

University Commencement Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 4, 2009
12:15 p.m.
President's Board Room, 210 Burruss Hall

Present: Dan Taylor (chair), Bill Stringer for Jerry Allen, Jactone Arogo Ojejo, Sonya Benson, Candice Clemenz, Jeffrey Connor, Michelle Czamanske, Randy Stith for Larry Hincker, Christina Todd for Adeel Khan, Jong Kim, Ann Marie Knoblauch, Brian Mihalik, Kim O'Rourke, Dixie Reaves, Dean Stauffer

Absent: Elizabeth Fine, Brian Golden, Brad Klein, Christina McIntyre, Lyndell Price, Kerry Redican, Linda Tegarden

Guests: Captain Albert, Kevin Ayoub, Rebecca Burtch, Captain Houston, Brianna Kauhane, Margie Murray, April Myers, Laura Wedin, Eric Wininger

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

Approval of Minutes

Czamanske moved that the minutes for December 3, 2008, meeting be approved. With a second from O'Rourke, the minutes were approved unanimously.

Debriefing from Fall Ceremonies

Murray indicated that there were too many programs left over at the conclusion of the ceremonies even though the number printed was reduced from last year. It was decided to reduce the number of programs printed when the ceremonies fall on a date close to the holidays.

A question was raised as to why the readers of names were asked to slow down when they were going at a pace similar to previous years. It was stated that the graduate should be at the center of the stage before the next name is called. There was also a new photographer taking pictures that may have contributed to this.

Reaves mentioned that the opening and closing reflections and the speech from the Alumni Board president were too long. Each speech should be approximately two minutes long or a page to a page and a half double spaced. Wedin indicated that she will work with the students to make sure the speeches in the Spring are shortened.

The sound quality was very poor on the floor especially near the stage. The same company was used but a new person was running the system. It was decided to test the system during the rehearsal for all future ceremonies and to make sure there are speakers on stage. Mihalik indicated that the ceiling fans seemed to be louder than normal from the stage. This might have been due to the lack of speakers on the stage.

Pre-Ceremony Video

Taylor informed the committee that a request was made to use the Jumbotron to entertain the audience before the ceremony starts. One suggestion is to list information about the different types of academic regalia. Taylor mentioned that a photo montage could also be shown on the Jumbotron along with the information about the academic regalia. Wedin informed the committee that there is a photo montage shown during the ring premier which is already produced and could be used for the Commencement ceremony. Mihalik indicated that the Graduate School shows a photo montage that focuses on graduate students during the Graduate School ceremony. Stith will work on developing a photo montage for Commencement.

Size of Graduate Student Diplomas

Sonya Benson indicated that a graduate student has raised a concern about the size of the Graduate School diplomas. This has been a recurring issue brought to the committee at several different meetings. The concern is that that size of the diploma does not adequately reflect the amount of work that goes into obtaining a graduate degree. Currently the size of a graduate diploma is 9"x12" and the size of the undergraduate diploma is 13 ½" x 15 ½". Students cannot buy a stock frame from the bookstore for the 9"x12" diploma. Benson indicated that graduate students would like to have a diploma at least the same size as the undergraduate diploma or larger. Benson has contacted the Graduate School with these concerns, but a meeting has not taken place at this time. Taylor indicated that at past discussions on this matter it was determined that the Graduate School has an inventory of diploma covers to fit the 9"x12" diplomas, and the purchase of these covers is done by contract. Mihalik also mentioned that most diplomas are mailed out, and the cost to mail these out will increase if the size of the diploma is increased. International students can more readily find frames in their respective countries to fit the 9"x12" size. Taylor has requested that Benson take this to the Graduate Student Assembly for discussion and bring back suggestions or ideas for the next committee meeting.

Planning for Spring Ceremonies

Last spring the Commencement dinner and robing area was located in the President's Box. This location worked well, and it was determined that the President's Box will be used again for the upcoming spring ceremony.

Taylor announced that Christina McIntyre will have a draft memo requesting volunteers for marshals and ushers next week. The numbers should be similar to past years.

Virginia Reilly sent word that there are not any students requiring special accommodations at either ceremony at this time.

Murray gave an update on the college/department space concerns. Three of the ceremonies will move into larger spaces, one will move into a smaller space, and three will change the start time of their ceremonies in order to accommodate the other changes. Kevin Ayoub from the UUSA Event Planning Office will work with each group to finalize each requested space. The four largest venues each have three ceremonies scheduled for Saturday. McBryde 100 and Torgersen 2150 are the only two spaces on campus that do not require a fee to use. This makes it difficult for a college/department to move from one of these venues to a new venue because of the additional cost.

A question was raised as to how the Commencement Keynote speakers are chosen. O'Rourke informed the committee that the speakers are selected by the President, but any recommendations are welcome. Mihalik indicated that the Dean of the Graduate School recommends a speaker for the Graduate School ceremony, and sends the recommendation to the President for final approval. Typically, when a new Governor is elected, he/she will speak at the spring ceremony following his/her inauguration.

With no other business, O'Rourke moved to adjourn at 12:45 p.m.