

**BOARD OF REGENTS
BRIEFING PAPER**

1. AGENDA ITEM TITLE: AMENDMENT DISTINGUISHED NEVADAN, REGENT EMERITUS, AND HONORARY DEGREE CRITERIA

MEETING DATE: June 6/7, 2019

2. BACKGROUND & POLICY CONTEXT OF ISSUE:

The Board of Regents has previously had discussions regarding the propriety of granting a candidate for public elected office the award of being a Distinguished Nevadan, pursuant to Title 4, Chapter 1, Section 14 of the *Handbook* or the status of Regent Emeritus or conference of an Honorary Degree, pursuant to Chapter 8, Section 1 of the *Procedures and Guidelines Manual*. Concerns have been raised that bestowing these honors on a person running for public elected office will give the appearance of an endorsement of the candidacy of the candidate.

3. SPECIFIC ACTIONS BEING RECOMMENDED OR REQUESTED:

Attached are amendments to the relevant provisions in the *Handbook* and *Procedures and Guidelines Manual* that set forth and clarify that a person “running as a candidate” for a public elected office is not eligible for the Distinguished Nevadan Award, Regent Emeritus Status, or an Honorary Degree.

4. IMPETUS (WHY NOW?):

The year 2020 will be a major election-cycle year and now, as regional and national candidates are beginning to declare their candidacy, is a good time to update the *Handbook* and *Procedures and Guidelines Manual* to clarify the criteria for these honorary designations.

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

Not Applicable to NSHE Strategic Plan Goals

INDICATE HOW THE PROPOSAL SUPPORTS THE SPECIFIC STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL

N/A

6. BULLET POINTS TO SUPPORT REQUEST/RECOMMENDATION:

- Keeping the award of Distinguished Nevada, the status of Regent Emeritus, and the granting of an Honorary Degree outside of political considerations lends greater credibility to these designations and the motivations for bestowing these honors.

7. POTENTIAL ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE REQUEST/RECOMMENDATION:

The Board can already take the candidacy of an individual into consideration when voting to grant the award or status.

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

Maintain the status quo.

9. RECOMMENDATION FROM THE CHANCELLOR’S OFFICE:

Approve.

10. COMPLIANCE WITH BOARD POLICY:

X: Amends Handbook: Title 4, Chapter 1, Section 14
X Amends Procedures & Guidelines Manual: Chapter 8, Section 1
Fiscal Impact: **No**

PROPOSED EDITS

Additions appear in ***boldface italics*** and deletions are [~~stricken and bracketed~~].

Title 4 - Codification of Board Policy Statements

Chapter 1

GENERAL POLICY STATEMENTS

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Section 14. Regent-Emeritus/Emerita Status

1. Regent-Emeritus/Emerita status is a privilege, awarded in the Board of Regents' discretion by action of the Board, to honor a former Regent after long-term achievement and distinguished service to NSHE. A minimum of 12 years of service is required to be eligible for the title of Regent-Emeritus/Emerita. Persons currently holding ***or running as a candidate for an*** elected public office are not eligible to be awarded Regent-Emeritus/Emerita during their term of office.
2. Emeritus/Emerita Regents may, upon request, receive business cards, a parking permit to park on campus while attending official institutional events, and such other attendant privileges as the Chancellor may deem appropriate.

PROPOSED EDITS

Additions appear in ***boldface italics*** and deletions are [~~stricken and bracketed~~].

NEVADA SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES MANUAL

CHAPTER 8

DEGREES AND AWARDS

Section 1. Distinguished Nevadan and Honorary Degree Nominations

1. Distinguished Nevadans

- a. Nominations for the award of Distinguished Nevadan will be made by the Board of Regents pursuant to the Board of Regents *Handbook* (Title 4, Chapter 1, Section 14). Nominations must be received by the Chief of Staff of the Board no later than December 31 of each academic year. The Board of Regents shall make the award on or before March 31 of each academic year.
- b. The purpose of the awards is to recognize prominent individuals who are present or former residents of the state for their significant achievements contributing to the cultural, economic, scientific, or social advancement of Nevada and its people; or for exceptional service to the state or nation that has influenced constructively the well-being of humankind. Persons currently holding ***or running as a candidate for a*** public elective office shall not be eligible to be nominated for Distinguished Nevadan, except that the Board of Regents reserves the right to waive this limitation at its own discretion in extraordinary circumstances.
- c. These awards shall normally be given at Spring commencement exercises.

2. Honorary Degrees

- a. Nominations for honorary degrees shall be made to the Board of Regents by the president for any degree that is officially offered by the requesting institution.
- b. Honorary degrees may, at the discretion of the president and with approval from the Board of Regents, be conferred at any time during the year at an appropriate ceremony. No more than two honorary degrees will be conferred at each institution's commencement ceremony unless otherwise approved by the Board.
- c. 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. Persons currently holding ***or running as a candidate for a*** 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.