

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, ACADEMIC SENATE

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August 3, 2018

**SENATE DIVISION CHAIRS**  
**SENATE EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS**

**Re: Proposed Model Policy for the Awarding of Posthumous Undergraduate Degrees**

Dear Colleagues:

At its July 25, 2018 meeting, the Academic Council unanimously endorsed the attached recommendation from the University Committee on Educational Policy (UCEP) that each UC campus adopt a policy to regulate the awarding of posthumous baccalaureate degrees within the model systemwide framework provided by UCEP.

Thank you and please do not hesitate to contact me if you have additional questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shane N. White".

Shane N. White, Chair  
Academic Council

Encl

Cc: Academic Council  
Senate Director Baxter



UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY (UCEP)  
Ed Caswell-Chen, Chair  
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June 18, 2018

**SHANE WHITE, CHAIR  
ACADEMIC COUNCIL**

**RE: PROPOSED MODEL SYSTEMWIDE POLICY FOR POSTHUMOUS DEGREES**

Dear Shane,

In late February, you asked UCEP to assess the need for a systemwide policy for granting posthumous degrees. UCEP reviewed the existing campus policies (Attachment A) and discussed what a systemwide policy might look like during our April and May meetings.

The committee found that the requirements for awarding posthumous degrees vary across, as well as within, campuses. Members agreed that it would be beneficial to have a standard policy for the system that affords campuses some latitude for flexibility. UCEP also recognized that a lenient policy will make the process easier for grieving families. We are pleased to submit for Council's consideration a draft model Systemwide Policy for the Awarding of Posthumous Degrees.

UCEP appreciates the opportunity to comment on this matter. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Ed Caswell-Chen, Chair  
UCEP

**PROPOSED MODEL SYSTEMWIDE POLICY  
FOR THE  
AWARDING OF POSTHUMOUS UNDERGRADUATE DEGREES  
June 2018**

UCEP recommends that all UC campuses consider adopting a policy to regulate the awarding of posthumous baccalaureate degrees, if they have not already done so. For families of a deceased student, it may be a significant consolation that the student's near completion of a degree is formally recognized. For students who do not meet the criteria for a posthumous degree, we recommend the issuance of a "Certificate of Attendance" that details the student's progress toward the degree.

### **Policy on the Posthumous Award Of Degrees And Certificates Of Attendance**

#### **Purpose**

The University of California seeks to extend sympathy and compassion to the families of students who pass away near the completion of their degrees and to recognize the academic achievement of students who would have fulfilled the requirements of the degree. These actions must be balanced with attention to academic and institutional integrity.

#### **Criteria**

Normally, the posthumous degree is conferred on students currently enrolled or on leave at the time of death. To be eligible for a posthumous baccalaureate degree, the deceased student must have senior-level standing and have a 2.0 GPA. For students who pass away before achieving the requisite number of units for senior-level standing or who do not possess the requisite 2.0 GPA, the University will offer a Certificate of Attendance detailing the student's progress toward the degree.

#### **Procedure**

The process for identifying and considering candidates for the award of posthumous undergraduate degrees will vary from campus to campus, but should include the following features:

1. A formal request for the awarding of the degree may be initiated by any of the following: a family member, a faculty member, a dean, or a fellow student. If the request is not made by a family member, the family should be contacted, if possible, and consulted about the possible award.
2. The decision to award the degree should not be based solely on whether the student meets the criteria. A group or individual should be tasked with assessing each case on its merits. Degrees should not be awarded to students whose actions at the time of their death would have led to expulsion from the university or similar disciplinary action. Similarly, students who died in notably heroic circumstances should be considered potentially eligible for the degree even if they do not meet all the criteria.
3. Ordinarily, degrees awarded posthumously will be noted on the commencement program. The student's diploma or certificate will be released or mailed to the person legally authorized to manage the deceased student's affairs. The posthumous nature of the award will be indicated on the diploma and in the student's official transcript. Any fees associated with the administration of the posthumous degree or certificate of attendance shall be waived.