

CAP Proposal for Posthumous Degrees

Presented by Jennifer deWinter

Motion: The Committee on Academic Policy recommends, and I move, to award graduation degrees to undergraduate students who have passed away during their enrollment as a student.

We believe that any student who is enrolled at WPI will succeed. In the unfortunate event of death while enrolled in a degree-seeking program, WPI will confer a bachelor's degree in the student's name to be awarded to the student's family or other interested parties.

Procedure:

- A student passes away and a family member or other interested party initiates a request for degree conferral
 - Provost or Provost-appointed delegate will:
 - Confer with family, President, and Dean of Undergraduate Studies
 - Confer with department head, program directors, and advisors as appropriate
 - Dean of Undergraduate Studies approves the student to be included in the graduation voting lists with all students, representing the fact that the student was part of a larger community
- Registrar will create the diploma, with no notation of it being a posthumous degree
Diploma is delivered in alignment with family members' requests

University	Posted online	Minimum course requirements	Undergraduate policy	Graduate policy	Differentiated degree
Boston University	X	X (Certificate if not met)	X	X	
University of Maine	X	X	X	X	X
UMASS Dartmouth	X	X	X	X	X
Adelphi University	X	X (certificate if not met)	X	X	X
Syracuse University	X	X (certificate if not met)	X (rare and can be denied)	X (rare and can be denied)	
Clark University	X	X	X	X	X
Cal Poly	X	X (certificate if not met)	X	X	

WPI community defer to dignity in death rather than what counts as “degree completion”

- 95% retention rate and high four-year completion rates
- Strong project-based education ensures close connection between peers and between students and faculty
- policy provides both recognition of a student and a type of closure to family and loved ones of the student

