

AO 3: Posthumous Degrees

Posthumous degrees extend sympathy and compassion to the families of students who pass away close to the completion of their degree and recognize the academic achievement of those students while maintaining the academic integrity of University programs.

3.1 Eligibility

A deceased student who was enrolled at NS at the time of their death may be awarded a posthumous degree provided these conditions are met:

1. The student was degree-seeking and had declared a major.
2. The student was in good academic and disciplinary standing.
3. The student completed 75% of degree requirements.
4. The student completed at least 15 upper-division credits at NS.
5. The dean of the school that houses the student's primary or first major recommends awarding a posthumous degree.

In some cases NS may wish to recognize the attendance and/or contributions of a deceased student who did not meet the conditions for a degree by awarding a posthumous certificate of attendance, participation, or completion of some core element of the student's program.

3.2 Procedures

A formal request may be made by a family member, faculty member, or another student. The request process varies depending on who submits the request:

- Family member or student: Submit to department chair or dean
- Faculty member: Submit to department chair or dean

If the request is not made by a family member, the family will only be informed if the request is approved. The process should be kept confidential until and unless approved at all levels.

1. The dean will review the student's academic record, confirm with the Registrar whether the criteria for a posthumous degree are met, and forward the request and a recommendation to the Provost.
2. If the Provost supports the request, the Provost will submit a recommendation to the President for approval.
3. If the president approves the request, the Provost will notify the Registrar to begin the process for posting the degree and for Commencement proceedings (if applicable).

4. The President will inform the immediate family of the decision and the University's wish to recognize their student with this honor. If the family wants to represent the student and receive the diploma at a commencement ceremony, this must be relayed to the Registrar for planning.
5. The degree is noted as posthumous on the commencement program. "Awarded posthumously" will be printed on the diploma or certificate. The transcript will also note that it is a posthumous degree. If the commencement program has been sent to print before approval of a posthumous degree, the name of the student will be printed on the following year's program.
6. If the family chooses not to participate in Commencement, the award may still be read during the ceremony, unless explicitly requested otherwise by the family. The student's diploma or certificate will be released or mailed to the person legally authorized to manage their affairs.
7. Any fees associated with the posthumous degree or certificate will be waived.

3.2 Related Information and Revision History

- Approved by Dr. Joanna Shearer on 4/28/2015; Dr. Erika Beck on 5/05/2015; and President Bart Patterson on 5/12/2015.