

Submitted by: Julie H. Miller, Secretary to the Board of Governors

RATIFICATION OF ELECTRONIC VOTE
Authorization to Award Posthumous Degree

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Governors ratify the action adopted by the Board of Governors by electronic vote on April 17, with a vote of 8-0, approving the award of a Baccalaureate Degree to Dwayne Carrero-Berry, posthumously.

Background

The background on this request was distributed to the Board under separate cover, a copy of which is attached to this summary. Action prior to May 1st was taken to allow the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences to recognize Mr. Carrero-Berry at the virtual commencement program held on April 29th, prior to this meeting.

REQUEST TO AWARD A BACCALAUREATE DEGREE TO A DECEASED STUDENT

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Governors approve a request for an exception to statute 2.43.62.040, and award the Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Arts and Sciences, with a Major in Psychology, to a deceased student, effective Winter term, 2020.

Applicable Code

2.43.62.020 It may be requested of the University occasionally that academic recognition be bestowed posthumously to a deceased student who did not complete degree requirements and who did not meet the prescribed criteria for an honorary degree. In such a circumstance, the University may, upon request of the family of the subject student and upon approval of the appropriate faculty, confer a degree, if the deceased student had met the requirements as set forth below.

2.43.62.040 BACCALAUREATE STUDENTS: To be eligible for these University recognitions, a deceased or critically ill student who, at the time of termination of study, was pursuing a Bachelor Degree, shall have met a minimum of 90 percent of the requirements in each published category: general education, departmental, collegiate, University.

Background

Dwayne Carrero-Berry was a WSU student from Detroit and Southfield, MI. He entered Wayne State University in Fall 2011 and successfully completed 101 semester hours. Despite having earned less than 120 degree credits, he completed 81% of his degree requirements, including an overall GPA above 2.0 (2.3), completion of all but three general education and college group requirements (84%), and 27 out of 36 credits (75%) required by his major department. He had also completed most of the requirements for minors in Latino/a and Latin American Studies (89%) and Peace and Conflict Studies (83%).

Mr. Carrero-Berry was diagnosed with heart disease in 2012, at the age of 19. In 2015, he underwent a heart transplant. This surgery significantly delayed his degree completion. Despite challenges brought on by his illness, Mr. Carrero-Berry remained committed to WSU, serving as a peer mentor and student ambassador for the Center for Latino/a and Latin American Studies. Mr. Carrero-Berry was actively working to complete his degree requirements when he passed away of heart failure in December 2017. At the time of his death, he was enrolled in three courses at WSU that would have fulfilled additional degree requirements. Mr. Carrero-Berry will not have an opportunity to complete the remaining credits required to earn a degree from WSU.

By requiring a 90% completion threshold in department requirements, the statute effectively limits the possibility of awarding the degree under the statute to students who have completed the vast majority of their degree requirements and have department-level support for the awarding of a degree. While Mr. Carrero-Berry has not yet met the requirement of statute 2.43.62.040, it should be noted that, between bouts of serious illness, he worked diligently to complete his degree requirements in the time he had and should be recognized for his achievements at this university.

Submitted by: Keith E. Whitfield, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

Approvals

This request is supported by the Chair of the Department of Psychology, the Director of the Center for Latino/a and Latin American Studies, the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and the Provost.