

## **University Commencement Committee Meeting Minutes**

**November 1, 2023**

**12:00PM**

**Zoom**

**Attending:** Diane Zahm, Jennifer Cleveland, Margie Deck, Jenn Thomas, Monica Kimbrell, Marlana Lester, Stewart Scales, Amie Pendleton, Keith Thompson, Jacob Neice, Pascha Gerni, Kim O'Rourke

**Invited Guest:** Deanna Harman, Ciji Good, Milford Palmer, Barbara Hoopes, Zach Roland, Abby Carlson, Eryn Peters, Pamela Vickers

Diane Zahm called the meeting to order at 12:02 p.m.

### **Fall Commencement**

Commencement ceremonies will be held on Friday, December 15 in Cassell Coliseum. The timeline of the day was reviewed and can be found in Appendix A. Set-up for the ceremonies will mostly be done on Wednesday, December 13 with final touches on Thursday, December 14. A rehearsal will be held on Thursday, December 14 at 4:00 p.m. This is not a dress rehearsal and students do not attend. The rehearsal is a time for the stage party and those with speaking or volunteer roles to see the space, test the microphone, and ask questions.

The University Ceremony for undergraduate students will take place at 10:30 a.m. and doors will open at 9:30 a.m. A luncheon will be served to stage party between the ceremonies. The Graduate School Ceremony will begin at 2:30 p.m.

### **Commencement Speakers**

The University Commencement Speaker has been chosen through suggestions provided by university leadership. Dr. Amy Pruden was selected and has agreed to speak.

The University Ceremony will have one student speaker this year. This year the speaker will be Erin Highland, the Ring Dance Chair for the Class of 2024.

The Graduate School Ceremony will have three student speakers, following the nut-shell game layout of 90 seconds speeches. Students will be selected in several weeks.

### **Spring Commencement Schedule**

The Spring Commencement schedule of ceremonies is going through university leadership approval. Once approved the final schedule will be shared with the committee again before sharing with the public. The current timeline has public announce on November 13<sup>th</sup>.

This new schedule will have to be reevaluated each year for viability of campus resources. The current number of requested ceremonies will soon result in a full week of ceremonies, which the university would prefer not to have. While the schedule of college ceremonies may change, the University Ceremony will continue to be Friday morning.

### **Fall Commencement Marshal**

Diane Zahm, Committee Chair, has sent out the call for marshals to Associate Deans and the representatives on the committee. Representatives can be a marshal. Each representative was reminded to check what their college process is for providing volunteer marshals. The list of names is due by December 1<sup>st</sup>.

For each ceremony (undergraduate and graduate), each college was asked to provide:

1- marshal ***with regalia*** to lead graduates to the podium

1- marshal [***with or without regalia***] to assist with other aspects of the ceremonies, for example, seating graduates in advance of the ceremony and directing graduates back to their seats during the ceremonies. Regalia is welcomed, but will not be required for this marshal.

1 – escort ***without regalia*** to assist with ADA services.

Less volunteer marshals will be necessary for the Graduate School Ceremony. Marshals will receive instructions from the Special Events Office before the event.

### **Adjournment**

With no further committee business, the meeting adjourned at 12:21 p.m.

### **Future Meeting Dates**

December 6, 2023, at Noon

## Appendix A:

### Fall 2023 Commencement Timeline Cassell Coliseum

#### Wednesday, December 13

Cassell Coliseum set up

#### Thursday, December 14

1:30 p.m. SE reports to Cassell  
4:00 p.m. Rehearsal in Cassell Coliseum  
Florals delivered  
Color Guard deliver flags?  
7:00 p.m. Rhino staff in Cassell Coliseum overnight

#### Friday, December 15

7:00 a.m. K-9 Sweeps begin  
SE staff arrive for setup  
8:00 a.m. Rhino Staff report  
8:30 a.m. Emergency Operations Center Opens  
Student Athlete Performance Center (SAPC) open  
Volunteer break service begins, Cassell Coliseum side room.  
9:00 a.m. Marshals report (on Cassell floor at tunnel entrance)  
First Aid Stations staffed  
Concessions opens  
Stage Party arrival begins SAPC  
9:30 a.m. Doors open to the public and remain open until the end of the second ceremony  
Students and Faculty participating in ceremony arrive  
Color Guard arrive  
9:45 a.m. Musicians report  
10:00 a.m. Last call arrival time for Stage Party and guests assemble in Cassell Coliseum, Student Athlete Performance Center. Stage Party guests will be escorted to special seating near the stage.  
10:15 a.m. Stage Party Leave SAPC  
Breakfast service ends, SAPC  
  
**10:20 a.m. Virginia Tech Brass Ensemble, led by Jay Crone, Conductor, begins the prelude.**  
**10:30 a.m. Stage Party beings procession to stage. Ceremony begins.**  
Robert Weiss  
Commencement Marshal  
**10:32 a.m. Announcement- Posting of the Colors. Call to stand followed by National Anthem**  
Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets Color Guard

Haley Hansen, Vocalist

**10:42 a.m. Greetings**  
 Timothy D. Sands (2 minutes)  
 University President

**10:44 a.m. Opening Remarks-**  
 Student TBD (2 minutes)

**10:46 a.m. Graduation Address**  
 Amy Pruden (8-10 minutes)

**10:56 a.m. Presentation of Degree Candidates**  
 Cyril R. Clarke  
 Executive Vice President and Provost and College Deans

**11:01 a.m. Name reading begins (allowing approx. 8 names per minute)**  
 ~**12:20 p.m. Following completion of the name reading, college dean returns to the stage**

**12:15 p.m. Lunch service begins for Stage Party, Stage Party Guests, and some staff**

**12:20 p.m. Conferral of Degrees**  
 Timothy D. Sands

**12:22 p.m. Greetings from the Alumni Association**  
 Nathan Lavinka (2 minutes)  
 President, Virginia Tech Alumni Association Board of Directors

**12:24 p.m. Concluding Remarks**  
 Timothy D. Sands

**12:26 p.m. Recessional**  
 Brass Ensemble

**12:30 p.m. Congratulations slide, music, and announcement about exiting**  
 Stage Party returns to SAPC for lunch and wait till next ceremony  
 Coffee Break service begins

1:00 p.m. Concessions open

1:30 p.m. Additional Stage Party begin arrival, SAPC  
 Students and faculty participating in the ceremony arrive

1:45 p.m. Stage Party guests will be escorted to special seating near the stage.  
 Lunch Service ends, SAPC  
 Musicians report

2:00 p.m. Last call for Stage Party arrival, SAPC  
 Color Guard reports

**2:20 p.m. Virginia Tech Brass Ensemble, led by Jay Crone, Conductor, begins the prelude.**

**2:30 p.m. Academic Processional. Program begins.**

**Special Events clear out SAPC- Leave 1 coat rack for collecting regalia after ceremony.**

**2:32 p.m. Announcement to stand followed by National Anthem- Haley Hansen**

**2:42 p.m. Greetings**  
 Timothy D. Sands (2 minutes)  
 University President

**2:44 p.m. Speaker introductions**

Cyril Clarke (2 minutes)

Provost

**2:46 p.m. Graduate Student Remarks 1**

(2 minutes)

**2:48 p.m. Graduate Student Remarks 2**

(2 minutes)

**2:50 p.m. Graduate Student Remarks 3**

(2 minutes)

**2:52 p.m. Reflections**

(10 minutes)

**3:02 p.m. Presentation of Doctoral Candidates**

(1-2 minutes)

**3:03 p.m. Name reading begins (allowing approx. 8 names per minute)**

**~4:30 p.m. Following completion of the name reading, college dean returns to the stage**

**4:37 p.m. Message from Faculty**

(2 minutes)

**4:39 p.m. Closing remarks**

(1-2 minutes)

**4:45 p.m. Stage Party return to SAPC to remove any items left.**