Commencement Logistics Sub-Committee

Charge: The Commencement Logistics Committee will provide coordination and planning of logistics for commencement exercises.

Membership

1. Director, University Events - Chairperson
2. President's Designee
3. Provost's Designee
4. Two representatives from the Registrar's Office
5. Lead Marshal
6. Two representatives from the Office of Graduate Studies
7. Director, Alumni Engagement
8. Director, Communications
9. Director, Web & Creative Services

10. Director, Web & Digital Media
11. Event Coordinator, University Events
12. Executive Associate, Advancement
13. Director, Environmental Health and Safety
14. Director, Catering and Dining Services
15. Manager, Ticket Office
16. Manager, University Store
17. Assistant Vice President, Facilities
18. Director, Housekeeping and University Services
19. Director, Maintenance and Operations
20. Representative, Moving and Deliveries
21. Two representatives from University Police
22. Two representatives from Technical Support Services

3. Commencement Speaker and Honorary Degree Sub-Committee

Charge: The Commencement Speaker and Honorary Degree Committee shall generate a pool of potential commencement speakers (preferably MU Alumni) and Honorary Degree recipients for consideration by the University President.

Term Length: Two years for selected representatives

Membership

- Vice President for University Advancement-Chair
- Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs or Designee
- Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer or Designee
- President's Designee
- University Communications Representative
- One Faculty representative from each of the four academic colleges selected by APSCUF and one Faculty representative from the Graduate School selected by the GCPRC.
- Two Representatives from the Council of Trustees
- Student Trustee

Commencement Speaker Process

- Speaker candidates will be nominated through outreach to the University Community. The speakers for the spring and winter commencements shall be drawn from the pool generated each fall by the committee. The pool shall be broadly representative in terms of race, gender, and academic discipline, and may include other considerations in order to promote enhanced diversity. Preference will be afforded to alumni nominees.

- In the event a speaker cannot be obtained from the pool, nothing in this policy shall prevent the University administration from obtaining a commencement speaker from other avenues.
- It is preferred to have a speaker for each ceremony, but not mandated.

Honorary Degree Process

- Honorary degree designations are limited to degrees not given in course as earned degrees by any institution of postsecondary education authorized by the Commonwealth to grant such degrees. No honorary degrees shall be awarded in absentia but, under special circumstances, may be awarded posthumously. The University will grant honorary degrees in the following categories:
 - L.itt.D. - Doctor of Letters (litterarum doctor, honoris causa)
 - L.H.D. - Doctor of Humane Letters (litterarum humaniorum doctor, honoris causa)
 - Sc.D. - Doctor of Science (scientia doctor, honoris causa)
- Millersville University is privileged to grant honorary degrees to persons who have made outstanding contributions to the welfare and well-being of the community at large. Such degrees are granted to recognize individual creativity, distinguished service, significant scholarship, and other individual accomplishments, whether in the arts, humanities, sciences, the professions, public service, or in service to mankind.
- The recipient shall exemplify the quality of character and achievement representative of the high ideals and values of Millersville University. As such, the recipient will serve as an inspiration and role model to the entire university community.
- Consistent with current Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) policy, recommendations of individuals for any honorary degree should be submitted to the Council of Trustees through the University President.
- Normally no more than two (2) honorary degrees may be awarded during any calendar year. Honorary degrees may be awarded at any commencement, convocation or other appropriate University function, though the University may choose not to grant an award in every calendar year.
- The Chancellor of PASSHE shall be notified of the identity, qualifications, and degree to be awarded at least 30 days prior to the actual awarding of the degree, as required by PASSHE policy.
- All nominations and the deliberation process shall be conducted with confidentiality.
- **Limitations on Granting Honorary Degrees**
 - The University shall not grant an honorary degree to current members of the faculty, administration, staff, or Council of Trustees.
 - Generally the University shall not grant an honorary degree to individuals currently serving in the legislature or executive branches of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania or as members of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education or its Board of Governors
 - Special exception may be made for an outstanding individual whose public service or commitment to the welfare of the public higher education is both distinguished and worthy of such recognition. In such matters, the Council of Trustees, by majority vote, shall make the determination.