Texas A&M University-Commerce has a long standing tradition of awarding posthumous degrees that recognizes the loss to the University, family, and friends when a student is deceased while enrolled at the university. The award of a posthumous degree may be an appropriate recognition of a student’s academic achievement when the student’s progress would have likely fulfilled the requirements of a degree except for the occurrence of death.

This rule provides the process by which A&M-Commerce may award a posthumous degree in accordance with System Policy 11.08, Award of Posthumous Degrees.

Procedures and Responsibilities

1 GENERAL

1.1 A&M-Commerce may award a graduate or undergraduate degree posthumously when a student has substantially completed all requirements for the degree. Also, the student must be in good academic standing as defined by University Procedure 13.99.99.R0.13 and not the subject of disciplinary actions at the time of death.

1.2 Customarily, degrees awarded posthumously will be noted on the commencement program and a member of the deceased student's family will be permitted to participate, upon approval, in the commencement in which the deceased student would have been eligible to participate. The student's diploma will be mailed to the person legally authorized to manage the deceased student's affairs.

2 POSTHUMOUS BACHELOR’S DEGREE

2.1 The appropriate bachelor’s degree may be awarded posthumously if, at the time of death, the student, classified as a senior, is enrolled at A&M-Commerce in the semester in which the degree would have been conferred. In the case of summer graduation, enrollment in the first summer term or second summer term would meet this requirement.

2.2 The degree would be awarded only upon the recommendation of the student's major department, the Dean of the College, the Faculty Senate, the Provost, and the President. Any exceptions to the rule on awarding of posthumous degrees must be approved by the President.
3 POSTHUMOUS GRADUATE DEGREE

3.1 Any request for a posthumous graduate degree award for a student must be initiated by the Dean of the College. The request must include a positive recommendation from the student’s academic department. The degree would be awarded only upon the recommendation of the major department, Dean of the College, Dean of the Graduate School, the Graduate Council, the Provost, and President.

3.2 For a graduate degree requiring a research project (dissertation, thesis, or research paper), all course work must have been completed with passing grades at the time of the student’s death. Substantial progress toward the completion of the research project should have been made.

3.3 For a graduate degree not requiring a research project, the student at the time of death must have been enrolled in courses that would have completed the degree requirements.

3.4 Any exceptions to the rule on the awarding of a posthumous degree must be approved by the President.

4 PROCEDURES

4.1 The Dean of the College in which the student was pursuing the degree at the time of death is responsible for ensuring that the procedures below are followed.

4.2 The Department Head/Assistant Dean in which the student was pursuing the degree is responsible for certifying the student's academic record with the Registrar’s Office and consulting with the student's professors and, if applicable, the student's graduate advisory committee. The Department Head/Assistant Dean will forward his/her written recommendation, along with the academic record (degree audit) and proof of student’s demise, to the Dean of the College. Any recommendations provided by the student's professors or the graduate advisory committee should also be forwarded to the dean.

4.3 The Dean of the College will review the recommendations and confer with the Dean of the Graduate School (if appropriate). The Dean of the College/ will forward his/her own written recommendation and the written recommendation of the Dean of the Graduate School (if appropriate), along with supporting documentation (academic audit, proof of death, and other relevant materials) to the Faculty Senate or the Graduate Council.

4.4 The Faculty Senate or the Graduate Council will review the written recommendations and the documentation and will forward the materials and a written recommendation to the Provost.

4.5 The Provost will review the materials and forward a written recommendation, along with supporting documentation, to the President.

4.6 The President makes the final decision on the posthumous awarding of the degree and notifies the Registrar through the Provost.

4.7 It shall be noted on the student’s transcript that the degree was awarded posthumously.
Related Statutes, Policies, or Requirements

System Policy 11.08, Award of Posthumous Degrees

University Procedure 13.99.99.R0.13 Good Academic Standing

Suspends University Procedure 11.08.99.R1.01 Awarding Degrees Posthumously Procedure

Contact Office

Office of the Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs
903.886.5410