

## Honorary Degree Board policy review

This document is a comparative review of Honorary Degree Board policies. The community college districts include San Bernardino, Santa Clarita, Gavilan, Merced, and Monterey Peninsula. Of these college districts, there are essentially two groups. One group has an honorary degrees as part of their Board meeting policies. The second group has a specific Governing Board policy for honorary degrees.

Santa Clarita and Gavilan community college districts have specific honorary degrees policies. This is also the recommendation of the Community College League. Gavilan College has a comparable Board policy, but also has a specific administrative procedure to guide the Board of Trustees in making their selection.

The administrative procedure includes the nominee's education, experience, and record of distinguished service. The college president recommends the individual/s to the Board of Trustees, who then makes the final decision.

Santa Clarita CCD Board Policy on Honorary degrees is brief, noting that the college does award such degrees. These degrees are awarded by the Board of Trustees. No eligibility criteria are noted within the policy. This policy, like Gavilan CCD, parallels the recommended Community College League policy.

The remaining college districts, San Bernardino, Merced, and Monterey Peninsula mention honorary degrees in their Governing Board policies. In each case, they are noted as part of closed session policy. There are no eligibility criteria in these policies, as their purpose is to meet the legal provisions of the Ralph M. Brown Open Meetings Act.

The existing Hartnell CCD Board policy is also stated within the Governing Board policies. The policy notes that the college confers these degrees based upon exceptional achievement or performance. The Board of Trustees confers the degree, utilizing procedures created by the Superintendent/President. This document is both a statement of policy as well as administrative procedure.

## Recommendation

The Community College League of California recommends an Academic Affairs Board policy which contains both the duties and responsibilities noted for the Board of Trustees and well as the Superintendent/President. Gavilan College also utilizes the same language in their Academic Affairs policy for honorary degrees. It would seem that the adopting a policy with Academic Affairs would be more in keeping with the Degrees and Degree Requirements also part of this area. The existing Board policy, Section 1430, is within the Policies of the Governing Board. Although this policy could remain, and since a sensitive decision such as this is best covered in executive session, a parallel academic Affairs Board policy would not be in conflict.

