

Board Meeting  
January 15, 2009

## APPROVE HONORARY DEGREE, CHICAGO

**Action:** Approve the Award of Honorary Doctorate Degree, Chicago

**Funding:** No New Funding Required

The Senate at the Chicago campus has nominated the following person for conferral of honorary degree at Commencement exercises in May 2009. The Interim Chancellor recommends approval of this nomination.

**Barbara Schaal**, Prominent and leading evolutionary biology scientist, Spencer T. Olin Professor of Biology and Professor of Genetics at Washington University in St. Louis, generous mentor, role model, and educator--the honorary degree of Doctor of Biological Sciences

In a National Academy of Sciences interview, Dr. Schaal was recognized for her studies that “use DNA sequences to understand evolutionary processes such as gene flow, geographical differentiation, and the domestication of crop species.” Dr. Schaal’s interest in plants began early in life, on family camping trips where she picked and studied plants and plant populations. Her initial research focused on the population genetics of native plant species and subsequently on cultivated plant species. Her recent work examines the domestication and cultivation of genetically modified crops and issues related to invasive plant species and the potential use of both types of plants in acts of bioterrorism. Dr. Schaal is engaged in conserving natural processes, and educating the general public on scientific matters including genetically modified foods, global warming, energy, and bioterrorism. Dr. Schaal is the only UIC College of Liberal Arts and Sciences graduate elected to the National Academy of Sciences and the first woman elected as its vice president. Her honors and recognitions are many including elected fellowships to the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the National Academy of Sciences, the Distinguished Faculty Award at Washington University, and a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship.

Dr. Schaal was born in Germany and grew up in Chicago; she was the first in her family to go to college. She received a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology from the University of Illinois Circle Campus (at Chicago) and her Master's and Ph.D. degrees from Yale University in New Haven. Dr. Schaal is an outstanding scientist and a conscientious and dedicated educator.

The Board action recommended in this item complies in all material respects with applicable State and federal laws, University of Illinois *Statutes, The General Rules Concerning University Organization and Procedure*, and Board of Trustees policies and directives.

The President of the University concurs with this recommendation.