

CALIFORNIA STATE POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY, POMONA
ACADEMIC SENATE

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

REPORT TO

THE ACADEMIC SENATE

AA-005-212

Posthumous Degree Policy

Academic Affairs Committee

Date: January 26, 2022

Executive Committee
Received and Forwarded

Date: November 3, 2021

Academic Senate

Date: November 10, 2021
First Reading
December 1, 2021
Second Reading

Your Name: Erin DeRosa

Your Email: ederosa@cpp.edu

Title of Referral: Posthumous degree policy

Names and Titles of proponents: Cecilia Santiago-Gonzalez, Assistant Vice President

Erin DeRosa, Director

S. Terri Gomez, Associate Provost

Keywords: Posthumous degree, honorary degree, deceased

Is there a deadline by when this referral needs to be considered by the Academic Senate?:

No

Deadline Date:

Justification for deadline:

Background: Provide background on the need for this referral and how it will benefit the University. Clearly state the expected outcome(s) or action(s) requested.

Cal Poly Pomona does not have a policy for awarding posthumous degrees to students. In consultation with other CSU campuses, we determined that having a posthumous degree policy helps departments and colleges to make consistent determinations about granting degrees for deceased students. The goal is to eliminate unnecessary confusion, frustration, and/or pain for the families and supporters of these students.

To provide a consistent policy that can be used by all campus community members, the Office of Student Success proposes the following policy:

Proposed Undergraduate Policy:

A posthumous baccalaureate degree may be awarded to a student who, at the time of death, had completed a substantial portion of the requirements for graduation, defined as follows:

The student was enrolled at the university at the time of death, on an approved leave of absence, or was an active-duty member of the U.S. Armed Forces, federal military reserve forces, and/or National Guard;

The student meets one of the following conditions:

The student was within 15 semester units of completing the minimum number of semester units for their degree

The student had satisfactorily completed at least 120 semester units of coursework and/or had completed at least 85% of all degree requirements

Had a grade point average of 2.0 or higher for all units used in calculating the grade point average

The student may not be considered for a degree if they were in a negative disciplinary standing, or if the cause of death was related to illegal activity.

Under exceptional circumstances (such as outstanding service to the university), the President may, upon consideration of the recommendations of the faculty within the deceased student's major or concentration, that School's Dean, and the Provost, confer a posthumous bachelor's degree to a student who, at the time of death, had not completed the requirements set forth above. The Department Chair and the Dean of the student's major will be responsible for evaluating the request against the criteria above in consultation with the Registrar's Office, Office of Student Success, and Dean of Students. If the request is granted, the Office of Student Success will partner with the Dean of Students to contact the deceased's family to make arrangements for presenting the diploma.

Students who do not qualify for a posthumous bachelor's degree may be awarded a Certificate of Achievement if the student was in good standing and had been enrolled at CPP within the past three semesters prior to his/her death. The approval process for the Certificate of Achievement is the same as for the posthumous degree.

Proposed Graduate Student Policy:

A posthumous graduate degree may be awarded to a student who, at the time of death, had completed a substantial portion of the requirements for graduation, defined as follows:

The student was enrolled at the university at the time of death, on an approved leave of absence, or was an active-duty member of the U.S. Armed Forces, federal military reserve forces, and/or National Guard;

The student meets one of the following conditions:

The student was within 15 semester units of completing the minimum number of semester units for their degree

The student had satisfactorily completed at least 85% of all degree requirements with a C or better in all classes.

Had a grade point average of 3.0 or higher for all units used in calculating the grade point average

The student may not be considered for a degree if they were in a negative disciplinary standing, or if the cause of death was related to illegal activity.

Under exceptional circumstances (such as outstanding service to the university), the President may, upon consideration of the recommendations of the faculty within the deceased student's major or concentration, that School's Dean, and the Provost, confer a posthumous degree to a student who, at the time of death, had not completed the requirements set forth above. The Department Chair and the Dean of the student's major will be responsible for evaluating the request against the criteria above in consultation with the Registrar's Office, Graduate Studies, and Dean of Students. If the request is granted, Graduate Studies will partner with the Dean of Students to contact the deceased's family to make arrangements for presenting the diploma.

Students who do not qualify for a posthumous bachelor's degree may be awarded a Certificate of Achievement if the student was in good standing and had been enrolled at CPP within the past three semesters prior to his/her death. The approval process for the Certificate of Achievement is the same as for the posthumous degree.

Recommended Resources: We obtained sample policies from other CSU institutions, including CSU Northridge's unofficial policy (attached) and CSU Bakersfield's current policy (attached).

In order to finalize this policy, we recommend consultation with:

The Dean of Students

The University Registrar

Academic Programs

College Deans and Associate Deans

Graduate Studies

Attachment 1:

https://s3.amazonaws.com/files.formstack.com/uploads/2070179/36745860/860778524/senate_referral-_posthumous_degree.docx

Discussion

Overall the committee thought this was a timely addition to campus policy, however, we were concerned about two items. First, we updated the language to reflect gender neutral pronouns. Second, we removed the stipulations: "The student may not be considered for a degree if they

were in a negative disciplinary standing, or if the cause of death was related to illegal activity.” We added an affirmative statement regarding good standing, but we felt that legality of activity was not something that should be considered given potential complexities.

Recommendation

We Recommend the adoption of the following policy:

A posthumous baccalaureate degree may be awarded to a student who, at the time of death, had completed a substantial portion of the requirements for graduation, defined as follows:

The student was enrolled at the university at the time of death, on an approved leave of absence, or was an active-duty member of the U.S. Armed Forces, federal military reserve forces, and/or National Guard;

The student meets one of the following conditions:

The student was within 15 semester units of completing the minimum number of semester units for their degree

The student had satisfactorily completed at least 120 semester units of coursework and/or had completed at least 85% of all degree requirements, **and is in good standing**.

Had a grade point average of 2.0 or higher for all units used in calculating the grade point average

Under exceptional circumstances (such as outstanding service to the university), the President may, upon consideration of the recommendations of the faculty within the deceased student’s major or concentration, that School’s Dean, and the Provost, confer a posthumous bachelor’s degree to a student who, at the time of death, had not completed the requirements set forth above. The Department Chair and the Dean of the student's major will be responsible for evaluating the request against the criteria above in consultation with the Registrar's Office, Office of Student Success, and Dean of Students. If the request is granted, the Office of Student Success will partner with the Dean of Students to contact the deceased's family to **arrange** for presenting the diploma.

Students who do not qualify for a posthumous bachelor’s degree may be awarded a Certificate of Achievement if the student was in good standing and had been enrolled at CPP within the past three semesters prior to **their** death. The approval process for the Certificate of Achievement is the same as for the posthumous degree.

Proposed Graduate Student Policy:

A posthumous graduate degree may be awarded to a student who, at the time of death, had completed a substantial portion of the requirements for graduation, defined as follows:

The student was enrolled at the university at the time of death, on an approved leave of absence, or was an active-duty member of the U.S. Armed Forces, federal military reserve forces, and/or National Guard;

The student meets one of the following conditions:

The student was within 15 semester units of completing the minimum number of semester units for their degree

The student had satisfactorily completed at least 85% of all degree requirements with a C or better in all classes, and is in good standing.

Had a grade point average of 3.0 or higher for all units used in calculating the grade point average

Under exceptional circumstances (such as outstanding service to the university), the President may, upon consideration of the recommendations of the faculty within the deceased student's major or concentration, that School's Dean, and the Provost, confer a posthumous degree to a student who, at the time of death, had not completed the requirements set forth above. The Department Chair and the Dean of the student's major will be responsible for evaluating the request against the criteria above in consultation with the Registrar's Office, Graduate Studies, and Dean of Students. If the request is granted, Graduate Studies will partner with the Dean of Students to contact the deceased's family to arrange for presenting the diploma.

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