

University Commencement Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, February 3, 2010

12:15 p.m.

President's Boardroom, 210 Burruss Hall

Present: Dan Taylor (chair), LTCOL Bill Stringer for Jerry Allen, Jactone Arogo Ogejo, Jeffrey Connor, Elizabeth Fine, Pat Goodrich, Larry Hincker, Jong Kim, Ann Marie Knoblauch, Nathan Lavinka, Kim O'Rourke, Kate Preston, David Shuster, Jill Sible, Dean Stauffer Muzzo Uysal

Absent: Bud Brown (with notice), Brian Golden, Brad Klein (with notice), Christina McIntyre (with notice), Hardus Odendaal, Lyndell Price (with notice),

Guests: Travis Cross, Captain Houston, Mike Mulhare, Margie Murray, April Myers, Jennie Reilly, Krisztina Roder, Eric Wininger

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

Approval of December 2, 2009 minutes

A motion was made and seconded to approve the December 2, 2009, minutes. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Debriefing from Fall Ceremonies

Taylor asked for comments or suggestions about the fall ceremonies.

Hincker indicated that a decision to cancel a ceremony should be made at least three or four hours in advance of the start of the ceremony. Stauffer indicated that it is difficult to determine when to cancel a ceremony because there are people coming from out of town and may be in transit when a decision is made. Hincker stated that the real safety issue, during a winter storm, is the huge amount for people that will be traveling home after the ceremonies. Preston suggested including information on the Commencement website that states when a decision will be made to cancel the ceremonies. This will be helpful to those traveling on the day of the ceremony. Taylor questioned if an alert system could be used for inclement weather announcements concerning Commencement. Hincker indicated that it would be difficult to do. (Hincker later reported to the committee chair, Taylor, that University Relations likely would use VT Alerts, along with other communications channels to announce a cancellation.) Taylor asked Hincker to organize a sub-committee to devise a policy for cancellation or postponement.

Emergency Preparedness Planning

Taylor introduced Mike Mulhare, Director of Emergency Management, to discuss event management for Commencement. At the spring 2009 University Commencement, it almost became necessary to evacuate Lane Stadium because of the threat of dangerous lightning. It is important to have an organized system which will allow improved communication. Mr. Mulhare indicated that it is important to know who is in charge of each area of Commencement and how each area fits together. Taylor and Mr. Mulhare will work together to begin the process for the event management plan for Commencement.

Committee Support on Spring Band Tour

Taylor asked if the committee wanted to support the request from the Music Department for funding the annual University Wind Ensemble tour. Every year, the student Wind Ensemble that performs at the Spring University Commencement goes on a tour to several Virginia high schools during the week beforehand as a goodwill gesture and to recruit students. Cross indicated that the proposal was very similar to last year's request. The total projected cost of the tour is \$13,210, but Cross is only requesting funding for \$10,625 (the same as last year). Cross will seek assistance from the Department of Music and/or the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences to pay for the difference. This request is being made earlier this year, and Cross will contact the Admissions office to invite representatives to accompany the group.

O'Rourke made a motion to recommend to the President that Virginia Tech support the University Wind Ensemble Tour. Hincker seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Taylor will send a memo to the President requesting his approval.

Planning for Spring Ceremonies

Taylor informed the committee that a sub-committee has been established to organize the use of Burruss Hall Auditorium by four different groups. Historically, there have only been three groups using the same space in one day, but Burruss Hall Auditorium is the only venue with ample space for these four groups.

Knoblauch informed the committee that she has a difficult time getting volunteers for ushers and marshals in her college, and she asked for any suggestions on how to make the process easier. Stauffer suggested using a system that takes a prorated number of volunteers (depending on size) for each department along with a rotating system for serving. Taylor distributed the memo from McIntyre to the college representatives requesting volunteers for ushers and marshals. This memo will also be sent out electronically next week.

Announcements

- O'Rourke announced that Governor McDonnell will be the keynote speaker at the University Ceremony.
- Volunteers are needed for the Director of Ushers and the Director of Marshals to take over beginning with the Fall 2010 ceremonies; suggestions for candidates would be appreciated from the committee.
- Security is lined up for the spring ceremonies.
- Taylor may cancel the March 3, 2010 commencement committee meeting, if there are no major items to discuss, but please keep the March meeting on your calendar for now. The committee will meet in April and May.

With no other business, Stauffer moved to adjourn at 12:51 p.m.