Honorary Associate Degrees Awarded by Community Colleges
Frequently Asked Questions

This document includes information for SUNY community colleges about the awarding of honorary associate degrees. SUNY System Administration does not facilitate the honorary associate degrees process. These degrees are conferred at the discretion of individual SUNY community colleges; however, the following provides answers to frequently asked questions.

Q: Are SUNY community colleges permitted to award an honorary associate degree?
A: Yes, in 2006, a law was passed and signed by Governor Pataki that introduced the following in section 6306: "5-b. Subject to the approval of the board of regents, the board of trustees shall have the authority to grant honorary associate degrees." In September 2008, the Board of Regents adopted regulation that provided Approval for Community Colleges to Award Honorary Associate Degrees. The law and regulation establish that the awarding of honorary associate degrees rests fully with the community college board of trustees.

Q: Which honorary associate degree titles are currently authorized by the New York State Education Department?
A: The available honorary associate degrees are listed in 3.50 (c)(3) of the Regulations of the Commissioner, which currently lists the following (the college is advised to select degree types best aligned with the institutional mission):

- Associate of Civil Law (A.C.L.)
- Associate of Commercial Science (A.C.S.)
- Associate of Divinity (A.D.)
- Associate of Fine Arts (A.F.A.)
- Associate of Hebrew Letters (A.H.Litt.)
- Associate of Human Letters (A.H.L.)
- Associate of Jewish Theology (A.J.T.)
- Associate of Laws (LL.A.)
- Associate of Letters (A.Litt.)
- Associate of Music (A.Mus.)
- Associate of Pedagogy (A.Pd.)
- Associate of Sacred Theology (A.S.T.)

Q: Does a community college need to follow SUNY's system-wide honorary degree nomination and selection process in addition to its local nomination and selection process?
A: No, the awarding of honorary associate degrees rests fully with the community college board of trustees. If an honorary associate degree is awarded, it is important to note that the degree would be in the name of the individual community college, not in the name of SUNY.

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