

**COMMENCEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**  
**Wednesday, September 1, 2004**  
**12:15 p.m.**  
**President's Boardroom, 210 Burruss Hall**

**Present:** Ed Henneke, Bill Stringer for Jerry Allen, Roger Avery, Sumeet Bagai, Bud Brown, Myrna Callison, Deborah Cook, Robyn Daniel, Jerry Gibson, Ellington Graves, Clara Cox for Larry Hincker, Brad Klein, Kim O'Rourke, Lyndell Price, Dixie Reaves, Dan Taylor, Diane Zahm

**Absent:** Bill Green, Brian James, Vinod Lohani, Dean Stauffer

**Guests:** Patrick Casey, Wendy Conner, Hunter Gresham, Dave McKee, Jennie Reilly,

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

**Approval of Minutes**

The minutes were approved as written.

**Review of Spring Commencement**

The Commencement Program was reprinted for the graduates of the Virginia Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine due to the omission of the second half of their graduate listing in the program. The President's Office is waiting for a mailing list to mail the programs to the recent graduates.

Taylor noted that there needed to be more signage indicating the closure of the West Stands. Reaves requested that orange cones be placed where students process to help keep the students in marching order. Gibson also requested more signage. Price suggested that Taylor and Reaves provide them with a list of needed signs prior to the ceremony.

Reaves and McKee commented on how well the honors procession was handled.

It was requested that the colleges holding ceremonies around campus be informed that programs are being delivered and that the location of the programs be provided to be sure they are handed out.

Price stated that there was a group selling milkshakes in the Coliseum. Due to the spillage during the first ceremony, it became harder to set up for the second ceremony because of the additional cleaning that was necessary. It was noted that the Dairy Science Club had been given permission to sell the milkshakes. The concessions were requested to be opened because it is necessary to provide cold drinks on hot days to the staff working and to the audience. Henneke indicated that the concessions operator will be notified to request changes to items being provided. It was suggested that at minimum, plastic lids and straws be provided to reduce spillage.

Gresham stated that the ceremonies being held in Squires have become larger due to the combining of departments, and that space is becoming an issue. Some departments may need to move to larger venues if available. It was suggested that once the new Alumni Conference Center opens that it may be possible to have larger ceremonies there.

Henneke asked for volunteers to serve on a sub-committee to review the dress code for Commencement regarding stoles, colors of sashes, and college tassel colors. Because there are no official lists, students have little guidance regarding academic regalia other than what is sent to the Bookstore from Oak Hall.

## **2004 Fall Ceremony**

The fall ceremony will be held on December 17, much earlier than last year. The University Ceremony will be held at 11 a.m., and the Graduate Ceremony at 3:00 p.m. in Cassell Coliseum.

At the request of the Commencement Committee, there will be a change at each ceremony regarding the photographing of students as they cross the stage. No additional photographs will be taken off stage. The President's Office will make arrangements with Chappell Studios to set up for official photographs the day before the ceremonies for both undergraduate and graduate students.

Reaves noted that each college uses a different means of assigning volunteer ushers and marshals for Commencement. She requested that the college representatives be sure that volunteers are made aware of their assignment to avoid no-shows.

Avery indicated that Dean DePauw has commissioned another piece of music to be written for the next spring ceremony. Also, he noted that the Northern Virginia Ceremony may again be on Sunday because a venue cannot be found for Saturday evening.

No speakers have been chosen for either ceremony at this point. Callison and Daniel asked how the speakers are chosen. O'Rourke indicated that for the University ceremony in the fall, the senior class president confers with the Alumni Association to develop a list of three faculty, from which the President makes the selection. The speaker for the University Ceremony in the spring is usually an external person selected by the President, and the President's Office is always pleased to receive suggestions. Avery noted that the Graduate Commencement speaker is chosen by the Graduate School and that they were looking for a speaker for the fall ceremony as well.

Beach estimated that the cost of an additional handicap ramp would be approximately \$14-15,000. There are systems that may be rented for \$3-5,000 that includes a ramp.

With no other business, the meeting adjourned at 1:05 p.m.

**Commencement Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, October 6, 2004**  
**12:15 p.m.**  
**President's Boardroom, 210 Burruss Hall**

**Present:** Ed Henneke, Bill Stringer for Jerry Allen, Roger Avery, Bud Brown, Myrna Callison, Deborah Cook, Robyn Daniel, Jerry Gibson, Ellington Graves, Bill Green, Larry Hincker, Vinod Lohani, Kim O'Rourke, Lyndell Price, Dixie Reaves, Dan Taylor, Diane Zahm

**Absent:** Sumeet Bagai, Lay Nam Chang, Brian James, Brad Klein, Dean Stauffer

**Guests:** Wendy Conner, Margie Murray, April Myers, Jennie Reilly

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

**Approval of Minutes**

Brown moved that the minutes for the September 1, 2004 meeting be approved. With a second from Graves the minutes were approved unanimously.

**Discussion on Academic Apparel**

The Sub-committee on academic apparel (Bud Brown, Myrna Callison, Robyn Daniel, Dixie Reaves, Diane Zahm, and Ed Henneke) made two recommendations to the committee: The 1<sup>st</sup> recommendation is that the University accept the American Council on Education's Academic Costume Code and Academic Ceremony Guide as the University's official guide for academic apparel standards. The 2<sup>nd</sup> recommendation is to indicate exceptions to the guide. The first exception is that only one other item (sash, stole, cord, or medal) may be worn in addition to the academic gown. It was mentioned that it will be the students' choice as to what one item to wear if there is more than one option. Lohani questioned how the public will know the meaning of the items. Henneke stated that only academic distinction will be recognized by asking these students to rise during the ceremony.

O'Rourke mentioned that there will be no limitations to what the graduates can wear during pre-ceremony photographs and it was indicated that it will still be allowable for the students to decorate their mortar boards.

Graves questioned if there are going to be provisions for the approval of the additional items. Henneke indicated that the allowance is for only one item per student so the committee will not have to be involved in each decision. Students will be required to wear academic apparel, and if wearing an additional item, it can be no more than four inches wide and no longer than the gown.

Gibson questioned if sandals or high heels are acceptable. Henneke stated that the academic apparel standards specify that shoes should be dark, but it will be difficult to enforce this on the day of the ceremony. There are no restrictions on wearing high heels. Price added that they will not damage the stadium field, but they could break.

Lohani asked how the public would be made aware of the changes. Henneke noted that the program would be updated to indicate standard academic colors for hoods, etc., and that the undergraduate students with honors sashes is the only group asked to rise other than each college during the university ceremony.

## **Regalia Colors**

Graves questioned the interpretation of the Ph.D. blue hood as opposed to the disciplinary color of hoods. It was determined that there is a need to clarify the appropriate color to be worn.

Zahm indicated the color for Architecture should be brown but in the past has always been purple. It was stated that the color worn is because of the degree not the college. Henneke indicated the choice of color should be made by the Dean of each college.

Murray stated that more colors will be difficult for the bookstore to handle especially since some students show up at the bookstore not knowing their own degree. It was determined that the changes would be implemented in time for the 2004 Fall Commencement ceremonies. Gibson stated that distance learning students only visit the bookstore during Commencement and Zahm suggested that there is a need to give the bookstore an overall list of college colors.

Zahm questioned if it would be possible to have one tassel color for undergraduates as indicated in the guide. Reaves indicated that having one color would not be a good idea and the committee should work with each college to set tassel colors.

O'Rourke questioned when the official committee vote would be. Henneke responded that it would have to be in November.

Murray suggested that the brochure will need to be bigger in order to accommodate the additional information. It was determined that a line should be added to the brochure stating that information on regalia could be found at a specified web address.

To meet printing deadlines, it was necessary for the committee to vote on the recommendations at this meeting. Reaves then moved to follow the standard costume codes with the approval of the colleges and their modifications. Exceptions: 1) One additional item of the student's choice may be worn with the gown; 2) graduating members of the Corps would wear academic regalia (not uniforms); 3) the cadet assisting on stage would wear the Corps uniform; and 4) associate degree candidates would wear black gowns (rather than grey). Brown seconded the motion. Henneke set an October 15, 2004 deadline for each college's approval or modification. The motion passed unanimously.

## **Commencement Brochure and Website**

Reilly asked what the deadline was for submitting information for the Commencement website. Murray indicated that all information for the website and the brochure would be needed by the end of October.

## **Concessions**

Gibson requested clarification as to where the committee stands with regard to the Dairy Club selling milkshakes during the fall ceremony. Price stated that unlike the college ceremonies in the spring, there is plenty of time in the fall between ceremonies for cleanup. Henneke then stated it would be acceptable for the Dairy Club to sell milkshakes as long as a plastic lid was supplied.

## **Commencement Speakers**

Avery indicated that the Graduate School prefers that two graduate speakers be chosen for Commencement this fall; one for the Graduate School ceremony, and one for the University ceremony.

The need to adhere to time limits for speeches by student and alumni speakers was discussed. Daniel questioned if there is a requirement to have speeches submitted for review before the ceremony. It was determined that there is no requirement to have speeches reviewed prior to the ceremony, but it would be a good idea to have speeches submitted to the Commencement Committee chair two weeks prior to Commencement for review.

Avery stated that the Graduate School has invited a speaker but does not have confirmation yet.

With no other business the meeting adjourned at 1:04 p.m.

**COMMENCEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**  
**Wednesday, November 3, 2004**  
**12:15 p.m.**  
**President's Boardroom, 210 Burruss Hall**

**Present:** Dan Taylor (Acting Chair), Bill Stringer for Jerry Allen, Roger Avery, Sumeet Bagai, Bud Brown, Deborah Cook, Robyn Daniel, Jerry Gibson, Larry Hincker, Brad Klein, Vinod Lohani, Kim O'Rourke, Lyndell Price, Dixie Reaves, Diane Zahm, Audrey Zink-Sharp for Dean Stauffer

**Absent:** Myrna Callison, Lay Nam Chang, Ellington Graves, Bill Green, Ed Henneke, Brian James

**Guests:** Susan Angle, Wendy Conner, Hunter Gresham, Dave McKee, Mary Roop

Taylor, acting Chairman due to Henneke's absence, called the meeting to order at 12:15 p.m.

**Approval of Minutes**

Zahm moved that the minutes for the October 6, 2004 meeting be approved as written. With a second from Gibson the minutes were approved unanimously.

**Academic Apparel**

Murray announced that the University Bookstore has started selling commencement apparel based on last year's recommendations. This will make it difficult to recommend alternative colors unless the committee has already met and made its decisions. Zahm announced that the College of Architecture, whose color has been purple since 1964, will continue to wear purple. Zahm has notified the bookstore of that decision. The only exception will be that Master of Public Administration recipients will wear peacock blue.

Avery relayed a request by Dean DePauw that the committee consider excusing graduate students from wearing only one accoutrement. For example, it's common for graduate students to wear a country sash as well as an honor sash.

Reaves then made the request that the committee allow undergraduates to wear the honor sash as well as one other accoutrement of his/her choice.

Zahm moved to accept the American Council on Education's American Academic Costume Code and Academic Ceremony Guide standards with the exception that Architecture wear purple. Avery seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously. It was noted that at the last meeting the motion to allow associate degree candidates to wear black gowns instead of gray gowns was approved.

Reaves moved to allow qualifying undergraduates to wear the GPA honor sash awarded by his/her college as well as one other accoutrement of their choice. Brown seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously. It was noted that the following guidelines were approved at the last meeting: (1) graduating members of the Corps will wear academic regalia (not uniforms); the cadet assisting on stage will wear the Corps uniform; and (3) associate degree candidates will wear black gowns (instead of gray).

At this time, O'Rourke informed the group that the Alumni Association continues to develop a commencement gown. It will be necessary for the committee to ascertain that color criteria and other standards are met. It was decided that the committee should act on this issue separately.

### **Planning for Fall Commencement Ceremony**

After an inquiry from Price, it was announced that commencement rehearsal will be held on Thursday, December 16, at 4:00pm.

Regarding disability issues, Roop announced that she and her staff have spoken with the dean of each college and have acquired a contact name and phone number for each. The contact information will be posted on the main website.

Murray reminded the group that the photographer will set up for portrait sittings in the Bowman Room of Jamerson Athletic Center on Thursday, December 16, from 10am until 3pm. Any graduate – undergraduate, Master's or PhD – is eligible to have his/her photo taken. Graduates may wear all honor cords, sashes, stoles or other embellishment of choice. Backdrop for the photos will include the United States flag and the Virginia Tech flag (no college banners). Fliers about the photo session have been given to the University Bookstore for distribution at the campus bookstore, Volume Two Bookstore and at the Senior Moving On event. The commencement website has now been updated and commencement fliers have been mailed.

### **Planning for Spring Commencement Ceremony**

Lohani requested a confirmation that the College of Engineering would have the earliest time slot at the coliseum for the college's spring 2005 Commencement ceremony. It was confirmed that the Pamplin College of Business and the College of Engineering would alternate, therefore meaning that the College of Engineering will be first in the spring.

Regarding discussion at previous meetings, Gibson announced that Dairy Club representatives have agreed to provide plastic lids on milkshakes sold at the spring commencement.

With no other business, the meeting adjourned at 12:40 p.m.

**Commencement Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, December 1, 2004**  
**12:15 p.m.**  
**President's Boardroom, 210 Burruss Hall**

**Present:** Ed Henneke, Bill Stringer for Jerry Allen, Roger Avery, Bud Brown, Myrna Callison, Lay Nam Chang, Deborah Cook, Robyn Daniel, Bill Green, Larry Hincker, Brian James, Brad Klein, Vinod Lohani, Kim O'Rourke, Lyndell Price, Dan Taylor

**Absent:** Sumeet Bagai, Jerry Gibson, Ellington Graves, Dixie Reaves, Dean Stauffer, Diane Zahm

**Guests:** Susan Angle, Wendy Conner, Penny Cook, Wendell Flinchum, Hunter Gresham, Vince Houston, Richard McCoy, April Myers, Jennie Reilly

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

**Approval of Minutes**

Taylor and Avery will rewrite the verbiage on the graduate/undergraduate apparel from the November 3, 2004 meeting minutes. The minutes will then be distributed at a later date via e-mail for approval.

**Planning for Fall Commencement Ceremony**

Henneke questioned if there are any problems thus far and Brown mentioned there is a need to encourage faculty participation.

Dean Chang questioned why there isn't a day between the last day of exams and Commencement. Brown then mentioned that he administers an exam on the last day which could determine whether or not certain students graduate. It was suggested that the additional day is not necessary because diplomas are not handed out during the Fall Commencement ceremony (as they are during the spring ceremonies) and the registrar's office doesn't need the additional day to determine whether or not a student will complete the requirements to graduate.

After an inquiry from Henneke it was determined that there are not any issues with parking. The designated parking areas for the stage party will be the tennis court parking lot. There will also be parking in the coliseum parking, but there will be assigned spaces for special needs parking. Cook indicated the orange parking pass will work for both lots.

Regarding issues with assisted listening devices it was determined that information is listed on the Commencement website and the Commencement brochure to contact the Services for Students with Disabilities Office for any need of special equipment. Angle stated that in the past there has not been a request for assisted listening devices due to the sound systems being so advanced.

Henneke announced that the College of Engineering would like to record the Fall Commencement ceremony at their expense as a trial run in order to practice for the Spring Commencement ceremony. Hincker stated that if the college wants to handle this he feels it is a great idea.



Daniel questioned if the speakers were in order. O'Rourke confirmed that the speakers are set and a script is being drafted for the ceremony.

Daniel asked if honor sashes were obtained from the colleges and it was determined that honor sashes can be obtained from the bookstore where a list of honor graduates has been sent.

After an inquiry from Daniel it was announced that all participants in the ceremony will wear regalia with the exception of the Corps members on stage.

At this time O'Rourke confirmed that there will be a luncheon between ceremonies for the stage party in the Bowman Room.

Henneke confirmed that the rehearsal will be on Thursday, December 16, 2004 at 4:00 p.m.

Price questioned how many students will be graduating in order to prepare the correct number of chairs for the ceremony. Margie Murray had given him an approximate number of 900 undergraduates but he will need a more accurate number.

Henneke stated that the closing speech given by a class officer should be short. He also mentioned that there are no requirements as to which side tassels are to be worn on according to the American Council on Education's American Academic Costume Code and Academic Ceremony Guide standards.

Henneke announced that the next meeting will be the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday in February.

With no other business Brown moved to adjourn at 12:40 p.m.

[Note: A special meeting has been called for January 12, 2005]

**Commencement Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, February 2, 2005**  
**12:15 p.m.**  
**President's Boardroom, 210 Burruss Hall**

**Present:** Ed Henneke, Bill Stringer for Jerry Allen, Roger Avery, Bud Brown, Emily Aleshire, Deborah Cook, Brad Klein, Kim O'Rourke, Lyndell Price, Dixie Reaves, Dean Stauffer Dan Taylor

**Absent:** Sumeet Bagai, Lay Nam Chang, Robyn Daniel, Jerry Gibson, Ellington Graves, Bill Green, Larry Hincker, Brian James, Vinod Lohani, Diane Zahm

**Guests:** Susan Angle, Hunter Gresham, Dave McKee, Patrick Casey, April Myers, Eric Winger

Dr. Henneke called the meeting to order at 12:18 p.m.

**Approval of Minutes**

Avery moved that the minutes for the January 12, 2005, meeting be approved as written. With a second from O'Rourke, the minutes were approved unanimously.

**Individual Commencement Ceremony Locations and Times**

Henneke called for discussion of a request from the President's Office to have the Commencement Committee take on the responsibility along with the President's Office to coordinate the scheduling and allocation of space for all spring commencement ceremonies, including those held by the colleges and departments. Assignments would be based on need and history.

Henneke indicated that in the past the Commencement Committee (and the President's Office) had avoided becoming involved in the scheduling of college and department ceremonies, and the units resolved any issues among themselves. However, the restructuring created a need for more of the larger venues because some departments and colleges are now larger and have outgrown their previous venues. Several situations have arisen this year in which the President's Office or Commencement Committee Chair have been asked to help resolve scheduling and space issues when the units involved could not reach a compromise. He indicated that it may be necessary to employ the same type of procedure in other large venues that is used in Cassell Coliseum: rotating time slots for ceremonies among the same group from year to year. For example, each year the College of Business and the College of Engineering rotate the earliest and latest Saturday time slots in the Coliseum, and the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences takes the middle time slot because it is the smallest of the three units.

Gresham indicated that the University Unions and Student Activities office would put a block on all venues that they control for both Friday and Saturday for the President's Office to schedule as needed. O'Rourke stated that she would communicate with the other offices responsible for scheduling on-campus venues (such as Athletics, the Registrar's Office, Hillcrest, DBHCC, and Owens Hall), requesting that they reserve their respective spaces for the Friday and Saturday Commencement ceremonies for the President's Office to schedule.

After much discussion, Brown made a motion that the Commencement Committee Chair and the President's Office will coordinate the scheduling and space allocations for all Spring Commencement ceremonies (University, Graduate, college, and department) on the basis of need and history. Stauffer seconded the motion.

Klein questioned whether the current college and department ceremony times and locations as noted on the sheet that was circulated were final. Gresham indicated there will be additional ceremonies to add that have not been scheduled yet. Myers indicated that there could be minor changes, but for the most part the ceremonies that are scheduled are final.

With no further discussion, the motion was approved unanimously. It is effective immediately.

### **General Planning for Spring Commencement**

Henneke questioned whether there has been any feedback on the announcement about the change in time for the Graduate School and University ceremonies. O'Rourke stated that there have not been any responses.

Henneke then asked if we are still on schedule with the use of the stadium. Price indicated that we are, and there will be additional lights for the people leaving the stadium after the ceremony.

Reaves stated that she has received the number of students graduating from each college and will make a determination on the lineup soon. Price asked Reaves to send that information to him also.

O'Rourke questioned how the brochure was progressing. Myers indicated that the only information needed is from the National Capital Region and that is expected by 1:00 p.m. today.

Brown asked if there has been a confirmation on speakers for Commencement yet. O'Rourke indicated that as of today we have a University speaker but the name cannot be revealed until Larry Hincker releases the information publicly.

Avery stated that the Graduate School has extended an invitation but has not received confirmation as of yet.

### **Committee Support on University Band Tour**

Henneke then questioned if the committee wanted to support the request from the Music Department for funding for the University Band Tour. In the past, the procedure has been that the committee recommends approval to the EVP's office to support a tour by the University Band to various high schools around the state. This tour will take place between exams and the University Commencement ceremony and creates good public relations for Virginia Tech.

McKee stated that the tours previously were farther away but are now more localized in order to reduce costs and allow the band to be close to campus for the University Commencement ceremony. Avery questioned the cost of the tour. Henneke confirmed that the cost will be \$7487.50, which will cover the cost of the bus, meals, and hotel rooms for the band members.

Cook made a motion to recommend to the EVP that Virginia Tech support the University Band tour. O'Rourke seconded the motion. With no further discussion, it passed unanimously.

With no other business Brown moved to adjourn at 12:39 p.m.

**Commencement Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, March 2, 2005**  
**12:15 p.m.**  
**Room 325 Burruss Hall**

**Present:** Ed Henneke, Bill Stringer for Jerry Allen, Roger Avery, Bud Brown, Emily Aleshire, Deborah Cook, Robyn Daniel, Larry Hincker, Kim O'Rourke, Lyndell Price, Dan Taylor

**Absent:** Sumeet Bagai, Lay Nam Chang, Jerry Gibson, Ellington Graves, Bill Green, Brian James, Brad Klein, Vinod Lohani, Dixie Reaves, Dean Stauffer, Diane Zahm

**Guests:** Wendy Conner, Hunter Gresham, Patrick Casey, Margie Murray, April Myers, Eric Wininger

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

**Approval of Minutes**

Avery moved that the minutes for the February 2, 2005 meeting be approved as written. With a second from Brown the minutes were approved unanimously.

**Distribution of Diplomas for Spring Commencement**

Henneke informed the Committee that the Graduate School wants to mail master's diplomas after the semester ends rather than give them out at the Graduate School Commencement Ceremony. He gave background information on how diplomas have been distributed. Historically diplomas have been handed to the students as they walked across the stage at the Graduate School Ceremony. Last Spring the Graduate School wanted to mail diplomas to the master's candidates after the ceremony instead of handing them out. This development arose too late for the Commencement Committee to discuss and give feedback on that decision. After discussions involving the Graduate School, President's Office, and Commencement Committee Chair, a compromise was reached wherein master's students could pick up their diploma at the Graduate School offices for an hour after the ceremony. There is a concern that master's students are not being treated the same as bachelor's and Ph.D. students. Henneke then called for discussion on how to handle the distribution of master's diplomas.

Avery clarified that Ph.D. students will receive their diploma as they cross the stage because they must be cleared for completion before they can even attend the Commencement Ceremony and the number of Ph.D. candidates is more manageable than the master's candidates. It was discussed that formerly a diploma was ordered early in the year for each student who applied for a degree, and many of these diplomas were never used. During the ceremony the diplomas have to be kept in order, and in reality many of the master's students do not actually get their diploma at the time of the ceremony. Instead they receive a letter stating what their remaining requirements are for completion. According to Avery, this system of handing out diplomas was inefficient and very stressful on the staff due to last-minute changes. Last year there was also an option given to the master's candidates to have their diplomas mailed out or to pick them up at the Graduate School after the ceremony. Only about ten percent of the master's students actually picked up their diplomas. A new system that Dean DePauw has implemented is to hand out a diploma cover containing a personalized letter for each student walking. It was indicated by Avery that the Dean of the Graduate School would like to continue using this system for handling of master's diplomas. Henneke then clarified that only ten percent of the master's candidates picked up their diplomas because the Graduate School was only open from 5:00 p.m. till 6:00 p.m. and the actual ceremony ended after 5:00

p.m., which did not give enough time for the students to get from Cassell Coliseum to Sandy Hall to pick up their diplomas. It was stated that the College of Engineering with approximately 850 bachelor's candidates and the Pamplin College of Business with approximately 700 are able to have their diplomas ready for their Saturday ceremonies. It was determined that the registrar's office works all day and night on Friday to ensure that the diplomas are ready the following day. Henneke indicated that the wrong message will be sent out if we cannot treat the master's candidates equally. It was suggested that in many cases the master's degree will be a student's terminal degree from Virginia Tech, and we want to treat all students the same.

Henneke indicated that deadlines could be set earlier in order to allow more time to prepare diplomas.

A question was raised about having additional time, such as a week between the final exam and the Commencement Ceremony, in order to give the Graduate School and the registrar's office more time to get the grades in and the diplomas ready. O'Rourke indicated that students and faculty would not hang around a week waiting for the ceremony. Hincker stated that other universities have their ceremony a week later, but the reason it works is because it is a tradition. Hincker also indicated that there is not enough time to add an additional week because the first summer session begins a week later. O'Rourke informed the committee that both the spring and fall semesters have to have an equal number of days, and if you add a week in the spring, you have to add a week in the fall.

Avery then indicated that Dean DePauw wants to do a good quality job, and if the diplomas are handed out at the ceremony, there is more room for error due to the late night work that it requires. Several committee members indicated that receiving a degree is a huge mile stone and not getting the diploma at the ceremony is disheartening.

Avery then mentioned that in discussions with the Graduate Student Assembly, graduate students indicated that they are content to get their diploma in the mail as long as they get recognition at the ceremony. O'Rourke questioned if master's candidates could receive their diplomas at the individual college ceremonies. Henneke stated that would not be feasible because the time allotted for each ceremony would not be sufficient. Avery indicated that the new company the Graduate School uses to handle the diplomas assures that graduates will receive their diplomas within the two weeks after the ceremony.

O'Rourke then questioned if the Graduate School could be kept open on Saturday with a minimal staff in order for students to pick up their diplomas. Avery stated that may be a possibility, but he would have to get approval from the Dean of the Graduate School.

Henneke informed the committee that comparisons have been made in the past on the cost of mailing the diplomas versus paying employees overtime to get diplomas ready for the ceremony, and the cost ended up being basically the same.

It was determined that Avery would relay to Dean DePauw that the committee supports handing out diplomas to master's candidates at the ceremony. A vote to that effect is on record from a previous meeting.

Murray indicated that a determination on how master's diplomas are to be distributed needs to be made by Thursday, March 3, 2005, in order to have the information printed in the Commencement brochure. [Note: the decision reached is that master's students will not receive their diplomas at the ceremony but can pick them up at the Graduate School until 6:30 p.m.]

### **Planning for Spring Commencement**

Henneke stated that he has only received three complaints from parents about the ceremony time change. One of those complaints dealt with invitations that were ordered over the winter break that had the incorrect ceremony time listed. After contacting the parent, Henneke explained the reason for the time change and the parent was satisfied with the explanation. The other two parents that made complaints have been contacted and messages have been left but as of now there has not been a response to the messages.

Daniels indicated that some parents still do not know the times of the ceremonies and they expect the students to keep them informed.

### **Academic Regalia Colors**

Henneke informed the committee that there is still some confusion in the bookstore and with students as to the correct tassel colors that are assigned for each discipline. Murray indicated that the bookstore needs to know the official colors by March 14 at the latest because the bookstore will begin selling regalia on March 16 during the Seniors Moving on Day. Daniels stated that the bookstore can sell regalia anytime and there is even a special section in the bookstore of regalia. She then questioned if it would be possible for each college to post the official colors to their websites or even submit an email to the students with the appropriate colors.

It was determined that a new list will be devised with each college color listed. If there is a different color for a specific department, that department will be listed separately. Hincker stated that the official color list can be posted to the Commencement Website once it is finalized. Daniels requested a copy of the list in order to distribute it to potential graduates via listserv.

Murray questioned if students receive listserv emails in January concerning Commencement because several parents have called saying they have not received any information on Commencement. Daniels indicated that students have received information from the registrar's office about registering for their degree and they have received an email about the ceremony time change.

O'Rourke mentioned that it was helpful having a January Commencement Committee meeting, and the committee should consider having a January meeting in the future. Henneke stated that the request will be noted.

### **Commencement Speakers**

O'Rourke announced that David Calhoun, President of G.E. Transportation will be the University Commencement Speaker and Avery announced that Judith Bailey, President of Western Michigan University and Virginia Tech alumna, will be the Graduate School Commencement Speaker.

With no other business Brown moved to adjourn at 1:05 p.m.

**Commencement Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, April 6, 2005**  
**12:15 p.m.**  
**President's Boardroom, 210 Burruss Hall**

**Present:** Ed Henneke, Bill Stringer for Jerry Allen, Roger Avery, Bud Brown, Emily Aleshire, Deborah Cook, Robyn Daniel, Larry Hincker, Vinod Lohani, Kim O'Rourke, John Beach for Lyndell Price, Dixie Reaves, Dean Stauffer, Diane Zahm

**Absent:** Sumeet Bagai, Lay Nam Chang, Dan Eversole, Ellington Graves, Bill Green, Brian James, Brad Klein, Dan Taylor

**Guests:** Susan Angle, Hunter Gresham, Patrick Casey, Margie Murray, April Myers, Eric Wininger

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

**Approval of Minutes**

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes for the March 2, 2005 meeting and the minutes were approved unanimously.

**Announcements**

Henneke stated that Jim Hyatt has approved the request from Dave McKee for the pre-Commencement band tour that will be sponsored by the Commencement Committee.

Requests have already been sent out for ushers and assistant marshals to volunteer to help with the ceremony.

Avery indicated that the master's candidates will be able to pick up their diplomas after the ceremony at the Graduate School. The Graduate School will extend their hours to accommodate this.

Henneke informed the committee that one of the departments has sent out an announcement to their graduates stating that there will be a limit of five tickets to the ceremony available for each graduate. Several irate parents have called stating that they have more than five people attending the ceremony. Hincker questioned who changed the venue for this department. Henneke stated that the Commencement Committee Chair and the President's office made the change because another department needed the larger space. Murray indicated that the department in question did not return a survey that was sent out requesting the necessary information to schedule a suitable venue. Murray then stated that information gathered last year from this department indicated a total of 250 students graduating and 600 guests which is why the change was made to a smaller venue that will accommodate 1500 people. Henneke then stated that he brought this situation to the committee's attention because the committee will hear about it, but it is ultimately up to the department to handle.

## **Planning for the Spring Ceremony**

Henneke questioned if there has been a determination made on how many programs to print. Murray indicated that a decision has been made to print 23,000 programs. Murray then informed the committee that last year a decision was made to print a two-page flyer for the University ceremony guests, but because of all of the award recipients this year the flyer would have to be four pages. Last year two programs per student were provided for each college/department ceremony. Murray stated if we only provide one program per student this year there should be enough full programs to hand out to the audience.

It states in the brochure that those wanting a program will need to go to the University ceremony to obtain one. Murray then stated that 3,000 programs are for the Graduate School, 1,000 are for the College of Veterinary Medicine, 4,000 are for the undergraduates, and 15,000 are for the University ceremony audience. Henneke stated that 15,000 should cover the adults in the audience but not the children. Beach then suggested that the number of programs printed be increased in order to supply the entire audience, but it is hard to keep waste to a minimum. Hincker asked how many were in the audience last year. Beach indicated that the numbers were between 20,000 and 30,000. Avery suggested handing the programs out just to the adults. Gresham questioned if there were still going to be programs given out at the individual ceremonies. Murray confirmed that there will be one per student provided for the individual ceremonies. Gresham indicated that the College of Veterinary Medicine does not want any programs. Zahm then stated that Architecture doesn't want the University programs for their ceremony either. Murray then stated that she would send out an email to each college/department asking if they want University programs for their ceremonies.

Hincker asked what the price for each program has been in the past. O'Rourke indicated that she would research this and let him know. [Note: In 2004, the cost was \$1.16 per program.]

Beach then indicated that due to the construction there will only be a couple of distribution points this year which should make things easier.

Daniels indicated that as a graduating student she definitely wants a program. Reaves indicated that the programs are handed out to each student while marching in at the University ceremony.

Reaves then mentioned that colleges are starting to send in the names of their volunteers, and that each college representative needs to make sure that the volunteers know that they have been volunteered in advance.

Beach reminded everyone of the construction on the west side. There will be plenty of seating on the east side and the south end zone, and that there should not be anyone near the west side.

In response to a question, Henneke confirmed that the stage will be in the same location.

Beach informed the committee that there is a chance that the jumbotron will not have video feed, and will not be used.

Reaves questioned if the honors students processional has been set. Henneke stated that he received an email from Jack Dudley stating that they would be ready to march in at 5:50 p.m. It



was decided that after Reaves determines the time to march in Henneke will contact Jack Dudley informing him of the correct time to be ready.

Henneke then reminded the committee that the next meeting, and the last one of the academic year will be the first Wednesday in May.

With no other business Cook moved to adjourn at 1:46 p.m.

**Commencement Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, May 4, 2005**  
**12:15 p.m.**  
**President's Boardroom, 210 Burruss Hall**

**Present:** Ed Henneke, Chuck Payne for Jerry Allen, Roger Avery, Bud Brown, Emily Aleshire, Deborah Cook, Robyn Daniel, Ellington Graves, Mark Owczarski for Larry Hincker, Kim O'Rourke, Lyndell Price, Dixie Reaves, Dean Stauffer, Dan Taylor

**Absent:** Sumeet Bagai, Lay Nam Chang, Dan Eversole, Bill Green, Brian James, Brad Klein, Vinod Lohani, Diane Zahm

**Guests:** Susan Angle, John Beach, Vince Houston for Debra Duncan, Wendell Flinchum, Hunter Gresham, Richard McCoy, Patrick Casey, Margie Murray, April Myers, Eric Winger

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

**Approval of Minutes**

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes for the April 6, 2005, meeting and the minutes were approved unanimously.

**Selection of student speakers for University Commencement Ceremony**

Henneke provided some background. Prior to 1990, there was an invocation (now opening remarks), student speaker, and a benediction (now closing remarks). Historically, the invocation and benediction were given by a faculty member, and the class president was the only student speaker. Sometime around 1990, a request was made by the student officers to allow the students to become more involved with Commencement. The Commencement Committee decided to allow the opening and closing remarks to be given by students. It is uncertain as to whether or not the students were to be class officers, but currently the class officers are the speakers for Commencement. Recently a student questioned why the class officers are the student speakers for Commencement. Class officers are elected at the end of freshman year and remain as class officers until graduation. Therefore, the views and ideas of the students who voted may have changed over the years, and they may not have necessarily have voted for the same group of people.

Henneke requested that the committee think about the process to use in determining the student speakers for future Commencement ceremonies. Henneke asked for the committee to think about it, and a determination will be made at the first meeting in the fall.

**NOTE ADDED AFTER MEETING:**

Henneke communicated with Carol Nickerson who had worked with Chuck Kennedy's committee back in the late 80's when the University decided to do a major change to the Spring University Commencement Ceremony. The reason for the change was to improve student behavior during commencement. One major change was to remove the graduates from sitting in the stands and to put them on the field where they would be under sight of parents and other attendees. A second change recommended by the committee was to have students more involved in the ceremony by having more of them speak during the ceremony. Carol remembers that this committee spent long hours discussing various methods of selecting the student speakers, including a lottery among student leaders, essay or other contests, a special election, and so on. The Committee decided after considering the various pros and cons of a

large number of different possibilities, that the most expedient and fair method would be to use the only group of student leaders who were chosen via election by the entire graduating class and this group is the class officers.

### **Planning for the Spring Ceremony**

Henneke reminded the committee that rehearsal will be held on Thursday, May 12, 2005, at 4:00 p.m. instead of 8:00 a.m. on Friday. This will allow more time for any last minute changes or setups.

Henneke indicated the need to schedule a walkthrough early next week for those organizing the processional. Beach indicated that this will not be a problem.

Beach then mentioned that the gate near the Merryman loading dock is blocked with construction equipment, and the route by which the honor students enter may need to be changed. Beach suggested that an alternate route would be to come down the steps going into the bottom of the Jamerson Center off of Spring Road in order to avoid the construction equipment. Reaves indicated that Jack Dudley needs to be ready to march in with the honors students by 5:30 p.m. Beach stated that Jack Dudley should be invited to participate in the walkthrough on Monday in order to show him where the new route will be.

Angle indicated that currently there have been requests for 60 special needs parking passes, but in the past around 300 have been given out. Taylor indicated that a total of 200 Cassell Coliseum parking passes were requested for the marshals and ushers, but they have also been informed that the parking area will only be reserved until 4:30 p.m. It was determined to rope off ½ of the coliseum lot and the first bay going into the south end zone lot, which will not interfere with the student lineup.

Owczarski informed the committee that starting Monday, May 9, 2005, he would coordinate getting any Commencement Information or announcements added to the Virginia Tech homepage.

Beach announced that the northwest gate will be totally blocked; both south gates will be open; and the northeast vehicle gate should be open.

Beach then indicated that the contractors will be working on Friday, and have been asked to shut down at 3:00 p.m.

Payne indicated that 4:00 p.m. for the rehearsal will be okay for the Color Guard. Casey informed the committee that he along with the Wind Symphony will not be able to attend the rehearsal because of the tour to area high schools.

Henneke reminded the committee that the next meeting will be the first Wednesday in September.

With no other business, Brown moved to adjourn at 12:45 p.m.