PRESENT: Bill Stringer for Jerry Allen, Randy Billingsley, Bud Brown, Theresa Cassino, Reba Crawford, John Beach for Bill Elvey, Jerry Gibson, Pat Goodrich, Bill Green, Randy Stith for Larry Hincker, Vinod Lohani, Kim O'Rourke, Dixie Reaves, Nicole Reynolds, Sherry Schofield-Tomschin, Dan Taylor.

ABSENT: Ed Henneke, Greg Brown, Leon Geyer, Grant Hill, Brad Klein, Dean Stauffer, Diane Zahm.


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

Approval of Minutes – March 12, 2003
With one change in the spelling of Debra Stewart's name, O'Rourke moved that the minutes be approved. With a second from Schofield-Tomschin, the minutes were approved unanimously.

Announcements / Questions
Bud Brown asked that the committee recognize Dixie Reaves as being a recipient of the Alumni Teaching Award.

It was also asked if anyone had heard about a change in the Virginia Tech diplomas? Although the Graduate School is now using diploma covers at presentation, no one had heard of diplomas being changed.

Information
Suggested Route for Honors Graduates Parade: The honors students will march down the sidewalk from Litton Reaves, cross at McComas Hall and then continue through the commuter parking lot to Lane Stadium. Including family members, this group could be as large as 300-500 people. Honors students will process through the tunnel. Jack Dudley has arranged for volunteers to assist with getting the honors students from the tunnel to their seats. He did not see an additional need for marshals to be arranged by the colleges because of this change. Lt. Ridinger does not see any problem with this procession, other than having to cross two streets, but there will be traffic management as needed.

In addition, Murray will be contacting Lauren Roop to make arrangements for event staff, and will request additional staff for the tunnel.

Recommendation for Televising Coliseum Ceremony in Case of Inclement Weather: Randy Stith indicated that in order to prepare for televising in case of inclement weather, he would need to let CNS know within a week of the ceremony whether or not preparations should be made. This would require a $600 non-refundable deposit for setup. Goodrich said that the Graduate School is interested in televising, and that they may want to televise in either case, but that no arrangements had been made. It was felt that this would attract more of an outside audience.
Taylor moved that $600 was a reasonable cost to guarantee the success of the ceremonies, assuming that additional costs for actually having to make this work would not be unreasonable. With a second from Lohani, the committee agreed unanimously.

**Spring Commencement Planning**
Taylor announced that April 9 was the deadline for all colleges to provide him with usher/marshal volunteer names.

Beach began the discussion by talking about the procession through the south end zone for the university ceremony. Signs will be posted for colleges to line up candidates. One half of the students will enter on one side of the field, the other half on the other side. The center parking aisle will be blocked for handicapped parking and para-transit needs. This will work until about thirty minutes prior to the ceremony. When Reaves gives the signal to police, the road will be blocked.

The university stage party will robe in the Press Room (Beamer's) on the ground floor of the south end zone. Guests will be escorted to a suite where they may view the ceremony. In case of inclement weather, the stage party will again robe in the Monogram Room, 309 Jamerson Athletic Center.

The Graduate School ceremony stage party will again robe in the Monogram Room, 309 Cassell. There will be an 8 a.m. rehearsal in Cassell Coliseum on Friday, May 9.

Beach stated that there was only one handicap ramp available for the stage, and asked that he be notified if anyone needed that ramp for their ceremony. [Note: Virginia Reilly has since learned of a need to have a ramp at both sides of the stage for the Graduate School ceremony.]

The Virginia Tech Police Department will provide additional officers on Saturday in Cassell Coliseum, and event staff will also be hired by the individual colleges to assist with pedestrian flow between ceremonies.

McKee asked if the Jumbotron would be used pre-event as it was last year for the University ceremony. He was told that it would not be, and that was also his preference.

Reilly asked that Dan review the handicap map. Murray will email that map for his comments. She also noted that directions for the small ceremonies were also being written, and would be distributed as soon as they were available.

The members of each stage party will have ample parking available—near the tennis courts for the Graduate Ceremony, and in the south end zone for the University Ceremony. [A decision must be made as to where parking will be for the University Ceremony in the event of inclement weather.]

**Discussion of Fall Commencement**
The members of the Commencement Committee were asked to consider whether or not to cancel Fall Commencement, and report at this meeting. The committee consensus was that it was too late to cancel the ceremony for Fall 2003. With a motion from Lohani, and a second from Brown, the committee agreed unanimously to recommend holding Fall Commencement 2003 to the President.
One possibility arose of having both the undergraduate and graduate ceremonies on Friday, instead of having the graduate ceremony on Friday, and the undergraduate ceremony on Saturday.

Although local hotels would still require a two-night stay, according to a poll done by Hincker’s office, that could also be changed for a Thursday/Friday night stay, instead of Friday/Saturday.

One ceremony could be held late morning on Friday, and the other early afternoon. This change would need to be advertised as soon as possible so that parents and guests would have time to change their reservations. Should the committee recommend to the president that both ceremonies be held on Friday, with his approval, this would give families up to eight months to revise their plans.

When asked at what time the Graduate School preferred to have their ceremony, Goodrich indicated that it did not matter to the students, as long as there was a ceremony.

It was noted that it is difficult to get ushers/marshals to volunteer on Saturday for Fall Commencement since it is so close to the holidays. It would also be easier to hire event staff for Friday ceremonies—especially for the fall ceremonies.

**Taylor moved that the committee recommend to the president that both fall ceremonies be held on Friday. McKee seconded, and the committee agreed unanimously.**

After the president's approval, a press release should be done by Hincker's office to get the word out in advance to avoid complications.

Discussions turned to which ceremony to hold first—and when. Beach indicated that this time of year is very cold, and it would be better not to hold either ceremony in the evening. He also noted that it is easier to take chairs away from the floor of the Coliseum than it is to add them. Therefore, he thought it would be a good idea to hold the undergraduate ceremony in the morning, and the graduate ceremony in the early afternoon.

Until the president has a chance to review the recommendation to hold both ceremonies on Friday, the discussion on the timing of the ceremonies would be tabled until this decision has been made. In the meantime, the student representative on the committee will poll students to get their feedback as well. The graduate student representative indicated that the graduate students were flexible on this issue.

Taylor adjourned the meeting at 1:02 p.m.