Approved by the Board of Trustees

January 26, 2023

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Board Meeting

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# AWARD HONORARY DEGREE, URBANA

**Action:** Award Honorary Degree

**Funding:** No New Funding Required

The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign Senate has nominated the following individual for conferral of honorary degree award at the Commencement exercises in May 2023. The Chancellor, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, and Vice President, University of Illinois System recommends approval of this nomination.

**Gwynne Shotwell, President and Chief Operating Officer, SpaceX--**the honorary degree of Doctor of Engineering

Ms. Gwynne Shotwell is being nominated for an honorary degree award by the Department of Aerospace Engineering at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign for her leadership in space exploration and her significant contributions in aerospace engineering. Ms. Shotwell is the President of SpaceX, and under her leadership SpaceX has significantly reduced launch costs due to the introduction of reusable rockets. Ms. Shotwell has set SpaceX on a path that would greatly facilitate access to space for numerous stakeholders all while making space travel more sustainable. Ms. Shotwell oversaw the first landing of a reusable rocket’s first stage on both land and ocean platforms. Under her leadership, SpaceX has also become the first commercial company in the U.S. to successfully deliver astronauts to the International Space Station (ISS). Ms. Shotwell successfully negotiated a multibillion-dollar contract with NASA to deliver astronauts and scientific payloads to the ISS. Ms. Shotwell has received numerous awards during her career, including being inducted into the Women in Technology International Hall of Fame (2012), named as the Satellite Executive of the year (2017), named on the list of *Forbes*’ America’s Top 50 Women in Tech (2018), and is a recipient of the Goddard Astronautics Award (2018). In addition to these career awards, Ms. Shotwell has authored papers in peer reviewed journals, and in 2018 she gave a TED talk on the importance of STEM programs. Prior to working at SpaceX, Ms. Shotwell worked for the Chrysler Corporation, The Aerospace Corporation, and Microcosm, Inc. Ms. Shotwell holds B.S. and M.S. degrees in Mechanical Engineering and Applied Mathematics from Northwestern University.

The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign strives to be an international leader in engineering impact that changes the world, as well as in our scholarship and research. Awarding an honorary degree to Ms. Shotwell provides an appropriate recognition of her engineering achievement and leadership, and signals the importance that the University places on global impact and inspiration of the next generation.

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.