

University Commencement Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 2, 2011
12:15 p.m.
President's Board Room, 210 Burruss Hall

Present: Dan Taylor (chair), Sandy Bass, Tom Broyles, Larry Hincker, Jong Kim, Brad Klein, Kim O'Rourke, Nathan Lavinka, Gary Long, Jacqueline Nottingham, David Shuster, Jill Sible, Muzaffer Uysal, Anthony Watson

Absent Jerry Allen, Jactone Arogo Ogejo (with notice), Jeffrey Connor, Elizabeth Fine, Pat Goodrich, Jason Holliday (with notice), Ann Marie Knoblauch, Kate Preston (with notice)

Guests: Captain Albert, Kevin Ayoub, Travis Cross, Bo Frazier, Margie Murray, April Myers, Pam Vickers,

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

Approval of December 1, 2010, minutes

Lavinka moved to approve the minutes of the December 1, 2010, meeting. With a second from Long, the minutes were approved unanimously.

Recap of Fall Ceremonies

Long informed the committee that there was a complaint from a faculty member that the names of two graduates were not included in the Commencement program. He also indicated that the two students did not meet the deadline for submitting their information in order for their names to be included in the program.

Taylor indicated that everything ran very smoothly during the two ceremonies.

Committee Support on Spring Band Tour

Cross asked for the committee's support in requesting funding for the annual University Wind Ensemble tour. The student Wind Ensemble performs during the Spring University Commencement. The student Wind Ensemble goes on a tour to perform at several different high schools in Virginia the week before Commencement. The tour will be to the Richmond and the Hampton Roads areas this year. Cross indicated that the projected cost of the tour is \$11,095, but the requested funding from the President's Office is for the same amount as the past three years of \$10,625. The remainder of the funding will be requested from the Department of Music.

O'Rourke made a motion to accept the proposal and to recommend to the President that Virginia Tech support the University Wind Ensemble Tour. Long seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Changes to Memorial Gym Floor

Dave Shuster informed the committee that there is a new floor in Memorial gym, that is not as forgiving as the previous floor. He requested using plywood underneath the stage in order to keep the stage from damaging the new floor by sinking into it. Shuster also indicated that the chairs on the floor should have the rubber caps on them as well to prevent damage to the new floor. Murray indicated that she will contact the group that sets up to stage to let them know about the new floor and the requests concerning the stage and chairs.

Request for Graduation Procedures for Ceremonies in Cassell Coliseum

Taylor requested a report from the college representatives who have ceremonies in Cassell Coliseum about the procedures used to get the graduates seated. The wear-and-tear of the carpet in the coliseum is the reason for this request. Taylor indicated that this topic will be brought back up at the March meeting, and the college representatives who have ceremonies in Cassell will be asked to give a report on procedures used for seating graduates.

Usher and Marshal Recruitment Process

Each college representative to the Commencement Committee is asked to get volunteers for marshals and ushers for the Graduate School and the University ceremonies. Some college representatives have found it difficult to get faculty to volunteer to participate as marshals and ushers. Taylor asked that the college representatives share their process for obtaining volunteers. Klein indicated that for the College of Veterinary Medicine, he e-mails each department head with number of volunteers needed and what the requirements are (if regalia is needed, etc.). Then each department head is responsible for getting the names of the volunteers. The department heads usually have a list of what faculty members have recently volunteered and which ones are up to participate. Klein keeps a master list of all volunteers and contacts certain faculty members who have participated most years as backup in case someone cancels at the last minute. Dr. Uysal indicated that the Pamplin College of Business basically uses the same process as the College of Veterinary Medicine. Dr. Kim indicated that he sends out an e-mail to the faculty in the College of Science asking for volunteers. He indicated that some departments are more cooperative than others. Sometimes, the dean is asked to encourage the department heads. Taylor indicated that the Colleges of Natural Resources and Environment and Engineering have a formal rotation system that seems to work well.

A suggestion was made to have a written request come from the committee which may show how important it is to get volunteers. Hincker suggested opening the request up to staff employees and administrative and professional faculty. It was indicated that classified and university staff employees may not be able to volunteer because they may have to be compensated for their hours worked. Murray suggested that staff employees use some of their community service leave to volunteer. O'Rourke will check with Human Resources to see what the options are for asking staff to volunteer.

Printing of Commencement Brochure and Program

Murray informed the committee that the President's Office puts together a brochure for the Fall and Spring ceremonies that is mailed to the students and to the parents of the students. Many of the brochures that are mailed to the parents are returned because of an incorrect address. The President's Office also puts together programs for both the Fall and Spring ceremonies that include the names of those graduating. Every year, boxes of programs are left over after Commencement. Watson added that many programs are left behind or discarded on the floor by the audience after the ceremony. With the recent budget cuts and the university's focus on sustainability, Murray suggested the following:

- Eliminate the printing of the brochure and instead post online and e-mail it out.
- Eliminate printing the names of students in the program but post the names online.

By taking these two steps it could save approximately \$27,000 for printing and distribution costs and over 1.25 million pages. It was indicated that many of the individual college and department ceremonies print their own programs that also include the names of the graduates. These programs are more likely to have the most up-to-date information since the deadline for the Commencement program is earlier in the year.

Lavinka indicated that he felt the brochures should still be mailed to the parents because many of them will not get the information by looking online. He also indicated that it is a good idea to e-mail it to the students. Hincker suggested e-mailing the brochure to the parents because University Relations does have access to the parents' e-mail addresses.

Long made a motion to discontinue the printing of the brochure and distribute it as an e-mail to students and parents as well as post on the Commencement website. Sible seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Hincker indicated that the program is a memento, and the names of the graduates should be included in it. It was then suggested that the complete programs could be printed and handed out to the audience members but not the graduates. O'Rourke suggested giving the student a one-page card stock that includes the order of ceremony on one side and the speaker/award winners on the other side. It was then suggested that the audience at the University ceremony receive an abbreviated program that does not include the student names, but the full program (including the student names) would be given out at the individual college and department ceremonies. Murray reminded the committee that prior to 2003, the audience at the University ceremony received only the abbreviated program without the student names listed; they received the full program with student names at college/department ceremonies. The entire program would be distributed to the audience at the Graduate School ceremony since they do not have individual ceremonies on Saturday. Taylor asked Murray to research more into printing the abbreviated program for the audience at the University ceremony along with the one-page cardstock for the graduates and report back to the committee at the March meeting.

Announcements

Taylor announced that the formalized emergency notification procedures are being updated and will be posted on the Commencement website.

With no other business, Long moved to adjourn at 1:19 p.m.