

University Commencement Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, October 1, 2019
12:15 p.m.
Holtzman Alumni Center Boardroom

Present: Diane Zahm (Chair), Wat Hopkins (Ushers), Janice Austin (Grad), Jay Crone (CLAHS), Tara Nepper (SE), Margie Murray (Pres. Office), Cjana Camp (Rhino), Dennis Robarge (Rhino), Christina McIntyre (Honors), Cara Spicer (Pamplin), Laura Wedin (Alumni), Gregory Klatt (2020), Grant Bommer (2021), Lance Jones (VTCC), Anthony Watson (Facilities), Chris Bolling (EMS), Tom Gallemore (VTPD), Kelly McCann (SE), Kim O'Rourke (VPPG), Derek Shapiro (Band)

Diane Zahm called the meeting to order at 12:16 p.m.

Minutes

Dr. Zahm asked for copies of minutes since February 2019. Margie Murray to provide.

Review of Committee Member Responsibilities

Dr. Zahm reviewed the importance of departmental contacts seeking college faculty, staff, and graduate students to assist as ushers and marshals during the university and graduate ceremonies. Wat Hopkins will send communication out in late October/early November with names to be submitted around Thanksgiving. Colleges differ on guidelines on participation however Dr. Zahm noted that the number requested has been scaled down to the minimum number in order to provide the ceremony to the students and university community. Participation is encouraged and greatly needed.

Dr. Zahm noted that the Commencement Committee currently reports to the Commission on Faculty Affairs. Kim O'Rourke noted that the President has appointed a committee to review current governance structures.

Students serving as class presidents work with Laura Wedin in order to provide the President's Office with three names of potential faculty members to provide the Commencement address at the Fall University Ceremony. Greg Klatt and Grant Bommer reported they are in discussion with Laura Wedin and will have the name soon.

Space Discussion

Dr. Zahm reported that as the University continues to grow, available space to hold large ceremonies has become a greater need. Some ideas have been discussed in order to decrease the time and costs of ceremonies. No major changes would be put in place prior to the Spring 2021 ceremonies.

One idea includes discontinuing handing out diplomas which may allow more faculty to participate in ceremonies, decrease cost by not providing diploma covers as a large number are thrown away, and decreasing staff time of removing diplomas from covers and then rolled and put into mailing tubes for those who did not attend the ceremony. Handing out diplomas is not consistent across all college ceremonies.

Lane Stadium use has been discussed and has been decided it is not ideal due to the additional setup and breakdown cost and unpredictable weather. The Football Practice Facility is not a viable option due to the estimated cost of \$52,000 for setup.

Some colleges and departments have outgrown classroom space but do not have the available funding in order to move from a free space into a space with a cost to their department.

Some discussion was held on holding college ceremonies and encouraging departments to hold recognition ceremonies or some event which would not require seating for all attending.

Additional discussion was held on the needs of the Corps of Cadets and how their continued growth will

also impacts future ceremonies. Special to this section of the University is that the Corps graduates attend at least four ceremonies – the University Ceremony, the pinning/commissioning ceremony, Corps graduation ceremony and the students' college or departmental ceremony. Corps graduates cannot attend the pinning/commission ceremony until after their degrees have been conferred at the University Ceremony.

A convocation center is no longer in the master plan and further discussion will need to be held with University administration in order to find viable options for future ceremonies.

Adjournment

With no further committee business, the meeting adjourned at 12:55 p.m.

Future Meeting Dates – Holtzman Alumni Center Boardroom – 12:15 p.m.

November 6, 2019

December 6, 2019