

Commencement Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, September 6, 2006
12:15 p.m.
President's Boardroom, 210 Burruss Hall

Present: Ed Henneke, Bill Stringer for Jerry Allen, Bud Brown, Michelle Czamanske, Russell Davis, Larry Hincker, Kathy Hosig, Jean Kampe, Brad Klein, Kim O'Rourke, John Beach for Lyndell Price, Dan Taylor, Linda Tegarden

Absent: Michael Dunleavy, Ellington Graves, Bill Green, Brian James, Brian Mihalik, Jerry Niles, Dixie Reaves, Susanna Rinehart, Dean Stauffer

Guests: Patrick Casey, Margie Murray, April Myers, Jennie Reilly

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

Approval of Minutes

With one change indicating the Green Engineering Program should be a concentration and not a minor, Brown moved that the minutes for the May 3, 2006, meeting be approved. With a second from Kampe, the minutes were approved unanimously.

Introduction of new committee members

Henneke requested introductions be made so that everyone can become familiar with each other.

Recap of Spring Commencement Ceremonies

The members of the committee were asked to share observations about the operations of the spring ceremony. Taylor indicated that there was some congestion due to the construction, but now that the stadium is complete this should not be a problem in the future.

Numbering of Fall/Spring Ceremonies

Henneke and Hincker provided some background about the confusion surrounding the number of the Commencement. The issue is what should be printed on the Commencement program cover: the year of the university or the number of the Commencement. In 1984, the program read the 112th Annual Commencement and each year the number was increased by one. In the early 1990's the university started having fall ceremonies. In the mid to late nineties, it was recognized that there was not a ceremony held for one or two years during World War II. It was determined that the University was established in 1872 and the first Commencement Ceremony was in 1875. Because of the uncertainty, the Commencement Committee decided that the year of the university should be used on the program, starting with the 1997-1998 year. For two years, the academic year was used, and then somehow, we reverted back to using the Commencement number on the program and have continued that practice.

A question was also brought up as to what academic year the fall graduates will be graduating in. It was indicated by the Alumni Association that the students graduating this fall want to be part of the 2006 Senior Class, not the 2007 Senior Class. Kampe stated that if the students have submitted their credentials for graduation, then the registrar's office should indicate in what academic year the student is graduating.

Henneke called for a motion from the floor to revive the resolution passed in the late 1990s saying that each Commencement program will say the ____ year of the university. O'Rourke seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

Presentation of University Awards at the Spring University Ceremony

Henneke distributed copies of a letter he received from President Steger (see attached) asking for the Commencement Committee's input regarding a recommendation he had received from a small committee that has been looking at ways to restructure Founders Day. Henneke explained that since there is no longer a Founders Day ceremony held in the spring, for the past two years, the University has conferred the Ruffner Medal, the University Distinguished Achievement (UDA) Award, and the Alumni Distinguished Service (ADS) Awards (2-3) at the spring Commencement Ceremony. Historically, the university has conferred the University Distinguished Achievement Award at the spring Commencement Ceremony. However, Henneke voiced concern that the decision to add the remaining awards for those two years was made without input from the Commencement Committee. Further, he pointed out that the purpose of Commencement is to honor the graduates and not to present awards. In the discussion that ensued, O'Rourke explained that the reason for the recommendation is to give the award recipients—who have built distinguished careers and often performed extraordinary service to the university—an appropriate audience, and to inspire the graduates as to what they can accomplish after graduation. This is a common practice at other universities, although O'Rourke favored keeping the number of awards to a small number. While most of the award recipients are alumni, that is not a requirement for either the Ruffner or the UDA award. None of the award recipients would be given an opportunity to speak at the Commencement Ceremony; they would have an opportunity to do that at a small dinner hosted by the president the night before. O'Rourke noted that the presentation of the four awards (Ruffner, UDA, and two Alumni Distinguished Service Awards) at the spring 2006 Commencement Ceremony took a total of nine minutes. A question arose as to whether the number of ADS awards could be limited to two (some years there are three), and O'Rourke indicated that this could be discussed with Vice President Tillar. The Commencement Committee will give the matter further thought and act at the October meeting.

Presentation of Master's Diplomas at the Graduate School Ceremony

Henneke recalled that the Commencement Committee passed a motion in April 2006 recommending strongly that master's diplomas be presented to students during the spring ceremony beginning as soon as feasible. This did not occur at the spring 2006 ceremony. The master's degree candidates are the only graduates that do not get their diplomas at the spring ceremony. They may pick up the diplomas immediately after the ceremony at the Graduate Life Center. The Graduate School states the reason the master's diplomas are not handed out during the ceremony is due to the time it takes to get the diplomas ready. The Graduate School also indicated that there are around 250-300 master's degree students that participate in the spring ceremony. However, it was pointed out that the number of students that attend may increase if they receive their diplomas at the ceremony. The Graduate School ceremony used to be held in Squires and was only for the Ph.D. students. When Squires became too small a venue for the Graduate School ceremony, it was decided to allow the ceremony to be held in Cassell Coliseum. The coliseum was too big a venue for just the Ph.D. students and it was decided to add the master's degree candidates as part of the Graduate School ceremony. For the last two or three ceremonies in the spring, the Graduate School decided that it was not feasible to hand out the master's diplomas at the ceremony. Henneke indicated because there was no representative from the Graduate School present, this matter will be placed on the agenda for further discussion at the next meeting.

Other Items from the Committee

Taylor sends out an annual survey to the ushers for comments on how they felt the ceremony went. The survey results will be sent out to the committee members for their information.

Murray stated that there are a couple of issues with regard to the Commencement website. The first issue is that a guide to graduation on the Registrar's website does not link to the official

Commencement website. It is also difficult to find the official Commencement website. It was suggested that a link be added to the Virginia Tech homepage for Commencement information. Murray indicated that parents have questions about Commencement all year long regarding accommodations, pictures, regalia, etc. Hincker stated that he would look into getting a link added to the homepage.

Henneke announced that the next meeting will be the first Wednesday in October.

With no other business, Hincker moved to adjourn at 12:58 p.m.

September 4, 2006

Dr. Edmund Henneke
Chair, Commencement Committee
College of Engineering
333 Norris Hall
Campus (0217)

Dear Ed:

A small committee has been considering how Founders Day might be re-structured, and they have provided me with a series of recommendations. My purpose in writing is to ask for the Commencement Committee's input with regard to one of those recommendations.

First, let me provide some background. Traditionally, the University Distinguished Achievement Award is conferred at the University Commencement in the spring. This has consisted of reading a citation and placing the medal around the neck of the recipient; the recipient does not make any remarks. In contrast, the Ruffner Medal, which is the university's highest award, was conferred at Founders Day, along a number of other alumni, faculty, staff, and student awards.

Because the number of awards that were being conferred at Founders Day made that ceremony extremely long, about five years ago, Founders Day was divided into three distinct university events: a Student Honors Banquet (held in the spring), a Faculty/Staff Awards Ceremony (held in the fall), and the Founders Day Convocation (still held in the spring). The Student Honors Banquet and the Faculty/Staff Awards Ceremony were highly successful. However, the Founders Day Convocation at which the Ruffner Medal and the Alumni Distinguished Service Awards (typically three) were given struggled. Despite the intensive preparations that were invested in producing Founders Day, few members of the university community attended.

The most troubling situation was that with an embarrassingly low turnout, the recipients of the university's highest awards—people who had supported this university for decades through thick and thin with their time and financial resources—were not being honored by the university community in the manner they deserved. (*Note: A sampling of the individuals who have received the Ruffner Medal and the University Distinguished Achievement Award over the past ten years is provided at the end of this letter to give a sense of the stature of the recipients.)

As a result, in 2005, we suspended the Founders Day Convocation (pending a review of the ceremony) and instead honored the recipients of the University Distinguished Achievement Award, the Ruffner Medal, and the three Alumni Distinguished Service Awards in what we hoped would be a more fitting and meaningful way. In the spring of 2005 and 2006, on the night before the University Commencement, I hosted a dinner in their honor to which university officials and the recipients' families were invited. Each of the recipients was recognized, and each had an opportunity to make comments at the dinner. The next day, the award recipients processed as members of the stage party and were given their awards on stage in front of an audience of thousands at the University Commencement in Lane Stadium. *The venue seemed most fitting not only for the honorees, but also for the graduating students, who, it is hoped, would be inspired by their good works and accomplishments.*

Invent the Future

Dr. Edmund Henneke
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September 4, 2006

Mindful of the fact that we want to keep the Commencement ceremony to a reasonable length and maintain primary focus on the graduates, with the exception of one recipient in 2005, the award recipients were not offered the opportunity to give remarks during Commencement. We witnessed at the spring 2006 University Commencement that the conferral of these awards takes a total of less than 10 minutes when the recipients do not make remarks.

The committee that has been looking at the Founders Day Convocation has proposed to me replacing it with a week-long celebration in the spring that would take the form of a traditions week. The proposal calls for a series of activities, each of which would appeal to a particular segment of the university community. However, they also reached the realization that in this day and time the only ceremony at the university that will amass a large audience is Commencement. For that reason and their perception that Commencement is a fitting venue for these awards, the committee has recommended to me that conferral of the Ruffner Medal, the University Distinguished Achievement Award, and the three Alumni Distinguished Service Awards (with no opportunity for remarks from the recipients) become a permanent part of the University Commencement Ceremony in the spring, with a dinner in honor of the awardees to be hosted by the President the night before.

I have delayed responding to the Founders Day proposal until the start of the academic year so that I could give the Commencement Committee an opportunity to comment on this particular recommendation. However, I must respond to this proposal in the very near future. Therefore, I would appreciate it if you would bring the above recommendation to the Commencement Committee for discussion and apprise me of their views as soon as possible.

Sincerely,



Charles W. Steger
President

* Ruffner Medal Recipients

James E. Turner, Jr. (2004) – Engineering alumnus, retired president and CEO of General Dynamics, and former Rector of Virginia Tech's Board of Visitors.
Christopher C. Kraft, Jr. (2002) – Engineering alumnus and retired director of the Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center.
Clifton C. Garvin, Jr. (1997) – Engineering alumnus, retired chairman and CEO of Exxon Corporation, and former Rector of Virginia Tech's Board of Visitors.

* University Distinguished Achievement Award Recipients

William H. Goodwin, Jr. (2005) – Engineering alumnus and president of Commonwealth Computer Advisors.
John H. Chichester (1999) – Business alumnus, member of the Senate of Virginia, and chairman of the Senate Finance Committee.
Roger K. Crouch (1998) – Engineering alumnus and astronaut aboard the 1997 flight of the U.S. Space Shuttle Columbia.

University Commencement Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, October 4, 2006
12:15 p.m.
325 Burruss Hall

Present: Ed Henneke, Bill Stringer for Jerry Allen, Bud Brown, Michelle Czamanske, Russell Davis, Ellington Graves, Larry Hincker, Kathy Hosig, Jean Kampe, Brad Klein, Brian Mihalik, Jerry Niles, Kim O'Rourke, Lyndell Price, Dixie Reaves, Dean Stauffer, Dan Taylor, Linda Tegarden

Absent: Michael Dunleavy, Bill Green, Brian James, Susanna Rinehart,

Guests: Margie Murray, April Myers, Eric Wininger, Leslie Simmers, Donna Hodges

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

Approval of Minutes

O'Rourke moved that the minutes for the September 6, 2006, meeting be approved. With a second from Czamanske, the minutes were approved unanimously.

Presentation of University Awards at the Spring University Ceremony

Henneke opened up the floor to discussion about the letter he received from Dr. Steger asking for the committee's recommendation relative to the presentation of University Awards during the Spring University Commencement ceremony. Historically, the university has conferred the University Distinguished Achievement Award (UDA) at the spring Commencement Ceremony. However, because there has not been a Founders Day, for the past two years, the University has awarded not only the UDA, but also the Ruffner Medal and two Alumni Distinguished Service Awards at the spring University Commencement Ceremony. Tegarden indicated that after the last University Commencement Committee meeting, the College of Business Commencement Committee voted to recommend that the additional awards not be given out during the spring University Ceremony because it would not allow the proper recognition for the award recipients, and it would be detrimental to the students to add additional time to the ceremony. It was then mentioned that it took nine minutes for four awards to be presented at the Spring 2006 ceremony, and the recipients were thrilled to have been a part of the ceremony. The Ruffner Medal and the University Distinguished Achievement (UDA) Award recipients are not required to be alumni of the university but most of the time they are. O'Rourke shared with the committee comments from Dr. Tom Tillar, Vice President for Alumni Relations, indicating that the Alumni Distinguished Service (ADS) Awards were actually created before the Ruffner Medal and the UDA Award. Hincker made the point that if colleges give out awards during their individual ceremonies, then it would seem logical to present the University's awards at the University Ceremony. Reaves commented that the proper venue for the awards to be presented is a Founder's Day ceremony, but since there is no longer a Founder's Day ceremony, the next most appropriate venue is Commencement. Reaves then suggested that only a few highlights be read for each award recipient rather than the entire biography contained in the program. It was then reiterated that the proposal at hand states that the award recipients would only stand to receive their award and would not make remarks at the ceremony. Henneke acknowledged that there is no question that the award recipients deserve recognition, but in his view Commencement should be to honor the graduating students and not people who graduated years ago. He was not in favor of the University Commencement Ceremony being used to fix a problem with Founder's Day.

Hincker made a motion that the proposal to Dr. Steger outlined in his letter of September 4, 2006, to Dr. Henneke be accepted, with the recommendation that there be only three total awards presented during the ceremony: the Ruffner Medal, the University Distinguished Achievement Award, and *one* Alumni Distinguished Service Award. An exception would be made to allow two Alumni Distinguished Service Awards to be presented in Spring 2006 since those recipients had already been selected by the Alumni Association. Further, as part of the motion, the Commencement Committee recommends that the citation read for each recipient include only highlights rather than the entire biography, and that the recipients not be offered the opportunity to make remarks during the ceremony. O'Rourke seconded the motion. The motion passed with eight votes in favor, seven votes in opposition, and three abstentions.

It was confirmed that the recommendation to the President will not affect the Graduate Alumni Achievement Award given out at the Graduate School ceremony.

Change in Undergraduate Academic Regalia

Donna Hodges from Oak Hall and Leslie Simmers with the University Bookstore gave a presentation proposing that undergraduate and master's regalia be branded with the university logo. Hodges informed the committee that she attends many graduate fairs across the country, and one of the things that students comment on when they get their caps and gowns is that the gowns look the same as those they wore when they graduated from high school. Students are looking for something unique. She indicated that other universities that have adopted the new design have seen an increase in ceremony participation of about 18 percent. O'Rourke inquired about the additional cost to the students. Hodges indicated that the additional cost would only be approximately five to six dollars. She assured the committee that the price was not a promotion and would not increase after the first year. Hodges brought several gowns from other universities as well as a prototype gown for Virginia Tech for the committee to see. The Virginia Tech prototype undergraduate/master's gown had two flaps on the front of the gown on which the University Seal was embroidered. Similarly, the Virginia Tech doctoral robe that Oak Hall produces has the University Seal embroidered on the gown itself. Hincker then indicated that if the committee accepts the concept of a new design for the undergraduate/master's regalia, then University Relations will work on an appropriate symbol to embroider on the flaps. Henneke questioned whether the design meets the ACE guidelines. Hodges informed the committee that Oak Hall stays in constant communication with the American Council of Education (ACE) concerning requirements for academic regalia. The Academic Regalia Committee of ACE was dissolved approximately 15 years ago, but Oak Hall is working with ACE to have this committee revived. Oak Hall also works closely with other companies to keep some sense of order. Some other companies are personalizing regalia with a silk screen on the yoke of the gown instead of attaching embroidered flaps to the front of the gown. Hosig asked if there is currently a contract with a specific company for the caps and gowns. Henneke confirmed that Oak Hall is the current supplier for regalia in the University Bookstore. Hodges indicated that she would need a decision by December in order to have the regalia ready for the spring ceremony. Davis stated that he personally would be willing to pay the additional five to six dollars to have the branded regalia, but he will raise the issue at his next class officers' meeting to obtain more input. Hodges left two Virginia Tech prototype gowns, which will be available for viewing in Margie Murray's office in 219 Burruss Hall.

Presentation of Master's Diplomas at the Spring Graduate School Ceremony

Henneke opened the floor for discussion on the motion made on April 5, 2006, to have the Commencement Committee recommend strongly to the Dean of the Graduate School that diplomas be presented to master's degree candidates during the spring Graduate School ceremony beginning as soon as possible and preferably with the spring 2006 ceremony. The motion in April 2006 passed unanimously. The response from the Graduate School was that they could not do so for the Spring 2006 ceremony, but they would consider it for future ceremonies. Mihalik indicated that the Graduate School has not received complaints from any student about the process of receiving their diplomas after the ceremony. Henneke indicated that the Commencement Committee has long taken the stance that diplomas should be handed out during the spring ceremonies. The Registrar's Office manages to get thousands of bachelor's diplomas in order for the Saturday Commencement ceremonies. Henneke mentioned that it is very important to treat all bachelor's, master's, and PhD students the same. O'Rourke noted that the Graduate School gains less than two hours of preparation time by giving diplomas out immediately after the ceremony as opposed to during the ceremony. Taylor pointed out that the diplomas need to be in the correct order so as to not hand a diploma to the wrong student, but it has been done in the past. It was suggested that students be required to confirm their plans to participate in the graduate ceremony a month before the ceremony. It was then suggested that at least one representative from each college could help with organizing the master's diplomas for the ceremony, and the college representatives who were present concurred. In response to a question from Mihalik, Henneke indicated that the Graduate School stopped handing out master's diplomas at the ceremony approximately three years ago. Henneke asked Mihalik to pass on the request to the Dean of the Graduate School.

Numbering of Fall/Spring Ceremonies

Henneke thanked Hincker for researching the matter thoroughly and proposing language for the cover of the Fall/Spring Commencement Program. The cover will read, "Fall (or Spring) Commencement in the _____ Year of the University." It was determined that the calendar year of the University, not the academic year, will be used. This enables the same year to be printed on the program for both the Spring and the subsequent Fall program. The 135th year of the University will be printed on the Fall 2006 program, and the 136th year of the University will be printed on the Spring 2007 and Fall 2007 programs, and so on.

Planning for the Fall Ceremony

Mihalik announced that the Graduate School speaker will be Ben Davenport, former rector of the Board of Visitors.

It was suggested that the doors of the coliseum be propped open before the ceremony in order to cool the coliseum. Price indicated it may be against fire codes to leave the doors open, and he will have to get approval from the fire marshal.

With no other business, Brown moved to adjourn at 1:27 p.m.

University Commencement Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, November 1, 2006
12:15 p.m.
President's Board Room, 210 Burruss Hall

Present: Ed Henneke, Jim Snyder for Jerry Allen, Ellington Graves, Larry Hincker, Jean Kampe, Brian Mihalik, Jerry Niles, Matthew O'Leary, Kim O'Rourke, Dixie Reaves, Susanna Rinehart, Dean Stauffer, Dan Taylor

Absent: Bud Brown, Michelle Czamanske, Russell Davis, Bill Green, Kathy Hosig, Brian James, Brad Klein, Lyndell Price, Linda Tegarden

Guests: Patrick Casey, Margie Murray, April Myers, Jennie Reilly

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

Approval of Minutes

Graves moved that the minutes for the October 4, 2006, meeting be approved. With a second from Reaves, the minutes were approved unanimously.

Committee Response to Proposal for Undergraduate Regalia

At the October 4, 2006, meeting, Donna Hodges from Oak Hall and Leslie Simmers with the University Bookstore gave a presentation proposing that undergraduate and master's regalia be branded with the university logo. Hosig was not able to attend today's meeting, but she sent an email stating that the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences supports adding the university logo to the gowns. She also talked with several students, all of whom would prefer the new design if the added cost is nominal (in the \$5-\$10 range). O'Leary indicated that as a student he is willing to pay the additional cost for the new design. Reaves made a motion that the committee accept the design to add an embroidered university logo onto two flaps that will be attached to the front of the undergraduate/master's gowns. O'Rourke seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Hincker indicated he will design a logo to go onto the flaps, and he will send a proof out via email for the committee to review and approve. It was indicated that Oak Hall needs an answer on the design by December in order to have the gowns ready for the spring ceremony.

NOTE added after meeting: *Russell Davis, the President of the Class of 2007, has communicated with the other class officers, and he indicated that the new regalia design is something they would like to implement in the spring.*

Planning for the Spring Ceremony – Distribution of Master's Diplomas

The issue is that undergraduate and Ph.D. diplomas are distributed during spring commencement ceremonies, while it has become the recent practice of the Graduate School to distribute master's diplomas after the ceremony; master's students are required to pick up their diplomas at the Graduate Life Center or to have them mailed to their home. In April 2006, the Commencement Committee passed a resolution encouraging the Graduate School to distribute master's diplomas during the spring ceremony so that master's students are treated consistently with all other graduating students. Subsequently, the Graduate School again did not distribute the master's

diplomas during the spring 2006 ceremony, and the Commencement Committee took up the issue again when it reconvened in the fall of 2006 (see minutes for September and October meetings). Mihalik informed the committee that after the October meeting of the Commencement Committee, the Graduate School discussed passing out the Master's diplomas at the spring ceremony in great length and decided to continue with the current system in place while monitoring student complaints. He then invited the committee to participate in the spring ceremony to observe what happens behind the scenes on the day of Commencement. Henneke indicated that he will follow up on this issue. (Note: At Dr. Henneke's invitation, Dean DePauw has agreed to attend the February 2007 meeting of the Commencement Committee to discuss the matter.)

Planning for the Fall Ceremony

Reilly indicated that the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities reviewed the information in the brochure and everything was correct.

O'Rourke reminded the committee that a "message from the Faculty," given by the Faculty Senate President, was added to both the University and Graduate School ceremonies last spring and that this will be a part of all future ceremonies. Reaves questioned the length of the speech. Rinehart indicated that the speech she gave last year was approximately 2 to 3 minutes long.

Casey informed the committee that Ivica Ico Bukvic's "Gaudeamus" will be premiered at the Graduate School ceremony. He also indicated that there will be a woodwind ensemble group performing before and during Commencement this fall. It was confirmed that Cynthia Brundage will be the singer for both ceremonies.

Henneke announced that former rector of the Board of Visitors, Henry Dekker, will be the University Commencement speaker. It was confirmed that former rector of the Board of Visitors, Ben Davenport, will be the Graduate School Commencement speaker.

With no other business, Graves moved to adjourn at 12:30 p.m.

University Commencement Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, December 6, 2006
12:15 p.m.
President's Board Room, 210 Burruss Hall

Present: Ed Henneke, Bill Stringer for Jerry Allen, Sharnnia Artis, Bud Brown, Michelle Czamanske, Russell Davis, Ellington Graves, Larry Hincker, Kathy Hosig, Jean Kampe, Brad Klein, Matthew O'Leary, Kim O'Rourke, Lyndell Price, Dixie Reaves, Susanna Rinehart, Dean Stauffer, Dan Taylor

Absent: Bill Green Brian James, Brian Mihalik, Jerry Niles, Linda Tegarden

Guests: Patrick Casey, Richard McCoy, April Myers

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

Approval of Minutes

O'Rourke moved that the minutes for the November 1, 2006, meeting be approved. With a second from Graves, the minutes were approved unanimously.

Review of Sample Mock-up for New Commencement Regalia

Hincker presented the sample mock-up of the logo to be embroidered on the two front flaps for master's, bachelor's, and associate's gowns. After a brief discussion, it was decided to increase the size of the pylons to match the size of the sample Oak Hall provided and to decrease the size of the motto by around 50-75%. Hincker made a motion to accept the design of the pylons with the university motto "Ut Prosim" embroidered underneath in a curved fashion. With a second from Brown, the motion passed unanimously.

Final Planning for Fall Ceremonies

Henneke announced that the rehearsal will be on Thursday, December 14, 2006, at 4:00 p.m.

Price stated that he needs to know the number of graduates in order to have ample seating for the ceremony. Myers indicated that the President's Office will obtain the number of graduates and will then forward those numbers to both Price and Reaves.

Reaves informed the committee that the information has been mailed out to the marshals and ushers. College representatives may be contacted by volunteers if there are any concerns or conflicts.

It was determined that there will be no changes in parking from last fall's ceremony.

O'Rourke stated that the Commencement program has gone to print.

It was announced that a photographer from Chappell Graduation Images will be taking portraits on Thursday, December 14, 2006, in the Museum Room of Torgersen Hall from 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Henneke reminded the committee that the next meeting will be the first Wednesday in February. At this meeting Dean Karen DePauw of the Graduate School has been invited to attend and give input on why master's candidates do not receive their diplomas as they cross the stage during the spring ceremony.

With no other business, Brown moved to adjourn at 12:23 p.m.

University Commencement Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 7, 2007
12:15 p.m.
President's Board Room, 210 Burruss Hall

Present: Ed Henneke, Jeff Murriel for Jerry Allen, Sharnnia Artis, Bud Brown, Ellington Graves, Larry Hincker, Kathy Hosig, Jean Kampe, Brad Klein, Brian Mihalik, Kim O'Rourke, Lyndell Price, Dean Stauffer, Dan Taylor

Absent: Michelle Czamanske, Bill Green, Jerry Niles, Matt O'Leary, Dixie Reaves, Susanna Rinehart, Linda Tegarden, James Tyger for Russell Davis

Guests: Patrick Casey, Karen DePauw, April Myers, Jennie Reilly, Janis Wilfore, Eric Winger

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

Approval of Minutes

Graves moved that the minutes for the December 6, 2006, meeting be approved. With a second from Brown, the minutes were approved unanimously.

Review of December Ceremony

Henneke suggested that the Graduate Ceremony have the candidates walk across the stage before the president confers degrees. This will eliminate the commotion that is currently happening while the president is speaking. This will also keep both the Graduate School and University ceremonies consistent. Mihalik indicated that he will take this suggestion back to the Graduate School.

There was one complaint from the family of a graduate about the use of an air horn during the ceremony, and it really hindered their enjoyment of the ceremony. It was suggested that if this happens in the future the ushers should ask the person to not use the air horn or get the police to take care of the situation.

Mihalik mentioned that the music went well during the ceremony.

Speaking Request - University Ceremony

Henneke brought a request to the committee from the Staff Senate president, a member of the stage party, who would like to be given the opportunity to speak at the University Commencement ceremony. The Staff Senate president was a member of the stage party for the first time at the Fall 2006 ceremony because this position was added as the staff representative to the Board of Visitors in August 2006. It was indicated to the Staff Senate president that time is already an issue and if one group is allowed to have a representative speak, then other groups will want the same opportunity. Currently the Faculty Senate president speaks to the graduates, but he/she is doing so on behalf of the faculty because they have a unique relationship with the students. It was the consensus of the committee not to add another speaker.

Report on Services for the Impaired – Jennie Reilly

Reilly gave a report in order for the committee to better understand what services are provided for the disabled during Commencement.

Unfortunately, there were three ushers assigned to accessibility that did not show up for the fall undergraduate ceremony. Henneke asked the college representatives to go back to the deans of their respective colleges to encourage their volunteers to fulfill their obligation or have a substitute fill in. These volunteers are really relied upon in order to greet people at the door who are in wheelchairs or need accessible seating.

There is short a training for the ushers that gives a walkthrough of the route for accessible seating. Because of ushers arriving late, the training had to be repeated several times. Reilly offered to give the instructions to Dan Taylor to include with the mailing sent to ushers prior to the ceremony.

A suggestion was also made to inform ushers to wear comfortable shoes to the ceremony.

Two ushers are always stationed at the Merryman entrance but they had no programs there to hand out at the fall ceremony. Lyndell indicated that Margie Murray can add that location to the list of locations where programs are delivered prior to the ceremony.

Reilly indicated that there is a need to expand the ambulatory seating. Mihalik suggested doing something more than just posting signs in order to keep guests out that are not in need of ambulatory seating. New signs are being made that will indicate that only one other family member may accompany an impaired guest in the reserved ambulatory seating area. Reilly mentioned the other family members will sit either in front of or behind the ambulatory area.

The rescue squad has an emergency wheelchair that can be used when needed. Reilly suggested including this information about the emergency wheelchair with the mailing that is sent out to the ushers prior to the ceremony.

Reilly indicated that a lot of calls are generated from the website where the disability and accommodation information is listed. The Services for Students with Disabilities website has all of the necessary information for anyone needing assistance for Commencement.

Reilly suggested changing the signage for the section where guests that need interpreters sit to indicate the purpose for the reserved seating.

There was a request to provide blankets for those sitting in the wheelchair section of the South End Zone during the spring university ceremony. It was very cold last spring during the ceremony and this section is located where there is a lot of wind. Henneke suggested getting the blankets used on airplanes. These blankets are quite warm and cannot be that expensive. O'Rourke indicated that the President's office will pay for the blankets. Reilly confirmed that the ADA Services office can take care of getting the blankets and bringing them to the ceremony. A suggestion was made to add a link to the National Weather Service on the Commencement webpage so that people can check the weather in Blacksburg.

Reilly then informed the committee that there are new accessible route maps available on line on the ADA Services website. A suggestion was made to include a map with the mailing that goes out to the ushers.

Presentation of Master's Diplomas on Stage at the Spring Ceremony

Henneke introduced the Dean of the Graduate School, Dr. Karen DePauw, to the committee. Dean DePauw offered to come to the meeting in order to clarify why the master's candidates do not get their diplomas on the stage during the Spring ceremony. Dean DePauw stated that the Graduate School did receive the recommendation of the Commencement Committee to hand out diplomas to the master's students as they cross the stage. This was discussed in great detail at several staff meetings and with the members of the Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies. She decided to continue to give out the master's diplomas at the Graduate Life Center after the ceremony for the following reasons:

- It is very difficult to clear all students in time to get the diplomas in order and keep them in order on stage. The deadline for clearing will have to be moved back and not as many diplomas can be awarded.
- When diplomas were given out on stage, some students received the wrong diploma.
- The ceremony is a celebratory event and students want to sit with their friends and have a more relaxed ceremony, rather than being required to sit in alphabetical order.
- Now, each student gets a very nice diploma cover that is a gift from the Graduate School and the Alumni Association. A letter is included in the diploma cover that gives instructions as to how to obtain his/her diploma.
- There is a celebration at the Graduate Life Center after the ceremony where students can pick up their diplomas and celebrate with family and friends.
- Students who did not clear by the deadline may clear by the time of the ceremony, and they can get their diplomas at the Graduate Life Center at the same time as those who cleared by the deadline.
- There is less stress on the staff because they do not have work all night to get the diplomas ready for the ceremony.
- The Graduate School has not received any complaints from any master's students.

There was discussion as to having representatives from each of the colleges help with the process of getting the diplomas ready. Dean DePauw indicated that would not be possible because they would not have access to the students' records, and it would create more work for the Graduate School staff to train the college representatives.

Members of the committee gave reasons as to why the master's diplomas should be handed out on stage:

- To stay consistent with the other graduates who receive their diplomas on stage. It was noted that colleges that have 900 or more undergraduate students graduating (as compared with the 300-400 graduate students at the Graduate School ceremony) distribute diplomas to their undergraduates as they cross the stage.
- Over the years, some administrative offices have requested to not give out diplomas on stage, and the students have applied tremendous pressure to prevent this change from taking place.
- There is a great deal of pride the students feel when they walk across the stage with their diploma in their hand.

- Master's students should not be treated any differently than the other graduates. All other levels of undergraduate and graduate students receive their diplomas as they cross the stage.
- Master's students who attend the National Capital Region ceremony do receive their diplomas as they cross the stage, unlike their Blacksburg counterparts.
- Most universities mail diplomas out to their students, but handing out diplomas on stage is one of the things that makes Virginia Tech unique.

Artis, who is now a Ph. D. Student, indicated that she really liked how the Graduate School ceremony was handled because she was able to march before she completed her master's degree. She enjoyed the camaraderie with her friends and the relaxed ceremony. Undergraduate students are allowed to walk in the ceremony before receiving their degree with the approval of their college. If the student walks and does not receive his/her degree he/she will receive an envelope with instructions indicating how to obtain the diploma. It was also suggested that the Graduate School could hand out diplomas on stage to the students who have cleared and hand out envelopes with instructions to those who have not cleared.

It was then suggested to survey the master's students to determine if they want to continue with the current process or receive their diplomas on stage. Dean DePauw will survey the Graduate Student Assembly to see if they want to continue with the current process. Some noted that it might be more informative to ask those who have already graduated.

Committee Support on Wind Symphony Tour

Henneke then asked if the committee wanted to support the request from the Music Department for funding for the Wind Symphony tour. In the past, the procedure has been that the committee recommends approval to the EVP's office to support a tour of student musicians to various high schools around the state. These musicians will also play at the Spring Commencement ceremony. This tour creates good public relations for Virginia Tech and also lets area high school students see that they can attend Virginia Tech as music majors or as majors in another discipline and still have the opportunity to play music.

Casey indicated that the budget is \$9,134 and covers meals, transportation, and one night's lodging to provide concerts at schools in Radford, Pulaski, and Bristol.

Mihalik made a motion to recommend to the EVP that Virginia Tech support the Wind Symphony tour. Brown seconded the motion. With no further discussion, it passed unanimously.

Change in University Calendar

Mihalik mentioned that a change in the university calendar being considered would push Commencement back one week. This should not be much of a problem in the spring, but in the fall it would push the ceremony very close to the holidays.

The next Commencement meeting will be on Wednesday, March 14, 2007.

With no other business, Stauffer moved to adjourn at 1:28 p.m.

University Commencement Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, April 4, 2007
12:15 p.m.
President's Board Room, 210 Burruss Hall

Present: Ed Henneke, Bill Stringer for Gen. Allen, Bud Brown, Ellington Graves, Larry Hincker, Kathy Hosig, Jean Kampe, Brian Mihalik, Kim O'Rourke, Lyndell Price, Dean Stauffer, Dan Taylor

Absent: Sharnnia Artis, Michelle Czamanske, Bill Green, Brad Klein, Jerry Niles, Matt O'Leary, Dixie Reaves, Susanna Rinehart, Linda Tegarden, James Tyger

Guests: Patrick Casey, Margie Murray, April Myers, Jacqueline Nottingham, Eric Winger

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

Approval of Minutes

Graves moved that the minutes for the March 14, 2007, meeting be approved. With a second from Mihalik, the minutes were approved unanimously.

Continuation of Discussion on Diploma Sizes

Mihalik gave out data on diploma sizes of ACC schools and Select SCHEV-approved 2007 peers of Virginia Tech. The majority of the ACC schools give one size diploma for all degrees, and the most common sizes of diploma are 8 ½" x 11" or 11" x 14". Ohio State University, University of Michigan, and UC-Berkeley all give out 8 ½" x 11" diplomas. Only Virginia Tech gives out an odd size diploma of 13 ½" x 15 ½". This odd size makes it difficult for students to find inexpensive off-the-shelf frames. It is also difficult for international students to go home and find frames to fit the odd size diploma. Other schools offer to order larger diplomas for an additional cost to the students. Henneke informed the committee that the registrar's office stated that all diplomas for a particular degree must be the same size because they are official legal documents. Mihalik indicated that the Graduate School supports one size diploma for all degrees, but the size should be a standard size. Henneke informed the committee that the cost of printing the diplomas is approximately \$2.00 each and the difference between the 13 ½" x 15 ½" and the 9" x 12" is very minimal. Hosig questioned if changing the size of the Graduate School diploma would create a problem getting the diploma covers shipped in time for the ceremony. Mihalik indicated that if a standard size is used, there should not be a problem getting them by Commencement. Nottingham indicated that the Graduate School just reordered the diploma covers and the cost is \$3.75 each. Graves stated that students like the larger diploma and if the size is changed it should be a standard size of 11" x 14" or 14" x 17". Hincker stated that there are two issues at hand. The first issue is whether or not all diplomas should be the same size. The second issue is whether the size of the diplomas should be a standard size. Hincker indicated that the standard sizes are 8 ½" x 11", 11" x 14", and 16" x 20". Henneke then indicated that he is not sure as to why the size of 13 ½" x 15 ½" was selected, but it was decided by the Commencement Committee in the mid 1970's. Henneke then stated that a change to the Ph. D. diploma was made without the committee's input. The Commencement Committee is charged with all aspects of Commencement for both ceremonies. Mihalik indicated that since the Alumni Association helps with the cost of the diploma covers

they should be consulted before any changes are made. O'Rourke then suggested that it seems logical to make the diplomas a consistent standard size in the vicinity of 13 ½" x 15 ½". Kampe noted that a change in diploma size might necessitate a change in design. Hincker offered to do some research on the different sizes and bring this information to the next meeting.

Planning for Spring Commencement

Henneke informed the committee that the Spring Commencement rehearsal will be on Friday, May 11, 2007, at 8:00 a.m. There will also be a walkthrough scheduled on the Thursday, May 10.

It was determined that the suites, the west lounge, and the pressroom in the South End Zone have all been reserved for the ceremony on May 11. The President's Box would be a suitable location, but there is an issue getting the stage party from the President's Box to the South End Zone.

Mihalik asked if it is possible to turn the exhaust fans in the coliseum on between ceremonies on Saturday, May 12. Price indicated that the exhaust fans can be turned on between ceremonies and permission has been given to open the doors in the coliseum in order to have better airflow.

There was a request from the Department of Mathematics to have the College of Engineering's ceremony changed to a different time because several students are graduating from both and can only attend one ceremony. Henneke mentioned that each year the College of Engineering and the Pamplin College of Business alternate between an 8:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. start time. It may be possible to change the start time for the Department of Mathematics' ceremony but not the College of Engineering. Murray indicated that lots of students get dual degrees each year and have to choose what ceremony they want to attend.

Casey announced that Katie Campbell Deglans has been selected as the singer for both ceremonies.

It was announced that retired General John Philip Abizaid will deliver the University Commencement address and Dr. Alberto Bustani, president of Monterrey Region of the Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey in Mexico, will deliver the Graduate School address. Mihalik asked if there are any concerns about demonstrations because of the General being the keynote speaker. Everyone is aware of possible protests, and as long as it doesn't get out of hand they will be allowed to protest. O'Rourke indicated that only two students have voiced their concerns and she invited them to come in and discuss their concerns. One student came in and O'Rourke explained to the student that the selection was based on General Abizaid's unique leadership position. The student indicated that he will be attending the ceremony. The student also questioned if the senior class can offer suggestions of possible speakers. O'Rourke indicated that as juniors they could propose names to be considered.

[Note: There was no protest at the ceremony, and the General's speech was well received by the audience.]

With no other business, Brown moved to adjourn at 12:50 p.m.

University Commencement Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, May 2, 2007
12:15 p.m.
President's Board Room, 210 Burruss Hall

Present: Ed Henneke, Bill Stringer for Jerry Allen, Sharnnia Artis, Bud Brown, Michelle Czamanske, Ellington Graves, Larry Hincker, Jean Kampe, Brian Mihalik, Jerry Niles, Kim O'Rourke, Lyndell Price, Dixie Reaves, Audrey Zink-Sharp for Dean Stauffer, Dan Taylor

Absent: Bill Green, Kathy Hosig, Brad Klein, Matt O'Leary, Susanna Rinehart, Linda Tegarden, James Tyger

Guests: Capt. Albert, John Beach, Patrick Casey, Karen DePauw, Margie Murray, April Myers, Jacqueline Nottingham, Mark Owczarski, Jennie Reilly, Brianna Robinson, Eric Wininger

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

Approval of Minutes

Henneke informed the committee that the minutes from the April 4, 2007, meeting are not complete and will be sent out electronically for reading and approval within the next couple of weeks.

Increased Security for Ceremonies

Information is already posted on the website about the increased security at all Commencement ceremonies on Friday, May 11, and Saturday, May 12. The increased security measures will include searching every person, handbag, or package that comes into each venue. Even the graduates who will be processing will be asked to open their gowns before entering. At every ceremony there will be police officers present. There will be RMC staff at Lane Stadium, Cassell Coliseum, Burruss Auditorium, The Graduate Life Center, and Squires to assist with the security measures. Sites are going to be secured beforehand, but it should not disrupt the rehearsal on Friday morning at 8:00 a.m. Albert suggested that ushers arrive approximately two-and-a-half hours before the start of the ceremony in order to allow time for searches. Mihalik indicated that the ceremonies in Cassell may be delayed because of the enhanced security. The guests of the Engineering ceremony will be asked to exit on the east side of the coliseum while the Agriculture guests enter on the west side. Albert indicated that the families will also be searched.

The families of the deceased will be in room 207 of Cassell and will park in the tennis court parking lot. Henneke asked if the liaison for each family will be in the family room. DePauw indicated that the liaisons will be in the family room, and she has also asked for help for the families on the way into the coliseum. O'Rourke indicated that the families of the deceased will have identification cards that will allow them access to the Cassell Coliseum and the South End Zone. There are 250 of these cards being made. Henneke questioned if room 207 would be large enough to accommodate all of the families. DePauw indicated that there should be enough space. Taylor then suggested using the women's visiting locker room if necessary. Murray informed the committee that there will be a new robing room for the Graduate School stage party that is larger

than the Monogram Room, and it is air conditioned. She will let everyone know the location once it is confirmed. Everyone at the Northern Virginia ceremony will be also be searched.

Emergency Evacuation Plan

There are plans that have been established in the past for Lane Stadium and Cassell Coliseum. If there is a need to evacuate one of these two venues, an announcement will be made from the public speaker system asking the audience to please rise and file out to the nearest exit. The plan will include the process to be used for wheelchairs. Taylor indicated that he will ask the ushers to assist with anyone in wheelchairs if they are in the same area. Albert indicated that all security personnel and those in charge will have the evacuation plan.

Program Overview

Niles expressed concern about capacity for the Communication and Political Science and International Studies ceremonies as well as concern that there may not be a sufficient amount of time between the two ceremonies. Old Dominion and the Studio Theatre were suggested as possible locations for overflow seating. Reilly indicated that the Studio Theatre is not very accessible. It was determined that Veterinary Medicine will have a reception in Old Dominion after their ceremony, but it should be over before it would be needed for any overflow seating. Henneke indicated that he would check into the availability of possible overflow locations.

DePauw indicated that the families of the deceased graduate students will receive the posthumous degrees while on stage, and the Ph.D. hoods will also be presented to the two families of Ph.D. students. DePauw stated that Professor Loganathan was the advisor for one of the deceased graduate students and someone will probably fill in for him. The class rings will be given to the families of the deceased graduate students by Tom Tillar before the ceremony. These families will be asked if they want to be seated prior to the ceremony or to process in just before the stage party. Reaves will need to know the number of seats needed for the families. Tissues and water will be provided to the families of the deceased in the family room as well as on the floor of the coliseum. Light refreshments will also be available in the family room.

O'Rourke informed the committee that during the University ceremony photographs of the deceased undergraduate students will be displayed on the Jumbo Tron while Tom Tillar reads the names of the deceased students. While all this is going on the President and the Provost will be walking down on to the field where the families are sitting and present them with the class rings. During the University ceremony, the deceased graduate students' and faculty members' names will also be read while their photographs are displayed on the Jumbo Tron.

Counselors will be available for all Commencement ceremonies, and Chris Flynn will be handling the scheduling for both Friday and Saturday ceremonies.

Taylor mentioned that there will probably be more faculty participation this year because deans are announcing that all faculty are expected to participate. There may be a need for overflow for the Graduate School ceremony. DePauw suggested putting the chairs on the floor closer together in order to accommodate the increase of participants.

O'Rourke stated that for the University ceremony, the families of the deceased will be meeting and dining in the East Lounge of the South End Zone, and the stage party will be meeting, dining, and robing in the West Lounge of the South End Zone. At 7:15 p.m. the elevators will be brought to the third floor to wait for the stage party to be transported to the bottom floor where they will line up in the same hallway that is always used. O'Rourke then mentioned that the families of the injured students and the families of the Virginia Tech Rescue Squad who are graduating are invited to the West Lounge for dinner. After dinner, the guests can be escorted to a suite. The family members of the deceased who are not going down on the field can stay in the East Lounge and view the ceremony.

The families of the deceased undergraduates will be escorted down onto the field at the same time the stage party goes down to line up. There will be someone there to escort them out onto the field.

Reilly indicated that Tom Gabbard suggested that people with mobility difficulties can use the area right outside of the President's Box on the West Side in addition to the fourth floor of the South End Zone. They can gain access by taking the elevators in the south tower to the fourth floor. Taylor indicated that the information for the ushers and marshals will be sent out by Monday, May 7 and the information about the mobility seating can be added to that information.

Offers of Music and Songs to be Played During Commencement

There has been a tremendous outpouring of music that has been written in the past two weeks, and requests have been made to play these tributes during the Commencement ceremony. It was decided that the best thing to do is to play something classic in order to not upset anyone. It was suggested that these pieces of music be played during next year's commemoration on April 16. It was decided that the Alma Mater will be played quietly while the deceased students' photographs are being shown during the University ceremony.

ACC Flags

Hincker informed the committee that there was an offer to have flags of the other ACC schools carried onto the field as a symbol of solidarity. The committee agreed that Commencement is not an appropriate event for this.

Media

Hincker indicated that there will be at least thirty-five national news organizations at Commencement. There will be a feed to the media that will be a two camera set up controlled by Kevin Hicks. The media will not be allowed on the field, but they will be allowed in the stands. There will be guidelines about what the media can and cannot do. There will be Public Information Officers (PIOs) to guide the media at all ceremonies, and there will be no broadcast cameras. The Graduate School ceremony will still be broadcast locally as usual. CNN is going to carry the University ceremony live on Friday night. Owczarski indicated that all media will be required to sign in and receive credentials at Lane Stadium on Friday morning. All press will be required to have a Virginia Tech lanyard and a big orange credential in order to be easily identified. There will only be one photographer from the *Roanoke Times*, the Associated Press, and University Relations allowed on the field. These photographers will have to make all of their photographs available to everyone else. Albert suggested that those photographers allowed on the field have credentials that indicate they are allowed on the

field. The press box will be open to the print journalists, which will allow them access to sound feeds and the internet. There will be no media allowed on the floor of Cassell Coliseum at any time.

It was determined that the entire University ceremony as well as the Graduate School ceremony will be taped. Some of the families of the deceased students may want a copy of the videos.

Working staff of both the Graduate School and University ceremonies will need to display credentials at all times for security purposes.

Plan if University Ceremony has to be Cancelled

It was decided that the ceremony will take place as scheduled unless there is severe weather. There is the possibility of delaying the ceremony for thirty minutes, but if it is longer than thirty minutes the ceremony will be cancelled. There will be either umbrellas or ponchos provided for the stage party and the families of the deceased if needed.

It was decided to have one final meeting on Wednesday, May 9, 2007, at 12:15 p.m. in the President's Board Room. This will be the last meeting for Dr. Henneke who has chaired the committee since the 1991-92 academic year.

With no other business, Brown moved to adjourn at 1:27 p.m.

University Commencement Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, May 9, 2007
12:15 p.m.
President's Board Room, 210 Burruss Hall

Present: Ed Henneke, Bill Stringer for Gen. Allen, Bud Brown, Russell Davis, Bill Green, Mark Owczarski and Randy Stith for Larry Hincker, Kathy Hosig, Jean Kampe, Marion Ehrich for Brad Klein, Brian Mihalik, Kim O'Rourke, Lyndell Price, Dixie Reaves, Susanna Rinehart, Dean Stauffer, Dan Taylor, Christopher Neck for Linda Tegarden

Absent: Sharnnia Artis, Michelle Czamanske, Ellington Graves, Jerry Niles, Matt O'Leary

Guests: Capt. Albert, John Beach, Patrick Casey, Debbie Day, Chris Flynn, Hunter Gresham, Angela Marshall, Margie Murray, April Myers, Jacqueline Nottingham, Jennie Reilly, Brianna Robinson, Eric Wininger

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

Security & Emergency Evacuation Procedures

Albert indicated that everything is in order. Everyone will be screened when they enter a venue with no exceptions. The Virginia Tech Police Department has a script if there is a need to evacuate. There will not be any public announcements made about the evacuation procedures unless necessary. Albert confirmed that there will be screening at the Northern Virginia ceremony as well. The graduates will be screened at the opening of the tunnel so they will have time to zip up their gowns before entering the field. The honor students will be screened at the entrance of the tunnel on the north side. Albert indicated that every entrance to the coliseum will be monitored.

Taylor questioned what gates will be open. Albert informed the committee that the only gate that will not be open will be gate eight. Gate two will be used for handicapped, stage party, staff working the game, or families of the deceased. All those going to the third floor of the South End Zone will have credentials. It was determined that credentials will be needed for those in food service. Murray then indicated that the club seats in the South End Zone will be roped off for guests of the East and West lounges of the South End Zone. Gate two and the surrounding gates will primarily be for those going to the third and second floors.

Murray indicated that there will be credentials for all of the counselors and the liaisons. The committee decided that counselors should be available at the ceremony, but they will need to blend into the background. Flynn indicated that Value Options will have six to eight counselors on hand. There will also be twelve other Virginia Tech counselors at the University ceremony and four to six at the Graduate School ceremony. There will also be approximately four counselors at the bigger venues on Saturday and two counselors at the smaller venues. Cook Counseling Center will be open just in case someone needs more intense counseling. Mihalik questioned if counselors will be at the Northern Virginia ceremony. Flynn will contact those in Northern Virginia to see if there is a need for counselors at that ceremony. Reilly indicated that counselors can be stationed at the first aid stations. Flynn suggested having walkie-talkies in order to communicate counseling needs during the ceremony.

Media

Owczarski indicated that there will be a message going out to the entire university community acknowledging the fact that there will be a very large media presence on campus starting Thursday through Saturday. The message will be a very positive tone thanking the community for its dignity and proper responses about April 16 and asking the community to do it again. The credentialing process will begin on Thursday morning at the Holtzman Center. All reporters will be asked to wear media credentials given to them by Virginia Tech. Owczarski informed the committee that there will be approximately 500 media people and approximately 100 to 200 media outlets. There will be press seating and press sections in all the Cassell Coliseum and Lane Stadium events. There will be various restrictions that the media will be asked to comply with. Priority will be given to the families of the deceased, guests, and graduates as an event of celebration first, and the needs of the media will be second.

There will be a media event at 2:00 p.m. on Saturday with General Abizaid in a location that will be announced at a later time. It was determined that there will be a large presence of media at the Graduate School ceremony as well.

Broadcast media coverage is being provided by Athletic Communications that will be available on satellite, which will eliminate some of the need to have broadcast cameras.

Still photography has also been coordinated through the Roanoke Times on Friday for both Cassell Coliseum and Lane Stadium so there will be fewer press photographers. There will be one photographer on the floor of the coliseum and one on the field of the stadium. There will be no tripods allowed in the coliseum, but still cameras and broadcast cameras will be allowed as long as they do not block any guests.

Both ceremonies will be videotaped. O'Rourke indicated that there may be requests for copies of these videos. Henneke mentioned that Chappell Graduation Images will be on the floor of the coliseum taking photos as the graduates cross the stage.

Final Planning for Ceremonies

Henneke asked if there are a sufficient number of ushers and marshals. Taylor indicated that the number we have can work.

Murray indicated that approximately 500 parking passes have been given out for Friday and Saturday for the Cassell and Lane parking lots.

Two families of the deceased undergraduates will be processing in with the honors students. They will be seated with the other families unless there is not enough room, in which case, they will be seated on the front row of the honors section. The liaisons will be with each family and will introduce the family as they are receiving the class ring.

The undergraduate student representative to the Board of Visitors will be marching in with the honors students, and he will also sit on the stage. It was determined that he will stay in the march to the south side stands, and someone will be there to escort him to where the stage party lines up.

Henneke informed the committee that he received an email questioning if room 207 in Cassell is large enough for the families of the deceased graduate students. There will

be approximately forty family members attending the Graduate School ceremony. Day indicated that she, Monika Gibson, and Jacqueline Nottingham will be going to Cassell to determine if 207 will work.

It was determined that 213 Merryman (Auditorium) will be the robing room for the Graduate School stage party. Murray confirmed that there is an appropriate hallway to tape the name-cards to the floor.

There will be a buffet dinner after the Graduate School and before the University ceremonies in the West Club Lounge of the South End Zone arranged by the President's office. The stage party will be robing in the West Club Lounge and the guests of the stage party will be seated in a reserved suite in the South End Zone. The elevators will be stopped on the third floor at approximately 7:00 p.m., to take the families of the deceased down to be escorted onto the field. Any family member who decides to sit on the field after 7:00 p.m. may do so by being escorted to their seats along the East sideline. At approximately 7:15 p.m. the elevators will be stopped at the third floor to take the stage party down to line up in the hallway next to Beamer's Pressroom.

O'Rourke informed the committee that each photograph of the deceased will be shown on the Jumbo Tron for five seconds. It was also determined that the Alma Mater should continue to play until the President and the Provost return to the stage.

The University ceremony will only be cancelled if there is life threatening weather. There will be ponchos and/or umbrellas available for the stage party and the families sitting on the field.

The Graduate School ceremony speaker may sit on stage at the University ceremony. Dean DePauw will determine where he will be sitting during the University ceremony.

Dan Taylor presented a gift to Dr. Henneke on behalf of the Commencement Committee because this is his last Commencement Committee meeting. Dr. Henneke received a standing ovation.

With no other business, Brown moved to adjourn at 1:20 p.m.

University Commencement Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, March 14, 2007
12:15 p.m.
President's Board Room, 210 Burruss Hall

Present: Ed Henneke, Bill Stringer for Jerry Allen, Sharnnia Artis, Bud Brown, Ellington Graves, Mark Owczarski for Larry Hincker, Kathy Hosig, Jean Kampe, Brad Klein, Brian Mihalik, Kim O'Rourke

Absent: Michelle Czamanske, Bill Green, Jerry Niles, Matt O'Leary, Lyndell Price, Dixie Reaves, Susanna Rinehart, Dean Stauffer, Dan Taylor, Linda Tegarden, James Tyger for Russell Davis

Guests: Patrick Casey, April Myers, Eric Wininger

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

Approval of Minutes

Mihalik moved that the minutes for the February 7, 2007, meeting be approved. With a second from Stringer, the minutes were approved unanimously.

Planning for Spring Commencement

Kampe questioned when the request for ushers and marshals will be distributed to the colleges. Henneke confirmed that Dan Taylor, Director of Ushers, and Dixie Reaves, Director of Processions, are working on the memo, and the information will be sent out soon.

Casey indicated that they are finalizing who the Commencement singer will be, and there is a possibility it will not be the same singer from the fall ceremonies.

Henneke informed the committee that the funding for the Wind Symphony tour has been approved by the EVP's office.

Stringer indicated the Color Guard is all set for the two ceremonies in Blacksburg and the Northern Virginia ceremony.

O'Rourke indicated that a speaker has been confirmed for the university ceremony, but the university does not have permission to release the name at this time. Owczarski informed the committee that the Graduate School speaker has also been confirmed. A speaker has not been confirmed for the Northern Virginia ceremony.

At the February 7, 2007, meeting it was suggested that the Graduate Ceremony have the candidates walk across the stage before the president confers degrees. Mihalik indicated that Dean DePauw has no problem with that change, and the President's Office will need to update the script to incorporate the change.

It was then suggested that the doors on both sides of Cassell Coliseum remain open during each ceremony on Saturday, May 12, 2007, in order to keep air flowing. Henneke informed the committee that the reason the doors are closed on the west side of the coliseum during the first two ceremonies is to prevent guests from entering for

those ceremonies before the guests of the previous ceremony are able to leave. Mihalik asked if there is a ventilation system in the roof of the coliseum. Henneke indicated that there are fans in the ceiling, but sometimes the fans are noisy. Henneke will check with the physical plant to see if the fans can be turned on for the Saturday ceremonies. The group that handles the sound system may be able to overcome the sound of the fans also. Graves suggested having an usher posted outside in order to keep people from entering through certain doors. Henneke indicated that posting an usher outside to prevent guests from entering an open door will not work because once two or three people decide to use those doors, others will follow.

Quality of Virginia Tech Diplomas

Henneke received a copy of a letter addressed to Dean DePauw. The letter was written by a Ph.D. December 2006. The graduate is concerned with the difference in quality between the master's diploma he received three or four years ago and the Ph.D. diploma he recently received. His master's diploma measures 15 ½" x 13 ½" and his Ph.D. diploma measures 12" x 9". The graduate also indicated that the print on the diploma was not produced with raised print and the university name and seal are not fully embossed. It was then determined that currently master's diplomas are also the smaller size. The Graduate School diploma sizes were changed four years ago in order to fit the diploma covers that are given out by the Graduate School. The bachelor's diplomas are still 15 ½" x 13 ½" in size. In the 1970's, the Commencement Committee set the size of all the diplomas given out by the University to be 15 ½" x 13 ½". Henneke then indicated that all diplomas with a particular degree must be the same size because the diploma is an official legal document. The re-sizing of the graduate degree diplomas is an issue that should have been brought to the Commencement Committee before being implemented. Artis indicated that when she received her master's diploma she was disappointed that it was smaller than her bachelor's diploma. Graves suggested that graduates would prefer a diploma that they can frame and display. A suggestion was made to decrease the size of the bachelor's diplomas. It was mentioned that the undergraduates would not be pleased with a decrease in the size of the bachelor's diplomas. Mihalik indicated that the Graduate School will correct any errors with the printing and embossing. Artis recommended that all three diplomas be uniform by keeping them the same size. Owczarski suggested that the committee research the options that are available for cover and diploma sizes. Henneke suggested that the members of committee do more background investigation, and the issue will be brought to the attention of the committee at the next meeting.

With no other business, Brown moved to adjourn at 12:23 p.m.

University Commencement Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, April 23, 2007
12:15 p.m.
President's Board Room, 210 Burruss Hall

Present: Ed Henneke, Bud Brown, Michelle Czamanske, Ellington Graves, Clara Cox for Larry Hincker, Kathy Hosig, Jean Kampe, Brad Klein, Brian Mihalik, Mercy Azeke for Chris Neck, Kim O'Rourke, Anthony Watson for Lyndell Price, Dixie Reaves, Susanna Rinehart, Dean Stauffer, Dan Taylor

Absent: Gen. Allen, Sharnnia Artis, Bill Green, Jerry Niles, Matt O'Leary, James Tyger

Guests: Patrick Casey, Wanda Hankins Dean, Karen DePauw, Angela Marshall, Margie Murray, April Myers, Jacqueline Nottingham, Jennie Reilly, Jessica Surace, Eric Winingger

Dr. Henneke called the meeting to order at 12:15 p.m. This special meeting was convened to discuss changes to the Commencement ceremony in consideration of the tragedy of April 16.

Approval of Minutes

Henneke informed the committee that the minutes from the April 4, 2007, meeting are not complete and will be dispensed for reading and approval at the May 2, 2007, meeting.

Special Commencement Ceremony Memorials

Dean DePauw shared the Graduate School's plans to honor the nine Graduate School students who lost their lives in the tragic shooting on April 16, 2007. All posthumous degrees for the nine graduate students will be presented at the Graduate School ceremony. The posthumous degrees for the eighteen undergraduate students will be presented at each individual college or department ceremony on Saturday, May 12. DePauw indicated that the diplomas are already ordered and a company has offered to supply frames for all twenty-seven posthumous diplomas. Alumni Relations is taking care of getting class rings for the families of each student, and the Graduate School will be providing the two Ph.D. students' families with hoods. DePauw indicated that most of the families of the nine graduate students are planning to attend. During the Images and Reflections portion of the Graduate School ceremony, there will be photos shown of all twenty-seven deceased students. O'Rourke mentioned that the office of University Relations has been working with the Office of Student Affairs to obtain photos of the deceased and permission from the families. It was suggested to have all posthumous degrees presented after the Interlude in the Graduate School order of ceremony because it is already a quiet time. DePauw will present the degrees by reading a paragraph about each student, stating the degree he/she has earned, and what family members are accepting the diploma. DePauw requested that the family members of the deceased students be seated in the first two rows on the right side facing the stage and to have a separate room away from the stage party to wait before the ceremony begins. A suggestion was made to use either the men's or ladies' basketball lounges as a place for the families to wait for the ceremony to begin. It was also determined to let the families decide if they want to be seated prior to the start of the processional or if they want to be seated just before the stage party. It was also decided that it would be best

for the families to recess after the stage party. The families will be given a choice of parking in either the tennis court parking lot or the coliseum lot. The tennis court lot will allow more privacy for the families.

There will be a dinner between the Graduate School ceremony and the University Ceremony provided for the families of the deceased in the East Lounge of the South End Zone and arranged by the President's office.

There are currently seven buildings designated for Commencement housing and the Graduate Life Center is not one of the designated buildings. DePauw suggested the use of the Graduate Life Center to house the families of the deceased students in order to give them more privacy. DePauw indicated that there will be approximately eighty vacant rooms available to use. Czamanske indicated that the Graduate students that are staying this summer will be moved to the Alumni side of the Graduate Life Center and there will be available rooms for all families of the deceased. Winger informed the committee that the office of Student Programs will provide bed linens for the families staying at the Graduate Life Center. [Note: Ultimately, one of the newer air-conditioned residence halls was used.]

Tyger questioned if the student speeches should be more somber as a result of the tragedy. The committee agreed that the speeches can acknowledge the loss but the end of the speech should be more celebratory.

Tyger then questioned if the graduates should wear a ribbon symbolizing the victims. The committee decided that it would be very appropriate for the students to all wear ribbons during the ceremony. Tyger indicated that he would work with the students to get the ribbons ready for Commencement.

O'Rourke suggested having pictures of the deceased students shown on the jumbo tron during the University ceremony. As the pictures are being shown Dr Tom Tillar could read the names while the President and Provost walk onto the field to present class rings to the family members.

There will be a separate room for the families of the deceased to remain before the University ceremony. The individual college representatives of the committee were asked to make similar arrangements to keep the families separate at the Saturday ceremonies.

Wanda Dean indicated that there are two diplomas ordered for the blended families as well as two rings being donated for blended families.

Rinehart mentioned that there really is a different task for this Commencement than any other. There needs to be a balance in celebrating those that are graduating and honoring those that lost their lives on April 16. She questioned the need for an inspirational speaker to help show the Virginia Tech community and everything it is and has become in spite of the tragic events on April 16. Reaves asked if there is going to be a review of all speeches before the ceremony. O'Rourke indicated that the keynote speaker (Abizaid) is concentrating on a sense of family, the need for healing, the need for paying tribute to those who sacrificed courage leadership, and how to move forward. [Note: An addition was made to the program for President Steger to give special remarks following the keynote address.]

Casey offered to have a special musical arrangement during the ceremony that could possibly be played while the pictures are being displayed on the Jumbo Tron.

Cox stated that the print shop needs to start printing the Commencement program next week. If biographies of the deceased are to be included they will have to be inserted into the center of the program because there is not time to include them in the body. O'Rourke suggested creating a separate publication for the deceased students and faculty. Taylor indicated that there would not be a problem handing out two different publications. [Note: A special "Remembrance" publication was produced to accompany the Commencement program.]

Henneke announced that the next meeting of the Commencement Committee will be on Wednesday, May 2, 2007.

With no other business, Brown moved to adjourn at 1:50 p.m.