BSU VI–1.08 –POLICY ON COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER SELECTION

I. PURPOSE

Bowie State University recognizes the importance and historical significance of the Commencement ceremony to the University, and endeavors to involve the campus community in the nomination of potential keynote speakers who reflect the mission and vision of the University. The purpose of this policy is to establish a committee and outline its role and responsibility in the selection of a commencement speaker.

II. DEFINITIONS

A. Committee: for purposes of this policy is a specially appointed group of individuals chosen to serve as a liaison between the general campus community and the University President during the commencement speaker nomination and selection process.

III. POLICY

A. Commencement Speaker Committee

The Commencement Speaker Committee will be responsible for submitting for the President’s consideration a pool of potential commencement speakers:

1. Committee Membership

   a) The Committee shall be comprised of:

      i. Two faculty members representing different academic colleges, selected by Faculty Senate.
      ii. Two staff members selected by the Staff Council.
      iii. The senior class president, one student selected by the Student Government Association and one student selected by the Graduate Student Association for a one-year term;
      iv. The Vice President for Institutional Advancement, who shall also serve as convener of the committee;
      v. The Vice President for Student Affairs; and
      vi. The Director of University Relations & Marketing

   b) The Committee shall meet at least one time per year, typically during the fall semester, but at other times at the call of the convener or a majority of the members of the committee.
2. **Committee Functions**

   a) The committee shall generate a pool of potential commencement speakers for consideration by the University president.
   b) The pool shall be broadly representative in terms of race, gender, and academic discipline.
   c) The speakers for the spring and winter commencements shall be drawn from the pool generated each fall by the committee.
   d) The commencement committee shall receive nominations for the commencement speaker pool from any source within the University community, and members of the University community are encouraged to submit names of potential speakers to any member of the committee.

B. **Commencement Speaker Selection Criteria**

   The University is committed to securing speakers who reflect the mission and values of the University, who have made significant contributions to academia or to society, and who may be perceived as a role model for students and other members of the University community. When deliberating on or submitting a candidate’s name for nomination, the Commencement Speaker Committee shall consider these factors, among other criteria.

C. **Commencement Speaker Final Selection Process**

   The President of the University has final approval authority over the selection of speakers for Commencement ceremonies. The Committee will be required to forward the biographical information of the potential speakers to the President at a reasonable time. Similarly, the Chair of the Committee will be required to submit a complete list of recommended speakers to the President at least one full year in advance of the ceremony for which the speakers are recommended. Throughout the nomination process, the Committee members will be expected to keep all deliberations, investigations and recommendations strictly confidential.

   It is assumed that honorary degree recipients will on occasion deliver the commencement address.

   In the event a speaker cannot be obtained from the pool, nothing in this policy shall prevent the President from securing a commencement speaker from other avenues.

   **Approved on September 22, 2017.**