COMMENCEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, May 5, 2004
12:15 p.m.
President's Boardroom, 210 Burruss Hall

Present: Ed Henneke, Bud Brown, Theresa Cassino, Deborah Cook, John Beach for Bill Elvey, Jerry Gibson, Pat Goodrich, Larry Hincker, Vinod Lohani, Kim O’Rourke, Dixie Reaves, Nicole Reynolds, Rich Sorensen, Audrey Zink-Sharp for Dean Stauffer, Dan Taylor, Diane Zahm

Absent: Jerry Allen, Robyn Daniel, Bill Green, Brian James, Brad Klein, Sherry Schofield-Tomschin,


Chairman Henneke called the meeting to order at 12:15 p.m. Before beginning, Henneke dropped the third item regarding a request to display the Golden Anniversary booklet at Commencement from the agenda.

Approval of Minutes
After an update to the present and absent listing showing Zink-Sharp attending for Dean Stauffer, Cook moved that the minutes be approved. With a second from Sorensen, the minutes were approved as written.

Request from Student Group to Wear Stoles at Commencement
Members of the committee were provided photos of stole examples before discussion began. It was noted that in prior years the Commencement Committee had given permission for an international student stole and an African American “kinta” stole. Several questions arose— one being “How many students were required to be an organization?” The answer of three full-time students was provided. The other question was “How would stoles be restricted?” It was suggested that information regarding appropriate dress could be provided on the Commencement website.

Sorensen felt that more information was needed and that a task force should be appointed to study the issue.

Final Spring Commencement Planning
West Stands
After a concern was raised regarding safety on or near the west stands, Beach indicated that the west stands would be closed, and that the project manager for the job would ensure the enclosure of the area. And, there would be no concessions open in the west stands.

Parking
Parking for the Graduate and Undergraduate Stage Parties would be provided in the tennis court lots. If members of the stage parties arrived early enough for each ceremony, parking in the south stadium lot would also be available. This lot would have security, and barricades would be moved upon arrival to ensure adequate parking.

Captain Baudo indicated that although the coliseum lot was blocked for usher/marshal/procession parking prior to each ceremony, that the lot would be reopened within 45 minutes of the ceremony for additional guests attending the ceremonies.
It was requested that signs in the first bay of the coliseum lot be provided for handicap parking only. After a complaint about last year’s parking problems in the Southgate Center lot, it was suggested that Personnel Services employees park in the maintenance lot to avoid being blocked during the ceremonies.

Beach stated that the road behind the stadium would be blocked approximately 20 minutes prior to the beginning of the ceremony.

Miscellaneous
Due to the lack of lighting available in the west stands, it was requested that additional lighting be provided on the podium, especially for main speaker needs.

Taylor indicated that if programs were to be handed out to students as they processed into the stadium, that a table should be provided at each procession line so that marshals don’t have to hand out programs individually.

The Graduate School plans to have their ceremony videotaped, and the Virginia Tech Bookstore will be selling the videotapes upon request. Only the main speaker of the University Ceremony will be videotaped, and copies will not be available for sale.

To begin the ceremony, the prelude music will end at 7:10 p.m., the honors students will process in from the tunnel, march to the end of the scoreboard, and join the other students in the processional into seating on the field.

Inclement Weather
Hincker said that if the university waited until 3 p.m. to announce that the University Ceremony would be held in Cassell Coliseum, there would be no time to prepare for closed-circuit television. The only option might be to air the ceremony on campus cable or off-campus to Blacksburg cable only. It would take a full day for CNS to prepare the cable. He indicated that Athletics may have the equipment to prepare for such an event, and that he would check with them.

Other Comments
There is only one handicap ramp available for stage purposes. Since there may be a need to have one in the Coliseum, and one at Lane Stadium, especially in an inclement weather situation, Beach indicated that he would get an estimate on purchasing a second one, and that it could probably be stored with the other ramp.

Graduate Photos
Pat Goodrich stated that during the Graduate ceremony, there needs to be a change in the way photos are taken so that graduates do not become backed up on stage. Maybe only one photo angle should be taken instead of two. Someone should work with the photographer in the future to work out another arrangement.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:50 p.m.