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Steven W. Cheung  
Chair, Assembly of the  
Academic Senate  
Faculty Representative,  
UC Board of Regents

Academic Senate

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CAMPUSES

Berkeley  
Davis  
Irvine  
UCLA  
Merced  
Riverside  
San Diego  
San Francisco  
Santa Barbara  
Santa Cruz

MEDICAL CENTERS

Davis  
Irvine  
UCLA  
San Diego  
San Francisco

NATIONAL LABORATORIES

Lawrence Berkeley  
Lawrence Livermore  
Los Alamos

September 9, 2024

CHAIRS OF SENATE DIVISIONS  
CHAIRS OF SYSTEMWIDE SENATE COMMITTEES

Re: Systemwide Senate Review of Proposed Senate Regulation 627  
(Posthumous Awarding of Degrees)

Dear Colleagues,

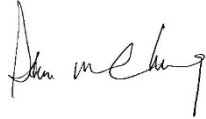
I am forwarding for systemwide Senate review a proposed new Senate Regulation 627, presented by the University Committee on Educational Policy and the Coordinating Committee on Graduate Affairs, and approved by the Academic Council for systemwide review. The regulation introduces a Senate policy to govern the awarding of undergraduate and graduate degrees to students who die prior to their completion of the degree.

Some Senate members may recall that in April 2019, the Assembly of the Academic Senate [endorsed](#) a similar systemwide policy and recommended it to the president as a Regents policy; however, the policy proposal was put on hold to allow for additional consideration and the development of a corresponding Senate regulation. The current proposal replaces the previous one and has been streamlined. If approved, the new Senate regulation will be the first step toward pursuing this matter as a Regents policy.

Please submit comments to the systemwide Academic Senate office at [SenateReview@ucop.edu](mailto:SenateReview@ucop.edu) by December 10, 2024, to allow us to compile and summarize comments for the Academic Council's December 18 meeting, when next steps for this proposal will be considered. As always, any committee that considers these matters outside its jurisdiction or charge may decline to comment.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven W. Cheung". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Steven" and last name "Cheung" clearly distinguishable.

Steven W. Cheung  
Chair, Academic Council

Cc: UCEP Chair Goodhue  
CCGA Chair Bisley  
Senate Division Executive Directors  
Senate Executive Director Lin

**UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY (UCEP)**

Melanie Cocco, Chair  
[mcocco@uci.edu](mailto:mcocco@uci.edu)

**ACADEMIC SENATE**

University of California  
1111 Franklin Street, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Oakland, California 94607-5200

**COORDINATING COMMITTEE ON GRADUATE AFFAIRS (CCGA)**

Dean J. Tantillo, Chair  
[deanjtantillo@ucdavis.edu](mailto:deanjtantillo@ucdavis.edu)

March 19, 2024

**ACADEMIC SENATE CHAIR JAMES STEINTRAGER**

Dear Chair Steintrager,

During the first part of the 2023-24 academic year, members of UCEP and CCGA worked to develop language for a policy on awarding posthumous degrees to students who had died during the course of their studies at the University of California. In tandem, it developed language for a proposed Senate regulation for the proposed policy.

The history of the development of this draft policy warrants a brief summation:

Early 2018: a Student Regent asked the Council Chair about a policy for awarding degrees posthumously; it was noted that no such policy existed. The Council Chair then asked UCEP to develop a draft policy.

Mid-2018: UCEP sent a “model systemwide policy framework” to Council. Following that, the Provost forwarded it to the divisions for [feedback](#). Following receipt of that feedback, the new Council Chair asked UCEP to work with CCGA to revise the framework into a policy that would cover both graduate and undergraduate students.

Early 2019: Council endorsed the draft policy.

April 2019: Assembly endorsed the policy.

June 2019: the draft policy was transmitted to President Napolitano with the recommendation that the Regents adopt the proposal as part of Regents policy.

July 2019: the Provost asked the campus administrators for feedback on the draft policy. That feedback was forwarded to the Senate Executive Director in October of 2019.

Following that 2019 transmission, the proposed policy languished.

February 2023: The UCEP Analyst brought it to the attention of the new Senate Executive Director, who recommended that CCGA and UCEP review the previously collected feedback from administrators and incorporate it into the policy.

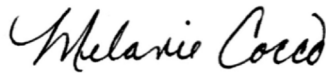
In 2023-24, UCEP and CCGA asked for volunteers from their committees to review the previous draft policy and administration feedback. These volunteers looked at the policy and feedback and felt that entirely new language was needed. They developed a new draft policy which was brought back to their respective committees; UCEP and CCGA weighed in with feedback. In early 2024, both committees voted to approve the final draft language that the group recommended.

Once the proposed policy was developed, the same group created language for a Senate regulation to go with it. This language was also reviewed and approved by UCEP and CCGA. The committees recommend that this regulation be added as a new Article 4 in Part III, Title II Chapter 1 of the systemwide Senate Regulations.

The members who drafted the new policy language felt that the awarding of degrees posthumously should be as generous and compassionate as possible and should reflect the University's position as the "bountiful mother" (alma mater) of the students who had died before graduating.

The suggested draft policy and regulation language is attached. We respectfully request a systemwide Senate review of them. Please let us know if you have any questions or need further clarification about the document or the considerations that went into their creation.

Sincerely,



Melanie Cocco,  
Chair, UCEP



Dean J. Tantillo,  
Chair, CCGA

c: Steven Cheung, Academic Senate Vice Chair  
Monica Lin, Academic Senate Executive Director  
Michael LaBriola, Academic Senate Assistant Director  
CCGA Members  
UCEP Members

## Policy on the Posthumous Awarding of Degrees

### ***Purpose***

The University of California seeks to extend sympathy and compassion to the families of students who die while working towards their degrees and to recognize the academic achievement of students who were on track to fulfilling the requirements of the degree.

### ***Criteria***

Normally, the posthumous conferral of the degree is granted to students who have started their studies, maintain good academic standing (excluding financial status), and are currently enrolled or on leave at the time of death.

### ***Recommended Procedure***

The process for identifying and considering candidates for the posthumous conferring of degrees will vary from campus to campus, but will include the following features:

1. **Request:** A request for the awarding of the degree may be initiated by any of the following: a family member, a faculty member, a dean, or a fellow student. If the request is not made by a family member, the family should be contacted, if possible, and consulted about the possible award.
2. **Approval Process:**
  - a. Degrees to students who are not in good academic standing or whose actions may have led to dismissal from the university maybe granted under exceptional circumstances and require the specific approval of the Chancellor.
  - b. The appropriate Senate committee recommends the conferral of the degree ([Regents Policy Bylaw 40](#)).
3. **Recognition:** The student's diploma will be released or mailed to the person(s) who requested the degree. The diploma provided should be standard issue, and any fees associated with the administration of the degree shall be waived.

# Proposed Senate Regulation 627 Regarding the Posthumous Awarding of Degrees

[\(To appear as Article 4 in Title II, Chapter 1\)](#)

## Title II. Curricula

### Chapter 1. General Provisions

#### Article 4. Posthumous Awarding of Degrees

##### 627.

- A. Students of the University of California who die while working towards their degrees may be awarded a posthumous degree, contingent upon having started their studies, maintaining good academic standing (excluding financial status), and being currently enrolled or on leave at the time of death.
- B. Degrees to students who are not in good academic standing or whose actions may have led to dismissal from the university may be granted under exceptional circumstances and require the specific approval of the Chancellor.
- C. Although the request of the degree may be initiated by a family member, a faculty member, a dean, or a fellow student, the family of the deceased student should be consulted.
- D. The degree awarded under this Article shall be represented by a standard-issue diploma, and any fees associated with the administration of the degree shall be waived.