COMMENCEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
Wednesday, December 5, 2001  
12:15 to 12:55 p.m.  
President's Boardroom, 210 Burruss Hall  

PRESENT:  John Beach for Bill Elvey, Randy Billingsley, Bud Brown, Stan Burke, Bill Conger, Reba Crawford, Pat Goodrich, Ed Henneke, Michelle Jefferson, Brad Klein, Mary Ann Lewis for Janet Johnson, David McKee, Kim O’Rourke, Harry Robertshaw, Sherry Schofield-Tomshin, Bill Stringer for J. Allen, Dan Taylor, Audrey Zink-Sharp.  


ABSENT:  Grant Hill, Larry Hincker, Mitzi Vernon, Dixie Reaves, Erin Miller, Margie Murray  

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

Approval of the November 7, 2001 Minutes  
Mary Ann Lewis moved that the minutes be approved, Kim O’Rourke seconded, and the minutes were unanimously approved.  

Request from the undergraduate Honor System to wear special sashes  
Amanda Cockrell, representing the Honor System, brought a maroon, braided rope sash that the graduating students who have served as Honor System panel members and associate justices are proposing to wear in the commencement ceremony. At any one time, there would be no more than ten Honor System students graduating. Discussion ensued regarding other areas of service work that may request special recognition. It was noted that international students were previously given permission to wear sashes depicting the colors of their country. Another issue was whether granting permission to the undergraduate Honor System members to wear sashes would have to be expanded to include students who work with the university’s other three honor systems. A decision on the proposal was finally tabled due to the fact that the deadline had passed for adding a description of the significance of the sash to the descriptions of the various components of academic regalia listed in the Fall Commencement Program, which has already gone to press. The proposal will be discussed at a later meeting with possible consideration for spring commencement. With no motion being made from the committee to continue discussion or to vote on the Honor System proposal, Chairman Henneke focused the discussion on the next item on the agenda concerning the winter commencement.  

Final Plans:  
Lt. Jack Ridinger of the VT Police Department outlined plans to follow the basic security plan for Fall Commencement at the Coliseum that is used for large events on campus such as basketball and football games. With regard to commencement, the University
Registrar, Wanda Dean, will send a message over the listserv to graduating graduate and undergraduate students requesting that they share with their guests that all packages, purses, and persons attending commencement are subject to search. Attendees are being encouraged to leave packages in their vehicles, especially gifts that will be subject to being unwrapped and searched if brought inside the Coliseum. Graduates will need to carry regalia into the Coliseum and then put the gowns on once they reach their designated area. In addition, signage will be posted in the entrance to parking lots and on the walkway to the Coliseum advising those who are entering the building that, for security precautions, all packages, purses, persons are subject to search. A suggestion was made that students hand out flyers in the parking areas, however, with so many areas for parking, it would be impossible to cover them. It was felt signage in and around the Coliseum was sufficient. Parking areas directly around the Coliseum will be blocked to prevent anyone parking near the building. Officers will be stationed at the banks of doors entering from Washington Street, Spring Road, and the lower level of the Coliseum. Only those in wheelchairs will be allowed access into the Jamerson Center entrance.

Richard McCoy of Parking Services indicated that he will send a message through the Deans, Directors and Department Heads listserv to advise faculty and staff regarding the changes to parking access and areas that will be blocked off beginning Thursday evening.

Security will consist of 6 officers and event staff at the Graduate School Commencement and 12 officers and the event staff at the University Commencement. John Beach indicated that Physical Plant staff would be posted around the building. The Coliseum has no central fire alarm system so each of the staff members and officers are being advised to call the central police station to report any sign of smoke or fire. A meeting with the State Fire Marshal is being coordinated to learn more about safety precautions before spring commencement.

Randy Billingsley has agreed to find out the time of the College of Business breakfast that will be held on Saturday morning in the Bowman Room and whether the attendees will have tickets to the event. He will relay this information to Chairman Henneke who requested it so that the hours the Coliseum doors will be opened could be coordinated to accommodate those who need to be in the building and to advise staff who may need to check tickets for those entering the building.

The committee suggested adding an announcement at the beginning of the commencement program regarding turning cell phones off. Kim O’Rourke will have an announcement to this effect included in the scripts for both the graduate and undergraduate ceremonies.

The committee discussed the feasibility of issuing diplomas being received at the fall commencement ceremonies. It seems unlikely that the university will be able to hand out the actual diplomas due to economic and security issues related to the printing of the diplomas, coupled with difficulty in the timeframe for grades to be received and recorded. Chairman Henneke has a meeting scheduled with the Registrar and will report back to the Committee.
**Update on Tom Tillar's proposal for VT academic regalia**

Chairman Henneke reported to the committee that the proposal for new VT regalia has been referred by letter to the Commission on Faculty Affairs, Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies, and the Faculty Senate. Approval from these groups and what other groups that may need to be identified should be obtained before the gown is used in commencement ceremonies. Further, the university’s logo and seal are trademarked, so the vendor will have to receive a license from the university. Committee members were asked to advise any students who may have inadvertently been told that they could order the regalia for commencement that the proposal is still under consideration.

With no further business to discuss, Bud Brown moved for adjournment, and the meeting adjourned at 12:55 p.m.

There will be no meeting in January. The next meeting will be Wednesday, February 6, 2002, at 12:15 p.m. in the President’s Board Room, 210 Burruss.