Inviting visiting speakers and dignitaries to participate in Commencements and other events is a time-honored tradition among colleges and universities. While enhancing the quality of the events, prominent speakers raise the University’s profile in the larger community. Invited outside speakers may subsequently be motivated to provide financial, intellectual, organizational or promotional support to key University initiatives.

In some—but not all—cases, the University may present such an individual with an honorary degree in recognition of his or her accomplishments.

The participation of a public figure as a speaker and/or honorary degree recipient reflects on the University’s image. Moreover, the manner and timing in which such individuals are selected and invited to campus influence an honoree’s impression of the University.

The following policies and procedures are intended to ensure that speakers and honorary degree recipients positively affirm the University’s Mission, objectives and values, and that all selections are made and invitations issued in a timely and respectful fashion.

**A. HONORARY DEGREES**

Nominations may be made by University schools and departments, administrators, and members of the Board and the Corporation. Nominations shall include a letter stating the reasons why the candidate merits the honor, accompanied by supporting documents such as a resume or curriculum vita and any other relevant information.

Nominations shall be submitted to the Provost, who will present them to the Public Honors and Events Committee. This Committee is appointed by the President to evaluate the credentials and merit of candidates for honorary degrees and other University awards.

To expedite approvals and invitations, the Public Honors and Events Committee will evaluate and recommend candidates to the President on an ongoing basis, however, for Spring Commencements, all nominations must be submitted to the Provost no later than December 1. For formal events held at other times during the year, the deadline for submission shall be no later than five months prior to the occasion’s scheduled date.

The Committee shall consider each candidate’s suitability based on the following criteria:
- Personal and professional achievements
- Eminent scholarship
- Notable creative work
- Outstanding public service
- Leadership
- Reputation in the community
- Demonstrated or potential service to the University
- Reflection of the University’s Mission and its underlying Catholic and Spiritan values

Recommendations should be based on assessment of as many criteria as may apply to the candidate; reflection of Mission and values should be considered as a factor in all cases.

The Committee shall vote on advancing the recommendation of each candidate individually, with those receiving a majority affirmative vote forwarded to the President for review and action.

The President, at his discretion, shall then submit the recommendations and supporting documents to the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors. The Executive Committee will determine the final list of recipients and degrees to be awarded, generally by February 1 for Spring Commencements or three months prior to other events.

**B. SPEAKERS FOR COMMENCEMENTS AND OTHER UNIVERSITY AND SCHOOL EVENTS**

Speakers for University and School Commencements and events who are not candidates to receive an honorary degree nonetheless reflect on the image of the University; thus great care and consideration should also be applied to their selection and invitation.

Individuals and committees charged with the evaluation, selection and invitation of speakers should assess all relevant aspects of each candidate’s suitability based on the same criteria used for consideration of honorary degree candidates:
- Personal and professional achievements
- Eminent scholarship
- Notable creative work
- Outstanding public service
• Leadership
• Reputation in the community
• Demonstrated or potential service to the University
• Reflection of the University’s Mission and its underlying Catholic and Spiritan values

Selections should be based on assessment of as many criteria as may apply to the candidate; reflection of Mission and values should be considered as a factor in all cases.

Invitations should be issued no later than three months prior to the scheduled event in order to allow sufficient time for proper logistical arrangements and event promotion.