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Office of the President
October 24, 2015

Members, Board of Trustees:

HONORARY DEGREE RECIPIENTS

Recommendation: that the Board of Trustees approve awarding an Honorary Doctor of Engineering to Matthew D. Cutts as approved and recommended by the University Faculty.

Background: Pursuant to the Conditions of Merit for Honorary Degrees, the University Joint Committee on Honorary Degrees has recommended to the elected Faculty Senators that the specified honorary degree be awarded to Matthew D. Cutts. The elected Faculty Senators have approved the recommendation.

A biographical sketch of the recipient is attached.

Action taken: Approved Disapproved Other _____

Matt Cutts

Honorary Doctor of Engineering, UK Commencement, Dec. 2015

Matt Cutts is a native of Morehead, Kentucky who was awarded a Singletary Scholarship to attend the University of Kentucky. He graduated with a double major in 1995, earning a Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Science and another B.S. degree in Mathematics.

While at UK, Mr. Cutts achieved a sparkling academic record, maintaining a 4.0 GPA, being selected to receive a Gaines Fellowship in the Humanities, earning election to Phi Beta Kappa and being named as the Outstanding Graduating Senior in the College of Engineering.

Outside of the classroom, Mr. Cutts excelled in a cooperative (co-op) education opportunity at the Department of Defense in Fort Meade, Maryland, completing four work tours (adding up to more than one year total) with the National Security Agency. On campus, he was recruited to serve as a member of the Mathematical Sciences Staff, serving as a teaching assistant on a distance-learning class, one in which he had determined the computer hardware necessary to make the class possible.

After graduating from UK, Mr. Cutts earned a Master of Science degree in Computer Science at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he served as a research assistant and software engineer. He was awarded both a National Science Foundation (NSF) Fellowship and a Link Foundation Fellowship.

Mr. Cutts joined Google in 1999 as one of the company's first 100 employees and his career continues to thrive. He has headed Google's Webspam group since 2004. His leadership has resulted in safer web searching for families and children, improved ranking schemes, and "search encryption."

Mr. Cutts was inducted into the UK College of Arts and Sciences Hall of Fame in 2012.

One of his nominators for this honorary doctorate said, "An honorary degree awarded to Matt will honor his global impact as a software engineer, and his down-to-earth, inspirational engagement with his colleagues and through his outreach. But it will also acknowledge that a Kentucky education and the willingness to take some risks with the determination to make them pay off, is something we produce and celebrate here at UK."