

# **BOARD OF REGENTS BRIEFING PAPER**

**1. AGENDA ITEM TITLE: Honorary Degree – Joe Murphy**

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

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

You may not realize it, but if you have lived or passed through Las Vegas in the last 35 years, you have benefitted from the work of Joe Murphy. And if you are a part of the UNLV community, you have unknowingly felt the effect of his philanthropy.

But Joe Murphy was not originally a Las Vegas local. He found his way to Sin City in 1981 at the age of 18, after being stationed at Nellis Air Force base as an avionics mechanic. After finishing his service commitment and meeting and marrying his wife Julie, he created roots in the city, becoming a Runnin' Rebels fan. After seeing his first UNLV Basketball game, he said, "the community excitement for the Runnin' Rebels was incredible [and] also infectious." He also pivoted his career into an electrician's apprenticeship, eventually starting his own company in 1989: Murphy Electric. He built his company on a reputation of promptness, professionalism, and service, focusing on nourishing relationships with repeat clients. And in the time since his company's founding, Joe's clients include manufacturers, retailers, schools, banks, data processing centers, industrial facilities, and hotels. Together with NextGen Integrated Solutions, a low-voltage security fire protection company he also founded, Murphy Electric did \$65 million in gross revenue last year. And thanks to this revenue, Joe has been able to give back to the community he has grown to love. For the last 15 years, he and his wife have generously financially supported the Rebel Athletic Fund, and recently established the Emily Stevens Scholarship at the Kirk Kerkorian School of Medicine, which offsets a student's medical school tuition costs.

In addition, Joe Murphy has donated his time and served in many UNLV and community organizations. Joe served as a member of the Southern Highlands Charity Foundation Board, the UNLV Foundation Board of Trustees, the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department Foundation Board of Directors, and the Las Vegas Bowl Committee, and has done extensive fundraising for and donated to the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation. His support for UNLV and the community comes from his realization of the impact of higher education on the Las Vegas Valley. He said, "I realized how much I have benefitted - and continue to benefit - from the community. ... The simple fact is that this university represents the community that I have called home for more than 40 years. It's a community that I love."

Because of his continued commitment to the growth and betterment of the Las Vegas and UNLV community, UNLV presents Mr. Joe Murphy for an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters

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

UNLV President Keith E. Whitfield requests approval to award an honorary doctorate degree to Joe Murphy.

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

Joe's philanthropic work deserves to be recognized.

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

- Access (Increase access to higher education)
- Success (Improve student success)
- Close Institutional Performance Gaps
- Workforce (Meet workforce needs in Nevada)
- Research (Increase solutions-focused research)
- Coordination, Accountability, and Transparency (Ensure system coordination, accountability, and transparency)
- Not Applicable to NSHE Strategic Plan Goals

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

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

Please see background and / or Honorary Degree Nomination Form.

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

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

Do not award Joe Murphy an honorary degree.

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

The Chancellor’s Office recommends approval.

**11. COMPLIANCE WITH BOARD POLICY:**

- Consistent With Current Board Policy: Title # \_\_\_\_\_ Chapter # \_\_\_\_\_ Section # \_\_\_\_\_
- Amends Current Board Policy: Title # \_\_\_\_\_ Chapter # \_\_\_\_\_ Section # \_\_\_\_\_
- Amends Current Procedures & Guidelines Manual: Chapter # \_\_\_\_\_ Section # \_\_\_\_\_
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Fiscal Impact: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No X \_\_\_\_\_  
Explain: \_\_\_\_\_



## Honorary Degree Nomination Form

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1. Degree to be Awarded:

Honorary Doctorate     Honorary Baccalaureate     Honorary Associate

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

Joe Murphy

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3. Honorary degrees may be awarded to persons who have made significant contributions to the improvement of the quality of academic programs and academic life at the requesting institution, or to distinguished visitors. Person currently holding public elective office shall not be eligible to be nominated for an honorary degree, except that the Board of Regents reserves the right to waive this limitation at its own discretion in extraordinary circumstances.

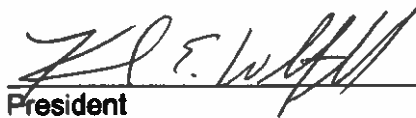
4. What are your reasons for nominating this person (Attach additional pages, if necessary.)

Please see attached document.

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\_\_\_\_\_  
President

2/7/25  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

UNLV  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Institution

2/7/25  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

(B/R 1/87, 10/98, 3/03; Added 6/05; A.3/07, 11/07, 12/07)

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