

## **University Commencement Committee Meeting Minutes**

**May 1, 2024**

**12:00PM**

**Zoom**

**Attending:** Diane Zahm (chair), Margie Deck, Amie Pendleton, Jenn Thomas, Marlena Lester, Jennifer Cleveland, Anthony Watson, Jodie Brinkmann, Vito Scarola, Janice Austin, Stewart Scales, Kim O'Rourke, Pascha Gerni, Monica Kimbrell, Joe Merola,

**Invited Guests:** Kendrah Cline, Deanna Harman, Becca Emery, Barbara Hoopes, Abby Carlson, Ginny Wagg, John Jackson, Chris Bolling, Eryn Peters, Andrew Marinik, Elvis Rosario,

Diane Zahm called the meeting to order at 12:03 p.m.

### **Spring Schedule of Ceremonies**

The schedule of ceremonies was reviewed with the committee. Specific logistical times were noted for committee. Set-up and rehearsal times were emphasized. Additional rehearsals were needed to accommodate specific requests from colleges. A University Commencement Ceremony rehearsal will happen on Thursday between ceremonies for only the speaker and student speakers.

The committee was notified of the rental of an additional ADA ramp for Cassell allowing access to the stage at all venues.

### **University Ceremony Logistics**

The University Commencement Ceremony is set for Friday, May 10, at 8:30 a.m. The Blacksburg campus will have a delayed opening during the University Commencement Ceremony. While it is an authorized closing, staff/faculty expected to work, or are volunteering, during the University Commencement ceremony are still expected at the ceremony and should work with their supervisor/review relevant materials on how to recording time worked.

Arrival time for volunteer marshals was shared with the committee as 6:45 a.m. It was noted by the committee chair that a few names were still missing from the volunteer marshal list. The

Office of Special Events is set to email the volunteers instructions by the end of the week to provide more time for names to be added. The list of marshal will also be shared with the representative for ADA & Accessibility Services, and the Graduate School, for them to provide instructions to their volunteer marshals.

The run of show for the ceremony was reviewed with the committee. The ceremony is anticipated to start on time at 8:30 a.m. by 9:45 a.m. After the conclusion of the ceremony stage party members will be escorted back to the President's Suite for a brunch. It was shared with the committee that President Sands has requested for the stage party to exit the stage via the center aisle into graduate seating before exiting back towards the northwest player tunnel to experience Enter Sandman on the field with the graduates.

### **Security at the Ceremonies**

A representative for the Virginia Tech Police Department shared with the committee the plans currently in development for security and possible protests at the ceremonies. The committee was reminded that the ceremonies are public events at which people can express their right to free speech. There will be an increased security presence at all ceremonies. Including officers from local and regional area. Plans for how to handle various situations are in development and will be shared with appropriate personnel before the ceremonies. It was expressed by the committee that the college want to know the plans so they can be prepared. The committee and ceremony coordinators were asked to share cell phone numbers when possible for all marshals and volunteers at the ceremonies to prepare for any situation that might arise.

### **Spring Commencement Debrief Email**

The committee was reminded that this was the last meeting for the semester. As such an email will be sent to them following all commencement ceremonies asking for them to provide feedback in place of a debrief meeting. The committee was also informed that the first meeting back in October will provide them a chance to discuss the spring commencement process.

With no further business the meeting was concluded at 12:28 p.m.