Northwest Missouri State University Board of Regents
Date of Meeting: October 30, 2026

Agenda Item: Awarding Posthumous Degrees Policy

Lead: Rose Marie Ward, Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs

Open or Closed Agenda Item? Open

Issue description and proposal:

University Police and the Division of Student Affairs have detailed student death procedures documented in the Emergency Management Manual. The proposed policy moves oversight of the posthumous degree process to the Division of Academic Affairs. It also updates and formalizes past practices regarding the awarding of posthumous degrees.

The eligibility criteria have been updated to include a threshold for progress toward degree at 75% or 90+ credit hours for an undergraduate student and 70% for a graduate student. The policy also identifies the departments who will process and approve nominations. In addition, the creation of a "Certificate of In Memoriam" is proposed as an option to honor a student who does not meet the eligibility threshold for the posthumous degree.

The policy has been developed according to the university's Policy on Policies.

Proposed resolution:

- I move to approve the creation of the Awarding Posthumous Degrees Policy effective immediately.

NORTHWEST MISSOURI STATE UNIVERSITY | POLICY

Policy Name:	Awarding Posthumous Degrees
Effective Date:	October 30, 2026
Last Revision Date:	May 31, 2026
Last Review Date:	September 22, 2026
Approving Authority:	Board of Regents
Responsible Office:	Office of the Provost
Category:	Enrollment & Academics

I. Purpose

The University recognizes that academic achievements are a significant part of a student's legacy. This policy establishes criteria for awarding degrees posthumously to acknowledge a student's academic progress and to provide their family and the university community a way to honor their memory.

II. Eligibility Criteria

A degree may be awarded posthumously if the student was making satisfactory progress toward their degree at the time of death and met the following conditions:

- **Academic Standing:** The student must have been in good academic standing (not on probation or suspension) at the time of death.
- **Progress Toward Degree:**
  - **Undergraduate:** The student must be of Senior standing, having completed approximately **75%** of the required coursework (typically 90+ credit hours).
  - **Graduate (Coursework-based):** The student must have completed approximately **70%** of their graduate program.
- **Enrollment:** The student must have been enrolled at the university within the **12 months** preceding their death.

III. Nomination and Approval Process

1. **Initiation:** Any member of the university community (administrator, faculty, staff, or student) may suggest a student for a posthumous degree. Formal nominations usually start with the vice president of Student Affairs or the school chair of the student's major.
2. **Verification:** The Registrar's Office audits the student's record to verify they meet the

academic and credit-hour requirements.

3. **Academic Approval:** The school chair and the dean of the student's college must recommend the award.

Final Conferral: The recommendation is forwarded to the provost and vice president for Academic Affairs for a final recommendation to the university president.

IV. Awarding and Recognition

- **Diploma:** The diploma is prepared in the same manner as a regular degree
- **Commencement:** The family is invited to participate in the commencement ceremony by the Office of the President. The student's name is listed in the program, if possible, with the notation *"Degree Awarded Posthumously."*
- **Certificate of "In Memoriam":** If a student does not meet the threshold in the eligibility Criteria section, and was a valued member of the community, the university may instead award an "In Memoriam" Certificate and be designated as an honorary alumnus.

V. Exceptions

In extraordinary circumstances (such as a student nearing completion who dies while on active military duty or during a university-sponsored event), the president may waive specific credit-hour requirements upon recommendation by the provost.