COMMENCEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
Wednesday, February 4, 2004  
12:15 p.m.  
President’s Boardroom, 210 Burruss Hall

Present: Ed Henneke, Bill Stringer for Jerry Allen, Bud Brown, Theresa Cassino, Deborah Cook, John Beach for Bill Elvey, Pat Goodrich, Larry Hincker, Brad Klein, Vinod Lohani, Kim O’Rourke, Dixie Reaves, Nicole Reynolds, Sherry Schofield-Tomschin, Rich Sorensen, Dan Taylor, Diane Zahm

Absent: Robyn Daniel, Jerry Gibson, Bill Green, Brian James, Dean Stauffer

Guests: Kimberle Badinelli, Margie Murray, Lyndell Price, Betty Buskirk, Joey Wilkerson

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

Approval of Minutes
With a first from Cook, and a second from Brown, the minutes were approved as written.

Diplomas for Spring Commencement
Henneke began the meeting by reporting on the meeting of the Commission on Faculty Affairs discussion regarding handing out diplomas at spring commencement. Henneke voiced the Commencement Committee feeling that diplomas should be handed out in the spring. Several members of the faculty were urging the commission to discontinue the handing out of diplomas for several reasons: 1) they felt the process of providing preliminary grades led to grade inflation, 2) faculty members with large classes were forced to give different types of exams so that grades could get in on time. Henneke felt that the Commission was agreeable to the position of the Commencement Committee, and the Commission voted to continue the process of handing out diplomas.

Zahm stated that the Faculty Senate feels strongly against this issue, and that the faculty members on the Commission deferred to the wishes of the Commencement Committee this time. She said that time is very short from the last exam until grades are due, and that the time frame is a problem for faculty—not the diplomas. She believes this issue will come up again.

Taylor asked why the faculty are asked to provide preliminary grades, and it was said that it has something to do with the diploma printing deadlines. Taylor suggested that a senior week be proposed to delay the spring ceremony, or that all diplomas be printed for eligible seniors, but we just don’t hand out the diplomas for those who fail. He stated again that he felt the process of providing preliminary grades was a waste of time. Henneke indicated that that procedure was outside the purview of this committee.

Fall Ceremony Committee Recommendations
The discussion followed to the committee’s review of having fall commencement ceremonies all on one day. Zahm said that the response she heard was positive, and that she liked having the ceremonies on one day instead of two. Henneke asked the committee if they felt the schedule should change. He thought that the members of Physical Plant had a hard time dealing with a fast turnaround time from the University Ceremony since that ceremony ran over their time limit. Beach indicated that although the members of Physical Plant were able to reset for the Graduate Ceremony in time, it was a somewhat difficult since the first group ran over. Beach indicated that it might be a good idea to move the second ceremony back one half hour because of that.
Reaves suggested that the timing for the University ceremony be changed, and that there should be time limits for speakers. She also felt that maybe some of the student speaker comments be shortened or have the reflections removed from the ceremony. Goodrich indicated that the Graduate School will consider taking out the closing remarks of the student speaker from their ceremony. Sorensen felt that shortening the presentations or eliminating speakers from the University Ceremony would allow for the same schedule as before. The committee agreed that the schedule remain as is with the University Ceremony beginning at 11:00 a.m., and the Graduate Ceremony following at 3:00 p.m.

Sorensen felt that part of the backup on stage during the University ceremony was the second photograph taken once the student is off the stage. In addition, someone needs to alert the reader of potential backups so that the reading of names will slow down during these backups. The committee felt that the second photo was unnecessary, but the photographers feel that there is a better chance that the photo will be good if another photo can be taken off stage. The committee will consider looking for another close location for the second photograph to be taken after the ceremony concludes.

It was recommended by this committee that both the University and Graduate Ceremonies be held on the same day in the fall. Moved by Reaves, and seconded by Brown, the recommendation was unanimously approved by the committee. The Registrar’s Office will be notified of this change after official approval by Dr. Steger.

University Band Tour Committee Support
Dave McKee again has requested the support of the Commencement Committee regarding the local tour of band members to area schools. He feels this is an important recruiting tool and promotes a good image of the university. Zahm moved that the committee support his request for funds for the tour. With a second from O’Rourke, the committee unanimously agreed to support McKee’s request for funding for 2004.

Spring Commencement Ceremony Scheduling on Saturday
The committee reviewed the scheduling for college commencement ceremonies being held in Cassell Coliseum. Because there are three college ceremonies being held in Cassell it was felt that a review of the scheduling be addressed so that no ceremony begins later than 2:00 p.m. In 2003, the schedule was set for 8:30 a.m., 11:00 a.m., and 2:00 p.m. ceremonies. It was felt by the colleges involved that two of the largest colleges not hold back-to-back ceremonies. It was decided by the colleges that the Pamplin College of Business would hold their ceremony first, followed by the College of Agriculture, and then Engineering. In future years, this would mean that the College of Agriculture remains in the 11:00 a.m. time slot with the Pamplin College of Business and the College of Engineering switching times every year. To allow for ample time between ceremonies, the committee agreed that the schedule used in 2003 be used now and in upcoming years.

Reaves stated that speech limits during college ceremonies be exercised to limit ceremony length. This would improve handicap accessibility between ceremonies. Reaves also commended the members of the Physical Plant for handling the setups between ceremonies.

Survey of Ceremony Locations
A survey of ceremony locations for spring 2004 was handed out to the members of this committee, and it was requested that the college representatives work to ensure that each college or department complete the survey to verify the location and timing of their ceremonies.
New Business
Kimberle Badinelli of Student Programs reported that their office sent out a mailing to all eligible seniors and their parents regarding on-campus housing and dining during spring commencement. This mailing was sent separate from the commencement brochure mailing so that it could be mailed at an earlier date.

Goodrich reported that at the last Graduate Ceremony an interlude was played during the time graduates rose to come to the stage and actual presentations. Dean DePauw is working with McKee to have an original piece written just for this ceremony.