

**University Commencement Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, September 2, 2009**  
**12:15 p.m.**  
**President's Board Room, 210 Burruss Hall**

**Present:** Dan Taylor (chair), LTCOL Bill Stringer for Jerry Allen, Jactone Arogo Ojejo, Bud Brown, Jeffrey Connor, Brian Golden, Larry Hincker, Jong Kim, Brad Klein, Nathan Lavinka, Christina McIntyre, Kim O'Rourke, Kate Preston, David Shuster, Jill Sible, Dean Stauffer, Muzaffer Uysal

**Absent:** Elizabeth Fine, Ann Marie Knoblauch, Hardus Odendaal (with notice), Lyndell Price

**Guests:** Kevin Ayoub, Clyde Cridlin, Bo Frazier, Steven Glosch, Captain Houston, Michael Mulhare, Margie Murray, April Myers, Jennie Reilly, Krisztina Roder, Tom Tillar, Laura Wedin, Eric Winingar

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

**Approval of Minutes**

Hincker moved that the minutes for May 6, 2009, meeting be approved. With a second from Brown, the minutes were approved unanimously.

**Introduction of Members**

Taylor welcomed everyone to the committee and requested introductions be made so that everyone can become familiar with each other.

**Debriefing from Spring Ceremony**

Hincker expressed thanks to the Athletics department for the excellent camera work done that allowed the ceremony to be viewed on the Jumbotron. The demeanor of students on the field has changed since this was implemented several years ago.

Ayoub informed the committee that the Political Science and International Affairs ceremony is over capacity for Commonwealth Ballroom in the Squires Student Center. If this ceremony is moved to Burruss, there would be four ceremonies in Burruss. The first ceremony would begin at 8:00 a.m. and the last ceremony would begin between 4:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. A few suggestions were made to see if either the Blackbox Theater or the new basketball practice facility could be used. Murray informed the committee that part of the issue is that some colleges and departments have a cost associated with the use of a venue (chair rental fees, cost to use the space, etc.), and some colleges and departments do not have a cost associated with the use of a venue. If a ceremony that did not have any fees for the use of a venue has to be moved because of size, it may have to be moved to a space that will require a fee for using the space. This may cause a budgetary problem. Ayoub offered to analyze the time involved if four ceremonies were held in Burruss and will bring this to the next meeting. Murray will contact the three groups that are using Burruss Hall Auditorium and the Political Science and International Affairs department to inform them of the situation and will report back to the committee in October.

Roder brought up a concern that University Unions and Student Activities (UUSA) staff are overextended in terms of crowd management within facilities during individual college/departmental ceremonies. UUSA can maintain staff presence in the public spaces; however, additional support may be required from the departments to manage attendees of ceremonies in the large venues such as Squires and Burruss Hall.

Reilly informed the committee that there were no programs in the north and south towers for those in the handicapped-accessible seating. She also mentioned that at the Graduate ceremony the camera on the floor was blocking the interpreters from the view of those sitting in the reserved seating area. Taylor indicated that either the camera or the seating area can be adjusted for future ceremonies. Reilly then asked if there was anywhere in the stadium to store the blankets used in the South End Zone by those in handicapped-accessible seating. Tillar offered to store these at the Alumni office.

### **Undergraduate and Graduate Diploma Sizes**

There was a request last year to increase the Graduate Diploma size to be the same or larger than the undergraduate diplomas. Lavinka presented the committee copies of a survey taken of the undergraduate student body. Of the 2945 students who responded, 5 percent indicated they wanted a smaller diploma, 21 percent indicated they wanted a larger diploma, and 74 percent did not want to change the size of the diploma. Murray indicated that one of the main issues was to have standard sizes for both the graduate and undergraduate diplomas.

Cridlin informed the committee that the Registrar's office only needs to know what the standard size is, but that standard size doesn't need to be the same for both the graduate and undergraduate diplomas. Cridlin spoke with one of the Registrar's vendors and found out that the universally recognized standard sizes are 8 1/2 x 11, 11 x 14, and 16 x 20. Virginia Tech's undergraduate diploma is 13 1/2 x 15 1/2, which is not a standard size. The Registrar's office has no position on the size of the diploma, but requests a decision be made for when the change will take place and not to change it in the current year.

DePauw informed the committee that the graduate diploma was changed to 8 1/2 x 11 several years ago in order to have a standard size. DePauw stated a survey was done when the change took place and there were no major objections. There have only been approximately 10 total complaints about the size of the graduate diploma since the change took place. With the standard size, the Graduate School is able to offer diploma covers to each student.

Glosh stated that the graduates who purchase frames at the University Bookstore appear to be proud of the undergraduate diploma size. The University Bookstore is willing to go in whatever direction is needed, but the bookstore has a large stock of frames for the current diploma sizes.

A motion was made that the Commencement Committee resolves that: since diplomas for the graduate and undergraduate programs need not be the same size, and that any change in diploma size within either program would involve many issues such as existing inventories of supplies, supply contracts, and so forth, in the future any issues relating to the size of the diplomas should be decided by the undergraduate and graduate programs internally with appropriate timely interactions with other units involved on campus such as the registrar and bookstore. Thus diploma size is not an issue that needs to be brought before the commencement committee in the future. Connor moved to accept the motion. Stringer seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

### **Planning for Fall Ceremony**

Taylor announced that the carpet in Cassell Coliseum needs to be cleaned, and Lyndell Price in facilities will coordinate this project.

Houston indicated that R.M.C. staff has been arranged to work security during both ceremonies in the fall.

With no other business, O'Rourke moved to adjourn at 1:07 p.m.