

### **C-5. AWARDING OF POSTHUMOUS DEGREES POLICY**

The University may confer posthumous baccalaureate and graduate degrees upon students who were nearing formal completion of, but had not yet fully completed, all course requirements of the degree(s) being pursued at the time the student deceases, in all cases subject to final approval by the Board of Trustees acting upon the recommendation of the University President.

#### **ELIGIBILITY**

Any posthumous award of an the University degree must generally meet the following conditions:

1. at the time of death, the deceased student must have been enrolled in the University and (a) with respect to undergraduate degrees, must have been nearing completion of the course hours required to earn the relevant degree, (b) with respect to graduate degrees in programs not requiring a thesis, must have completed a majority of the required coursework for the degree, or (c) with respect to graduate degrees in programs requiring a thesis, completed all classroom coursework and commenced the thesis research process;
2. the student was in good academic standing and was successfully progressing toward completion of the requirements for the applicable degree to be awarded; and
3. recommendation for award of the degree must (a) be made by at least one (1) member of the faculty or leadership of the program in which the degree is to be awarded, (b) approved the head of the department in which the degree is to be granted, (c) approved by the dean of the college, school or graduate program of the program under which the degree is to be granted, and (d) approved by the Provost.

#### **APPROVAL PROCESS**

The process for identifying and considering candidates for the award of degrees posthumously shall be as follows:

1. The Vice President for Student Affairs with respect to undergraduate degrees, or the dean of the graduate school with respect to graduate degrees, upon learning of the death of a University student, shall ascertain the relative academic standing of the student, as specified in paragraphs 1 and 2 of the section of this policy titled "Eligibility" above.
2. If the deceased student is determined to be eligible as a candidate for posthumous award of the degree being pursued, the Vice President for Student Affairs or the dean of the graduate school shall so certify to the Provost.
3. Upon receiving certification that the deceased student is eligible to be considered for the award of a posthumous degree, the Provost will communicate this information to the dean(s) and department head(s), or other appropriate officials, of the relevant school or program.
4. If, after consulting with appropriate departmental faculty and review of the deceased student's overall records, the dean, department head, or other appropriate officials conclude that the merits support further consideration of a posthumous degree award, they will provide written certification of their determination to the Provost.

5. Upon receipt of such written certification, the Provost will weigh the relevant information relating to each case independently and will prepare a recommendation to the University President, who will determine if it should be forwarded for Board of Trustees consideration. Final approval for awarding posthumous degrees shall rest with the Board of Trustees, which will act upon the recommendation of the University President.

#### **AWARDING OF POSTHUMOUS DEGREES**

Upon final approval by the Board of Trustees, the following procedures will be followed in connection with the grant of a posthumous degree:

1. The family of the deceased student will be notified of the approval.
2. The degree will be conferred at the next regularly scheduled commencement exercise.
3. The posthumous nature of the award will be indicated on the diploma, the student's permanent record, and in the commencement program.

#### **EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES**

Cases that do not meet the above specified criteria may be considered when extraordinary circumstances prevail. In such cases, the appropriate dean(s), department head(s), or other faculty members of the relevant program may prepare a recommendation to send directly to the Board of Trustees for consideration; *provided, however*, that at least one (1) of the Provost or the University President shall join in the making of such recommendation, which recommendation shall include a listing of the unsatisfied criteria as well as a description of the extraordinary circumstances warranting further consideration.

#### **ADDITIONAL RECOGNITION OF DECEASED STUDENTS**

While a posthumous degree may only be awarded in accordance with the foregoing provisions of this policy, the University may recognize the attendance and/or contributions of a deceased student, regardless of the scope of coursework completed or whether any of the other foregoing criteria have been satisfied, by presenting a posthumous "Certificate of Attendance" to the family of the deceased student. The Certificate of Attendance is intended to recognize the deceased student's progress toward the attainment of a degree, and may include recognition of attendance, participation, or completion of some core program coursework or element, or other contributions to the University.

Additionally, and regardless of whether a posthumous degree or Certificate of Attendance has also been awarded with respect to a deceased student, an Auburn flag that has been previously flown on the Samford Hall flag pole shall be presented or sent to the family of each student deceasing while actively enrolled in the University, which flag shall be accompanied by a certificate stating the date(s) that the flag was flown on the Samford Hall flag pole in memory of the deceased student.

### APPLICABILITY OF POLICY TO ALL CAMPUSES

The provisions of this policy apply to all campuses of the University; *provided, however*, that where any role mentioned in this policy does not exist or apply to any other campus, the functional equivalent of such person at such campus shall be substituted in lieu thereof; *provided, further, however*, that solely with respect to awards pertaining to Auburn Montgomery students, the Chancellor of Auburn Montgomery shall be substituted in lieu of each reference to the “University President” in the above policy.

ADOPTED: November 11, 1994

REAFFIRMED: June 19, 2009

REVISED: June 18, 2010

REVISED: April 16, 2021