

**University Commencement Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, September 1, 2010**  
**12:15 p.m.**  
**President's Board Room, 210 Burruss Hall**

**Present:** Dan Taylor (chair), LTCOL Bill Stringer for Jerry Allen, Jactone Arogo Ogejo, Sandy Bass, Tom Broyles, Jeffrey Connor, Elizabeth Fine, Pat Goodrich, Larry Hincker, Jong Kim, Brad Klein, Ann Marie Knoblauch, Nathan Lavinka, Gary Long, Jacqueline Nottingham, Kim O'Rourke, Kate Preston, David Shuster, Jill Sible, Anthony Watson

**Absent:** Jason Holliday (with notice), Muzaffer Uysal

**Guests:** Bo Frazier, Captain Houston, Margie Murray, April Myers, Laura Wedin, Eric Winger

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

**Announcement of Approval of April 7, 2010 minutes**

Taylor announced that the minutes of April 7, 2010, have been voted on and approved electronically.

**Debriefing of Spring Ceremonies**

The Spring 2010 University ceremony was delayed for an hour due to inclement weather (i.e. severe thunderstorms in the area). Nottingham suggested that a written plan should be in place when the ceremony is delayed due to inclement weather. Fine indicated that several guests in the stands said they felt vulnerable just sitting in the stands with a thunderstorm close by. Houston informed the committee that the plan is to move guests under the stands when there is inclement weather. Hincker indicated that an announcement was displayed on the Jumbotron directing people to move under the stands in bad weather. O'Rourke suggested that it is important to have everyone move under the stands in a calm, orderly fashion in order to eliminate confusion and injury. The command center has the latest technology which allows the most current weather information to be displayed, but there needs to be a better way to communicate that information to everyone working with the ceremonies.

A request was made to have walkie-talkies for key personnel because cell phones are not very reliable during the ceremonies. Watson informed the committee that Facilities has walkie-talkies that can be used during the ceremonies. He will need to know how many walkie-talkies are needed a few weeks prior to the ceremony in order to have them available. Captain Houston also suggested that the Virginia Tech Rescue Squad may be able to provide radios as well.

A suggestion was made to purchase bullhorns in case there is a need to speak to a crowd. Nottingham indicated that it was difficult to communicate the changes that were made for the Spring University ceremony to the graduates. O'Rourke indicated that the President's Office will take care of purchasing two bullhorns for the Commencement ceremony. It would also be helpful to keep the soundstage in Cassell Coliseum active in case there are any announcements that need to be made during inclement weather. It would also be a good idea to use the big screen in Cassell Coliseum to display updates and instructions. Hincker questioned how well the VT Alerts system worked when the Spring University ceremony was delayed for one hour. It was stated that most everyone received the alert, but it might be a good idea to wait to ask the graduates to unsubscribe from VT Alerts until after Commencement.

It was confirmed that only the Spring Graduate School ceremony has been changed to 2:30 p.m. The Fall Graduate School ceremony will begin at the normal time of 3:00 p.m.

Murray stated that one group has indicated that the number of people for their ceremony has almost outgrown Burruss Hall Auditorium. This will be looked at later when there are more concrete numbers.

**Introductions**

Introductions were made so that everyone could become familiar with each other.

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