University Commencement Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 6, 2008
12:15 p.m.
President’s Board Room, 210 Burruss Hall

Present: Dan Taylor, Bud Brown, Michael Dunleavy, Larry Hincker, Brad Klein, Christina Mcintyre, Kim O’Rourke, Lyndell Price, Dixie Reaves, Susanna Rinehart, Dean Stauffer, Linda Tegarden

Absent: Jerry Allen, Candice Clemenz, Michelle Czamanske, Elizabeth Fine, Kathy Hosig, Adeel Khan, Brian Mihalik, Ashley Noble,

Guests: Captain Joey Albert, Stephen King, Margie Murray, April Myers, Jennie Reilly, Laura Wedin, Eric Wininger

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

Approval of Minutes
Dunleavy moved that the minutes for the December 5, 2007, meeting be approved. With a second from Hincker, the minutes were approved unanimously.

Debriefing from Fall Ceremonies
Reaves mentioned that both ceremonies flowed very smoothly even with the additional photograph being taken and the use of the ramp.

Tegarden, on behalf of Candice Clemenz, informed the committee that the Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies discussed an issue with the process of the photo cards given to the readers of names. Currently the reader of names will get the card from the student and after the name is read will slide the card onto a string provided by Chappell Graduation Images. Some of the students rip the cards so the cards will not stay on the string. Another problem is the string had a knot in it which made it difficult to slide the cards on. The names are difficult to read because there is a lot of information on the front of the card which makes it difficult to locate the phonetic spelling. It is also hard to manage the cards with the slanted podium. Dr. Candice Clemenz has offered to contact the photographer to research a better method to use for the photo cards. The committee welcomed her offer.

Dunleavy informed the committee that as a member of the stage party he received someone else’s proofs. Taylor indicated that this is another issue to inform Chappell Graduation Images about.

Dunleavy asked what graduates who are members of the stage party should do when their names are called. Reaves indicated that during the Fall ceremony, the student should get up and exit the stage and join his/her college as they are lining up to walk across the stage. After walking across the stage, the student should return to his/her seat on the stage.

Taylor informed the committee that the ceremony began before the colors were posted, which is when the flags are placed in the stands. It is very difficult to hear and see what the Color Guard is doing from the stage. Reaves suggested that in order to help make
the stage party aware of what is happening, the script should include stage directions noting that the chair of the Commencement Committee will announce the passing of the colors just prior to the colors being posted.

Captain Albert indicated that everything went well from a security point of view.

Reaves commended the physical plant employees for a fantastic job as always.

McIntyre suggested that the ushers check in at a predetermined location such as the food station. She also suggested there be an usher training session the day before the ceremony during which a walk-through can be conducted.

**Senior Class Officer Seating**
Dunleavy informed the committee that some of the class officers who will not have the opportunity to speak want some type of recognition. There was a suggestion from the officers to allow all eight officers (three who are speaking and five who are not speaking) to sit on the stage. It was determined that there is not enough room for all class officers to sit on the stage. A suggestion was made to have the five officers without a speaking role process in before the College of Veterinary Medicine graduates. Five seats can be placed in the front of the section specifically for the officers. Reaves suggested that the first student speaker can recognize the additional officers at the beginning of his/her speech.

**Planning for spring ceremonies**
Reilly informed the committee that she, David Bingham (Architect for ADA), and Doug Epps (Sign Shop) toured the stadium to look for any trouble spots. She indicated that there is a need for more ushers on the Northwest side. Reilly also asked if the Southwest platform would be available for ADA seating. This platform was used last year by the media. Hincker indicated that there will not be a large media presence this spring. It was also determined that there is a need to communicate when a platform has reached capacity. The use of signs and ushers were suggested as ways to communicate when the platforms are at capacity. Reilly also informed the committee that four handicapped-accessible bathrooms did not have signs posted. She will contact Tom Gabbard. A better map of the stadium will be included in the usher packets for the spring ceremony.

It was determined that the stage party will need a robing room located at field level. It was very difficult to get the ADA guests down on the elevators while the stage party tries to go back up to the west lounge of the South End Zone to disrobe after the ceremony. The caterers also use the elevators after the ceremony to transport items down. The congestion should not be as bad this year because there will be fewer guests on the club level.

Albert informed the committee that the quote from RMC for the spring ceremony will be approximately $19,000. He suggested giving the RMC staff dorm rooms to stay in which may help with decreasing the cost.

**Graduation Nation**
A company called Graduation Nation has contacted Randy Stith about videotaping or using Virginia Tech’s feed to produce a Commencement DVD. Murray indicated that this type of service may have to go out on bid. Klein stated that from his own experience
with trying to videotape his son’s graduation, he was grateful that the university produced a DVD of the ceremony. Rinehart cautioned that some of that these types of companies are only out to make money and do not get a real sense of the university. She then suggested that a DVD be produced in house. Hincker indicated that it would not be cost effective. He then suggested that Virginia Tech can provide background footage for the DVD, but not film the entire ceremony. Hincker suggested that there be an income stream coming back to the university if we allow Graduation Nation or any other company to do this. Reilly mentioned that if there is sound to the DVD, caption will need to be included for the hearing impaired. It was questioned if this company would be willing to provide DVDs of all college/department ceremonies or just the University and Graduate School ceremonies. A question was raised about how Chappell Graduation Images (photographer) would react to a videographer (i.e., a competitor) at the ceremonies. Hincker offered to investigate the university’s options and will report back to the committee.

March and April Meetings
Taylor indicated that the March meeting was moved back to March 12, 2008, in order to accommodate those away on spring break. He then informed the committee that he will be in Africa during the April meeting, so he would like to discuss as much as possible at the March meeting.

With no other business, O’Rourke moved to adjourn at 12:55 p.m.