

# **AURORA UNIVERSITY**

## **Posthumous Degree Policy**

**Effective:** Immediately

**Last Updated:** 4/1/22

**Responsible University Office:** Office of Academic Affairs

**Responsible Executive:** Vice President for Academic Affairs

**Approval:** Faculty Senate 5/6/22

**Scope:** Office of academic affairs, deans, and registrar.

### **A. REASON FOR POLICY**

This policy supports compliance with the following Higher Learning Commission Assumed Practice stipulation:

#### **B.1. Programs, Courses, and Credits**

- a. The institution conforms to commonly accepted minimum program length: 60 semester credits for associate's degrees, 120 semester credits for bachelor's degrees, and 30 semester credits beyond the bachelor's for master's degrees. Any variation from these minima must be explained and justified.

### **B. POLICY**

Aurora University may confer posthumous baccalaureate and graduate degrees upon students deceased prior to but nearing formal completion of all degree requirements being pursued.

**Eligibility:** To be eligible for the award of an Aurora University degree posthumously, the student generally must have met the following criteria:

- a. The student must have been enrolled in undergraduate or graduate degree programs at Aurora University at the time of their death (summer excluded), or their continuous enrollment was interrupted by their injury, illness, deployment, etc.
- b. The undergraduate student must have earned a minimum of 75% of the undergraduate degree requirements. The graduate student must have completed at least 75% of the graduate degree requirements. For graduate degrees requiring a research project (dissertation or thesis), the student should have commenced the research process. Other criteria may be considered at the discretion of the Chief Academic Officer.
- c. The student should have been in good disciplinary, financial, and academic standing with the University.

2. An approved posthumous degree shall be awarded consistent with the regular degree conferral cycle of the University.
3. If a posthumous degree is awarded,
  - a. the deceased student's name may be listed in the next Commencement Program, parenthetically noted "Posthumous."
  - b. There also shall be a notation of the posthumous award on the transcript.

## **C. DEFINITIONS**

## **D. PROCEDURES**

The following procedures shall be used in reviewing requests for and awarding posthumous degrees:

- The request for the awarding of a posthumous degree may be initiated by the deceased student's family or friends. Requests also may be initiated by a Dean or other academic administrator.
- The request must be in writing with a copy of the student death notification (e.g., state death notification form, newspaper article, funeral service program) and sent to the student's Dean. Contact information of the requestor is required.
- The Dean will contact the Registrar, who will confirm eligibility.
- In consultation with the school's faculty, the Dean shall recommend awarding the degree to the Chief Academic Officer.
- The determination that a posthumous degree is to be awarded shall be made by the Chief Academic Office, subject to the President of the University's review and determination.
- Upon receiving a decision from the Chief Academic Office, the Dean or other designated University administrator shall notify the individual who made the original request of the decision. If the posthumous degree is approved, that party shall also be responsible for providing the details for the diploma presentation or availability.
- The President, Chief Academic Officer, and/or Dean will make a personal presentation to the family. If a presentation is not possible or desired, the diploma may be made available to an appropriate family or another representative by the Office for Academic Affairs or Office of the President.

This posthumous degree policy is applied to all relevant students from all locations under the supervision of the university President, Vice-President for Academic Affairs, and Registrar.