Approved by the Board of Trustees

January 23, 2025

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Board Meeting

January 23, 2025

# AWARD HONORARY DEGREES, SPRINGFIELD

**Action:** Award Honorary Degrees

**Funding:** No New Funding Required

The University of Illinois Springfield Senate has recommended that honorary degrees be conferred on the following people at the May 10, 2025, Commencement ceremony. The chancellor, University of Illinois Springfield, and vice president, University of Illinois System, recommends approval of these nominations.

**William Bloemer,** dean emeritus, University of Illinois Springfield **–** the honorary degree award of Doctorate of Humane Letters

Dr. William Bloemer began his notable career at UIS in 1973 and has made significant contributions to scholarship, teaching, and leadership throughout his tenure. His innovative vision was essential in the establishment and growth of online learning at UIS in 1997, leading to the creation of the Center for Online Learning, Research and Service (COLRS). This groundbreaking initiative highlighted his commitment to advancing educational accessibility and quality, underscoring his distinguished contributions to the field of education.

Dr. Bloemer was designated as dean emeritus in 2004. After that time, he continued to support research initiatives, secure grants, and champion online education by teaching chemistry courses and conducting research projects for COLRS.

Dr. Bloemer’s volunteer work in various other areas, including COLRS, Institutional Research, and the Office of the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, further highlights his exceptional contributions and unwavering commitment to student success. His exceptional understanding of data systems and his mentoring abilities have made him an indispensable resource, showcasing his distinguished contributions to the UIS academic community.

**Richard Osborne,** senior managing director, Madison Industries **–** the honorary degree award of Doctorate of Humane Letters

Richard Osborne is a University of Illinois Springfield alumnus with over 40 years of industry experience. Mr. Osborne most recently held the position of managing director for Madison Industries and has previously held high-ranking positions with notable manufacturing companies in the state of Illinois. Mr. Osborne is a widely respected pioneer in the field of manufacturing and his contributions, both professional and philanthropic, have not only impacted society at-large, but also the UIS community.

Mr. Osborne’s generous contributions have helped to establish endowments and scholarships for students in the College of Business and Management. In 2019, he provided an endowment to support students participating in the UIS Capital Scholars Honors Program with partial and full-ride scholarships. Mr. Osborne played crucial roles in the development and implementation of the UIS Student Union in 2017. He has also supported other gift initiatives associated with the University of Illinois System, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, University of Illinois Chicago, and the University of Illinois Foundation.

In 2013, Mr. Osborne received the Alumni Achievement Award from UIS, the highest honor bestowed upon graduates in recognition of attaining distinction and success in one’s profession or life work.

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 executive vice president and vice president for academic affairs concurs with this recommendation.

The president of the University of Illinois System recommends approval.