

VII. STANDING COMMITTEES

A. Academic and Student Affairs Committee

Honorary Degree – Greg Mortenson

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 Humane Letters degree to Mr. Greg Mortenson, distinguished writer, educator and advocate for humanitarian causes.

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 Mr. Mortenson be awarded an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree at the University of Washington Bothell’s June commencement ceremony. President Emmert concurs with the recommendation and brings it to the Board of Regents on behalf of the faculty.

Mr. Mortenson is co-founder of the non-profit Central Asia Institute, dedicated to promoting literacy and education, especially for girls, in remote regions of Pakistan and Afghanistan. He has also founded Pennies for Peace, a program in over 500 U.S. schools to introduce children to philanthropy and cultural understanding.

In 1993, Mr. Mortenson found himself in a remote village in Pakistan and made a promise to a group of children to build them a school. Since that experience, he has dedicated his life to promoting education and literacy in remote regions of Pakistan and Afghanistan. By 2007, the Central Asia Institute has established sixty-one schools providing education to more than 24,000 children, 14,000 of whom are girls. These schools have given hope to many young children and their families.

His experiences in this difficult part of the world have been chronicled in his best-selling book, *Three Cups of Tea*, and his work has received international recognition. He provides an example to students of what it means to live a life of meaning and transformation. His example is that of one person making a difference in the face of the world’s seemingly insurmountable problems.

Mr. Mortenson is this year’s Commencement speaker at the University of Washington Bothell. It is fitting that the University confer upon Mr. Mortenson an honorary Doctor of Human Letters degree in recognition of his extraordinary efforts to improve the lives of others.