Commencement Committee Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, May 3, 2006  
12:15 p.m.  
President’s Boardroom, 210 Burruss Hall

Present: Ed Henneke, Dave Miller for Jerry Allen, Sumeet Bagai, Jerry Via for Bud Brown, Deborah Cook, Sam Easterling, Jean Kampe, Brian Mihalik, Kim O’Rourke, Lyndell Price, Dixie Reaves, Dean Stauffer

Absent: Russell Davis, Jerry Gibson, Ellington Graves, Bill Green, Larry Hincker, Brian James, Brad Klein, Navin Manjooran, Jerry Niles, Dan Taylor

Guests: John Beach, Wendell Flinchum, Richard McCoy, Patrick Casey, Margie Murray, April Myers, Jennie Reilly, Eric Wininger

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

Approval of Minutes
Easterling moved that the minutes for the April 5, 2006, meeting be approved as written. With a second from O’Rourke, the minutes were approved unanimously.

Distribution of Master’s Diplomas
Henneke indicated that the Commencement Committee made a strong recommendation to the Graduate School that the Master’s diplomas be passed out as the students walk across the stage. Henneke then stated that Dean DePauw responded to his note, indicating that the Graduate School can pass out more diplomas behind the scenes than on stage, but she will take the matter up again with her staff to consider for future ceremonies. Mihalik explained that the process of clearing a Master’s degree student is more involved than clearing a Bachelor’s degree student. A suggestion was made to have a strict deadline set for turning in paperwork by the Master’s degree students. Mihalik mentioned that the Graduate School has not received any complaints from the Master’s students about receiving their diplomas after the ceremony. Henneke made known that he received a complaint from an alumnus who is very upset that Master’s students are not receiving their diplomas during the ceremony. Mihalik asked to have any complaints that may be received in the future forwarded to him or Dean DePauw in the Graduate School.

Request by Green Engineering Program graduates to wear green sashes
Henneke informed the committee that the Green Engineering Program is an established concentration that students in the College of Engineering can pursue by taking specific courses. The Green Engineering Program graduates are requesting recognition of completing this program by wearing green sashes during Commencement as well as recognition in the program. Murray stated that if we recognize one group in the printed program we would have to recognize all special groups. After discussion, O’Rourke moved to maintain the existing policy that graduates can wear one accoutrement in addition to an honor sash during the University ceremony, and leave it to the discretion of each college to recognize its students in a manner it deems appropriate. Easterling seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

Final Planning for Spring Commencement
Price indicated that everything is in good shape, but he needs the number of students graduating in order to set up the correct number of chairs. Henneke confirmed that the
Honors Program graduates would be marching through the tunnel again and should arrive around 7:00 p.m.

Reilly indicated that the only special needs request received for the stage party is a cadet assistant escort for one of the award recipients; a ramp will not be needed.

O’Rourke stated that the Governor’s press conference would take place in the press room which may conflict with the robing area. Beach stated that he would determine what rooms will be used for the Governor’s press conference and the robing area after he speaks with the Governor’s staff.

Henneke then mentioned a request from University Relations office to hand out to each graduate a book of Virginia Tech post cards. The original plan was to have Alumni Relations mail these out with other information going to the graduates, but the postcards were not ready by the deadline for the mailing. After considerable discussion of the pros and cons, the committee decided not to distribute the booklets at the University ceremony and that University Relations will have to determine how to distribute the booklets.

Price asked if a teleprompter is needed for the Governor. O’Rourke stated that as soon as she found out, she would let everyone know. Beach indicated that at the last ceremony a teleprompter was used it was difficult to set up. He then suggested setting up the teleprompter on Thursday night to make sure that it will work properly.

Flinchum informed the committee that the Police Department received information that some groups may protest the University’s policy on banning firearms on campus during the ceremony. Flinchum indicated that there will be state police on the field because of the Governor, and they are aware of the situation. He also indicated that officers will be in the stands in case there are any disturbances.

Reilly questioned whether there will be any additional special needs parking at the stadium. McCoy indicated there will be additional parking set up aside at the stadium for special needs.

Easterling informed the committee that the Faculty Senate president has requested to address the graduates at the University ceremony to offer congratulations on behalf of the faculty. Bagai stated that he strongly supports the request. Easterling then moved that the Faculty Senate president address the graduates during the University ceremony on behalf of the faculty. O’Rourke seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

With no other business, O’Rourke moved to adjourn at 12:50 p.m.