

Submitted by: Laurie M. Lauzon Clabo, Interim Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

REQUEST TO AWARD A BACCALAUREATE DEGREE TO A DECEASED STUDENT

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Governors approve an exception to statute 2.43.62.040, and award the Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Arts and Sciences, with a Major in Political Science, to a deceased student, effective Fall 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

Michael Peterson (004076685, eg1751) was a WSU student from Detroit and Sterling Heights, MI. He entered Wayne State University in Fall 2009 and successfully completed 115 semester hours. Despite earning less than 120 degree credits he completed 91% of his degree requirements, with an overall GPA above 2.0 (2.76). Specifically, Mr. Peterson completed all but two general education requirements (86%), all college group requirements (100%), and all Political Science major requirements (100%).

Michael Peterson passed on August 29, 2019, at the age of 34. He had not enrolled at WSU since 2014, but was in contact with both the Undergraduate Director and the Academic Advisor in the Political Science Department about finishing his degree in the years before his passing. The Political Science Department recently became aware of Mr. Peterson's passing, and would like to recognize him for his achievements at this university.

By requiring a 90% completion threshold in general education 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 both department- and college-level support for the awarding of a degree. While Mr. Peterson has not met all requirements of statute 2.43.62.040, he worked diligently to complete his degree requirements, met the 90% threshold in 3 out of 4 requirement categories, and was only two courses short of graduation.

Approvals

This request is supported by the Chair of the Department of Political Science, the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and the Interim Provost.