



**St. Francis Xavier University  
Senate Honorary Degree Committee**

**Terms of Reference**

The purpose of the Senate Honorary Degree Committee is to oversee the nomination of candidates for honorary degrees and to advise Senate on the awarding and revocation of honorary degrees.

St. Francis Xavier University values the history and traditions of academia and understands the importance of establishing criteria and a process for the awarding of honours to distinguish individuals in recognition of extraordinary achievement and/or contributions to the University.

Honourary Degree recipients will receive the degree Doctor of Laws (LL.D.).

**COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

1. Ex Officio Voting Members
  - i. President and Vice Chancellor
  - ii. Academic Vice President and Provost
2. Elected Voting Members  
Six faculty members – one representative of each faculty
  - Arts
  - Business
  - Education
  - Science
  - Faculty Senators (2)
3. Student Voting Member - StFX Students' Union Vice President Academic or designate.
4. Board of Governors Voting Members – one member appointed by the StFX Board of Governors
5. Alumni Voting Member - one member appointed by the StFX University Alumni Association Executive.

The Committee membership elects the Chair and Vice Chair positions. The Chair and Vice Chair will be chosen for one-year terms and will be selected from among the six Faculty members of the Committee.

**RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Senate Honorary Degree Committee is responsible for the following:

1. Recommending to Senate nominees for Honorary Degrees.
2. Recommending to Senate the revocation of Honorary Degrees.
3. Recommending to Senate changes to these Terms of Reference.



## Honorary Degree Criteria and Procedures

### I. General Principles

In conferring honorary degrees, St. Francis Xavier University (the University) seeks to honour individuals whose accomplishments and achievements demonstrate a standard of excellence that will inspire our graduates and the University community and will reflect favourably on the public reputation of the University. The awarding of an honorary degree honours both the individual and the University and contributes to the recognition and celebration of excellence in society in a manner that reflects the University's character and values within the community and the world.

Honorary degrees are awarded to individuals. In exceptional circumstances, nominations for a pair, group or organization may be considered, in which case an additional component must be included in the nomination file as specified in IV(3)(v) below.

### II. Criteria for Selection

The role of the Senate Honorary Degree Committee ("the Committee") is to recommend, at least bi-annually, outstanding candidates for honorary degrees across a range of academic disciplines and non-academic areas of achievement.

The Committee will seek to nominate candidates who have demonstrated:

- i. Inspirational leadership in, or service to, society;
- ii. Outstanding contributions to, or leadership in, a field or discipline of study or a non-academic area of achievement; or
- iii. Significant pattern of outstanding achievement at, or contributions to St. Francis Xavier University.

Particular consideration will be given to those candidates whose contributions or leadership have not yet been widely recognized, but which merit such recognition.

Every effort will be made to select candidates who reflect the University's commitment to diversity including, but not limited to racially visible persons, Indigenous persons, persons with disabilities and women.

### III. Exclusions

1. Honorary degrees shall not be awarded to individuals who may exert a real or perceived influence on:
  - i. Public policy, laws, or public funding directly affecting the University; or
  - ii. The University's institutional autonomy.
2. The following are categories of individuals who have a deemed conflict of interest that would render a candidate ineligible to receive an honorary degree:



- i. Current members of the faculty, staff, the Board of Governors or Senate or their immediate households. These individuals may not be considered for nomination until a minimum of one year has passed since their active connection with the University has ended;
- ii. Current students;
- iii. Individuals actively serving as federal Members of Parliament;
- iv. Individuals actively serving as provincial Members of the Legislative Assembly in provinces where the University has a campus; and
- v. Individuals actively serving as municipal politicians in counties where the University has a campus.

Elected officials not falling into category 2(iii), 2(iv) or 2(v) will be carefully evaluated to determine whether the candidate may exert a real or perceived influence on the University as set out in Section 1 herein.

3. Honorary degrees are not normally granted in absentia.
4. Candidates who have accepted an invitation to receive an honorary degree but have cancelled an invitation twice without reasonable cause.

#### IV. Procedures for Nominations

1. At least once annually, the Chair of the Committee will issue a call for nominations which will be broadcast widely to the university community, using traditional means and any additional avenues suggested by members of the Senate Honorary Degrees Committee.
2. Nominations may be made by any member or constituent group from the University community. Any potential conflict of interest with respect to the nominee (association or connection with the nominee) should be disclosed as part of the nomination submission. No application from any person desirous of receiving the honour of the University shall be entertained.
3. All nominations must be made in writing. Nominations may be submitted at any time, and must be submitted in electronic form by email to the Chair of the Honourary Degree Committee. Nominators should ensure that their nomination letter and supporting materials provide reasons for the nomination that are as complete as possible. They should cite the pre-eminence of the individual nominee in their respective field and/or achievements and accomplishments of an outstanding nature. A complete nomination file will consist of:
  - i. A letter of nomination from a member of the University community. This letter should be two-three pages, making the case for why the nominator believes the nominee should receive an honorary degree.
  - ii. Curriculum Vitae of the nominee.
  - iii. A brief narrative biography of the nominee (one page maximum).



- iv. At least one additional letter of support (to a maximum of three). Alternatively, the letter of nomination may be co-signed by up to three other individuals.
- v. Where a pair, group or organization is being nominated, an additional one-page justification for the collective award is required.

Additional material, such as media articles, may also be provided as appropriate.

- 4. Nominators shall make best efforts to keep the nomination confidential from the nominee.
- 5. The Honourary Degree Committee will review nominations submitted to ensure that nomination files are complete. Nominees for whom complete files have been received will be added to the list of potential candidates for a period of three years from the date of nomination, at which time, if the nominee has not been selected for recommendation to Senate, the name will be removed from the list. If the person is subsequently re-nominated, the name will again be added to the list for an additional three-year period.
- 6. The Committee will review the active list of nominations as required to meet the annual convocation cycles and will recommend prospective candidates who meet the established criteria. The Committee will regularly review the criteria and pattern of nominations and awards to ensure alignment with the goals of the Committee and the University.
- 7. All decisions of the Committee will be by majority vote (50% plus 1). A quorum for Committee meetings consists of any six of the eleven members of the Committee.
- 8. Committee deliberations are confidential and conducted in-camera. The Committee will forward its recommendations to Senate for its consideration in a closed session. For each nominee presented to Senate, the Committee Chair will provide the Chair of Senate with a CV and a brief biography suitable for distribution to Senators. Senators will be given at least 24 hours prior to the Senate meeting at which nominees will be considered to review these materials.
- 9. Candidates approved by Senate will be contacted directly by the President and invited to receive an honorary degree. Upon acceptance of this invitation, the names and the ceremonies at which the honorary degrees will be awarded will be confirmed by the President to the University Ceremonial Officer and the Office of the Registrar on a confidential basis and will remain confidential until such time as a public announcement has been made by the President. Where possible, honorary degree recipients will be selected to receive their degrees at the Convocation which most closely aligns with their field of achievement.

#### V. Criteria for Revocation

- 1. The Senate Honorary Degree Committee may recommend to Senate that an honorary degree, and all privileges and rights connected with the honorary degree, be revoked where the holder of the honorary degree:



- a. has been convicted of any criminal offence (and all appeal options have been exhausted) which shall be held by the Committee to be of an immoral, or scandalous or disgraceful nature; or
  - b. has had their name removed for misconduct by a properly constituted legal authority from any official register of members of the profession to which they belong; or
  - c. has engaged in conduct which, in the reasonable opinion of the Committee, constitutes a significant departure from generally-recognized standards of public behavior and which is seen to undermine the public reputation of the University, and/or is inconsistent with the University's character and values within the community, and/or constitutes a breach of any agreement made with the University as a condition of the conferment of the honorary degree.
2. The Committee may consider the revocation of an honorary degree based on a request for revocation made in writing to the Chair of Senate. The Chair of Senate may also initiate a request for revocation, based on information available to the Chair. If the Chair of Senate determines that there may be reasonable grounds for revocation of an honorary degree as set out in V1. 1. the request will be forwarded by the Chair of Senate to the Committee for its consideration.
3. The Committee will review the information provided in support of a request for revocation and if, in the opinion of the Committee, the grounds for revocation are considered to be insufficient or spurious, the Committee will so advise the Chair of Senate in writing. The Chair of Senate will send a reply to the person who made the request of this decision.
4. If the Committee determines that there may be reasonable grounds for revocation of the honorary degree, the request will proceed as follows:
  - i. The Chair of the Committee will send a written notice advising the person, on the basis of the allegations of fact set out in the notice, that revocation of their honorary degree is under consideration. The notice will advise the person that, within the time prescribed in the notice, they may make representations respecting the matter under consideration or any allegation of fact set out in the notice. The notice will also indicate that the revocation process will continue, even if the person omits to reply within the prescribed time.
  - ii. If the person elects to make representations respecting the potential revocation or any allegation of fact set out in the notice, the person or his or her representative may, within the time prescribed in the notice or as otherwise authorized by the Committee Chair, make representations in writing.
  - iii. If, within the time prescribed in the notice or authorized by the Committee Chair, the person fails to reply to the notice, the Committee will review the matter in accordance with the procedures provided for in (iv).
  - iv. If the person has made representations, the Committee will be provided with all relevant documentation. After due consideration, the Committee will prepare for



the Chair of Senate a written report that contains its recommendation with respect to whether or not to revoke the person's honorary degree.

v. On receiving the report referred to in 4.iv, the Chair of Senate will:

- a. where the recommendation is not to revoke the honorary degree, accept the recommendation on behalf of Senate, and the Committee report will not be presented to Senate; or
- b. where the recommendation is to revoke the honorary degree, request that the Committee report be presented to Senate for a decision on the revocation.

vi. At the conclusion of this process, the Chair of Senate will report the outcome in writing to the person requesting revocation and to the person who received the Honorary Degree.

5. All decisions of the Committee will be by majority vote (50% plus 1).

6. Committee deliberations are confidential and conducted in-camera.