

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HONORARY DEGREES
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2025
232 ENGLISH BUILDING
MINUTES

Present: Chair Prasanta Kalita, Bisola Adeleke, Paul Davidson, Jon Hale, Gayle Magee
Ex officio: Anna Simon

Absent: Patrick Holt, Pollyanna Rhee

Guest: Angela Lyons (Chair, Senate Executive Committee)

1. CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the Senate Committee on Honorary Degrees (HD) was called to order at 11:00 am with Chair Kalita presiding.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the April 16, 2025 meeting were approved as distributed.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

No requests received.

4. CHAIR'S REMARKS

Chair Kalita welcomed new and returning committee members and invited each member to introduce themselves.

Chair Kalita gave an overview of the honorary degree award nomination process and noted the importance of confidentiality throughout the process. He commented that the honorary degree award recipient must be able to attend the May commencement to be recognized.

Chair Kalita invited Angela Lyons, Chair, Senate Executive Committee, to attend to discuss the upcoming review of the honorary degree award process. Lyons commented that as topics for the Ninth Senate Review Commission, which will occur this year, were compiled, the honorary degree award process was included. It was decided to create the Ad Hoc Committee on the Honorary Degree Award Process so that the discussion of the honorary degree award process does not overshadow the work of the Ninth Senate Review Commission.

Lyons commented that some individuals have questioned if the honorary degree awards should no longer be given. She noted that the awards will continue. Her role as Chair of the Senate Executive Committee is to preserve shared governance and her hope is that the Senate would want to continue participation in the honorary degree award process. The

directive to the ad hoc committee is to discuss a better way to process honorary degree awards while protecting the privacy of the nominees. Lyons reminded HD members that the nominees have not asked to be nominated and discussed in a public meeting.

Lyons noted that she would expect the ad hoc committee to reach out to HD for input during its review of the process.

HD commented that there are three nominations currently under consideration. Lyons noted that nominations should not be sent to the Senate until after the ad hoc committee has finished its work and recommended a new process that protects the privacy of the nominees. She acknowledged that this could result in no honorary degree award recipients being recognized at the May 2026 Commencement.

Lyons commented that there is an effort to improve the culture of the Senate including how to better recognize Senate service. She questioned how best to recognize leadership, years of service, and asked for any additional way Senate service could be recognized. Lyons noted that HD could consider expanding its duties to include helping to recognize leadership and service. Davidson commented that expanding the committee to include such a duty would change the focus of the committee. Lyons suggested that the Ad Hoc Committee on the Honorary Degree Award Process will be asked to report quickly so HD may want to wait to review those recommendations and then discuss committee duties.

5. OLD BUSINESS

a) HD.25.02, Nomination by the Department of Dance

No new discussion.

b) HD.25.04, Nomination by the School of Art and Design

No new discussion.

6. NEW BUSINESS

a) HD.26.01, Nomination by the Department of Sociology

No discussion.

7. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 pm.

Franci Miller
Committee Support Staff