

# Haverford College

## Honorary Degrees Committee

CHARGE

Amended February 2016

Honorary degree recipients enliven and augment the Haverford community, adding a singular dimension to the fabric of the college. As esteemed Commencement speakers, they inspire us, each graduating class in particular, through their lives' achievements—active, contemplative, civic, and humanitarian. We welcome these valued peers into the life of the College and invite them to enhance Haverford's legacy and mission in partnership with us.

### **Committee membership**

Board members are appointed by the Board's Nominations & Governance Committee. At least two faculty members are appointed by the Provost's Office, customarily the Faculty Representatives to the Board of Managers. Student members, of whom there may be between two and five, are drawn from the graduating class's Commencement Committee. The President of the Alumni Association Executive Committee is an *ex officio* member. At least one member of the Committee will be a current member of the Corporation's Advisory Committee. The Committee is staffed by the Chief of Staff and joined by the Vice President for Institutional Advancement.

### **Recipient criteria**

In making recommendations, the Committee considers individuals:

- whose intellectual curiosity, dedication, passion, diligence, work, and singular skills have led to major contributions that have been recognized (nationally or internationally) for their genuine excellence, distinction, and value in the fields of science, letters, arts, law, or humane letters;
- whose work or ideas have directly or indirectly changed the world for the better;
- whose lives speak to the College's values and to Quaker testimonies;
- who inspire the graduating class.

### **Other selection guidelines**

The Committee weighs a number of factors:

- while recipients are usually recognized for a life arc of work and influence, a singular act may be cause for recognition;
- the preferred slate should reflect a diversity of gender, race, ethnicity and disciplinary background;
- effort is made to nominate Quakers and Haverford alumni;
- the College refrains from inviting persons who require a fee;
- persons currently running for or holding elected office, undertaking political campaign work, or currently serving on the Board of Managers cannot be selected; their names may, however, come before the Committee when such responsibilities have been fulfilled;
- connection to the Haverford community or other predisposition to accept an invitation may make pursuit of a given candidate more compelling.

## Rescission

The Committee may, on a case by case basis, recommend that the Board rescind a Haverford honorary degree. The threshold for doing so shall be high and the standards of consideration shall generally be the recipient criteria.

## Timeline & Process

1. **No later than November (T-18 months):** invitation is sent to community members (faculty, Board of Managers, students, staff, alumni, Corporation) for recommendations of individuals to receive honorary degrees, accompanied by the set of criteria used by the Honorary Degree Committee. Solicitation of names may also be reinforced by appropriate liaisons and committee members. The rising senior class conducts its own nomination process to produce a small number of preferred names.
2. **December/Early January (T-16-17 months):** The HDC will consult with the campus community about recommended individuals to determine the strength of support for, or objections to, specific recommendations. This can take the shape of a feedback form including all nominees, sent to the Corporation Advisory Committee, Faculty, Alumni Association Executive Committee, and rising seniors.
3. **Mid to late January (T-16 months):** The President's Office produces a master list of recommendations, along with supporting documents and pertinent community feedback, and distributes it to the Committee. From this point on, the candidates under consideration and the deliberations of the Committee remain confidential.
4. **February Board weekend (T-15 months):** Honorary Degree Committee convenes to prepare a list of at least 10-12 nominees, taking into account biographical background available, feedback from the community, and the greatest possible representation of disciplines and diversity of background. Students' recommendations are important and weighted heavily. The nominees' names are presented for approval to the Board of Managers at its February meeting by the Chair of the Committee.
5. **Over the next 14 months:** Working off the approved list, supplemented by approved candidates from former years, the president offers invitations, using their discretion to produce an appropriately balanced slate of recipients (typically 3-4).
  - a. The President consults with the Committee as required.
  - b. A new candidate may be added with the consent of the Committee.
  - c. If a candidate has agreed to accept an honorary degree but cannot make that year's commencement, the President may decide to hold open that candidate invitation.
6. **Once the final list of honorees is confirmed** the president notifies the students followed by the College community and public at large.