

**COMMENCEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**  
**Tuesday, September 10, 2002**  
**12:15 p.m.**  
**President's Boardroom, 210 Burruss Hall**

**PRESENT:** Ed Henneke, Reba Crawford, John Beach for Bill Elvey, Pat Goodrich, Larry Hincker, Brad Klein, Kim O'Rourke, Dixie Reaves, Sherry Schofield-Tomschin, Dan Taylor

**GUESTS:** Susan Angle, Dave McKee, Allan Miller, Margie Murray, Lyndell Price, Jennie Reilly, Jack Ridinger

**ABSENT:** Jerry Allen, Randy Billingsley, Bud Brown, Leon Geyer, Bill Green, Grant Hill, Vinod Lohani, Dean Stauffer, CUS&P Representative, GSA Representative, CALS Representative

(Note: E-mail notes were sent to SGA and GSA encouraging them to have a representative attend.)

Chairman Ed Henneke called the meeting to order at 12:16 p.m. He first welcomed everyone and asked that self-introductions be made for the benefit of new members.

**Approval of Minutes from the May 1, 2002 Meeting**

The first order of business was to call for a vote on the approval of the minutes from the last meeting. ***With no discussion, the minutes were approved unanimously as written.***

**Recap of Spring Commencement Activities**

The members of the committee were asked to share observations about the operation of the spring ceremony.

1. Taylor indicated that access to the east stands for the general public was a problem. A woman fell, and based on her location and the crowd, it was difficult to get emergency services to her in a timely manner. Pedestrians were not given the option of traveling under the north end zone bleachers, but were asked to walk on the access road. Taylor suggested that there be at least one rescue squad individual stationed in the general area of the east stands with an emergency pack for such instances.

In response, Beach said there would have been better access to the east stands if the south end zone had been accessible, and if the normal processional activities were in place. In the future, the east stands will still be an issue, and signs should be posted to indicate access routes.

2. Reilly noted that she had heard many positive comments about the use of the Jumbotron for the Virginia Tech informational videos, and asked if they could possibly be captioned for the hearing impaired.

Hincker indicated that the purpose of the videos for spring commencement was to occupy the guests since there would be no processional. Also, there were concerns, discussed by the committee, about keeping the crowd--particularly students, from becoming unruly. McKee acknowledged the Jumbotron's effectiveness in controlling the crowd during the ceremony itself, but noted that the videos played before the ceremony interfered with the band. Hincker indicated this could still be done, but would add to commencement costs for each ceremony.

Along the same line, Beach reminded everyone that in prior meetings, the committee discussed moving the stage setup to the south end zone now that it is complete. The main reason for this move is the necessity to keep a minimum amount of heavy traffic on the new field. A major disadvantage of this move would be we would no longer have the Jumbotron visual display of the commencement speakers appearing directly above the stage. John Beach said he thought that physical plant could continue to set the stage in the north end with use of appropriate wide tires on vehicles, but this would be more difficult in cases where inclement weather in days prior to the ceremony would cause additional problems. Reilly did mention that having the stage in front of the Jumbotron helped with accessibility needs.

Based on the ongoing discussion, Henneke mentioned that this could be discussed in later meetings, and that the committee could wait until the last week before the ceremony to decide the advantages or disadvantages to having the stage moved, depending upon the weather. It was noted that the additional option of having access to the new club seats and concession area in the south end zone would be a plus for the stage party.

### **Future Meeting Dates**

The issue of the upcoming meetings dates was discussed prior to the budget discussion with the following results. The future meeting dates by agreement of the committee will be:

Wednesday, October 2, 2002  
Wednesday, November 6, 2002  
Wednesday, December 4, 2002

Wednesday, February 5, 2003  
Wednesday, March 12, 2003  
Wednesday, April 2, 2003  
Wednesday, April 30, 2003

All meetings will be held in the President's Boardroom, 210 Burruss Hall beginning at 12:15 p.m.

### **Budget Effects on Commencement Ceremonies**

Before the discussion began, the three proposals noted below were handed out to the members of the committee. Members were being asked to review the proposals and make recommendations on ways to reduce the commencement budget in anticipation of more stringent budget cuts from the state to higher education.

#### **Proposal #1:**

Permanently eliminate the setup of Rector Field House for the College of Human Resources and Education ceremony in the spring. This is the only college or department to have a ceremony in that venue. The only other space large enough to accommodate this ceremony is Cassell Coliseum, where the spring ceremonies are currently held for the Colleges of Business and Engineering. (Note: Currently, Staff Appreciation Day, which is held in Rector Field House the Wednesday following spring commencement, benefits from no setup fee.) Net Savings: \$22,000

**Option 1:** Move the CHRE ceremony to the Coliseum and add it to the rotation schedule with the Colleges of Engineering and Business. This would mean having one of the three ceremonies on Friday night or adding a later ceremony on Saturday.

**Option 2:** Move the University Ceremony to late Friday afternoon (e.g., 4:00 p.m.), thus allowing college ceremonies to begin earlier on Saturday. The Graduate School ceremony could be scheduled to follow the university ceremony on Friday evening, (e.g., 6:00 p.m.) If this change is made, it should be considered a permanent change.

**Proposal #2:**

Eliminate/reduce contributions to college receptions to reduce costs. This can be a temporary measure until the budget situation improves later in the decade. The President's Office currently provides a nominal \$5 per graduating student, for a total of approximately \$32,000. This contribution is more of a token and does not come close to the colleges' actual cost. Note: Some colleges may be contemplating eliminating reception as a cost-saving measure.

**Proposal #3:**

Eliminate the fall commencement ceremonies (graduate and university) for the next several years as a cost-saving measure, with the understanding that the fall ceremonies would be restored when the budget recovers. Cost Savings: \$32,000 plus overtime among Registrar's staff and college and President's Office staff who work with commencement.

**Committee Discussion on the Above Budget-Reducing Proposals**

**Proposal #1 Discussion**

To begin, Henneke and Beach provided some background on why the College of Human Resources and Education ceremony came to be located in the Field House. Originally, Human Resources' ceremony was held in Burruss, and the College of Education's in the Gym. When the colleges were combined, the ceremony became too large to house in either location. The first option was to have all three colleges' ceremonies (CHRE, COB, COE) in the Coliseum, but the colleges did not want all ceremonies to be held on the same day, because of the lateness of the last ceremony.

Beach voiced the concern that even without budget restrictions the Field House capacity is at its limit of 3600, and there have been increasing problems with the fire marshal regarding the numbers allowed inside. The port-a-floor is also at an advanced stage of wear and may only last two more years. This is a very expensive cost that the President's Office and Athletics shared a few years ago, but will be a hidden cost concern in the coming years.

Henneke stated that the committee should really consider the decision for Proposal #1 to be a permanent one to save expenses in future years and to remove the fire safety concerns.

Another committee member voiced the concern that the Field House is very hot in the spring, there are only port-a-potties available for guest use, and everyone would probably prefer to be in a different location.

Option 1:

**Move the spring CHRE ceremony to the Coliseum and rotate with Business and Engineering.** This would mean that the university ceremony would begin at 9:00 a.m. in Lane Stadium with the first college ceremony beginning in the Coliseum at 11:00 a.m., followed by a 1:30 p.m. ceremony, and the last being held at 4:30 p.m.

Or, one of the college ceremonies could be held on Friday afternoon/evening. The committee felt there might be strong opposition from the colleges to move one of their ceremonies to Friday.

Option 2:

**Move the university ceremony to Friday afternoon, allowing the three colleges to have their ceremonies on Saturday (with a rotating schedule).** It was voiced that there may be opposition from students and parents that could not be here on Friday afternoon for the university ceremony. But, it was also mentioned that the most important ceremony was the college ceremony, where students are actually called by name to come forward. In addition, the university ceremony is where the degrees are actually conferred, starting the remaining ceremonies on a good foot. College ceremonies on Saturday could be held at 8:30 a.m., 11:00 a.m., and 1:30 p.m., ending no later than the schedule currently set in the spring.

Another advantage would be that the stage party members for the graduate and university ceremonies would need to be present on one day only, lessening time commitment. The University might need to close offices by 3 p.m. for a 4 p.m. ceremony. Based on the fact that Commissioning is held on Friday afternoon, the ROTC would need to be notified to discuss their scheduling concerns.

Hincker indicated he would be concerned about traffic on Friday, and would prefer that one of the colleges hold their ceremony on Friday, rather than move the university ceremony. Ridinger felt traffic would be confined to the stadium area. McKee noted that beginning the university ceremony in the fresh morning air seems to signify a new beginning. Weather concerns voiced by Ridinger and Henneke confirmed that there are more storms early in the morning, and Hincker indicated it would be easier to cancel (i.e., relocate to the Coliseum) a Friday afternoon ceremony, rather than a Saturday morning one.

***The committee decided to act only on the proposal itself (discontinuing use of the Field House) and continue discussion of the options at the next meeting after the colleges and students had the chance to provide input. The committee unanimously approved to discontinue the use of the Field House for safety reasons and an estimated savings of \$22,000.00.***

#### Proposal #2 Discussion

It was stated earlier that the President's Office provides colleges with approximately \$32,000 per year in monies to bolster each college's own funding for post-event receptions. With the severe budget cuts expected, Henneke noted that the College of Engineering had planned to eliminate funding the spring reception and Taylor noted the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences would likely do the same. Goodrich indicated that the colleges were sensitive to the monies provided for their receptions, but that as in the case of the Graduate School, you get so little in the way of a nice reception due to the expensive costs related to having a catered event. Another member stated that the colleges at this point are much more concerned about other budget cuts than cuts for a ceremonial reception.

***The Committee voted unanimously to recommend that each of the colleges consider eliminating its respective reception until the budget situation improves. Funding from the President's Office could continue—though perhaps at a reduced level—for those college receptions that continue to be held.***

### Proposal #3 Discussion

Henneke began the discussion with some background information on why there is a fall commencement. Until 1989 or 1990, there was no fall commencement. There were a lot of summer graduates that did not return for the spring ceremony. Dr. McComas asked that the fall ceremony be instituted to accommodate these graduates. The first year ceremonies were very small, especially in the Graduate School. The second year, ceremonies in the Coliseum were fairly well attended with 400-500 graduates.

It was determined that there were two major concerns if the university proceeded to cancel fall commencement until the budget could be restored. One would be the effect on students and families, and two, the loss in revenue to businesses in the community.

Beach indicated that at the spring ceremonies, the Colleges of Business and Engineering are already at capacity on the floor, and if this were to be instituted, the added number of graduates in the spring could mean that many graduating students would need to be moved to the stands in the coliseum to accommodate the additional numbers.

Henneke stated that if fall commencement were to be cancelled, it would need to be done this fall. Taylor noted that if we were going to do this, we needed to make the decision before it was too late. Taylor was concerned that hotel room bookings would not be refundable, and that many students and families had already made plans that could not be altered. Hincker would try to work with the Chamber of Commerce regarding the lodging situation.

Based on the continuing budget cuts to higher education, Hincker is concerned and believes that we need to make a public statement that cuts to higher education cannot continue without the effects being felt, not only at colleges, but in the community as well. We cannot continue business as usual. This cut would not be a cut in funding for colleges. This would be a cut to a ceremony, not to an academic program. Others agreed that there is a need to make a public statement. Yet, in doing so, we need to get the message across that we are not at fault here, but continuing budget cuts from Richmond are forcing these decisions.

Considerable discussion ensued. International students would most likely not be able to come back for a spring commencement ceremony, but it was also noted that the Registrar's Office said that quite a few students do wish to return in the spring for the May ceremony, even if they graduated in the fall. It was noted that not all universities have fall ceremonies. UVA does not have a fall ceremony, although another of the Virginia universities added a fall ceremony in recent years. A suggestion was made to see if families would be willing to pay to attend, but O'Rourke noted that the President would not want families to have to pay to attend commencement. The possibility of continuing the fall ceremony for one more year and then discontinuing it was discussed, but that scenario would not aid the current budget shortfall or draw the same attention to the seriousness of the university's financial situation. There was also concern that there were no students present (although they were encouraged to attend) to offer their perspective.

Henneke reminded the committee that its charge is to make recommendations to the President, and the President will make the final decision. However, the President needs the committee's recommendation now because of the September 20 deadline for submission of the university's budget reduction plans to Richmond.

The committee continued to discuss this proposal with Reaves stating strong objections to it while others continued to support it, not because they were for voting to have no fall commencement, but because they believed a ceremony has less priority than academic programs. To break the impasse, Hincker suggested the committee vote to endorse all three proposals in a priority order, depending upon the final level of budget cuts implemented by the state on our budget.

***The committee voted unanimously to endorse all proposals and to recommend to the President the following order of implementation based on the reduction target assigned to the university: First, implementation of Proposal #2, as amended by the committee (elimination/reduction of funding for college receptions); second, implementation of Proposal #1 (discontinued use of Rector Field House); third, Proposal #3 (elimination of Fall Ceremonies until budget situation improves).***

The meeting adjourned at 1:25 p.m.

**COMMENCEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**  
**Wednesday, October 2, 2002**  
**12:15 p.m.**  
**President's Boardroom, 210 Burruss Hall**

**PRESENT:** Ed Henneke, Bill Stringer for Jerry Allen, Bud Brown, John Beach for Bill Elvey, Leon Geyer, Jerry Gibson, Pat Goodrich, Grant Hill, Larry Hincker, Brad Klein, Vinod Lohani, Kim O'Rourke, Sherry Schofield-Tomschin, Pat Scanlon for Dean Stauffer, Dan Taylor

**GUESTS:** Allen Miller, Margie Murray, Lyndell Price, Jennie Reilly, Jack Ridinger, Ed Sewell

**ABSENT:** Randy Billingsley, Reba Crawford, Bill Green, Dixie Reaves, Nicole Reynolds, Dean Stauffer (replacement sent)

Chairman Ed Henneke called the meeting to order at 12:15 p.m.

**Approval of Minutes for September 10, 2002**

Moved by O'Rourke and seconded by Schofield-Tomschin, the minutes were approved as written.

**Discussion for Change in Spring Ceremonies**

The discussion began around the use of the Field House for the College of Human Resources and Education for Spring Ceremonies. At the September meeting the committee unanimously approved to discontinue the use of the Field House for safety reasons and an estimated savings of \$22,000.00. Discussion regarding the change in the schedule itself would be discussed once the college representatives had a chance to review the proposals. They were:

**Proposal #1:**

Permanently eliminate the setup of Rector Field House for the College of Human Resources and Education ceremony in the spring. This is the only college or department to have a ceremony in that venue. The only other space large enough to accommodate this ceremony is Cassell Coliseum, where the spring ceremonies are currently held for the Colleges of Business and Engineering. (Note: Currently, Staff Appreciation Day, which is held in Rector Field House the Wednesday following spring commencement, benefits from no setup fee.) Net Savings: \$22,000

**Option 1:** Move the CHRE ceremony to the Coliseum and add it to the rotation schedule with the Colleges of Engineering and Business. This would mean having one of the three ceremonies on Friday night or adding a later ceremony on Saturday.

**Option 2:** Move the University Ceremony to late Friday afternoon (e.g., 4:00 p.m.), thus allowing college ceremonies to begin earlier on Saturday. The Graduate School ceremony could be scheduled to follow the university ceremony on Friday evening, (e.g., 6:00 p.m.) If this change is made, it should be considered a permanent change.

Wanda Dean sent a note to Ed Henneke advising the committee that if one of the colleges chose to move to a Friday ceremony in the spring, the Registrar's Office would not be able to have diplomas ready for that particular college.

The difficulty for some parents to arrive in time for a Friday college ceremony was discussed. The representative from the College of Human Resources & Education voiced their preference not to move to Friday. Additionally, she noted that the first year the College of Human Resources and Education had a combined ceremony, it was at 4:30 on Saturday, which was a terrible time.

Lohani stated that the College of Engineering would volunteer to take the 1:00 p.m. Friday slot permanently, knowing that diplomas would not be ready to be handed out, BUT only if NO diplomas were handed out at the other college ceremonies either. If diplomas are available to students, the College of Engineering will enter into whatever rotation evolves, but do not want any rotation that includes 4:00 p.m. on Saturday. Lohani also indicated that his college would support cancellation of the university ceremony. However, it is unlikely that the president would be receptive to this proposal unless there was widespread support for it throughout the university.

It was suggested that we not give diplomas in the spring to any college. That suggestion will not be considered at this time.

Beach indicated that the stadium itself might be used for a college ceremony following the main university ceremony, but that the weather would be a risk factor. If the University Ceremony were held late on Friday afternoon, there could be 4 ceremonies at Cassell Coliseum on Saturday based on the current rain plan. The latest ceremony would most likely begin at 4 p.m.

Henneke asked that the college representatives and the committee members review these issues with their college and report at the next meeting.

In the interim, the following memo was sent to the committee from Dr. Henneke:

***To serve both the internal and external University community, it will be necessary for our committee to develop a recommendation to the President concerning what changes the University should make in the Spring Commencement Ceremonies by the end of this semester.***

***This is a reminder that we have only two committee meetings left to discuss the issues and develop our recommendations. I am asking all of you, and especially the representatives from the Colleges of Business, Engineering and Human Resources & Education, to be ready to discuss this issue at our November 6th meeting so that we can vote on our final recommendations at the December 4th meeting.***

***Thanks to all of you for your continuing help and service to the university.***

### **New Carpet Use in the Coliseum**

At the spring commencement ceremony, the newly purchased carpet (purchased with Commencement Committee funds) was used for the first time. Beach mentioned that the prior carpet was used for approximately 10 years. On occasion, the Athletic Department requests that they be able to use this carpet for functions held by them. Beach indicated that with repeated use, the carpet would wear faster. It's not made to be put down and pulled up on a consistent basis. He brought up the fact that this is a very expensive cost to the Commencement Committee, and that it will continually need to be replaced. He suggested that each time the carpet is used, the



party using it should pay a rental fee. He indicated that the cost of the special trailer purchased to handle this carpet was \$5000 and that the labor costs were also a consideration. The Controller's office could help to identify an estimated rental fee, and Henneke and O'Rourke agreed to investigate this option.

### **Commencement Invitations**

Murray brought up the fact that the University mails Commencement invitations to two addresses of the student's choice, which is marked on the DARS form (at least one year in advance). Addresses can be out-of-date, typed in incorrectly or just not included. The committee was asked to vote on discontinuing the mailing of these invitations, especially since they do not contain complete information. Students and families will continue to receive the commencement brochure in the mail and will also have access to the web site for information.

Brown moved, Geyer seconded, and the committee voted unanimously to discontinue the mailing of these invitations.

With no further business, Geyer moved to adjourn.

**COMMENCEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**  
**Wednesday, November 6, 2002**  
**President's Boardroom, 210 Burruss Hall – 12:15 p.m.**

**Present:** Ed Henneke, Bill Stringer for Jerry Allen, Randy Billingsley, Bud Brown, Audrey Zink-Sharp for Greg Brown, Reba Crawford, John Beach for Bill Elvey, Jerry Gibson, Pat Goodrich, Grant Hill, Larry Hincker, Brad Klein, Vinod Lohani, Kim O'Rourke, Dixie Reaves, Katie McCoy for Nicole Reynolds, Sherry Schofield-Tomschin, Dean Stauffer, Dan Taylor

**Guests:** Susan Angle, Allen Miller, Margie Murray, Lyndell Price, Jennie Reilly

**Absent:** Theresa Cassino, Leon Geyer, Bill Green, Diane Zahm

Chairman Henneke called the meeting to order at 12:16 p.m.

**Approval of Minutes for October 2, 2002 Meeting**

Moved by Bud Brown, and seconded by Randy Billingsley, the minutes were approved as written.

**Planning for Fall Commencement Ceremonies**

Commencement brochures have been mailed, and the program is being proofed. With no further questions or discussion regarding the planning progress for fall commencement, the discussion moved to the next agenda item.

**Northern Virginia Commencement Ceremony**

Goodrich reported that Dean DePauw would like to see the Northern Virginia commencement ceremonies recognized in the programs beginning with the spring ceremony. Using the same program format, add a page with the schedule for the NOVA ceremony and list the students' names. The request was noted and will be added.

**Schedule for Spring Commencement Ceremonies**

The first question addressed the reasoning behind this committee's decision to discontinue the use of the Field House for spring commencement. The discussion began with the need to reduce the budget for commencement ceremonies. Although the savings for eliminating the use of this venue is approximately \$22,000, there is another reason that this committee decided it would be best to discontinue its use. Henneke restated that the posted occupancy of the Field House is limited to 3600 guests. Beach indicated that the floor was set for 3400 guests, plus graduates and staff. Recently those numbers had been exceeded beyond capacity, violating the fire code, causing this venue to be unsafe for the College of Human Sciences and Education ceremony. The only other site large enough for this college ceremony would be Cassell Coliseum unless the event was held outdoors. With no rain-site location, that is not a viable option.

If the university were to hold the usual University Ceremony at 9 a.m. (in cases of inclement weather, this ceremony would be in the Coliseum and not Lane Stadium) in the spring, this would delay the first college to hold its ceremony at 11 a.m., with another following at 1:30 p.m., and the third college beginning at 4 p.m., respectively. At present, no college wishes to begin their ceremony in that late of a time slot.

It was determined that this committee should make a recommendation regarding the schedule for spring commencement as soon as possible to get the information out to the public, and that the final recommendation would be made at the December 4 meeting and forwarded to the president for his consideration.

The discussion began.

- The first suggestion was to move the main ceremony to 8 a.m. on Saturday and have the three colleges follow, i.e. the College of Engineering, College of Human Sciences and Education, and the Pamplin College of Business. The college of engineering representative voted for moving the university ceremony to Friday afternoon, opposing the late Saturday afternoon start time for any college. It was reported that in discussions with the Registrar's Office that if a college moved their ceremony to Friday, that college would not be able to provide graduates with diplomas. The Registrar's Office could not have them ready that early.
- Hill, the 2003 class president, preferred that the university ceremony be moved to Friday instead of beginning the ceremony at 8 a.m. on Saturday morning. He thought it would be difficult for parents to be here that early. Hincker noted that parents would want to be at their child's graduation whether it is held on Friday or Saturday. Hill also felt that if a college ceremony moved to Friday, thus causing the decision that no student receives a diploma in the spring, he would be okay with that decision. Beach indicated that although the earlier time for the main ceremony would press the Physical Plant, it could be done at an earlier time. Beach did suggest that one of the college ceremonies could remain in Lane Stadium after the main ceremony, but again, there would be no rain site.
- There has been quite a lot of opposition to discontinuing the handing out of diplomas in the spring, and the Commission on Faculty Affairs is discussing the expense of preparing diplomas in the spring versus mailing them. At present, the Registrar believes that the expense for mailing would be greater in the long run than the extra effort required by their office in the spring to prepare them for college ceremonies.
- One member of the committee asked what exactly is handed out at the fall ceremony to each student rather than their diploma. The Alumni Association provides a memento or two, information is provided regarding the photographer and the mailing of diplomas, and either the president or the dean of the graduate school includes a letter. Basically, preparing these envelopes for both fall and spring would increase the expenses of the Alumni Association.
- Klein asked how the diplomas are prepared in the Registrar's Office. Are they done in alphabetical order by college? If so, could we let them know each year which college ceremony if any would be held on Friday, so that those diplomas could be made ready. It was stated again that the Registrar's Office indicated that none could be ready on Friday. Someone noted that most graduates really want to have their diploma in hand. It was also suggested that every third year, one college would not receive diplomas. The college of engineering representative indicated at an earlier meeting they would agree to a Friday ceremony only if no one received a diploma.

The discussion reverted back to the use of the Field House. Couldn't additional doors be added to the Field House to increase egress required by the Fire Marshal? Beach indicated that it would be quite expensive to add doors, but also noted that a lingering issue is the use of the port-o-floor, which must be replaced after a certain length of time. The first floor was purchased jointly by Athletics and the President's Office a few years back, but has become increasingly damaged by continued use. The replacement cost would eventually become an issue. There were also excessive heat and lack of seating complaints in prior years.

It was asked why the College of Human Resources was moved from War Memorial, and the answer was that once the college merged with Education, the venue became too small. Tent rental was suggested as an option, but the cost of tent rental of that size could be anywhere from \$10 to \$25 thousand dollars, thus eliminating the cost savings originally intended.

- It was suggested that the college of engineering could split its ceremonies the way the college of arts and sciences does. The engineering representative indicated that the college would not want to split its ceremonies. Because of the many locations currently used by arts and sciences, there would not be enough locations around campus to house these ceremonies.
- McKee indicated that the logical thing to do would be to move the university ceremony to Friday. This would eliminate the need for these three colleges to find another venue other than Cassell Coliseum.
- It was noted that the weather could still be an issue on a Friday afternoon or early evening time, but that Cassell Coliseum would be available as a rain site. It was suggested that the committee ask for more input from the SGA and other similar organizations to gauge their thoughts on this matter.
- It was also noted that if the ceremony moves to Friday, because of traffic and parking demands, the university would need to close early to supply the demand.
- It was stated that the university ceremony for students and parents is optional. The actual college ceremony is where the student receives his or her diploma. The main ceremony on Friday could be kind of a kick-off for the remaining ceremonies, with the conferring of degrees by the president. It is best that the graduates have a positive experience. Hincker also indicated that we are limited on Saturday to a one-hour university ceremony, and that given more time, the ceremony could become more creative—it's been the same for 20-30 years.

The next part of the discussion revolved around the planning for moving the university ceremony to Friday. If this is done, other ceremonies could possibly be affected. For instance, the Graduate School Ceremony (normally held at 4:30 p.m.), the Corps of Cadets Graduation Ceremony (normally held at 3 p.m., and the College of Veterinary Medicine (normally held in the evening).

- It was mentioned that it would be an advantage to have the Graduate School hold its ceremony first, and then the graduates could process with the faculty at the university ceremony.

- According to the representative from the Vet School, their ceremony is held in Squires and could be held at the same time as the Graduate School ceremony, or they could follow the Graduate School ceremony, with the university ceremony being held at twilight with a dinner break in between. Of course, this would leave the Corps Graduate Ceremony to place in a time slot.

Advantages to moving the university ceremony to Friday were reiterated: 1) the three colleges involved could begin their ceremonies in Cassell Coliseum earlier, 2) diplomas would be available for all colleges, 3) even the college of arts and sciences could begin its ceremonies earlier and have more campus venues available.

Hincker suggested that a subcommittee be appointed to discuss the details of the schedule for spring ceremonies. **Brown moved that the committee recommend to the president that the university ceremony be moved to Friday with the details of the schedule being worked out at a later date. The motion was seconded by Reaves, and all approved with one abstention from Klein—until a schedule could be discussed.**

Klein questioned whether or not the first college beginning early on Saturday would be able to get its diplomas in time. It was stated that the colleges usually pick up their diplomas quite early, and that this should not be a problem.

Henneke appointed the following members to discuss the schedule for spring commencement: Henneke, Beach, Price, Snyder, O'Rourke, Reaves, Taylor, Stringer, Klein, DePauw or Avery, Hill, and Nicole Reynolds.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:10 p.m.

**COMMENCEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**Wednesday, December 4, 2002**  
**President's Boardroom, 210 Burruss Hall – 12:15 p.m.**

1. Approval of Minutes – Wednesday, November 6 Meeting
2. Special Request from Senior Challenge
3. Fall Commencement Planning
4. Suggestions for Possible Speakers for Spring Commencement
5. Schedule Changes for Spring Commencement (see below)

A sub-committee convened to develop a recommendation for the University Commencement Committee met on Wednesday, November 20. The following recommendation is made for further consideration by the University Commencement Committee.

**Friday Spring Commencement Ceremonies**

**Present Schedule:**

Corps of Cadets Graduation Ceremony	3:00 p.m.
Graduate School Ceremony	4:30 p.m.
Army Commissioning	5:00 p.m.
VA/MD Vet School Ceremony	7:00 p.m.
New Virginians Show	8:00 p.m.

**New Schedule:**

In addition to the above schedule, these should be added.

University Ceremony  
Navy Commissioning (by request)

**Possible Schedule:**

Corps of Cadets Graduation Ceremony	CEC Auditorium	1:00 p.m.
VA/MD Vet School Ceremony	Commonwealth Ballroom	1:00 pm
Graduate School Ceremony	Cassell Coliseum	3:00 p.m.
Army Commissioning	CEC or Haymarket Theatre	3:30 p.m.*
Navy Commissioning	Colonial Hall, Squires	4:00 p.m.*
VA/MD Vet School Ceremony	Commonwealth Ballroom	5:00 p.m.
University Ceremony	Lane Stadium	7:30 p.m.
New Virginians Show	Haymarket Theatre	???

There was also some discussion about the possibility of varying from the usual schedule for the Northern Virginia Center ceremony. Rather than holding the ceremony as usual on that Sunday afternoon, it may now be possible to hold the ceremony early Saturday evening.

## **COMMENCEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

**Wednesday, December 4, 2002**

**12:15 p.m.**

**President's Boardroom, 210 Burruss Hall**

**PRESENT:** Ed Henneke, Bill Stringer for Jerry Allen, Randy Billingsley, Bud Brown, Greg Brown, Theresa Cassino, John Beach for Bill Elvey, Jerry Gibson, Pat Goodrich, Bill Green, Larry Hincker, Brad Klein, Vinod Lohani, Kim O'Rourke, Dixie Reaves, Nicole Reynolds, Dean Stauffer, Dan Taylor.

**GUESTS:** Susan Angle, David McKee, Margie Murray, Lyndell Price, Jennie Reilly, Mike Westfall, Ryan Martin, Lauren Ermann.

**ABSENT:** Reba Crawford, Leon Geyer, Grant Hill, Sherry Schofield-Tomschin, Diane Zahm.

Chairman Ed Henneke called the meeting to order at 12:15 p.m.

### **Approval of Minutes for November 6, 2002**

Moved by Billingsley and seconded by O'Rourke, the minutes were approved as written with one abstention from Klein due to insufficient review time.

### **Special Request from Senior Challenge (proposal attached)**

Ryan Martin, Lauren Ermann and Mike Westfall attended the December meeting on behalf of Annual Giving with regard to the attached proposal for Senior Challenge. They were interested in incorporating into the spring Commencement ceremony a check presentation from the senior class.

Committee members were concerned that this could be viewed as an indirect request for donations. Other members believed if this were done tastefully, it would be okay to incorporate. Still others were concerned that if this were approved, other similar requests would follow.

Martin indicated that this would be in the form of a gift to the University from seniors—a gesture of devotion and respect.

Reaves moved that this proposal be recommended to the president for approval. Brown seconded and the vote was eight for approval of recommendation, two opposed, and two abstentions.

### **Fall Commencement Planning**

Goodrich announced that the Graduate School made some changes to their program. First, arrangements were made with the Alumni Association to assist with funds to provide graduates with nice diploma covers—rather than the usual envelope with instructions enclosed for obtaining the diploma.

They also have plans for a television camera to focus on stage during their ceremony in Cassell Coliseum so that as graduates pass over the stage they may be shown on the large screen and

seen by the audience better. An outside vendor will be providing this service. Interpreters could also be seen on the large screen. One member asked if we could also access local cable television for broadcast, but it was indicated by Hincker that this could not be done, although he did state that Athletics had the equipment and capability to broadcast over campus cable.

Members voiced their opinions that this was a great idea, and wondered if this could be done at the university ceremony as well. Hincker indicated that the bulk of the cost would be in equipment and that additional costs would be hourly to do both ceremonies.

The committee discussions moved to the issue of whether or not security would or should be hired for commencement. It was noted that the brochure did not indicate that wrapped packages should not be brought to ceremonies or that bags would be checked.

It was noted that security at basketball games is now minimal. O'Rourke will contact Chief Duncan regarding her assessment of the risk, and the Chief's recommendation will be followed.

### **Suggestions for Possible Speakers for Spring Commencement**

O'Rourke asked that if anyone had suggestions for a speaker for Spring Commencement to let her know. Suggestions will be kept on file if they cannot be implemented this year.

### **Spring Commencement Schedule (New draft schedule attached)**

A draft commencement itinerary was presented to the committee. Those representing the college and departmental ceremonies agreed upon all changes. Reaves moved, and Brown seconded, that the committee approve the draft schedule and recommend it to the president for final approval. The committee passed this motion and recommended to the president that the Spring University Ceremony be moved to Friday evening at 7:30 p.m. in this schedule. (Note: The president is willing to try the revised schedule on a trial basis for spring 2003.) The time for the New Virginians show had not been set, but discussions would follow after the meeting with John Husser and Dave McKee.



## Proposal for Senior Challenge Check Presentation at Commencement

Realizing that Virginia Tech's Commencement is both a prestigious and meaningful event for students, parents, faculty, and staff, Annual Giving would like to explore the possibility of tastefully incorporating a check presentation into the ceremony.

### Basic Concept:

- An opportunity to have the entire Class of 2003 draw together in a **collective "Thank You"** to Virginia Tech
- Have the two **student co-chairs** of the senior Challenge present an oversized check to President Steger.
- Check would be made out to Virginia Tech **from the Class of 2003**
- Dollar amount would be the total amount **raised by the class** through the Senior Challenge
- The tone would be that of **respect and appreciation from the class** to Virginia Tech
- An opportunity for President Steger to **thank the class** for their support and dedication to Virginia Tech

### What it is not:

- An overt ask for money
- A "push" for money from parents
- A "push" for money from Virginia Tech's newest alumni
- A statement of the peril Virginia Tech faces due to budget constraints

**COMMENCEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**  
**Wednesday, February 5, 2003**  
**12:15 p.m.**  
**President's Boardroom, 210 Burruss Hall**

**PRESENT:** Ed Henneke, Bill Stringer for Jerry Allen, Bud Brown, Theresa Cassino, John Beach for Bill Elvey, Leon Geyer, Jerry Gibson, Pat Goodrich, Brad Klein, Vinod Lohani, Kim O'Rourke, Dixie Reaves, Sherry Schofield-Tomschin, Dean Stauffer, Dan Taylor.

**ABSENT:** Randy Billingsley, Greg Brown, Reba Crawford, Bill Green, Grant Hill, Larry Hincker, Nicole Reynolds, Diane Zahm.

**GUESTS:** Susan Angle, Greg Beecher, Dave McKee, Margie Murray, Jennie Reilly, Kimberle Badinelli, Vickie Sarfo-Kantanka, John Greene

Chairman Ed Henneke called the meeting to order at 12:17 p.m.

**Approval of Minutes for December 4, 2002 Meeting**

**Moved by Geyer, and seconded by Brown, the minutes were approved as written.**

**Request from Senior Challenge**

The Senior Challenge committee requested that they be allowed to make a check presentation during the spring commencement ceremony to the university as a gift. At the December meeting, the committee moved that the Senior Challenge proposal be recommended to the President for approval. **O'Rourke will comment at the February meeting on the outcome of that request.**

**Fall Commencement Planning Discussion**

Dr. Henneke asked that the committee begin discussions on whether or not to cancel Fall Commencement 2003. Would parents have problems getting lodging refunds? Hotels would lose the two nights' lodging. It was mentioned that Hincker should contact area hotels for their input, and that the committee members should ask for student interaction, and be ready to discuss this issue at the March meeting. It may be too late to cancel this year, but could go into affect for fall of 2004.

**Spring 2003 Commencement Schedule**

It was requested that the committee consider the pros and cons of the recent changes for Spring Commencement. Dr. Steger would ultimately decide on whether the schedule changes would continue in the coming years.

It was asked that the committee members present work with other college members to decide on sharing space for college and departmental ceremonies. In spring of 2004, the committee could be reviewing the need for additional large space for the New College, and current colleges could outgrow their current space.

Klein mentioned that Veterinary Medicine was having trouble getting space in Squires for their post-event reception. They were looking for space for approximately 1200 guests.

### **Spring 2003 Commencement Speaker**

The first speaker had been invited, but declined. O'Rourke indicated that another invitation had gone out, and that we hoped to know soon who the speaker would be.

### **Spring 2003 Commencement Planning**

Beach indicated that a college may use Lane Stadium for a spring ceremony, but inclement weather could be an issue, especially with no other indoor locations. Also, Physical Plant workers would not be available to assist on Saturday with college ceremonies. Only about fifty percent of the Physical Plant staff working on Friday would return on Saturday. Holding the University ceremony on Friday actually helps with the fact that Physical Plant workers do not receive overtime hours on weekends. Most of the work could be completed on Friday evening.

Veterinary Medicine was still considering the change of time for their ceremony to Saturday evening, but O'Rourke mentioned that the Northern Virginia Center Ceremony is held on Saturday evening.

It was reiterated that we do use the big screen at Lane Stadium for Commencement and will continue to do so.

The planning committee for the Northern Virginia Center Ceremony has again asked that the University Mace be used during their ceremony. In the past, Dr. Steger has allowed them to use the smaller version of the original mace to avoid expensive moving and security costs. The Northern Virginia Center will be allowed to use the smaller version of the mace as in the past, and since Dr. Geyer has been asked to serve as the marshal, will make arrangements to take the small mace.

It was announced that Residential and Dining Programs would be adding an optional dinner on Friday evening to the commencement schedule due to the change in the timing of the University Ceremony. The dinner would be available between 3:30 and 7:30 p.m. at West End Market.

It was announced by Dr. Henniker that we received only two emails complaining about the spring schedule changes.

McKee asked that the committee support the recommendation that the band be allowed to continue its local spring tour with reduced funding. The band would focus on Blacksburg as its base of operation with no overnight travel. This would reduce the cost to ½ of the normal cost of approximately \$1500. The band is a good representative of Virginia Tech, garnering excellent public relations for the university, and it's also a good diversion for the seniors prior to graduation. **Moved by McKee, and seconded by O'Rourke, the committee agreed to support the request of funds for their annual trip.**

### **Special Request by the Corps of Cadets**

The representatives of the Corps of Cadets asked if the members of the Corps were required to wear regalia for the university and college ceremonies or whether they could wear their dress uniforms. It was discussed by the committee with the following outcome. Although the Corps has its own graduation ceremony, it's not an academic ceremony. The university and college ceremonies are, and therefore, Corps members should wear cap and gown, as other undergraduates are required. All but one member agreed with the summation.

The meeting adjourned at 1 p.m.

**COMMENCEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**  
**Wednesday, March 12, 2003**  
**12:15 p.m.**  
**President's Boardroom, 210 Burruss Hall**

**PRESENT:** Bill Stringer for Jerry Allen, Norrine Bailey Spencer for Randy Billingsley, Bud Brown, Theresa Cassino, John Beach for Bill Elvey, Jerry Gibson, Pat Goodrich, Larry Hincker, Vinod Lohani, Kim O'Rourke, Dean Stauffer, Dan Taylor.

**ABSENT:** Ed Henneke, Greg Brown, Reba Crawford, Leon Geyer, Bill Green, Grant Hill, Brad Klein, Dixie Reaves, Nicole Reynolds, Sherry Schofield-Tomschin, Diane Zahm.

**GUESTS:** Susan Angle, Greg Beecher, Dave McKee, Margie Murray, Vickie Sarfo-Kantanka, Jack Dudley, Laura Torgersen.

Chairman Taylor called the meeting to order at 12:17 p.m.

**Approval of Minutes – February 5, 2003**

Dr. Taylor asked for a motion on the approval of the minutes from February 5. With a first from Brown, and a second by O'Rourke, the minutes were approved as written.

**University Commencement Speaker**

O'Rourke announced that the keynote speaker for the Spring 2003 University Commencement Ceremony will be The Honorable Leroy Hassell, Sr., the first African American to be appointed as Chief Justice of the Virginia Supreme Court.

**2003 University Band Tour**

McKee announced that the executive vice president had approved the funds for the tour of the university band prior to Commencement. Dr. McKee thanked the committee for their support.

**Announcement from the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences**

With the inclusion of the Department of Human Nutrition, Food and Exercise to this college, next year they will have outgrown the use of Burruss Hall for their ceremony.

**Spring 2003 Commencement Planning**

Beach reiterated the fact that very little faculty and/or staff assistance, especially Physical Plant personnel would be available on Saturday to assist with college ceremonies.

Lohani wanted to make sure that more security was on site during the college ceremony transitions on Saturday in Cassell Coliseum. Spencer suggested that for the Business ceremony guests not be allowed to enter until 1 p.m. It was stated that Business and Engineering would be hiring event staff, but that it was important that the volunteer rescue squad be on site.

To assist with transition, it was suggested that at the end of each ceremony, it should be announced that guests should exit through certain doors, and guests coming in, should enter through certain doors. Beach indicated that signs could be made if he received requests early for the sign shop.

Taylor noted that the requests for marshals and ushers for each college had been sent out.

Goodrich announced that the graduate commencement speaker would be Dr. Debra Stewart, President, Council of Graduate Schools. This guest speaker would be a departure from having an in-house speaker for fall and spring. The Graduate School will continue to have an in-house faculty speaker at the fall ceremony.

Newly updated information for the Virginia Tech website will be posted soon with information for the disabled—especially information on wheelchair rental. Special parking passes will be available, but must be picked up in advance.

Beach indicated that the rain plan for the Friday university ceremony is marginal at best—basically, it doesn't work. Should the ceremony be cancelled, where would the speaker speak? O'Rourke noted that the President would be very reluctant to cancel the ceremony and would want to implement the "rain plan."

Beach indicated that umbrellas would be available for members of the stage party should light showers appear. The guests are also urged (in the brochure) to bring umbrellas and rain jackets in case of showers. When discussing the rain plan, and when it would be announced that the university ceremony be moved indoors, Beach indicated that a 5 p.m. announcement would be too late, and that a 3 p.m. announcement should be made.

Because Cassell Coliseum is really too small to accommodate all university ceremony guests, Spencer asked if we could broadcast to other locations from Cassell Coliseum. Hincker said that he and his staff would look into the matter and report back to the committee with the possibilities.

### **Honors Student Procession**

Since 1991, the honors program has been holding a pre-ceremony reception for honors students. In the past, this reception was held on Friday since the University Ceremony wasn't until Saturday. Because the students will be pressed for time this year, Jack Dudley requested that the honors students be able to process from Hillcrest Hall to the stadium and be seated as a group.

The reception will begin at 4:30 p.m. on Friday at Hillcrest. The students will march to Lane Stadium, beginning at 6:30 p.m., through a route approved by the campus police, and will enter the stadium through the tunnel at the north end zone. Bagpipers will lead them from Hillcrest to the tunnel entrance. At the start of the regular procession, the honors students will march in through the tunnel and be seated in the first seats on the left facing the stage. The stage party will process from the south. By the Wednesday before commencement, the number of honors students will be known, so there should be an accurate count on the number of seats to be reserved. In the event of inclement weather, the Honors Student Procession would be cancelled.

***After considerable review and discussion, Brown moved that this procession be allowed, McKee seconded, and with an amendment by O'Rourke that this process be reviewed prior to Spring 2004, the committee approved the separate procession of honors students.***

### **Fall 2003 Commencement Ceremony Planning**

Hincker indicated that last fall \$10,000 was raised by hotels to help defer costs for the Fall Commencement ceremony. He doesn't believe the hotels will be as receptive this year.

It was mentioned that the committee could save money by holding both the graduate and undergraduate ceremonies on Friday instead of Friday and Saturday. The university ceremony could be held on Friday evening at 6:30 p.m. or 7 p.m., after the graduate school ceremony.

This would mean that most parents would only need a one-night stay at local hotels. However, after checking, Hincker's office indicated that the majority of local hotels do require a two-night stay on the weekends of commencement.

If the university does cancel fall commencement—even temporarily, this could mean even more space problems in the spring, but again, holding both Fall ceremonies on Friday, this could save money. Goodrich indicated that this would not be a problem for the Graduate School.

If the Coliseum were set with enough chairs for the University ceremony, would there be too many empty seats at the Graduate School ceremony? Alternatively, the university ceremony could be held first, but then parking on a workday could be an issue. By holding the University Ceremony first, Physical Plant would just have to remove excess chairs in order to set up for the Graduate School Ceremony to follow.

**The committee was asked to consider these options for discussion at the April meeting.**

The meeting adjourned at 1:15 p.m.

**COMMENCEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**  
**Wednesday, April 2, 2003**  
**12:15 p.m.**  
**President's Boardroom, 210 Burruss Hall**

**PRESENT:** Bill Stringer for Jerry Allen, Randy Billingsley, Bud Brown, Theresa Cassino, Reba Crawford, John Beach for Bill Elvey, Jerry Gibson, Pat Goodrich, Bill Green, Randy Stith for Larry Hincker, Vinod Lohani, Kim O'Rourke, Dixie Reaves, Nicole Reynolds, Sherry Schofield-Tomschin, Dan Taylor.

**ABSENT:** Ed Henneke, Greg Brown, Leon Geyer, Grant Hill, Brad Klein, Dean Stauffer, Diane Zahm.

**GUESTS:** John Greene, Hunter Gresham, Julie Kamienski, Dave McKee, Margie Murray, Lyndell Price, Jennie Reilly, Wendell Flinchum, Richard McCoy.

Chairman Taylor called the meeting to order at 12:15 p.m.

**Approval of Minutes – March 12, 2003**

With one change in the spelling of Debra Stewart's name, O'Rourke moved that the minutes be approved. With a second from Schofield-Tomschin, the minutes were approved unanimously.

**Announcements / Questions**

Bud Brown asked that the committee recognize Dixie Reaves as being a recipient of the Alumni Teaching Award.

It was also asked if anyone had heard about a change in the Virginia Tech diplomas? Although the Graduate School is now using diploma covers at presentation, no one had heard of diplomas being changed.

**Information**

*Suggested Route for Honors Graduates Parade:* The honors students will march down the sidewalk from Litton Reaves, cross at McComas Hall and then continue through the commuter parking lot to Lane Stadium. Including family members, this group could be as large as 300-500 people. Honors students will process through the tunnel. Jack Dudley has arranged for volunteers to assist with getting the honors students from the tunnel to their seats. He did not see an additional need for marshals to be arranged by the colleges because of this change. Lt. Ridinger does not see any problem with this procession, other than having to cross two streets, but there will be traffic management as needed.

In addition, Murray will be contacting Lauren Roop to make arrangements for event staff, and will request additional staff for the tunnel.

*Recommendation for Televising Coliseum Ceremony in Case of Inclement Weather:* Randy Stith indicated that in order to prepare for televising in case of inclement weather, he would need to let CNS know within a week of the ceremony whether or not preparations should be made. This would require a \$600 non-refundable deposit for setup. Goodrich said that the Graduate School is interested in televising, and that they may want to televise in either case, but that no arrangements had been made. It was felt that this would attract more of an outside audience.

**Taylor moved that \$600 was a reasonable cost to guarantee the success of the ceremonies, assuming that additional costs for actually having to make this work would not be unreasonable. With a second from Lohani, the committee agreed unanimously.**

### **Spring Commencement Planning**

Taylor announced that April 9 was the deadline for all colleges to provide him with usher/marshal volunteer names.

Beach began the discussion by talking about the procession through the south end zone for the university ceremony. Signs will be posted for colleges to line up candidates. One half of the students will enter on one side of the field, the other half on the other side. The center parking aisle will be blocked for handicapped parking and para-transit needs. This will work until about thirty minutes prior to the ceremony. When Reaves gives the signal to police, the road will be blocked.

The university stage party will robe in the Press Room (Beamer's) on the ground floor of the south end zone. Guests will be escorted to a suite where they may view the ceremony. In case of inclement weather, the stage party will again robe in the Monogram Room, 309 Jamerson Athletic Center.

The Graduate School ceremony stage party will again robe in the Monogram Room, 309 Cassell. There will be an 8 a.m. rehearsal in Cassell Coliseum on Friday, May 9.

Beach stated that there was only one handicap ramp available for the stage, and asked that he be notified if anyone needed that ramp for their ceremony. [Note: Virginia Reilly has since learned of a need to have a ramp at both sides of the stage for the Graduate School ceremony.]

The Virginia Tech Police Department will provide additional officers on Saturday in Cassell Coliseum, and event staff will also be hired by the individual colleges to assist with pedestrian flow between ceremonies.

McKee asked if the Jumbotron would be used pre-event as it was last year for the University ceremony. He was told that it would not be, and that was also his preference.

Reilly asked that Dan review the handicap map. Murray will email that map for his comments. She also noted that directions for the small ceremonies were also being written, and would be distributed as soon as they were available.

The members of each stage party will have ample parking available--near the tennis courts for the Graduate Ceremony, and in the south end zone for the University Ceremony. [A decision must be made as to where parking will be for the University Ceremony in the event of inclement weather.]

### **Discussion of Fall Commencement**

The members of the Commencement Committee were asked to consider whether or not to cancel Fall Commencement, and report at this meeting. The committee consensus was that it was too late to cancel the ceremony for Fall 2003. **With a motion from Lohani, and a second from Brown, the committee agreed unanimously to recommend holding Fall Commencement 2003 to the President.**



One possibility arose of having both the undergraduate and graduate ceremonies on Friday, instead of having the graduate ceremony on Friday, and the undergraduate ceremony on Saturday.

Although local hotels would still require a two-night stay, according to a poll done by Hincker's office, that could also be changed for a Thursday/Friday night stay, instead of Friday/Saturday.

One ceremony could be held late morning on Friday, and the other early afternoon. This change would need to be advertised as soon as possible so that parents and guests would have time to change their reservations. Should the committee recommend to the president that both ceremonies be held on Friday, with his approval, this would give families up to eight months to revise their plans.

When asked at what time the Graduate School preferred to have their ceremony, Goodrich indicated that it did not matter to the students, as long as there was a ceremony.

It was noted that it is difficult to get ushers/marshals to volunteer on Saturday for Fall Commencement since it is so close to the holidays. It would also be easier to hire event staff for Friday ceremonies—especially for the fall ceremonies.

**Taylor moved that the committee recommend to the president that both fall ceremonies be held on Friday. McKee seconded, and the committee agreed unanimously.**

After the president's approval, a press release should be done by Hincker's office to get the word out in advance to avoid complications.

Discussions turned to which ceremony to hold first—and when. Beach indicated that this time of year is very cold, and it would be better not to hold either ceremony in the evening. He also noted that it is easier to take chairs away from the floor of the Coliseum than it is to add them. Therefore, he thought it would be a good idea to hold the undergraduate ceremony in the morning, and the graduate ceremony in the early afternoon.

Until the president has a chance to review the recommendation to hold both ceremonies on Friday, the discussion on the timing of the ceremonies would be tabled until this decision has been made. In the meantime, the student representative on the committee will poll students to get their feedback as well. The graduate student representative indicated that the graduate students were flexible on this issue.

Taylor adjourned the meeting at 1:02 p.m.

## **COMMENCEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

**Wednesday, April 30, 2003**

**12:00 p.m.**

**President's Boardroom, 210 Burruss Hall**

**Present:** Ed Henneke, Bill Stringer for Jerry Allen, Bud Brown, Greg Brown, Theresa Cassino, John Beach for Bill Elvey, Jerry Gibson, Pat Goodrich, Larry Hincker, Vinod Lohani, Kim O'Rourke, Dixie Reaves, Sherry Schofield-Tomschin, Dean Stauffer, Dan Taylor

**Absent:** Randy Billingsley, Reba Crawford, Leon Geyer, Bill Green, Grant Hill, Brad Klein, Nicole Reynolds, Diane Zahm

**Guests:** Roger, Avery, Julie Kamienski, Richard McCoy, Dave McKee, Margie Murray, Lyndell Price, Jennie Reilly, Wendell Flinchum

Chairman Henneke called the meeting to order at 12:02 p.m.

### **Approval of Minutes – April 2, 2003 Meeting**

With a motion from Schofield-Tomschin, and a second by Lohani, the minutes were approved as written.

### **Final Planning for Spring Commencement – Discussion**

Taylor began the discussion by asking about the event staff and how student searches would be handled during the student lineup. Event staff will be available and assigned to each side of the south end zone tunnels at four per side. Ushers/marshals will ask students to leave their gowns unzipped prior to entering one of the tunnels into the stadium. All gates will be opened, and additional event staff will be stationed at those entrances as well. Ushers and marshals will be stationed as requested by the Director of Ushers.

Stage party musicians will be wearing tuxes and will need to set up on stage prior to the procession. They may enter through the north end zone tunnel or the stands.

Jack Dudley indicated that all arrangements for the honors students are in order. There will be six to eight bagpipers leading the procession to the stadium. Upon entering the stadium, the bagpipe music will cease, and the general stage party/student procession will begin.

Members of the stage party, Commencement Committee, and other dignitaries will be provided a parking pass valid for either the coliseum or tennis parking lots. Parking is available in the south end zone if space exists.

Roger Avery and Pat Goodrich stated the concern of the Graduate School of having too many seats on the floor during their ceremony, making it appear that there is a small turnout. Due to the possibility of rain at the University Ceremony in Lane Stadium, it is important to have enough seating on the Coliseum floor to accommodate the undergraduate ceremony should inclement weather affect use of the stadium. Beach will work with them and place fewer seats on the floor if the weather looks good.

Beach indicated a concern with the flags used for each ceremony. Because the flags are used at the Graduate ceremony first, it is very difficult to get these flags to the stage at Lane Stadium—especially once the guests start arriving. Hincker indicated that he'd noticed another set of flags/banners at the Volume II Bookstore. Murray will check into the possibility of borrowing these for the day. Another set would be very expensive. The small ones would cost approximately \$500 each, and the large about \$3,000 each.

Beach asked for a count of graduates so that chairs could be placed on the field. He is prepared to set 3,500 chairs if needed. Murray will get Beach the graduate numbers. Additional chairs for wheelchair users' families will be placed in the accessible areas should they be needed. In addition, a handicap ramp will be provided for the stage during the Graduate Ceremony.

After the students line up, the gates for the paratransit bus will not be available. Gate 1 should be used after that. Once Level 4 of the south end zone is full, BT buses should be directed to drop at Gate 2. BT paratransit will work with families if they are notified in advance.

Program Distribution was finalized. Individual college ceremonies will be sent one program per student with a few additional for faculty. It should be announced to your colleges that programs will be available at the Graduate and Undergraduate Ceremonies on Friday, and should be picked up there. Partial programs for the University ceremony, as used in the past, were discontinued due to the huge amount of waste. There was some concern about families not attending the university ceremony, but it has been decided that programs left over from the Friday ceremonies will be distributed early Saturday morning by Physical Plant if at all possible. Students are provided with one program during the University processional. The full number of needed programs would be distributed to the Graduate School, Veterinary Medicine, and NOVA program ceremonies.

Hincker suggested that the announcement that Fall Commencement has been moved from Saturday, December 20 to Friday, December 19 be posted in the student paper.

Beach asked for a total number of honors students so that seats in the front rows could be marked.

There will be an 8 a.m. rehearsal of both the graduate and undergraduate ceremonies. Henneke asked that the color guard be at rehearsal.

The meeting adjourned at 12:50 p.m.

**Note:**

On July 10 at 11 a.m. several members of the Commencement Committee met to discuss the timing for Fall Commencement. At that meeting the undergraduate ceremony was set for 11:00 a.m. on Friday, December 19, and the graduate ceremony was set for 3:00 p.m.

All members of the Commencement Committee, and those working with Commencement in their colleges, were notified of this decision and asked to communicate this information to their students.