

VII. STANDING COMMITTEES

A. Academic and Student Affairs Committee

Honorary Degree – Sir Timothy Berners-Lee

RECOMMENDED 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 Science degree to Sir Timothy Berners-Lee, the inventor of the World Wide Web.

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 February 8, 2008, the Council recommended to President Emmert that Sir Berners-Lee be awarded an Honorary Doctor of Science degree at the University’s June commencement ceremony. President Emmert concurs with the recommendation and brings it to the Board of Regents on behalf of the faculty.

In 1989, while at CERN (the European Particle Physics Laboratory), Sir Berners-Lee invented the World Wide Web, the internet-based hypermedia initiative for global information sharing that has revolutionized communications around the world. He wrote the first Web client and server in 1990. His specifications of standards such as the Uniform Resource Identifier (URI), Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP), and Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) have been refined by the World Wide Web Consortium as Web technology has evolved.

Sir Berners-Lee has served as Director of the World Wide Web Consortium since its founding in 1994. He holds the 3Com Founders chair and is a Senior Research Scientist at the Laboratory for Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence (CSAIL) at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He is also Professor of Computer Science at the University of Southampton School of Electronics and Computer Science. He graduated from Queen’s College, Oxford University in 1973 with a degree in Physics.

In 2001, he became a fellow of the Royal Society, and in 2004, he was knighted by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth. His work has received worldwide recognition.

In less than two decades, the global Web envisioned and enabled by Sir Berners-Lee has transformed how we communicate, conduct science, do business, create

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new works, and educate ourselves. The technologies set in motion by Sir Berners-Lee have enabled communications and mobilization among seekers of freedom the world over. He has made it possible for people from every part of the planet to connect and remain connected in ways never before possible.

In recognition of these transforming accomplishments, it would be appropriate for the University to confer upon Sir Timothy Berners-Lee an Honorary Doctor of Science degree at the June Commencement.