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

Present: Dan Taylor, Bill Stringer for Jerry Allen, Bud Brown, Candice Clemenz, Michael Dunleavy, Larry Hincker, Kathy Hosig, Christina McIntyre, Brian Mihalik, Kim O’Rourke, Lyndell Price, Dixie Reaves, Susanna Rinehart, Linda Tegarden

Absent: Michelle Czamanske, Elizabeth Fine, Adeel Khan, Brad Klein, Ashley Noble, Dean Stauffer

Guests: Captain Joey Albert, Stephen King, Margie Murray, April Myers, Randy Stith, Laura Wedin

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

Approval of Minutes
Mihalik moved that the minutes for the February 6, 2008, meeting be approved. With a second from Brown, the minutes were approved unanimously.

Commercial DVD Proposal – Report from Randy Stith
Randy Stith gave a report on what GraduationNation has to offer Virginia Tech concerning the production of a Commencement DVD. [Note: GraduationNation is a company that approached Virginia Tech requesting the opportunity to produce a Commencement DVD.]

List below are the highlights from Randy Stith’s report:

1. Production
   - Two cameras cover the stage
   - The samples provided were adequate but nothing special
   - They can do their own videography or take a finished tape from Virginia Tech and do post-production and marketing
   - If Virginia Tech provides a video the University will receive a rebate from each copy sold
   - 60%-70% of the schools that use GraduationNation provide their own tape

2. Marketing
   - DVD will be packaged and distributed
   - Package design is approved by the school (can copy Commencement program cover)
   - Sold on GraduationNation website for $30-$40
   - They create a flyer for graduation packets sent out
   - They send out e-mail blasts before and after Commencement
   - They set up tables at graduation
   - They take care of all sales on-line or by mail
   - They keep the DVD in archives for ordering anytime
3. **Timetable**
- February - Begin arrangements
- March – Designs are approved and fliers are delivered
- April – Plan production
- May – Sales representatives and camera crews are on campus
- July – DVD is approved, duplicated, and delivered

4. **Interest**
- Interest is said to grow from year to year
- GraduationNation claims that 5% order the first year, then 10% order, then maybe up to 25% order

5. **Smaller Schools**
- Video everyone receiving a diploma, and they do all of the coverage

6. **Larger Schools**
- They cover the main university ceremony and some of the large college/departmental ceremonies (must have at least 500 graduates)
- Perhaps 30% of clients are individual colleges or departments rather than the university as a whole
- GraduationNation claims to have done up to 10 concurrent ceremonies

7. **Reason to use GraduationNation**
- They have been around the longest
- They can put extra material provided by the school onto the DVD
- Can create 2-disc set for Virginia Tech – the main ceremony plus whatever breakout ceremony requested as long as the 500 minimum graduates are met

8. **Testimonials**
- Miami University – Basically covers main ceremony and speaker, no breakout ceremonies - Miami University has not had any problems with GraduationNation
- Old Dominion University – They cover 2 ceremonies of 3 colleges each – Still photos are more popular, but Old Dominion “highly endorses” GraduationNation
- Northwestern – Use local company for main ceremony, but may use GraduationNation for some individual schools

The Graduate School pays the Athletics Department for coverage of the Graduate School ceremony, and makes it available on a DVD through the University Bookstore. The Bookstore duplicates the DVD and markets it. There is little interest in this DVD. Some semesters there are only 3-5 copies sold, and there has never been more than 10 copies sold. The cost is $20 per video. The Bookstore has offered to do this for the University ceremony as well. The Bookstore only takes pre-orders on their website and will make the exact number ordered. There is no special packaging for the bookstore DVD.
It was mentioned that not many people will want to buy a copy of the University ceremony; they will want a video that shows graduates receiving their diplomas at the college/department ceremonies. It will also be impossible to make all ceremonies available on the DVD. If the DVD has to be close-captioned, it may not be worthwhile for vendors to produce.

This request will have to go out on bid if it an outside company produces the DVD of the Commencement ceremony. If the bookstore produces the DVD, it will not have to go out on bid.

Larry made a motion that the Commencement Committee has reviewed the options of producing a DVD of the University ceremony and at this time the Committee does not express any interest. With a second from Brown, the motion passed unanimously.

[Note: The committee recognized Mr. Randy Stith for the outstanding job he did on researching the commercial DVD and the report he presented to the committee.]

**Committee Support on Spring Band Tour**

Taylor then asked if the committee wanted to support the request from the Music Department for funding for the University Wind Ensemble tour. The procedure is that the committee recommends approval to the President to support a tour of student musicians to various high schools around the state. These musicians will also play at the Spring Commencement ceremony. This tour creates good public relations for Virginia Tech.

King indicated that the budget is $10,625 and covers meals, transportation, and a crew to provide concerts at proposed high schools in Floyd, William Byrd, and E.C. Glass. The musicians will be based at Virginia Tech this year so there will not be a need for any lodging expenses. A question was raised as to why Floyd High School was included in the list of schools. King informed the committee that Floyd High School made a request for the University Wind Ensemble to perform at their school.

Mihalik made a motion to recommend to the President that Virginia Tech support the University Wind Ensemble tour. Hincker seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**Planning for spring ceremonies**

Mihalik informed the committee that an invitation has been extended for the keynote speaker at the Graduate School ceremony, but the offer has not been accepted as of yet.

Stringer indicated that the Color Guard is ready. The Corps ceremony is also set and a meeting is scheduled with UUSA to make arrangements.

McIntyre informed the committee that she, Dan Taylor, Jennie Reilly, and a representative from the Virginia Tech Rescue Squad met at the Stadium to look at the stadium from an usher and an accessibility perspective. The main outcome from this will be an increase in the number of ushers requested from each college. The joint request for ushers and marshals will be sent out early next week. There will be a number for marshals (which requires regalia to be worn), and there will be a larger number for ushers (who will not be required to wear regalia).
Murray indicated that all the ceremonies are confirmed and on the website. The brochure is on schedule. Wedin indicated that she will provide a photo of the class ring to go on the cover of the brochure and the program.

Hincker informed the committee that there are several survivors of April 16 graduating this spring. As a result, it is very likely there will be a lot of media interest. This will be managed similar to last year’s Commencement. Media will have to be credentialed and satellite trucks will not be traveling around on campus. As of now, there have not been many requests from the media for Commencement.

Clemenz brought a question to the committee from the Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies. The commission wanted to know if someone was following up with the RMC staying in the dorms. Captain Albert indicated that he is working on it, and he will pursue other options if that is not feasible.

Clemenz wanted to let the committee know that she has contacted Chappell, and the photo cards have been redesigned to make them easier to read. She is still working with Chappell on a resolution for keeping the photo cards in order during the Fall Commencement ceremonies.

The University ceremony and the Northern Virginia ceremony speakers have been confirmed and will be announced approximately four to five weeks before the ceremonies.

**April Meeting**
Taylor reminded the committee that the next meeting will be on Wednesday, April 2, 2008. Dixie Reaves will be chairing the April meeting because Dr. Taylor will be out of the country.

With no other business, Brown moved to adjourn at 12:55 p.m.