

University Commencement Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, April 5, 2017
12:15 p.m.
President's Board Room, 210 Burruss Hall

Present: Dan Taylor (chair), Janice Austin, Candi Clemenz, Jay Crone, Rami Dalloul, Patrick Finn, Lance Jones, Liselle Joseph, Kelly McCann, Kim O'Rourke, Steve Sheetz, Martha Sullivan, Pengtao Yue, & Diane Zahm

Absent: Deborah Dickerson, Andrew Ellis, Rebecca Funk, PJ Johnston, Chris Saunders, Michael Stowe, Benjamin Tracy, & Anthony Watson

Guests: Deputy Chief of Police Mac Babb, Jonathan Caldwell, Bo Frazier, Tom Gallemore, Peter McCann, Christina McIntyre, Heather Miller, Margie Murray, April Myers, Dennis Robarge, Rick Sparks, Robyn Stuart, Pam Vickers, & Laura Wedin

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

Announcement of Approval of February 1, 2017, minutes

Taylor announced that the minutes of the February 1, 2017, meeting have been voted on and approved electronically.

Request to have SGA President Speak at Commencement

Ms. Alexa Parsley asked the committee members to consider having the Student Government Association (SGA) president be included in the list of speakers at the University Commencement ceremony beginning this year. Ms. Parsley indicated that the SGA president is the voice of the undergraduate students and is an elected position from the undergraduate student body. This request is not to give class officers less time or less opportunities to speak, but this is a request for an additional student speaking role at the University Commencement ceremony. This year is the 50th anniversary of the SGA and allowing the SGA president a speaking role at Commencement would be a good way to highlight the efforts of the SGA over the last 50 years. After a lengthy discussion, Diane Zahm made a motion to allow the SGA President to have a speaking role at the University Commencement Ceremony and the motion was seconded. A vote was taken and the motion failed. [Note: A subsequent request by Alexa Parsley, the SGA President, to be a member of the University Ceremony Stage Party for the 2017 Spring ceremony was approved for this year only in honor of the SGA's 50th anniversary.]

Commencement Band Proposal

In past years, there was a Commencement Band Tour, but the amount of time available to go on the tour has diminished because of the Graduate School ceremony is now held on Thursday instead of Friday so there is less time between the end of classes and the start of the ceremonies. Instead a concert will be held in the Moss Arts Center. It is free and will be for high school students, graduates, their families, and other community guests. The Moss Arts Center is charging only for the cost of its staff; they are waiving the rental fee. The entire cost for the concert is less than that of a tour. The concert will be on Thursday night after the Graduate School ceremony.

Diane Zahm made a motion to approve the Commencement band proposal. The motion was seconded, and the motion passed.

Planning for the Spring ceremonies

Master Gunnery Sergeant Jones informed the committee that the Color Guard will remove the flags from Cassell Coliseum after the ceremonies on Friday. They will be replaced for the Saturday ceremonies then removed at 6:00 p.m. The Color Guard participating in the National Capital Region ceremony will depart Blacksburg at 5:00 a.m. on Sunday to travel to Northern Virginia for that ceremony.

Sergeant Gallemore informed the committee members that the undergraduate students will line up in the track/soccer parking lot, but security checks will be conducted at the entrance of south tunnel in Lane Stadium. A question was raised as to how the honors graduates will process in without causing any issues with backing up the security checks in the south tunnel. It was determined that the honors students will enter Worsham Field through the north tunnel and go straight to their seats so as not to create an issue with the security checks.

There is information listed in the Commencement brochure about the clear bag policy, but this policy will not be enforced this year. There will be discussions for future ceremonies regarding the clear bag policy.

Kelly McCann indicated that eight porta potties will be needed in the track/soccer parking lot.

Dennis Robarge from Rhino (the event staff subcontractor) questioned if the schedule has been tightened up between the University ceremony and the ceremonies in the coliseum. Some of the same security staff is used for the ceremony in the stadium and the ceremonies in the coliseum. Dan Taylor indicated that a suggestion was made to have a smaller group stay at the stadium once the University ceremony begins and send the remainder of the Rhino staff to the coliseum.

Pam Vickers indicated that the interpreters are confirmed for both the University and Graduate School ceremonies.

Gate 2 will be opened for those needing accessible seating. Programs, ushers, and escorts will be needed at this gate.

Bo Frazier indicated that there is a plan for parking and it should work well. There may be a few small issues, but these can be worked out.

Peter McCann indicated that radio requests are needed. There will be a sign-up sheet at the next meeting to request the number of radios needed. The radios can be picked up on Thursday at the rehearsal or on the day of the ceremony.

With no other business, Steve Sheetz moved to adjourn at 1:09 p.m.