

University Commencement Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 6, 2013
12:15 p.m.
President's Board Room, 210 Burruss Hall

Present: Dan Taylor (chair), Tyler Campbell, Candi Clemenz, Terry Cobb, Elizabeth Fine, Rebecca Funk, Larry Hincker, Tamara Knott, Joe Merola, Kim O'Rourke, Bruce Pencek, Fatemeh Saeidi-Rizi, Durrelle Scott, Jay Tucker, Anthony Watson, Michael Weaver, Eric Winger

Absent Pat Goodrich (with notice), Bill Green, Jason Holliday (with notice), Jacqueline Nottingham (with notice), Diane Zahm

Guests: Kevin Ayoub, Tom Broyles, Travis Cross, Bo Frazier, Sergeant Gallemore, Natalie Hart, Captain Houston, Margie Murray, April Myers, Pam Vickers, Laura Wedin

Dr. Taylor called the meeting to order at 12:17 p.m.

Approval of December 5, 2012, minutes

Merola moved to approve the minutes of the December 5, 2012, meeting. With a second from Campbell, the minutes were approved unanimously.

Recap of Fall Ceremonies

Taylor stated that the number of graduates for the University ceremony was lower than usual because to the ceremony was scheduled close to the holidays so it difficult to determine if there needs to be changes made to how the students are lined up. Taylor will speak with the Director of Processions, Jacqueline Nottingham, to get her assessment. Merola indicated that the lineup for the Graduate School ceremony went well.

Hincker announced that 1,665 viewers watched the webcast of the ceremonies live (852 watched the University ceremony and 813 watched the Graduate School ceremony), and 467 viewers watched the ceremonies after the event (226 watched the University ceremony and 241 watched the Graduate School ceremony). Hincker was very pleased with the numbers and would like to continue streaming the ceremonies in the future. There is a fee from Athletics of \$300 to videotape and live cast both ceremonies and there are a couple of hours of setup prior to the ceremony. The cost averages out to \$.15 per viewer.

Merola raised the issue of the discontinuation of the "message from the faculty" (initiated in fall 2006) at the conclusion of the university and graduate ceremonies. Taylor indicated that the reason was to shorten the ceremonies, which have grown longer over time. In the spring, the colleges and departments have the discretion to include faculty remarks in their respective ceremonies should they wish to do so. Merola suggested that it is more important to have faculty remarks at the fall ceremonies since there are no individual college and department ceremonies in the fall. Broyles suggested that when the keynote speaker is a faculty member (which is traditional for the fall university ceremony), there is no need for additional remarks from the faculty. It was stated that Dean DePauw has indicated her willingness to shorten the graduate school ceremonies in other ways in order to accommodate remarks from the faculty at the spring and fall graduate school ceremonies.

Taylor informed the committee that there was a small glitch with the timing of the Posting of the Colors. Murray stated that the order will be changed in the scripts and will send copies of the scripts to Commander Weaver prior to the ceremony so that he can make corrections.

Committee Support on Spring Band Tour

Cross asked for the committee's support in requesting funding for the annual University Wind Ensemble tour. The student Wind Ensemble performs during the Spring University Commencement and goes on a tour to perform at several different high schools in Virginia the week of Commencement. This tour encourages student participation in the Commencement Wind Ensemble while simultaneously promoting Virginia Tech. The tour will be to the Roanoke, Charlottesville, and Richmond areas. Cross indicated that the projected cost of the tour is \$10,575 which is lower than last year.

Hincker made a motion to accept the proposal and to recommend to the President that Virginia Tech support the University Wind Ensemble Tour. Merola seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Planning for Spring ceremonies

Travis indicated that the Wind Ensemble will store their instruments at Lane Stadium on Thursday evening once they return from the band tour.

O'Rourke indicated that the announcement for keynote speakers will be made closer to the month of April.

Ayoub indicated that having departmental ceremonies on Friday afternoon went very well. The Saturday ceremonies were less stressful because fewer ceremonies were scheduled for Saturday. Murray indicated that there will be four departmental ceremonies held on Friday afternoon this year (three at 4:00 p.m. and one at 5:00 p.m.). Commander Weaver will touch base with the Department of Apparel, Housing and Resource Management to make sure they are aware that the Commissioning ceremony begins at 7:00 p.m. so that Corps students in that department can attend both ceremonies.

Murray indicated that several departmental ceremonies have changed locations and times which will eliminate the use of the gym and the Donaldson Brown auditorium.

Sergeant Gallemore informed the committee that there were issues last spring with the parking and traffic at Cassell Coliseum during the Saturday ceremonies. At one point, Spring Road had to be completely shut down because the ceremonies were scheduled so close together and guests could not get out of the building and parking lots before the guests for the next ceremony began arriving. Shutting down the section of Spring Road between the coliseum lot and Washington Street for the Saturday ceremonies can help to eliminate some of the problems with traffic. Sergeant Gallemore also suggested putting barricades up down Washington Street in order to keep pedestrians on the sidewalks.

Hincker informed the committee that he spoke to hotel groups this past summer to discourage the three-night minimum during Commencement. Unfortunately, one hotel is already imposing the three-night minimum. Hincker has requested the Vice President for Student Affairs, Dr. Patty Perillo, to provide additional campus housing. Hincker indicated that University Relations will heavily market the on-campus housing option in order to offer a lower-cost option for Commencement guests.

Announcements

Taylor announced that Dr. Diane Zahm has volunteered to take over as the Director of Ushers for the spring ceremonies. Taylor and the committee thanked Dr. Tom Broyles for his past few years of service as the Director of Ushers.

Taylor announced that the Commencement Committee may not meet on March 6, 2013, and an e-mail will be sent out to the committee members if this meeting will be cancelled.

With no other business, Cobb moved to adjourn at 12:49 p.m.