

BOARD OF REGENTS BRIEFING PAPER

1. AGENDA ITEM TITLE: Honorary Degree, UNLV — Mr. Jung-Ho Suh

MEETING DATE: March 5–6, 2026

2. BACKGROUND & POLICY CONTEXT OF ISSUE:

The William F. Harrah College of Hospitality (the “College of Hospitality”) seeks to confer an honorary doctorate degree upon Mr. Jung-Ho Suh, Chairman of Ambassador Hotel Group, in recognition of his transformative impact on the global hospitality and tourism industry and his enduring commitment to UNLV and the College of Hospitality.

Chairman Suh is a UNLV alumnus whose academic and professional achievements exemplify the global reach and influence of a UNLV education. His philanthropic support for the College of Hospitality includes a \$500,000 gift toward the development of Hospitality Hall, recognized through the Ambassador Hotel Group–named classroom, as well as decades of active engagement hosting UNLV alumni in Seoul, advancing international academic partnerships, and championing student recruitment. Through these efforts, Chairman Suh has expanded UNLV’s global reach, strengthened its presence in Asia, and elevated hospitality education worldwide.

3. SPECIFIC ACTIONS BEING RECOMMENDED OR REQUESTED:

University of Nevada, Las Vegas Interim President Chris Heavey will request approval to award an honorary doctorate degree to Mr. Jung-Ho Suh.

4. IMPETUS (WHY NOW?):

This is an appropriate and timely moment to recognize Chairman Suh, given both his continued industry leadership and his contributions to UNLV’s evolving global strategy. As Chairman of one of South Korea’s leading hotel enterprises, he was a driving force behind UNLV’s invitation to explore a global campus in Incheon, South Korea. UNLV is actively exploring expanded academic initiatives in Asia, making Chairman Suh’s recognition especially meaningful as a symbol of institutional partnership, alumni success, and global engagement. Honoring him at this time strengthens the international visibility of UNLV and the College of Hospitality, and reinforces long-standing ties with a globally respected hospitality leader.

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

N/A

7. BULLET POINTS TO SUPPORT REQUEST/RECOMMENDATION:

- Chairman Suh is a UNLV alumnus with degrees in Hotel Management and Business Administration.
- He is the Chairman of Ambassador Hotel Group, one of South Korea’s leading hospitality enterprises.
- He pioneered international hotel partnerships, bringing global brands to Korea.
- He is recognized globally for his contributions to hospitality and tourism development.

- He is the recipient of multiple international honors, including France’s Légion d’Honneur and Korea’s Gold Tower of Industrial Service Merit.
- He was a recipient of the UNLV Alumnus of the Year Award in 2010.
- He has demonstrated lifelong commitment to hospitality education and industry advancement.
- He embodies UNLV’s vision of developing global leaders who inspire excellence in hospitality.
- Bestowing an honorary degree upon Chairman Suh supports UNLV’s mission by:
 - Advancing UNLV’s commitment to global leadership and international engagement.
 - Elevating the global reputation and visibility of UNLV and the College of Hospitality.
 - Aligning with UNLV’s goal of expanding academic collaboration and presence in international markets.
 - Reinforcing UNLV’s mission to serve as a thought leader in hospitality education and industry innovation.
 - Strengthening international alumni relations and industry partnerships in Asia.
 - Highlighting the global impact of a UNLV education.

8. POTENTIAL ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE REQUEST/RECOMMENDATION:

None.

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

None.

10. RECOMMENDATION FROM THE CHANCELLOR’S OFFICE:

The Chancellor’s Office recommends approval.

11. COMPLIANCE WITH BOARD POLICY:

- Consistent With Current Board Policy: Title # 4 Chapter # 1 Section # 15
 - Amends Current Board Policy: Title # _____ Chapter # _____ Section # _____
 - Amends Current Procedures & Guidelines Manual: Chapter # _____ Section # _____
 - Other: Consistent With: P&GM Ch. 8, Sec. 1.2 _____
 - Fiscal Impact: Yes _____ No X
- Explain:



Honorary Degree Nomination Form

1. Degree to be Awarded:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Honorary Doctorate	<input type="checkbox"/> Honorary Masters
<input type="checkbox"/> Honorary Baccalaureate	<input type="checkbox"/> Honorary Associate

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

Mr. Jung-Ho Suh

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.)
See attached memo.

Chris Heavey

1/29/2026

President

Date

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Institution

(B/R 3/03; Added 6/05; A. 3/24)

To: Nevada System of Higher Education Board of Regents
From: Chris Heavey, Interim President, University of Nevada, Las Vegas 
Date: January 29, 2026
Subject: UNLV Honorary Degree Nomination — Jung-Ho Suh

It is my distinct honor to nominate Mr. Jung-Ho Suh, widely known as Chairman Suh, for the conferral of an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

Chairman Suh is a visionary and pioneering leader in the global hospitality and lodging industry, and has been an extraordinary champion of UNLV and the William F. Harrah College of Hospitality. His career has shaped the modern hospitality landscape in South Korea and influenced industry standards around the world. He has built an extraordinary hotel enterprise through the Ambassador Hotel Group, now recognized as one of Korea's leading hospitality organizations and a respected international partner to global hotel brands.

Chairman Suh's relationship with UNLV is both historic and deeply meaningful. In the 1970s, he came to UNLV to study hospitality. Inspired by his father, who founded the Ambassador Hotel Group after the Korean War, Chairman Suh was determined to learn from the world's leading hotel school before returning home to advance the family enterprise. Under his father's insistence on bottom-up leadership training, he worked in entry-level hotel roles before and during his studies at UNLV, gaining firsthand experience in service, operations, and guest relations. This formative combination of academic preparation and practical training shaped the management philosophy that would later define his leadership.

In 1987, Chairman Suh established a strategic partnership with Accor Group in advance of the 1988 Seoul Olympic Games, a defining milestone for the Ambassador Hotel Group. This collaboration introduced leading international hotel brands to the Korean market and laid the foundation for a long-standing joint venture with one of the world's foremost hospitality companies. In 1992, Chairman Suh rose to manager of the Ambassador Hotel Group, which today operates nearly twenty properties across South Korea and continues to grow under his visionary leadership.

Chairman Suh is widely recognized for his contributions to the hospitality and tourism sectors, as well as his impact on South Korea's national economic development. His distinguished honors include France's Légion d'Honneur, Korea's Gold Tower of Industrial Service Merit, and the Ten Million Tourism Promotion Tower. In recognition of his academic and professional influence, he has been awarded honorary doctorates in business administration from Sejong University and Dongguk University, along with a lifetime achievement award from the School of Hotel and Tourism Management at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. In recognition of his enduring connection to our institution, UNLV honored him as Alumnus of the Year in 2010.

Beyond his industry leadership, Chairman Suh's support for UNLV has advanced our mission, strengthened our global presence, and elevated hospitality education. His generosity includes a philanthropic contribution of \$500,000 toward the development of Hospitality Hall. In recognition of this gift, a classroom in the building proudly bears the name Ambassador Hotel Group, serving as a lasting symbol of his commitment to hospitality education.

Chairman Suh has also been a steadfast supporter of our alumni community. Nearly every year, he graciously hosts UNLV alumni gatherings in Seoul at his hotel, bringing graduates together, strengthening global networks, and promoting the College abroad. These events have played an important role in maintaining engagement with our international alumni and extending the reach of the College in Asia.

His leadership has been instrumental in establishing key partnerships, including academic collaborations with Kyung Hee University and Sejong University, which have helped recruit top South Korean talent to UNLV and

created valuable pathways for academic exchange and global engagement. He has also been a driving force behind UNLV's invitation to explore opening a global campus in Incheon. Through his advocacy and support, the Incheon Free Economic Zone Authority has extended an offer to fund and build a UNLV global campus in Incheon. This opportunity represents a transformational step in UNLV's international growth strategy.

Today, South Korean students comprise the largest international student population in the College of Hospitality. Chairman Suh's consistent advocacy, relationship building, and promotion of UNLV and the College in South Korea have been central to this success. His achievements have elevated the hospitality industry, expanded educational opportunities for UNLV students and alumni nationally and internationally, and helped grow UNLV's global reach.

For these reasons, I respectfully recommend Chairman Jung-Ho Suh for an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

Curriculum Vitae of Chairman SUH, JUNG HO

Education

- **May 1982**
Bachelor's Degree in Hotel Management, University of Nevada
 - **May 1984**
Master of Business Administration (MBA), Graduate School of Business, University of Nevada
 - **February 2004**
Honorary Doctorate in Business Administration, Sejong University
 - **February 2017**
Honorary Doctorate in Business Administration, Dongguk University
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Career History

- **October 1988**
Founder & Chief Executive Officer, Ambassadors Co., Ltd.
- **June 1989**
Founder & Chief Executive Officer, Ambatel Co., Ltd.
- **September 1993**
Chairman, Novotel Ambassador Gangnam
- **March 1994**
Chief Executive Officer, Seohan Co., Ltd.
- **September 1996**
Chairman, Sofitel Ambassador Seoul
- **September 1997**
Chairman, Novotel Ambassador Doksan
- **October 1997**
Appointed Chairman, Ambassador Hotel Group
- **October 2003**
Founder & Chief Executive Officer, Ambestel Co., Ltd.
- **May 2006**
Chairman, ibis Ambassador Myeongdong
- **February 2009**
Founder & Chief Executive Officer, Seohan Tourism Development Co., Ltd.

Curriculum Vitae of Chairman SUH, JUNG HO

- **July 2009**
Chairman, Grand Ambassador Seoul
 - **September 2013**
Chairman, ibis Ambassador Insadong
 - **November 2014**
Chairman, ibis Styles Ambassador Myeongdong
 - **August 2020**
Chairman, Mercure Ambassador Hongdae
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Honors & Awards

- **November 2000**
Knight of the Légion d'Honneur, Government of France
- **September 2001**
Hotel Management Excellence Award, Korean Academic Society of Hotel Management
- **September 2003**
Gold Tower of Industrial Service Merit, Government of Korea
- **April 2010**
Alumnus of the Year Award, University of Nevada Las Vegas
- **May 2024**
Lifetime Achievement Award, School of Hotel and Tourism Management (SHTM), The Hong Kong Polytechnic University