

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HONORARY DEGREES
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2026
232 ENGLISH BUILDING
MINUTES

Present: Chair *pro tempore* Jon Hale, Paul Davidson, Patrick Holt, Gayle Magee, Pollyanna Rhee
Ex officio: Anna Simon

Absent: Chair Prasanta Kalita, Bisola Adeleke

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 *pro tempore* Hale presiding.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the October 21, 2025 meeting and the January 27, 2026 meeting were approved as distributed.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

No requests received.

4. CHAIR'S REMARKS

Hale is serving as Chair *pro tempore* until Chair Kalita returns from medical leave.

5. OLD BUSINESS

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

HD reviewed the nomination materials including the four letters of support that have been received. HD noted the strength of the nomination.

Chair *pro tempore* Hale made a motion to approve the nomination to move forward with the next steps in the nomination process. The motion was seconded. HD approved the nomination.

The nomination materials will be forwarded to the Chancellor for transmittal to the President and the Board of Trustees for preliminary review prior to the nomination's consideration by the Senate.

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

HD noted only two letters of support have been received. Simon questioned if the nominee would be better suited to be recognized with the Chancellor's Medallion.

Davidson made a motion to transmit the nomination to the Chancellor for consideration of the Chancellor's Medallion. The motion was seconded. HD approved transmitting the nomination to the Chancellor.

Davidson noted that a courtesy email should be sent to the nominator to inform that the nomination has been forwarded for consideration of the Chancellor's Medallion.

c) HD.26.02, Internal Review of the Honorary Degree Award Process

Chair *pro tempore* Hale commented that the internal review report was distributed previously. The report was sent to the Ninth Senate Review Commission (SR9) with a courtesy copy to Angela Lyons, Chair, Senate Executive Committee (SEC), on January 29, 2026.

Chair *pro tempore* Hale and Rhee met with SR9 recently to provide information regarding the honorary degree award process. SR9 is expected to forward its report to SEC by the end of February.

HD discussed possible changes to the honorary degree award process. Davidson suggested a public comment/discussion meeting prior to a nomination being presented to the full Senate. Holt noted this is similar to the public comment session held for specific proposals considered by the Senate Committee on Educational Policy (EP).

Chair *pro tempore* Hale made motion to approve the internal review report to send to SEC. The motion was seconded. HD approved the report.

6. NEW BUSINESS

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

A nomination was received from Reuben Burford May, Head, Department of Sociology. The nomination packet also included letters of support from Jamelle Sharpe, Dean, College of Law, and Venetria Patton, Harry E. Preble Dean, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences.

HD reviewed and discussed the nomination packet. HD commented on the nominee's impressive career and noted that his h-index is 126. An h-index over 100 places a researcher in a very exclusive category of high impact.

HD will discuss the nomination further at the next meeting.

b) HD.26.03, Ninth Senate Review Commission Request for Committee Feedback from the Senate Committee on Honorary Degrees

HD received a request from SR9 to provide feedback on the committee's charge, composition, and function. The feedback is due by March 16, 2026.

Chair *pro tempore* Hale encouraged HD members to review the request from SR9 and send input to him. He will compile and send the response via email for review by HD members prior to sending it to SR9. HD members will be copied when the final response is sent to SR9.

7. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:55 am.

Franci Miller
Committee Support Staff