

Date: April 22, 2026

To: Jessica DeShazo, Chair Academic Senate

From: Azalea Camacho, Educational Policy Committee Chair

Copies: G. Menezes; W. Cwir; K. Howard; B. Winokur; M. Garcia; R. Roquemore; C. Pugh

Subject: **EPC Memo 25-18 Proposed New Policy: Awarding Posthumous Degrees– Chapter IV of the Faculty Handbook**

The Education Policy Committee (EPC) is proposing a new policy regarding the conferral of posthumous degrees. Currently, our campus lacks a formal policy to honor those students who pass away before fulfilling their final degree requirements. This policy aims to establish a formal, compassionate, and consistent procedure for honoring students who pass away prior to completing their degree requirements. It recognizes the academic journey and the personal impact of students who are valued members of the Cal State LA community.

In developing the policy, EPC reviewed existing posthumous degree policies across the CSU system. On November 19, 2025, the EPC held a time-certain with Blanca Martinez-Navarro, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management and Dean of Students, and Victor Rojas, Chief of Staff. Through the consultation, our primary objective was to move toward a more inclusive model than what is found at other CSUs. Rather than adopting a model that requires a specific percentage of completed units, as some campuses have, the EPC has recognized the student’s standing as a valued member of the Cal State LA community. The circumstances that lead to a student’s death may or may not be a factor in their academic journey, and grade point average or the number of credits completed by the student before their death do not adequately capture the student’s contribution to the Cal State LA community. For these reasons, and since the purpose of a posthumous degree is symbolic rather than practical, all persons who at the time of their passing are Cal State LA students may receive this honor.

The proposed policy establishes the posthumous degree as an honorary and symbolic designation. Eligibility extends to any student enrolled, registered, or on a leave of absence at the time of their passing. The process is centralized through the Vice President for Student Affairs (or designee), who will serve as the primary liaison with the student’s family to ensure their preferences and privacy are respected. The awarding of a posthumous degree is a meaningful gesture for grieving families and acknowledgement of a student’s dedication to their education.

AWARDING POSTHUMOUS DEGREES

PURPOSE

THE PURPOSE OF AWARDING A POSTHUMOUS DEGREE IS TO HONOR AND COMMEMORATE A STUDENT WHO IS DECEASED PRIOR TO COMPLETING DEGREE REQUIREMENTS AND TO RECOGNIZE THE STUDENT AS A VALUED AND CONTRIBUTING MEMBER OF THE CAL STATE LA COMMUNITY. THIS DESIGNATION REFLECTS THE UNIVERSITY'S COMMITMENT TO ACKNOWLEDGING THE ACADEMIC JOURNEY AND PERSONAL IMPACT OF STUDENTS WHOSE LIVES ENDED BEFORE THEY WERE ABLE TO GRADUATE.

DEFINITIONS

FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS POLICY, A *STUDENT* IS DEFINED AS AN INDIVIDUAL FOR WHOM CAL STATE LA MAINTAINS OFFICIAL STUDENT RECORDS AND WHO MEETS ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:

- IS ENROLLED IN OR REGISTERED WITH AN ACADEMIC PROGRAM AT CAL STATE LA; OR
- IS ON A LEAVE OF ABSENCE AT THE TIME OF THEIR PASSING

ELIGIBILITY

THE CONFERRAL OF A POSTHUMOUS DEGREE IS HONORARY AND SYMBOLIC IN NATURE; ELIGIBILITY IS EXTENDED TO ANYONE WHO, AT THE TIME OF THEIR PASSING, WAS A STUDENT. CONSIDERATION MAY BE GIVEN TO PERSONS WHO NO LONGER MEET THE DEFINITION OF STUDENT.

PROCEDURES FOR AWARDING A POSTHUMOUS DEGREE

- A RECOMMENDATION FOR THE AWARDING OF A POSTHUMOUS DEGREE MAY BE SUBMITTED BY FAMILY MEMBERS, FACULTY, STAFF, OR FELLOW STUDENTS TO THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS (OR DESIGNEE).
- UPON NOTIFICATION OF A STUDENT'S PASSING, THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS (OR DESIGNEE) WILL NOTIFY:
 - THE STUDENT'S DEPARTMENT, SCHOOL, OR ACADEMIC PROGRAM;
 - AND

- 33 ○ THE OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR.
- 34 • THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS (OR DESIGNEE) WILL CONTACT
35 THE STUDENT'S FAMILY TO INFORM THEM THAT THE DECEASED STUDENT
36 MAY BE ELIGIBLE FOR A POSTHUMOUS DEGREE AND TO DETERMINE THEIR
37 PREFERENCES REGARDING THE CONFERRAL OF THE DEGREE.
- 38 • IN COLLABORATION WITH THE STUDENT'S FAMILY, FACULTY, AND
39 UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP, THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS (OR
40 DESIGNEE) WILL DETERMINE THE APPROPRIATE MANNER IN WHICH THE
41 POSTHUMOUS DEGREE WILL BE CONFERRED.
- 42 • THE OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR WILL MAKE THE APPROPRIATE NOTATION IN
43 THE STUDENT'S ACADEMIC RECORD AND FACILITATE THE CONFERRAL
44 PROCESS.
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