University Commencement Committee Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, September 5, 2007  
12:15 p.m.  
President’s Board Room, 210 Burruss Hall

Present: Dan Taylor, Bill Stringer for Jerry Allen, Bud Brown, Michael Dunleavy, Elizabeth Fine, Larry Hincker, Kathy Hosig, Jean Kampe, Adeel Khan, Brad Klein, Christina McIntyre, Ashley Noble, Kim O’Rourke, Lyndell Price, Dixie Reaves, Susanna Rinehart, Dean Stauffer

Absent: Michelle Czamanske, Brian Mihalik, Linda Tegarden

Guests: Capt. Albert, Margie Murray, April Myers, Jacqueline Nottingham, Jennie Reilly, Eric Wininger

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

Approval of Minutes
Minutes will be distributed electronically for approval for the past four meetings. These meetings were so close together that it is taking some time to sort through the information.

Welcome and Introductions
Taylor welcomed everyone and asked those present to introduce themselves so everyone can become familiar with each other.

Debriefing From the Spring Ceremonies
Taylor asked the committee to look beyond the extraordinary circumstances and activities that took place during the Commencement ceremony in order to discuss the actual logistics of the ceremony.

Brown indicated that it took longer than normal to get everyone in. Reaves indicated that the student processional lined up too far in the tunnel which did not give the Honors Students a place to turn around. She then indicated that next year there will be a big yellow line on the ground that will help keep the processional from lining up too far. Reaves then stated that on the whole everything went very well. As in years past, it is difficult to keep the students lined up correctly when they process in. This results in uneven seating.

Taylor informed the committee that he received a comment about the congestion in the South End Zone with the elevators. It was very difficult to get those in wheelchairs where they needed to be efficiently. This was much worse this year due to the unique circumstances, but it has always been an issue in the past. It was then suggested that the stage party use the President’s Box for future ceremonies. O’Rourke indicated that the only detractor from using the President’s Box is the difficulty of getting the stage party down to the field through the crowds. Murray indicated that the elevator only goes to the concourse and not all the way down on to the field. It was determined that it is too congested to rope off a path for the stage party to walk through after they exit the elevator. It was then suggested the use of the stairs in the South End Zone to move the stage party down to line up for the processional.
Reilly indicated that there were not too many complaints about the congestion this past spring ceremony because most understood the circumstances. She then indicated that some of the congestion was created by the caterers transporting items in the elevators.

Murray informed the committee that there was a guest at the Spring ceremony who twisted his/her ankle and needed a wheelchair to leave. She then questioned if there are extra wheelchairs available during the ceremony. Reilly indicated that there are not, but emergency personnel has folding chairs that can be used.

Reilly indicated that there was more of a problem on the west side this past year. The accessible seating is very limited in the west stands and those that entered in on the west side had to go the South End Zone side to get to accessible seating. It was suggested to have better signage farther into the parking lot indicating where the accessible seating is located.

Hincker indicated that the number of guests attending the ceremony was comparable to past years.

**Planning for Fall Ceremonies**

Taylor asked if there is a need to have extra security at the Fall Commencement ceremony. Albert will get a cost estimate from RMC, the group that worked security at the Spring ceremonies, for the Fall ceremony. Albert indicated that extra security seems to put people attending football games more at ease. Albert then informed the committee that the Virginia Tech Police Department feels more comfortable when extra screening and security are done at big events. It was also determined that an evacuation of the coliseum will be easier than the stadium due to the number of doors coming in to the venue. Khan indicated that he did not feel that the extra security was overbearing during the Spring ceremony. Other ACC schools are providing extra security at their big events. A motion was made to have RMC staff at the Fall 2007 and the Spring 2008 Commencement ceremonies and to follow the same guidelines as the Spring 2007 Commencement Ceremony. O'Rourke seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

O'Rourke asked Dunleavy, the President of the Class of 2008, to provide names of possible keynote speakers for the Fall Commencement ceremony by the October meeting of the Commencement Committee. Dunleavy indicated that he will work with Tom Tillar to get that information.

With no other business, Brown moved to adjourn at 12:45 p.m.