

## VII. STANDING COMMITTEES

## A. Academic and Student Affairs Committee

Granting of Honorary Degree for William D. Ruckelshaus for June 2006RECOMMENDED 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 William D. Ruckelshaus, at the annual commencement ceremony on June 10, 2006.

BACKGROUND:

RCW 28B.20.130 (3) grants to the Board of Regents, upon recommendation of the faculty, the authority to confer degrees upon persons other than graduates “in recognition of their learning or devotion to literature, arts, or sciences.”

Under legislation adopted by the Faculty Senate in December 2001, the Faculty Council on University Relations was vested with the responsibility for recommending candidates for such degrees. On May 8, 2006, the Faculty Council on University Relations recommended to President Mark A. Emmert that William D. Ruckelshaus be awarded the degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*, and that the degree be awarded at the June 10, 2006 commencement ceremony, where Mr. Ruckelshaus will participate as the commencement speaker. President Emmert concurs and brings this recommendation to the Board of Regents.

During his nearly half century of public service, Mr. Ruckelshaus has played a significant role in our nation’s history, particularly with regard to environmental policy. His exemplary career spans the presidencies of Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan, William Clinton and George W. Bush and serves as a model of principled and effective leadership.

A native of Indiana, Mr. Ruckelshaus received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Princeton University, where he graduated cum laude, and obtained his law degree from Harvard University in 1960.

He was the Deputy Attorney General of Indiana and the majority leader in the Indiana House of Representatives before being appointed by President Nixon in 1969 as Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Civil Division for the U.S. Department of Justice.

In 1970, Mr. Ruckelshaus was chosen to be the first Administrator of the United States Environmental Protection Agency and in 1973 he became Deputy Attorney General of the United States Department of Justice. His integrity and commitment to the rule of law were clearly demonstrated when, on October 20, 1973, he and Attorney General Elliot

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Richardson resigned their positions rather than bowing to pressure from a Nixon administration that soon fell under the weight of the infamous Watergate affair.

In 1976, he became the Weyerhaeuser Company's Senior Vice President for Law and Corporate Affairs. He stayed with Weyerhaeuser until 1983, when he returned to the EPA as its fifth Administrator. Joining the Seattle law firm of Perkins Coie in 1985, his commitment to environmental problem solving continued to grow. From 1983 to 1986 he served on the United Nation's World Commission on Environment and Development. The Commission's final report, *Our Common Future*, focused the world's attention on the need for sustainable development policies that recognize the indivisibility of environmental protection and economic and social development.

Over the past several years, Mr. Ruckelshaus has contributed his expertise to several governmental boards dealing with the environment. Last year, Governor Christine Gregoire selected him to co-chair the Puget Sound Partnership, a collaborative effort to restore the health of Puget Sound.