

**RESOLUTION TO APPROVE A POLICY FOR THE AWARD OF POSTHUMOUS DEGREES AND IN-MEMORIAM CITATIONS**

**WHEREAS**, it is appropriate to recognize students who have made significant advancement towards their degree at Virginia Tech, but die before completing all degree requirements; and

**WHEREAS**, current practices in various Virginia Tech units with regard to posthumous recognition have not been codified as university policy, and in that way made congruent with one another; and

**WHEREAS**, in addition to awarding posthumous degrees to those students who have made significant advances towards completing degree requirements, there is also a desire to create a form of non-academic recognition for those students who die before they are able to complete most degree requirements;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Visitors approves the attached policy for awarding posthumous degrees across all colleges and degree levels and in-memoriam citations for those students who die before being able to meet posthumous degree criteria.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the attached policy for awarding posthumous degrees and in-memoriam citations be approved.

June 7, 2022



## Posthumous Degree Award Policy

**No. #####**

**Policy Effective Date:**

xx/xx/xxxx

**Last Revision Date:**

xx/xx/xxxx

**Policy Owner:**

John Smith

**Policy Author:**

*(Contact Person)*

Jane Doe

### 1.0 Purpose

Virginia Tech acknowledges the importance of recognizing the academic accomplishments of students who made significant progress towards the completion of their degree and would likely have met all requirements were it not for their untimely death.

### 2.0 Policy

Academic and institutional integrity will be upheld in the awarding of degrees conferred posthumously by Virginia Tech's colleges, departments, and programs across all levels of study. The criteria and procedures outlined within this policy are to be followed in the event that a degree-seeking student dies and a request is made to posthumously award their degree.

### 3.0 Procedures

The family, program, department, college, or Dean of Students office may request a posthumous degree review for any student who dies while admitted to a degree-awarding program. The posthumous degree review will be initiated by contacting the Office of the University Registrar. Generally, requests should be made within 12 months of the student's death.

Upon receiving a request, the University Registrar will conduct the review of Associate and Undergraduate students, or forward the review request to the Graduate School, Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine, or the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine as appropriate.

If the request does not come from the student's family, the offices identified above, in consultation with the Dean of Students office should, if possible, consult with the family as to whether it is their wish that a posthumous degree be conferred upon the deceased student.

Using the appropriate criteria and procedure listed in section 3.1 below, the office identified above will conduct the review. If the criteria are satisfied, a resolution for the award of the posthumous degree will be presented to the Commission on



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Undergraduate Studies and Policies or Commission of Graduate and Professional Studies and Policies for final approval.

Upon approval or denial, the University Registrar or the appropriate Dean of the Graduate School, Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine, or Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine will coordinate with the Dean of Students to communicate the results of the decision to the family of the deceased student, and the University Registrar, if appropriate.

Degrees awarded posthumously will be noted as such on the commencement program and official transcript, but not on the student's diploma. University representatives will communicate with the deceased's family or appointed representative regarding commencement arrangements as appropriate.

### **3.1 Level specific Criteria and/or Procedure for Posthumous Degree Award**

#### **Associate**

- Student was in good academic and code of conduct standing at the time of death, and
- Student completed at least 30 credits of which a minimum of 10 must have been completed at Virginia Tech.

#### **Undergraduate**

- Student was in good academic and code of conduct standing at the time of death, and
- Student completed at least 60 credits of which a minimum of 15 must have been completed at Virginia Tech.

#### **Graduate**

- Student was in good academic and code of conduct standing at the time of death, and
- Student completed most of the coursework on the plan of study at the time of death.
- For degree programs that require a thesis, student's thesis was substantially complete at the time of death. Substantially complete comprises the thesis being substantially complete, or manuscripts or other appropriate written products in draft form that would comprise the thesis being substantially complete.



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### *Graduate Level procedure:*

Upon receiving the request, the Graduate School then contacts the student's committee or department to request whether, in their judgment, the student met the requirements noted above. The committee, or the department-designated group, meets, decides, and submits their recommendation to the Dean of the Graduate School. The Dean of the Graduate School, in consultation with the Commission on Graduate and Professional Studies and Policies (CGPS&P), decides upon the request.

### **College of Veterinary Medicine**

- Student was in good academic and code of conduct standing at the time of death.
- Student would likely have completed all the degree requirements by their anticipated graduation date had the student not died.
- Student had completed first 2 years of coursework.

### *College of Veterinary Medicine (CVM) procedure:*

Upon receiving the request, the College then contacts the student's committee or department to request whether, in their judgment, the student met the requirements noted above. The committee, or the department-designated group, meets, decides, and submits their recommendation to the Dean of CVM. The Dean decides upon the request.

### **Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine**

- Student was in good standing, including academic performance and standards for professional and personal conduct.
- Student was not facing any pending disciplinary actions.
- Student would likely have completed all degree requirements by their anticipated graduation date were it not for their untimely death.

### *Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine procedure:*

- The Dean of the School of Medicine will appoint the Senior Dean of Students or equivalent appointee to review the request and confirm the School of Medicine's criteria have been met. Each case will be determined on its own merits, including the student's academic record.
- If confirmed, the request will be presented to the Medical Student Performance and Promotions Committee (MSPPC) for approval.
- If approved, the Chair of the MSPPC will notify the Dean of the School of Medicine who, after conferring with the School of Medicine Advisory Board grants final approval, as with the conferring of all VTCSOM degrees.



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- The Dean of the School of Medicine will communicate the decision to the family of the deceased student or their appointed representative, VTCSOM's Senior Dean of Student Affairs, and the University Registrar.

### 3.2 In-Memoriam Citation

If a deceased student was enrolled in a Virginia Tech degree program, but did not meet the posthumous degree criteria at the time of their death, a posthumous in-memoriam citation (Citation) may be given. The Citation may be requested by the student's family, department, college, or other interested party. Requests will be handled and decided upon by the registrar, with consultation as necessary, for example with the graduate school or the pertinent college. There are no minimum degree completion or credit requirements for the Citation. The student for whom the Citation is requested should have had good academic standing at the time of death. If the request is made by other than the family, the family should be contacted by the Registrar in consultation with the Dean of Students to determine the family wishes upon the matter. Posthumous Citations are not academic in nature and are not included in the official count of conferred degrees.

### 4.0 Definitions

**Posthumous Degree:** An academic degree conferred by Virginia Tech to a deceased student.

**In-Memoriam Citation:** A non-degree recognition by Virginia Tech of accomplishments by a deceased student.

### 5.0 References

### 6.0 Approval and Revisions