Honorary Doctorates @ James Madison University

Purpose

The awarding of an honorary doctorate denotes an individual’s great accomplishment as it relates to the values and ideals of James Madison University. It is to recognize an individual who exemplifies personal qualities and values consistent with James Madison University and would serve to inspire and encourage others to strive to make a difference in their world. The honorary doctorate is one of the highest and most significant honors the university can confer. The University and the Board of Visitors recognizes great selectivity associated with awarding such a degree.

Criteria

To be considered for an honorary doctorate, an individual should have made a significant contribution in their field, for society, or for humanity in general. Eminence that can be clearly defined should fall in one or more of the following areas: their career; intellectual, scholarship or creative activity; public service or in an artistic, literary, governmental, financial endeavor; national or international recognition; and/or contributions that have enhanced society as a whole. A relationship with the university or a connection between the individual’s achievement and the university’s mission and strategic priorities should be considered.

The university is committed to diversity and the Board of Visitors supports the awarding of honorary doctorates that reflect the diversity of interests, backgrounds and opportunities represented in the JMU community, the society, and the world that we serve.

Honorary doctorates will be awarded at appropriate university events such as commencements, Madison Week or another significant event. The individual who has been approved for an honorary doctorate must accept the award in person at the appropriate university event.

Honorary doctorates are not awarded posthumously, unless the offer has been made and accepted prior to the individual’s death. Honorary doctorates are not awarded to the following:

* Current faculty or staff
* Current holders of political office
* Current JMU Board of Visitors members
* Current students

Exceptions to these procedures may be made at the discretion of the President and the Board of Visitors.

Types of Doctorates

Doctor of Arts

Doctor of Humanities

Doctor of Science

Process of Selection

1. Confidentiality is a strict consideration regarding all nominations and the supporting materials.
2. Nominations can be made by any member of the JMU community.
   1. Under NO circumstances should the nominated individual be notified of their nomination.
3. Nomination forms should be sent to the Secretary of the Board of Visitors and will be accepted through the year.
   1. Deadlines may be implemented for consideration of presenting an honorary doctorate(s) at specific university events.
4. The Nomination Committee will be comprised of a representative from each of the divisions of the university, the student representative to the Board of Visitors and a faculty member appointed by the Faculty Senate.
5. The Nomination Committee will send its recommendation(s) to the Senior Leadership Team for review.
6. Approved nominations will be presented to the Board of Visitors for approval.
   1. Notification of an honorary doctorate will be made by the Rector or their designee.

Resources:

Berea College

Rutgers University

University of North Texas

University of Richmond