

**University Commencement Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, October 6, 2010**  
**12:15 p.m.**  
**President's Board Room, 210 Burruss Hall**

**Present:** Dan Taylor (chair), Sandy Bass, Elizabeth Fine, Larry Hincker, Jason Holliday, Jong Kim, Nathan Lavinka, Gary Long, Jacqueline Nottingham, Kim O'Rourke, Muzaffer Uysal  
Anthony Watson

**Absent:** Jerry Allen, Jactone Arogo Ogejo (with notice), Tom Broyles (with notice), Jeffrey Connor, Pat Goodrich (with notice), Brad Klein, Ann Marie Knoblauch, Kate Preston (with notice), David Shuster, Jill Sible (with notice)

**Guests:** Kevin Ayoub, Bo Frazier, Captain Houston, Margie Murray, April Myers, Pam Vickers, Laura Wedin, Eric Wininger

Dr. Taylor called the meeting to order at 12:15 p.m.

**Approval of September 1, 2010, minutes**

Long moved to approve the minutes of the September 1, 2010, meeting. With a second from Nottingham, the minutes were approved unanimously.

**Planning for Fall Ceremonies**

Taylor announced that the vocalists are lined up for both ceremonies in the fall and in the spring.

Lavinka indicated that the student speakers will be selected for the fall and the spring ceremonies by Friday, October 8, 2010. He also indicated that the class officers have recommendations for the University speaker and will get the names to the President's Office at the end of the Commencement Committee meeting. Nottingham informed the committee that the Graduate School speaker will be named by mid-October at the latest in order to get the information into the Commencement program.

A question was raised on how and when to communicate delay and cancellation announcements due to inclement weather. Hincker indicated that under normal circumstances, VT Alerts will not be used to make announcements about inclement weather, but if a last-minute decision is made, VT Alerts may be the best way to communicate the announcement quickly. Last spring, VT Alerts was used because the decision to delay the ceremony was made at 5:45 p.m.

**Other Items**

A question was raised as to how to handle the chairs for the stage party during the spring ceremony. Last spring, the chairs purchased for the ceremonies were not used at the University ceremony because of the possibility of rain. Older metal chairs were used instead. Long indicated that they were very uncomfortable to sit in for an hour. There may be a need to purchase additional chairs along with a storage facility for the Commencement stage party chairs. Watson also indicated that there may be a need for a storage facility for the Commencement stage as well.

Murray indicated that the carpet used for the coliseum floor will need to be replaced soon. Watson stated that the carpet may last a couple of more ceremonies, but it is showing signs of

wear and tear. The carpet is beginning to bunch-up at the ramp, and it is difficult to stretch back out between ceremonies. There is a lot of foot traffic going in and out of the coliseum floor during Saturday ceremonies because there is not an organized processional. It was suggested that the best solution may be a different type of backing on the next carpet purchased.

### **Spring Ceremonies Space Concerns**

Taylor informed the committee that the Department of Communication ceremony has outgrown War Memorial Gym and will need to be moved. The only two venues that have ample seating are Burruss Hall Auditorium and Cassell Coliseum. There are already four Saturday ceremonies in Burruss Hall, and there may be a need to have a fourth ceremony in Cassell Coliseum. Watson indicated that Facilities already has employees working eight- to twelve-hour shifts in Cassell Coliseum for the three ceremonies on Saturday. If a fourth ceremony is added, Facilities will have to add an additional three to four hours which will be approximately an additional \$4,000 for overtime pay. Taylor indicated that he would like to have a decision made about the number of ceremonies for Burruss Hall Auditorium and for Cassell Coliseum before the December Commencement ceremonies. That way the new group(s) can do a tour of the new facilities to see how things are set up. Taylor also suggested that before a change in venue is implemented for the Saturday ceremonies, the cost of the change should be communicated to the affected parties.

### **Cassell Coliseum Gym Closure**

The 220 Cassell Coliseum gym will no longer be available after the December Commencement ceremonies. Currently, both practice gyms in Cassell are used to line up the graduates. One practice gym will not be large enough to handle all of the graduates. Murray indicated that the new basketball facility will probably not be a solution because the back access door to the coliseum will be blocked, and graduates would have to process in front of Cassell Coliseum prior to the ceremony. Taylor is creating a subcommittee to determine where the graduates will be able to line up prior to the ceremony.

### **Announcement**

Mike Mulhare will be in attendance at the November 3, 2010, meeting to discuss emergency procedures and lessons learned during the spring ceremonies.

With no other business, O'Rourke moved to adjourn at 12:45 p.m.