

MINUTES

Commencement Committee Meeting Wednesday, April 8, 2026 Noon – 1 p.m. Zoom

Present – Diane Zahm (presiding), Cathy Barker, Jeanette Biczal, Jennifer Cleveland, Dixie Dalton, Pascha Gerni, Stephanie Hart, Amy Rasor, Keith Thompson, Rebecca Weaver-Hightower

Absent with Notice: Vito Scarola, Stewart Scales, Monecia Taylor

Absent: Nahum Arav, Janice Austin, Manuka Bhatiani, Lance Jones, Monica Kimbrell, Justin Lemkul, Kayla Moten, Kim O'Rourke, Karl Rice, Michelle Seref, Michael Stowe, Jenn Thomas, Anthony Watson, James Weger

Guests: Joseph Cooley, John Jackson, Annie McCallum, Jessie Richards, Brittany Shulz, Haylee Simpkins, Jennifer Skaggs, Ginny Wagg, Kendrah Cline, Clayton Oliver, Andrew Foiles, Holly Wessel

Diane Zahm called the meeting to order at 12:03 p.m. A quorum was present.

1. Announcement of approval and posting of minutes of 2/11/25

Diane Zahm noted that the minutes from the Committee's previous meeting on 2/11/25 were approved electronically and can be publicly accessed on the Governance Website:

governance.vt.edu

2. Spring Commencement Ceremonies

The schedule for spring commencement ceremonies was briefly discussed and members were reminded that the full schedule can be found online on the Commencement website [Schedule page](#).

3. Special Events Update

Erin Hand spoke to the Committee to make them aware of upcoming deadlines for the colleges to supply information to their SE Coordinators. The dates of these deadlines are as follows:

- April 17 – Digital and A/V Files due for Production Services
- April 24 – Digital Program Files due for Communications
- May 1 – Stage Party Layouts due for Facilities
- Two weeks prior to ceremony – Scripts due to Special Events

4. Spring Volunteer Updates

Diane Zahm looked at the shared spreadsheet this morning and wanted to express a big thank you to CALS, COE, and COS because they already have all of their volunteers listed in the spreadsheet. Please remember the deadline is May 1 so we can send information and parking passes etc. in plenty of time prior to commencement week.

5. Commencement Speaker Updates

Andy Folies will be taking over for Eryn Giegel as she has moved on to pursue other opportunities. Student speakers will be great they are selected and working on their scripts already. Andy will

coordinate with Erin Hand in Special Events regarding deadline for scripts as well as logistics. Graduate school is still in the process of selecting student speakers.

Pascha Gerni updated the group that we do not have official confirmation yet that we will have the governor but there has been positive feedback. Hoping to hear by Friday.

6. Further Business

Jeanette Biczal, representative for the College of Engineering, asked if anyone else had seen more ADA questions coming to colleges. Erin Hand, from Special Events, explained that due to resources in ADA and SSD being spread thin we have seen and will continue to see an increase in questions being routed to colleges/SE. Erin, Jessie Richards, and Beth Valentine from ADA had a very productive meeting during which it was decided that Erin would create an FAQ and update the current email being sent as a reply from ADA to ensure accuracy. The FAQ would be supplied to all SE Coordinators and passed along to their college coordinators in order to help with timely responses. Further, Erin has created a spreadsheet for ADA and SSD to use so they can CC the correct SE Coordinator, College Coordinator, and Commencement Committee contact for each college commencement ceremony when they receive a question that will need to be addressed at the college level. There will be an email sent with basic information on all venues in this warm hand-off email, but anything more specific to the college ceremony such as reserved seating, etc. will need to be addressed by the college itself.

7. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:18 p.m.