COMMENCEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
Wednesday, March 3, 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, Brian James, Brad Klein, Vinod Lohani, M. Echols for Dixie Reaves, Nicole Reynolds, Sherry Schofield-Tomschin, Audrey Zink-Sharp for Dean Stauffer

Absent: Robyn Daniel, Jerry Gibson, Bill Green, Rich Sorensen, Dan Taylor, Diane Zahm

Guests: Susan Angle, Hunter Gresham, Margie Murray, Lyndell Price, Jennie Reilly

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

Approval of Minutes
With one change in paragraph two under the heading of Diplomas for Spring Commencement, the minutes were approved unanimously after a motion from Schofield-Tomschin and a second from Cook.

Zahm stated that the Commission on Faculty Affairs feels strongly against this issue, and that the faculty members on the commission deferred to the members of the Commencement Committee this time.

Spring Commencement Planning
It was announced that the Commencement Speaker for the Graduate School Ceremony will be Dr. Orlando Taylor, Dean of Graduate Studies at Howard University. The University Commencement Speaker will be Pierre Thomas, ABC News Correspondent for the Justice Department. The speaker for the Northern Virginia Ceremony will be Lawrence J. Korb, Senior Fellow of the Center for American Progress.

****

Jack Dudley has again requested that a special procession of honors students be allowed at Spring Commencement. The procession would progress to Lane Stadium as before, but with more bagpipers and drummers leading the students instead of two. It was noted that last year, the students entered the north end zone simultaneously with the procession from the south end zone, but not enough seating was left for honors students. Dudley has asked for the committee to consider the following.

Dudley suggested that the honors students process onto the field from the tunnel at the north end zone, walk to the south end with the bagpipers and drummers playing, pause under the score board, and then join the front of the procession onto the field to be seated. The orchestra begins playing at approximately 6:45 p.m., and at approximately 7:00 or 7:05 p.m., the honors students would process in, followed by pomp and circumstance at 7:10 p.m. after the groups have joined.
Beach indicated that Dudley should work directly with the Virginia Tech Police again to develop a safe route of travel across roadways to the stadium.

Reaves and McKee will need to discuss the issue further with Dudley in order to make a final recommendation to the committee prior to May 14.

****
It was announced that the total number of usher and marshal volunteers from each college would be requested based on the number of graduates in the respective college instead of equally by college. This was in part due to college restructuring, and did not have a huge impact on the majority of colleges, with the exception of the College of Engineering whose volunteer numbers did increase.

****
Tassel Colors for Academic Regalia
Henneke reported to the committee that there was some confusion at the University Bookstore regarding tassel colors for academic regalia. This was also in part a direct result of college restructuring. It was thought by members of this committee that each college had its own tassel color, and that colors were not chosen based on the area of study. However, at least one, if not two colleges, directed students to choose colors based on area of study.

For this ceremony, it was agreed that no changes would be made, but that this issue should be addressed prior to the fall ceremony. Henneke stated that a national organization sets the standard for colors, and a copy of this literature was handed out to members of the committee for review. A follow-up study and review should be made with recommendations to the committee at a later time. This issue was tabled until further review.

****
Murray handed out a listing of the calendar of events for spring commencement for committee review so that any changes could be made if necessary prior to printing of the brochure. No changes were indicated.

In addition, a draft of the materials to be posted on the Virginia Tech Commencement Website was also distributed for review by the members of the committee prior to posting. Additional information should be directed to Murray for inclusion on the website as needed.

One last handout was distributed regarding the layout and maintenance of a permanent Commencement Information website. After review by the committee, the only suggestion was to have the past speakers of the University and Graduate ceremonies listed. Once the new website has been designed, the President's Office will be responsible for the continual update of this site for review as needed by students and family members on a daily basis.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:58 p.m.