

VII. STANDING COMMITTEES

A. Academic and Student Affairs Committee

Honorary Degree – Robert M. GatesRECOMMENDED ACTION:

It is the recommendation of the administration and the Academic and Student Affairs Committee that the Board of Regents approve the granting of an Honorary Doctor of Laws degree to Robert M. Gates, Secretary of Defense of the United States of America.

BACKGROUND:

RCW 28B.20.130(3) grants to the Board of Regents, upon recommendation of the faculty, the authority to confer honorary degrees upon persons other than graduates “in recognition of their learning or devotion to literature, arts, or sciences.” The Faculty Council on University Relations is responsible for recommending candidates for honorary degrees. On April 17, 2009, the Council recommended to President Emmert that Secretary Gates be awarded an Honorary Doctor of Laws degree at the University’s June commencement ceremony, where he will be the Commencement speaker. President Emmert concurs with the recommendation and brings it to the Board of Regents on behalf of the faculty.

Dr. Gates is the 22nd United States Secretary of Defense, serving since 2006 under two U.S. presidents, Republican George W. Bush and Democrat Barack Obama. He has won praise from both political parties for leading what many describe as sweeping reforms in military spending and strategic reshaping of the military.

Secretary Gates served in the Central Intelligence Agency from 1966 until 1993. He is the only career officer in the history of the CIA to rise from entry-level employee to Director, a post he held from 1991-93. He also served as Deputy Director of Central Intelligence from 1986-89 and as Assistant to the President and Deputy National Security Adviser in the White House from 1989-91. During his quarter century of service as an intelligence professional, he served six presidents.

Prior to becoming defense secretary, Dr. Gates served as the 22nd president of Texas A & M University. During his time as president from 2002-06, he expanded the size of the faculty, oversaw \$500 million in new construction, and increased the diversity of students, faculty, and staff.

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Honorary Degree – Robert M. Gates (continued p. 2)

Secretary Gates has been awarded the National Security Medal, the Presidential Citizens Medal, twice received the National Intelligence Distinguished Service Medal and three times received the CIA's highest award, the Distinguished Intelligence Medal. He was named one of *Time Magazine's* 100 most influential people in 2007 and was named one of America's best leaders by *U.S. News & World Report* in 2008. Just this spring, he was elected to fellowship in the American Academy of Arts & Sciences, one of the nation's most prestigious honorary societies.

A native of Kansas, Secretary Gates earned his bachelor's degree from the College of William & Mary. He earned a master's degree from Indiana University in history and a Ph.D. in Russian and Soviet history from Georgetown University. He is the author of the memoir, *From the Shadows: The Ultimate Insider's Story of Five Presidents and How They Won the Cold War*, published in 1996.

For his extraordinary and exemplary career in public service and academia, and for his abiding commitment to the security of our nation, it would be an honor to confer upon Robert M. Gates an Honorary Doctor of Laws degree at the June commencement.