UNIVERSITY COMMENCEMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES  
September 5, 2001  
210 Burruss Hall  
12:15 – 1:30 p.m.  
(Revised)


GUESTS: M. Murray, Lyndell Price

ABSENT: B. Conger, D. Reaves, S. Burke, E. Brown, H. Robertshaw, A. Zink-Sharp, R. Crawford, E. Miller.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Henneke at 12:15 p.m.

Approval of May 2, 2001 Minutes
Moved by D. Taylor, seconded by K. O'Rourke, the minutes were approved unanimously as distributed.

Introductions
Kim O'Rourke took a moment to introduce Margie Murray, Special Events Coordinator in the President’s Office. She is replacing Carolyn Agnew as primary support for the Commencement Committee. Carolyn recently retired after serving several years as assistant to the Commencement Committee.

Chairman Henneke asked that the committee officially acknowledge Carolyn's long hours and commitment to the committee and express its appreciation.

Post Mortem of Spring Commencement 2001
Handicap and wheelchair mobility seemed to be the biggest problem. In addition to minimal shuttle service and close accessibility, there were too many guests wishing to sit in the wheelchair access area. D. Taylor suggested that more rows in this area be added for family and friends.

Beach said it will be tough to get buses in until the Lane Stadium construction project is well along. He indicated that no bus will be brought in or allowed under the East stands by Cassell Coliseum (north end). There are too many pedestrians in that area.

Taylor indicated there would be no procession in the Spring 2002 ceremony.
Beach indicated there would be no south end zone access, and that the sound truck would no longer be allowed to park on the field due to the new system in place, and that sound towers may not be staked.

Hincker indicated that the stadium P.A. system has been renovated and wondered if we might use our own system. It was determined that the sound system is better that it was, but not quite good enough.

Henneke asked Goodrich about the Graduate Ceremony and having the concession stands opened during the ceremony, especially for beverages at a non-football price. Goodrich indicated that the issue had come up previously and had been voted against because the concessions would not offer a non-football price. Goodrich said she would ask the caterers to serve drinks earlier.

It was mentioned that the Graduate and Corps ceremonies are planned too close together. Arrangements need to be made to hold the Coliseum parking lots better because there is no parking available at the late minute for the stage party.

O'Rourke indicated that the use of the big screen for Spring worked well and that is was a good plan. Hincker said he received a bill from Athletics for $250 from Athletics for this arrangement, and that there were 5 individuals with cameras—three in the control tower.

Henneke mentioned that a letter of congratulations was sent to the committee from the president expressing his appreciation for their service. It was brought to the attention of the committee that one of the ushers especially commented on how well Physical Plant served the committee.

The next discussion revolved around emergency evacuation plans, especially for infirm or handicapped individuals. Beach indicated that evacuation from the floor of Cassell Coliseum is not easy. The gallery openings are on the 4th floor and that the practice gym is used for lining up. There are two ways out, but the fire code limits that access. The University Fire Safety Officer sets the capacity. A sub-committee will be established to look further into these issues.

Tom Tillar of the Alumni Association had planned to be at this meeting to discuss a proposal from the AA to have special academic apparel designed for Virginia Tech. He will attend the October meeting.

It was remarked that the graduate students voted against special VT academic gowns when surveyed previously. Special academic regalia is costly, and may not be used again except in a university setting. Should we have Oak Hall design special gowns? At one time, the McComas regalia was mentioned, but Tillar has another idea. Tillar will discuss this with the committee in October.
Hincker indicated that Pat White’s replacement had been chosen and would begin on September 17.

O’Rourke mentioned that a Commencement Hotline or “call box” was in the process of being implemented. This information will be promoted in the upcoming brochure, and O’Rourke asks for the committee’s feedback once installed. [Note: The Hotline has since been implemented and can be reached by calling (540) 231-3208, the same as Carolyn Agnew’s old phone number.]

The fall ceremonies will be on December 21st and 22nd this year with the 12th being the last day of classes, and the 19th the last day of exams.

Henneke received a letter from Dave McKee expressing his thanks to the Committee for supporting his request to Mr. Ridenour for financial support for the commencement orchestra visit to Virginia high schools prior to the Spring Commencement.

With there being no further business, Henneke asked that the meeting adjourn. This was moved by Hincker, seconded by O’Rourke, and the meeting adjourned at 12:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Edmund G. Henneke, Chair
University Commencement Committee
I'd like to note two corrections to the minutes from Sept. 15:

"Henneke asked Goodrich about the Graduate Ceremony and asked her to check into having the concession stands opened during the ceremony, especially for beverages at a non-football price"

What I said was that the issue had come up previously and had been voted against - because the concessions would not offer a non-football price, and I made a suggestion that I would ask the caterers to serve drinks earlier.

"Goodrich indicated that the Graduate and Corps ceremonies are planned too close together. Arrangements need to be made to hold the Coliseum parking lots better because there is no parking available at the last minute for the stage party."

I did not make this comment. The issue came up but I am not sure who brought it up.

Thanks. Pat

At 02:09 PM 10/1/01 -0400, you wrote:

> Agenda for Wednesday and minutes from last meeting are attached. Please let
> me know if you have trouble receiving these documents.
>
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New Graduate School Web Page: http://www.grads.vt.edu