Policy and Procedure for Awarding Degrees (Undergraduate) Posthumously

Background and Rationale

The University is periodically asked (generally by the family of a recently deceased student) to award a degree posthumously, and from time to time has acceded to such requests. Several years ago, a policy regarding the awarding of graduate degrees posthumously was developed and approved. [See GFC Document No. 602, January 7, 1992.] We do not, however, have on record a standard policy and set of procedures providing similar guidance in the case of undergraduate degrees, and the existing graduate policy does not appear entirely applicable.

Policy and Procedural Guidelines

1. Action is initiated within the appropriate school/college. Generally this would occur in response to a request made by the family of the deceased student. It is important to note that the decision to recommend that a degree be awarded posthumously is not automatic, and requires that the student have completed at least 7/8 of the required credits for his/her program. In the case of students not sufficiently close to graduation, the academic unit may wish to recommend that a "Certificate of Accomplishment" or other similar acknowledgement be issued.

2. If recommended by the appropriate school/college faculty and approved by the Dean, the recommendation is sent to Provost/Vice Chancellor for final approval, with copy to Director of Enrollment Services.

3. Provost/Vice Chancellor takes action and communicates decision to Dean and Director of Enrollment Services.

4. If approved, Dean (or designee) communicates via a memo to Enrollment Services staff any necessary waivers and other special permissions required for graduation clearance, and notifies campus administration so that appropriate recognition, if any, (e.g. special notice in commencement program, letter from the Chancellor to family of the deceased, etc.) may take place.

5. Enrollment Services staff post degree and appropriate notations to the unofficial transcript, file appropriate documentation of approvals and waivers, notify the school/college when the degree has been posted, etc. DES will also order a diploma, if desired, for presentation to survivors of the deceased student.

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