

# **BOARD OF REGENTS BRIEFING PAPER**

**1. AGENDA ITEM TITLE:** Nevada State University Honorary Degree Recipient, 2025 Commencement

**MEETING DATE:** March 6-7, 2025 \_\_\_\_\_

**2. BACKGROUND & POLICY CONTEXT OF ISSUE:**

Nomination of an individual to receive an honorary degree at 2025 commencement ceremony.

**3. SPECIFIC ACTIONS BEING RECOMMENDED OR REQUESTED:**

Nevada State University President DeRionne Pollard requests approval to present Richard Perkins with an honorary degree at NSU's 2025 commencement ceremony.

**4. IMPETUS (WHY NOW?):**

Standing item

**5. CHECK THE NSHE STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL THAT IS SUPPORTED BY THIS REQUEST:**

- Access (Increase participation in post-secondary education)
- Success (Increase student success)
- Close the Achievement Gap (Close the achievement gap among underserved student populations)
- Workforce (Collaboratively address the challenges of the workforce and industry education needs of Nevada)
- Research (Co-develop solutions to the critical issues facing 21<sup>st</sup> century Nevada and raise the overall research profile)
- Not Applicable to NSHE Strategic Plan Goals

**INDICATE HOW THE PROPOSAL SUPPORTS THE SPECIFIC STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL**

Richard Perkins is a Nevada native, public servant, and business leader whose career has been defined by leadership in government, law enforcement, and economic development. Serving 14 years in the Nevada Legislature, six as Speaker of the Assembly, Mr. Perkins played a key role in shaping the state's economic, education, and public safety policies. He spearheaded the establishment of Nevada State College, now known as Nevada State University, enhanced K-12 education funding, and introduced major reforms in counter terrorism and homeland security. His leadership extended beyond government, serving as Henderson's Chief of Police and later founding The Perkins Company, a premier government relations firm. As co-founder of the Business Council of Canada and Nevada (BCCN), Perkins has also strengthened international trade relationships, fostering economic growth between Nevada and Canada. His contributions to public service, law enforcement, and business development continue to impact Nevada's future.

**6. BULLET POINTS TO SUPPORT REQUEST/RECOMMENDATION:**

**Richard Perkins: Key Achievements & Contributions**  
***Government & Legislative Leadership***

- Served **14 years in the Nevada Legislature**, including:
  - **6 years as Speaker of the Assembly** (2nd longest-serving Speaker in state history).
  - **4 years as Majority Leader** and **2 years as Democratic Floor Leader**.
- Helped guide Nevada’s **\$14 billion biennial budget**, funding over **425 state agencies**.
- Spearheaded **K-12 education funding and reforms**, strengthening Nevada’s public education system.
- Led the effort to establish **Nevada State College**, now known as Nevada State University expanding access to higher education.
- Created the **Nevada Commission on Homeland Security**, improving statewide security policies.
- Established **Nevada’s Amber Alert System**, enhancing child protection and public safety.
- Provided leadership on **energy, water policy, trade, gaming, healthcare, labor/management, and public lands**.
- Speaker and policy expert for **NCSL, CSG, SGAC**, and other national organizations.

***Law Enforcement & Public Safety***

- Served **25 years in law enforcement**, culminating as **Chief of Police for Henderson** (2006–2009).
- **Graduate of the FBI National Academy (183rd Session)**, maintaining a **Top-Secret clearance**.
- Sat on the governance committees for the **Southern Nevada Counter Terrorism Center** and the **HIDTA Task Force**.
- Recognized for work with crime victims; honored by the **Clark County District Attorney and the Nevada Attorney General**.

***Business & Economic Development Leadership***

- **Founder & CEO of The Perkins Company (2008–present)** – representing Fortune 500 companies, industry associations, and startups in **government relations and business strategy**.
- **Co-founder & CEO of the Business Council of Nevada and Canada (BCCN)** – promoting bilateral trade, tourism, and investment between **Nevada and Canada**.
- Appointed by Governor Sandoval to the **Nevada Commission on Homeland Security**, where he continues to serve.

***Community & Professional Engagement***

- **Nevada State University Foundation Board Member**, contributing to higher education growth.
- Former Board Member for **Paramount Bank of Nevada, Opportunity Village**, and several non-profits.
- Recognized as a **CSG Toll Fellow, Leadership Las Vegas graduate**, and attended the **Harvard Kennedy School of Government**.

**7. POTENTIAL ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE REQUEST/RECOMMENDATION:**

None

**8. ALTERNATIVE(S) TO WHAT IS BEING REQUESTED/RECOMMENDED:**

None

**9. RECOMMENDATION FROM THE CHANCELLOR’S OFFICE:**

The Chancellor's Office recommends approval.

**10. COMPLIANCE WITH BOARD POLICY:**

<input type="checkbox"/> Consistent With Current Board Policy: Title # _____ Chapter # _____ Section # _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Amends Current Board Policy: Title # _____ Chapter # _____ Section # _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Amends Current Procedures & Guidelines Manual: Chapter # _____ Section # _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Fiscal Impact: Yes _____ No _____ Explain: _____



## Honorary Degree Nomination Form

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1. Degree to be Awarded:

Honorary Masters     Honorary Baccalaureate     Honorary Associate

2. Please state the name and address of your nominee for an Honorary Degree.

Richard Perkins  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

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3. Honorary degrees shall be awarded to persons who have made significant contributions to the improvement of the quality of academic programs and academic life at one of the NSHE's institutions. Persons currently holding public elected office are not eligible for the degree except in extraordinary circumstances.

What are your reasons for nominating this person? (Attach additional pages, if necessary.)

Richard Perkins is an outstanding public servant, policy leader, and business strategist whose contributions to higher education, public safety, and economic development have significantly shaped Nevada's future. As Speaker of the Nevada Assembly, Perkins played a key role in the creation of Nevada State College, now Nevada State University, directly impacting the accessibility and growth of higher education in the state. His commitment to education policy, K-12 funding, and institutional development has left a lasting mark on academic life within the Nevada System of Higher Education.

Beyond his legislative work, Perkins has continued to foster higher education advancement through his role as a Nevada State University Foundation Board Member. His leadership in economic development and trade policy through the Business Council of Canada and Nevada (BCCN) has further strengthened Nevada's economic landscape, creating new opportunities for students, faculty, and industry partners. Recognizing Richard Perkins with an honorary degree from Nevada State University would honor his exceptional leadership, dedication to education, and commitment to public service, aligning with the university's mission of fostering academic excellence and community impact.

2.03.2025

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President

Date

Nevada State University

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Institution

## Attach Bio Here: Richard Perkins



Richard Perkins is an American politician and former police officer. He served as a Democratic member of the Nevada Assembly from 1992 to 2006 representing District 23, covering parts of Henderson. Perkins served as floor leader from 1995 to 2001 and as Speaker of the Assembly from 2001 to 2006. He served as chief of police for the Henderson Police Department from 2006-2008.

Perkins was born in Boulder City, Nevada and grew up in Henderson. He graduated from Basic High School, where he was an All-American football player and a state wrestling champion. He was recruited to play college football at universities on the west coast, including at the University of Nevada-Reno, but ultimately decided to attend the University of Nevada, Las Vegas where he obtained a BA in criminal justice and political science. He is a Council of State Governments Toll Fellow, an American Swiss Foundation Young Political Leader, a Leadership Las Vegas graduate, and an attendee of the Harvard Kennedy School.

Perkins was elected to the Nevada Assembly in 1992 and was re-elected six additional times. He was elected Co-Floor Leader in 1995, during his second term in office, when the Nevada Assembly was evenly split among Democrats and Republicans with 21 members each. He became Majority Floor Leader when Democrats won the majority in the Nevada Assembly in 1996 and served in that role until being elected Speaker of the Nevada Assembly in 2001. Perkins was a primary sponsor on a number of high-profile bills. He introduced and passed Assembly Bill 220 (1999), establishing Nevada State College in Henderson to meet a growing need for higher education in Southern Nevada.

In 2000, Perkins introduced the Sherrice Iverson Good Samaritan Law, named after a 7-year-old girl murdered by Jeremy Strohmeier in Primm, Nevada. David Cash, an associate of Strohmeier's, witnessed the crime but never reported it to police or tried to intervene and was never charged with a crime. Perkins' bill requires Nevadans to notify police if they witness violent acts being committed against a child.

He also authored Assembly Bill 27 (2001), which prohibited the placement of juveniles performing community service along a highway or at another dangerous location; Assembly Bill 250 (2003) and Assembly Bill 441 (2003), which created Nevada's homeland security laws governing acts of terrorism and related emergencies; and Assembly Bill 322 (2003), which created a statewide alert system for the safe return of abducted children.

The most significant event during Perkins' tenure in the legislature was the budget dispute of 2003. Nevada's tax structure has traditionally been heavily dependent on sales and gaming taxes. After 9/11, tourism was sharply reduced, which caused a substantial hole in the state budget. Republican governor Kenny Guinn proposed a \$980 million increase in revenue to fill this hole. However, while the legislature was able to pass the governor's budget with a simple majority, anti-tax Republicans in the Assembly refused to vote for it and so the budget was denied a 2/3 majority. This provoked a constitutional crisis, since Nevada's Constitution requires a 2/3 majority for revenue-generating bills and also requires that K-12 education be funded. Guinn called two special sessions of the legislature, neither of which was able to pass

an education budget with the required majority. Ultimately, the Supreme Court of Nevada was required to rule on the crisis and held that the education funding requirement took precedence over the 2/3 majority requirement.

Perkins joined the Henderson Police Department in 1984 and was elected as president of the Henderson Police Association in 1986. He was appointed interim chief of police for the department in June 2006 (cite Henderson Home Newspaper) and made permanent chief a month later, serving in this role until his retirement in 2008. He said growth as the biggest challenge of the job in his retirement, noting that there were just 31 officers when he joined the department as an officer in 1984 which grew to 391 officers and a budget of \$70 million when he retired.

Perkins was recognized for his work with crime victims and in 1991 was honored by the Clark County District Attorney and the Nevada Attorney General. He attended the 183rd Session of the FBI National Academy in 1995 and is active in the Nevada Sheriffs and Chiefs Association and the International Association of Chiefs of Police.

After retiring as a legislator and chief of police, Perkins opened his own lobbying firm, counting clients such as Newmont and the city of Henderson.

He served on the board of directors for Paramount Bank of Nevada, Opportunity Village, and several other non-profit boards and committees. In 2024, Perkins joined the board of directors for the Democracy Defense Project,