

AGENDA ITEM BRIEFING

Submitted by: Mark A. Welsh III, President
Texas A&M University

Subject: Authorization to Award an Honorary Degree to Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker

Proposed Board Action:

Authorize the president of Texas A&M University (Texas A&M) to award an Honorary Doctor of Letters degree to Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker.

Background Information:

In accordance with Section 1.2 of System Policy *11.07, Granting of Honorary Degrees*, Texas A&M submits this request to award an Honorary Doctor of Letters degree to Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker. This recognition is in tribute to his distinguished career as an internationally noted leader in American foreign policy and diplomacy.

The nomination for this Honorary Doctor of Letters degree was received from Dr. F. Gregory Gause, Professor of International Affairs and John H. Lindsey '44 Chair and is supported by Department Head Dr. David Bearce and the faculty of the International Affairs Department within the Bush School of Government & Public Service. The nomination was endorsed by the Texas A&M Committee on Honorary Degrees. The Faculty Senate, meeting in executive session, approved the nomination and recommended it to the president of Texas A&M.

With Board authorization, this honorary degree will be presented to Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker at the Texas A&M commencement ceremony in August 2024, when the Bush School of Government & Public Service graduates receive their degrees.

A&M System Funding or Other Financial Implications:

None.

Strategic Plan Imperative(s) this Item Advances:

Approval of this agenda item and awarding this Honorary Doctor of Letters degree to Ambassador Crocker will recognize his outstanding and meritorious service toward The Texas A&M University System strategic imperatives 3 and 7. Specifically, Ambassador Crocker's award-winning work in the Foreign Service and in support of American diplomacy worldwide is a model for today's graduates to pursue as they strive to address national and global challenges while becoming responsible and engaged citizens.

Agenda Item No. 6.15

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
Office of the President
May 23, 2024

Members, Board of Regents
The Texas A&M University System

Subject: Authorization to Award an Honorary Degree to Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker

I recommend adoption of the following minute order:

“The president of Texas A&M University is authorized to award an Honorary Doctor of Letters degree to Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker.”

Respectfully submitted,

[ORIGINAL SIGNED BY]

Mark A. Welsh III
President

Approval Recommended:

Approved for Legal Sufficiency:

[ORIGINAL SIGNED BY]

John Sharp
Chancellor

[ORIGINAL SIGNED BY]

Ray Bonilla
General Counsel

[ORIGINAL SIGNED BY]

Billy Hamilton
Deputy Chancellor and
Chief Financial Officer

[ORIGINAL SIGNED BY]

James R. Hallmark, Ph.D.
Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

Texas A&M University
Honorary Degree Candidate Summary of Accomplishments

Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker
Candidate for Honorary Doctor of Letters

Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker received his B.A. in English from Whitman College in 1971 and was a Mid-Career Fellow at Princeton University where he studied public policy and Near Eastern Affairs. For his seminal accomplishments, he received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2009, the James Joyce Award from the Literary and Historical Society of University College Dublin in 2016, and the Sylvanus Thayer Award from the West Point Association of Graduates in 2020. He currently serves as a Senior Fellow for the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Ambassador Crocker is a world-famous specialist in American diplomacy and foreign affairs. He is attributed with being his generation's leading American diplomat in the Greater Middle East, serving in some of the most important and complex environments for American foreign policy during his time with the Foreign Service. His work in tense environments such as Lebanon (1990-93), Kuwait (1994-97), Syria (1998-2001), and Afghanistan in 2002 earned him a reputation from presidents of both parties as a key player of Middle Eastern relations. He was the first American diplomat on the scene at the Marine Corps barracks bombing in Beirut, which ultimately contributed to him being recognized as only the 75th Honorary Marine in their long and illustrious history.

He was conferred the rank of Career Ambassador by President George W. Bush in 2004, the highest rank that the Foreign Service bestows. He is the recipient of numerous other awards and recognitions including, the Inaugural Bancroft Award from the Naval Academy (2016), the Director's Award from the Director of Central Intelligence (2012), and the Department of Defense Award for Civilian Service (1997, 2008).

Ambassador Crocker has interacted with faculty of Texas A&M University as Dean of the Bush School of Government & Public Service and Executive Professor (2010-2016). His awarding of this honorary degree would allow for a stronger campus connection, including presentation of lectures for students, and enhance the visibility of our programs in Government & Public Service.

In supporting the nomination, former Texas A&M University President and U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates notes: "His experience in the Middle East allowed him to take his knowledge to the classroom to help students and through the media to share with a wider audience to further his belief that he could help improve the lives of others nationally and internationally." Dr. Gates continues by saying that Ambassador Crocker "is one of the finest public servants I have ever known, and I strongly endorse his nomination to receive an honorary degree from Texas A&M."

The Nomination is presented by the International Affairs Department and endorsed by the faculty of the Bush School of Government & Public Service, Interim Dean Frank B. Ashley III, the Committee on Honorary Degrees, Faculty Senate, Provost & Executive Vice President Alan Sams, and President Mark A. Welsh III.