

TO: The Board of Trustees

THRU: John A. Barrett, Jr. JD

Interim Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

FROM: Patricia R. Komuniecki, Ph.D. 

Co-Chair, Academic Honors Committee

Thea Sawicki, Ph.D.

Co-Chair, Academic Honors Committee

DATE: January 25, 2016

RE: **Honorary Degree Nomination for Rush D. Holt**

The Academic Honors Committee has approved the nomination of Rush D. Holt, Ph.D. for an honorary degree to be awarded at the Saturday, May 7, 2016 morning Commencement ceremony when he will be the Commencement speaker at the invitation of President Gaber.

**Dr. Rush D. Holt** has had a long distinguished career over the past 40 years and has held positions as a professor, scientist, administrator, and U.S. Congressman/policymaker. He became the 18th chief executive officer of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) and executive publisher of the *Science* family of journals in February 2015. In this role, Holt leads the world's largest multi-disciplinary scientific and engineering society.

He is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Carleton College with a B.A in Physics (1970) and holds M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in physics from New York University. He began his career as a faculty member at Swarthmore College (1980-88) and, in 1982, served as an AAAS Science and Technology Fellow on Capitol Hill, an experience that was ‘life changing’ and served as a springboard to his later role in Congress. He also served as the assistant director of the Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory (PPPL), a Department of Energy national lab, and one of the largest alternative energy research facilities in the country. At PPPL, he helped establish the lab's nationally renowned science education program. Dr. Holt was issued a patent for an improved solar-pond technology for harnessing energy from sunlight (1981).

Dr. Holt served for 16 years as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives (1999-2015), representing New Jersey's 12th Congressional District. In Congress, he served as a senior member of the Committee on Natural Resources and the Committee on Education and the Workforce. On Capitol Hill, he established a long track record of advocacy for federal investment in research and development, science education, and innovation. He served on the National Commission on the Teaching of Mathematics and Science (known as the Glenn Commission), founded the Congressional Research and Development Caucus, and served as a co-chair of the Biomedical Research Caucus. Dr. Holt served eight years on the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence and, from 2007 to 2010, chaired the Select Intelligence Oversight Panel, which worked to strengthen legislative oversight of the intelligence community. He also served as an arms control expert at the U.S. State Department, where he monitored the nuclear programs of countries such as Iraq, Iran, North Korea, and the former Soviet Union.

His legislative work earned him numerous accolades, including being named one of *Scientific American* magazine's "50 National Visionaries Contributing to a Brighter Technological Future" and a "Champion of Science" by the Science Coalition. He has also received awards from the American Chemical Society, the American Association of University Professors, the National Association of Graduate-Professional Students, the American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering, the Council of Scientific Society Presidents, the American Geophysical Union, and the Biotechnology Industry Organization. Dr. Holt is also a past recipient of two of AAAS' highest honors: the William D. Carey Lectureship Award (2005) and the Philip Hauge Abelson Award (2010).

He is an elected fellow of AAAS, the American Physical Society, and Sigma Xi, and holds honorary degrees from Monmouth University, Rider University, and Thomas Edison State College. He is married to Margaret Lancefield, a physician, and they have three children and seven grandchildren.

In recognition of the above accomplishments, the AHC recommends that Dr. Holt be awarded an honorary Doctor of a Public Service degree, *honoris causa.*

Attachments: Additional biographical material for Rush D. Holt, Ph.D.