

**University Commencement Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, April 6, 2016**  
**12:15 p.m.**  
**President's Board Room, 210 Burruss Hall**

**Present:** Dan Taylor (chair), Janice Austin, Luke Carroll, Candi Clemenz, Patrick Finn, Rebecca Funk, PJ Johnston, Lance Jones, Jacqueline Nottingham, Kim O'Rourke, Steve Sheetz, Michael Stowe, Martha Sullivan, Benjamin Tracy, Anthony Watson, Fisha Gresham for Raven Weaver, Pengtao Yue, Diane Zahm

**Absent:** Deborah Dickerson (with notice), Andrew Ellis, Bernice Hausman (with notice),

**Guests:** Ken Belcher, Jonathan Caldwell, Kathleen Green, Captain Vince Houston, Kelly McCann, Mike Mulhare, Margie Murray, April Myers, Rick Sparks, Robyn Stuart, Pam Vickers, Andrew Ward, Laura Wedin

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

**Approval of February 3, 2016, minutes**

Zahm made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 3, 2016, meeting. Sheetz seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved unanimously.

**Committee Support on Wind Ensemble Tour**

Jonathan Caldwell asked for the committee's endorsement for the request to fund the annual University Wind Ensemble tour. The student Wind Ensemble performs during the Spring University Commencement and goes on a tour prior to the ceremony to several local high schools. This tour helps to generate student musician participation in the Commencement ceremonies while simultaneously promoting Virginia Tech to important prospective students and alumni constituencies. The tour will be to Roanoke and Wytheville over a two-day period. The requested funds are for transportation costs and meal per diems.

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

**Social Media Posts on the Jumbotron**

Michael Stowe requested support from the committee to continue with the Twitter screen that was used last year during the University ceremony. Tweets using #HokieGrad were displayed on the Jumbotron prior to the University ceremony. The posts are screened prior to being displayed on the Jumbotron. Luke Carroll questioned if Instagram can be integrated with the Twitter posts so that photographs can be displayed as well as Tweets. Stowe indicated that he would look into having Instagram incorporated as well.

Stowe made a motion to continue posting social media posts on the Jumbotron prior to the University Commencement ceremony. Zahm seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**Planning for Spring ceremonies**

Robyn Stuart indicated that the university award recipients, who receive their awards on stage, will bring guests with them to the president's suite in Lane Stadium. The award recipients will process with the stage party and the guests will remain in the president's suite to view the ceremony.

Mike Mulhare stated that his office will reach out to groups in order to obtain individual activities which will be used to create an event management plan for Thursday and Friday. Mulhare indicated that Emergency Management will use the same format as last year.

Anthony Watson indicated that everything is okay with facilities. Parking will need to be established for the Graduate School ceremony since it will now be held on Thursday instead of Friday.

Pam Vickers questioned what time the doors will open for both the Graduate School and University ceremonies. The doors will be open for the Graduate School ceremony at 1:00 p.m. and for the University ceremony at 7:00 a.m. Captain Houston indicated that employees working the ceremonies can be granted earlier access if needed. Andrew Ward indicated that event security can give access through one gate.

Captain Houston indicated that everything is all set with the Virginia Tech Police Department. The band equipment will be dropped off on Thursday night so that it can be screened before the ceremony on Friday morning.

Ken Belcher mentioned that there were still some non-air-conditioned rooms available through campus housing. Registrations are being accepted through April 29, 2016. Check-in will begin at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, May 12, 2016.

Rick Sparks indicated that diplomas will be ready, and the Registrar's office will coordinate the distribution of the diplomas.

Wedin indicated that the student speakers are lined up. Taylor indicated that the rehearsal for the University ceremony will be at 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, May 12, 2016, in Lane Stadium (the Graduate School ceremony will be taking place at this time), and the rehearsal for the Graduate School ceremony will be at 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 11, 2016, in Cassell Coliseum. The tunnel in the south end zone will be open for those attending the rehearsal in the stadium. A question was raised as to when the Color Guard will be able to rehearse for the University ceremony since they participate in the Graduate School ceremony. Since the Color Guard does not officially retrieve the colors, they will be able to go to the rehearsal in Lane Stadium while the Graduate School ceremony is taking place, and then retrieve the colors after the Graduate School ceremony ends.

MGySgt Lance Jones questioned if the Color Guard can enter in at the southwest tunnel to access the staging area. It was confirmed that the Color Guard will have access to the southwest tunnel at 6:30 a.m. on Friday, May 13, 2016, in order to access the staging area for the Color Guard. MGySgt Jones announced that if any college or departmental ceremony wants the flags displayed, an e-mail will need to be sent to MGySgt Jones with the location, date, and time of the ceremony within the next two weeks in order for the request to be considered.

Janice Austin informed the committee that there are several people who are just finding out that the Graduate School ceremony has been moved to Thursday afternoon. A request was made to send out additional communication regarding the date change. Stowe indicated that he would have that information distributed again.

Diane Zahm informed the college representatives that it is important for those volunteering as either ushers or marshals should be made aware of the dates and times of the ceremony they are volunteering for. It is very difficult to reassign volunteers at the last minute especially in the

stadium. Jaqueline Nottingham introduced Kelly McCann, who will be assisting with the marshal volunteers and the processional. Nottingham indicated that she will be sending out a reminder note to the college representatives that volunteers are needed.

Captain Houston reminded the committee that it is important for employees who are not essential personnel to not arrive on campus before 10:00 a.m. This will help to keep the vehicle congestion down on campus. Stowe indicated that the delayed opening has been communicated sporadically, but will be run more often in the upcoming weeks. Murray suggested communicating to employees that they should not enter campus by way of Southgate Drive. Stowe indicated that he will include this information with the notice being communicated.

With no other business, Sheetz moved to adjourn at 12:44 p.m.