COMMENCEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, February 5, 2003
12:15 p.m.
President's Boardroom, 210 Burruss Hall

PRESENT: Ed Henneke, Bill Stringer for Jerry Allen, Bud Brown, Theresa Cassino, John Beach for Bill Elvey, Leon Geyer, Jerry Gibson, Pat Goodrich, Brad Klein, Vinod Lohani, Kim O'Rourke, Dixie Reaves, Sherry Schofield-Tomschin, Dean Stauffer, Dan Taylor.

ABSENT: Randy Billingsley, Greg Brown, Reba Crawford, Bill Green, Grant Hill, Larry Hincker, Nicole Reynolds, Diane Zahm.

GUESTS: Susan Angle, Greg Beecher, Dave McKee, Margie Murray, Jennie Reilly, Kimberle Badinelli, Vickie Sarfo-Kantanka, John Greene

Chairman Ed Henneke called the meeting to order at 12:17 p.m.

Approval of Minutes for December 4, 2002 Meeting
Moved by Geyer, and seconded by Brown, the minutes were approved as written.

Request from Senior Challenge
The Senior Challenge committee requested that they be allowed to make a check presentation during the spring commencement ceremony to the university as a gift. At the December meeting, the committee moved that the Senior Challenge proposal be recommended to the President for approval. O'Rourke will comment at the February meeting on the outcome of that request.

Fall Commencement Planning Discussion
Dr. Henneke asked that the committee begin discussions on whether or not to cancel Fall Commencement 2003. Would parents have problems getting lodging refunds? Hotels would lose the two nights' lodging. It was mentioned that Hincker should contact area hotels for their input, and that the committee members should ask for student interaction, and be ready to discuss this issue at the March meeting. It may be too late to cancel this year, but could go into affect for fall of 2004.

Spring 2003 Commencement Schedule
It was requested that the committee consider the pros and cons of the recent changes for Spring Commencement. Dr. Steger would ultimately decide on whether the schedule changes would continue in the coming years.

It was asked that the committee members present work with other college members to decide on sharing space for college and departmental ceremonies. In spring of 2004, the committee could be reviewing the need for additional large space for the New College, and current colleges could outgrow their current space.

Klein mentioned that Veterinary Medicine was having trouble getting space in Squires for their post-event reception. They were looking for space for approximately 1200 guests.
Spring 2003 Commencement Speaker
The first speaker had been invited, but declined. O'Rourke indicated that another invitation had gone out, and that we hoped to know soon who the speaker would be.

Spring 2003 Commencement Planning
Beach indicated that a college may use Lane Stadium for a spring ceremony, but inclement weather could be an issue, especially with no other indoor locations. Also, Physical Plant workers would not be available to assist on Saturday with college ceremonies. Only about fifty percent of the Physical Plant staff working on Friday would return on Saturday. Holding the University ceremony on Friday actually helps with the fact that Physical Plant workers do not receive overtime hours on weekends. Most of the work could be competed on Friday evening.

Veterinary Medicine was still considering the change of time for their ceremony to Saturday evening, but O'Rourke mentioned that the Northern Virginia Center Ceremony is held on Saturday evening.

It was reiterated that we do use the big screen at Lane Stadium for Commencement and will continue to do so.

The planning committee for the Northern Virginia Center Ceremony has again asked that the University Mace be used during their ceremony. In the past, Dr. Steger has allowed them to use the smaller version of the original mace to avoid expensive moving and security costs. The Northern Virginia Center will be allowed to use the smaller version of the mace as in the past, and since Dr. Geyer has been asked to serve as the marshal, will make arrangements to take the small mace.

It was announced that Residential and Dining Programs would be adding an optional dinner on Friday evening to the commencement schedule due to the change in the timing of the University Ceremony. The dinner would be available between 3:30 and 7:30 p.m. at West End Market.

It was announced by Dr. Henniker that we received only two emails complaining about the spring schedule changes.

McKee asked that the committee support the recommendation that the band be allowed to continue its local spring tour with reduced funding. The band would focus on Blacksburg as its base of operation with no overnight travel. This would reduce the cost to ½ of the normal cost of approximately $1500. The band is a good representative of Virginia Tech, garnering excellent public relations for the university, and it's also a good diversion for the seniors prior to graduation. Moved by McKee, and seconded by O'Rourke, the committee agreed to support the request of funds for their annual trip.

Special Request by the Corps of Cadets
The representatives of the Corps of Cadets asked if the members of the Corps were required to wear regalia for the university and college ceremonies or whether they could wear their dress uniforms. It was discussed by the committee with the following outcome. Although the Corps has its own graduation ceremony, it's not an academic ceremony. The university and college ceremonies are, and therefore, Corps members should wear cap and gown, as other undergraduates are required. All but one member agreed with the summation.

The meeting adjourned at 1 p.m.