

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

Present: Dan Taylor (chair), Sandy Bass, Tom Broyles, Tyler Campbell, Candi Clemenz, Elizabeth Fine, Rebecca Funk, Pat Goodrich, Mark Owczarski for Larry Hincker, Jason Holliday, Tamara Knott, Joe Merola, Rosemary Blieszner for Jacqueline Nottingham, Kim O'Rourke, David Shuster, Anthony Watson, Michael Weaver for Randy Fullhart

Absent Mike Ellerbrock (with notice), Bill Green, Masoud Safdari, Durelle Scott, Muzaffer Uysal

Guests: Captain Houston, Kevin Ayoub, Travis Cross, Bo Frazier, Natalie Hart, Margie Murray, April Myers, Pam Vickers, Laura Wedin, Eric Wininger

Dr. Taylor called the meeting to order at 12:16 p.m.

Approval of September 7, 2011, minutes

Fine moved to approve the minutes of the September 7, 2011, meeting. With a second from Merola, the minutes were approved unanimously.

Update on the Scheduling Changes for Spring 2012

Taylor indicated that Margie Murray and Kevin Ayoub have worked together on the new schedule for the Spring which is close to being complete. There are now only three ceremonies in Commonwealth Ballroom with the latest ceremony beginning before 3:00 p.m. Ceremony times are also going to be staggered in order to help control the flow of traffic and guests entering and leaving venues. Murray indicated that all groups seem to be pleased with the new schedule. Murray also stated that no ceremony will begin later than 2:30 p.m. on Saturday, and there are no ceremonies in either gym (McComas or War). There will also be additional time between the larger ceremonies in Squires so that it will be easier to get guests in and out of the venue between ceremonies.

Planning for Fall Ceremonies

Cross informed the committee that vocalists have been identified, and they will be announced once assignments have been made. Cross is also working on lining up performers for the Brass group for the Fall ceremonies.

Captain Houston informed the committee that a representative from RMC will attend the next Commencement Committee meeting and will also attend the rehearsal on Thursday, December 15, 2011, at 4:00 p.m.

Broyles indicated that the e-mail was sent to the college representatives requesting marshall and usher volunteers.

Watson informed the committee that both practice gyms will be available to use as staging areas for the Fall ceremonies, but only one will be available in the Spring.

Murray stated that the brochure will be an electronic version that will be distributed via e-mail to the graduates and will also be posted on the Commencement website. Owczarski indicated that Student Affairs has a monthly newsletter that is e-mailed out to parents which would be another

opportunity to get Commencement information sent out to parents. The contact for this newsletter is Katie Gehrt.

Goodrich asked if there has been any follow-up to getting credentials for the class officers so that they will be allowed to enter Cassell Coliseum. Taylor indicated that this will be brought up at the next Commencement Committee meeting when a representative from RMC will be here.

Owczarski informed the committee that the Fall Commencement speakers will be officially announced prior to Thanksgiving.

Planning for Spring Ceremonies

Owczarski informed the committee that Larry Hincker is working with the Blacksburg Partnership to address the issue of the rumored three-night minimum for local hotels during Spring Commencement.

Wininger indicated that there will be a few different options for lodging in the dorms for Spring Commencement. The options include the following:

- Thursday and Friday nights
- Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights
- Friday and Saturday nights

The dining hall will also be open for the following:

- Breakfast on Friday morning
- Dinner Friday evening (still working on the time)
- Breakfast on Saturday morning

Wininger indicated that approximately 1200 guests stayed in the dorms last Spring.

Murray informed the committee that the Spring schedule will be posted on the Commencement website within the next week. Owczarski indicated that sometime in early Spring information will go out to parents of graduates about lodging and dining options for the Spring ceremonies. Wininger informed the committee that a buzz card about campus lodging and dining options is sent out to the graduates in February. Wedin also indicated that she can send out a mass e-mail to the class listserv as well.

Bass requested that the class officers, who are not speaking at the Spring ceremony, be included as members of the stage party. The class officers who do not speak already have special seating in front of the DVM students and lead the processional. Murray indicated that there is not enough room on the stage to add five additional seats. O'Rourke indicated that recognition of the class officers can be included in the script and there can be a live shot of the class officers on the jumbotron as they are being recognized. Murray indicated that there is reserved seating in the stadium for the guests of the class officers so that they can sit near the class officers. Wedin indicated that the guests really do not have a good view of the class officers from the reserved seating area. Murray stated that she will check into this to see if the reserved seating area can be moved to give a better view of the class officers.

Other Items

Taylor informed the committee that there has been a suggestion to live video stream the ceremonies. Owczarski indicated that it is something that can be done, but he is unsure of the cost. There will probably be a need for University Relations and Athletics to work together to work out the details. Goodrich indicated that the Graduate School already provides local cable access for the Graduate School ceremonies. Having a live video stream would be a good option for guests who may find it difficult to attend the ceremony such as international guests. Taylor asked Owczarski to look into what it will take to get this accomplished.

Wedin made a request to have some of the information on the Commencement website more accessible (regalia, photographs, etc.). Murray indicated that this information is already accessible on the website on the left-hand side.

With no other business, O'Rourke moved to adjourn at 12:41 p.m.