

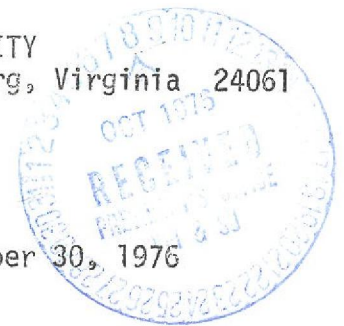
VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY
Student Personnel Division

Blacksburg, Virginia 24061

Minutes

University Commencement Committee, 1977

September 30, 1976



PRESENT: Robertson, Devens, Keller, Wischkaemper, Osborne, Arnold, Payne, Brice, Forkner, Sherman (for Salmon), Munden (for Lile), and Dr. Wilson was an invited guest.

CORRECTION to minutes of August 24:

WRONG AGAIN

Since a line was inadvertently omitted from the last minutes, a wrong impression was created about the committee's thinking concerning the All-University event in the stadium as opposed to various college exercises which follow.

The minutes SHOULD have read:

"The committee felt strongly that the All-University exercises in Lane Stadium must be continued. In the event of inclement weather, however, and if the stadium is inaccessible, the committee suggests consideration be given to the awarding of graduate degrees in the Coliseum and bachelor degrees be awarded at the indoor college exercises that year."

One of the problems our committee has is "communications". In addition to the misinterpretation of minutes, we have noticed the frequent absence of some valuable members from meetings, the difficulty of some college representatives cornering their deans, and the occasional lack of clarity of the committee's purpose (eq. Policy and/or management).

AN OLD PROBLEM

QUESTION: Is the lunch hour inconvenient for some members? If so, they should inform the chairman.

TIME OF MEETINGS

A detailed and helpful report by Mrs. Kathleen Rollins was shared concerning the wishes of graduating Seniors as revealed in their pre-graduation interviews. The chief point seemed to be that graduates are seriously concerned about having the correct date of their completion of studies on the diploma, instead of the general date of commencement exercises. There was much less concern about the University's policy of having only one graduation exercise each year.

CONCERN OF SENIORS

Keller expressed the feeling that this problem of specific dates on diplomas could be alleviated, and agreed to draft such a proposal to proper administrative channels.

CHANGE IS POSSIBLE

Keller also suggested that those graduates who complete their studies in an earlier quarter (not the spring quarter), should be encouraged to make reservations for their attendance at the big commencement rather than just "be expected" to attend.

In a discussion of the unfortunate two day gap (for 1977) between conclusion of exams and the May 28 commencement exercises, the question was raised whether certain dormitories could be left open for students who wish to remain on campus. If so, is it also possible for the University to provide emergency housing for parents who find it difficult to get reservations at nearby motels?

IS
HOUSING
AVAILABLE?

The chairman reported on replies he had received from three colleges regarding their "druthers" about commencement patterns:

COLLEGE
"DRUTHERS"

ENGINEERING prefers to continue their college exercises, with emphasis on individuality (calling names as candidates walk across the stage).

ARTS AND SCIENCES hopes for a smaller college exercise, with special attention to master's candidates and to students who receive awards or are graduating in honors and with distinction. Departments (19 of them), will probably be asked to hand present diplomas to undergraduates with more personal attention.

BUSINESS wants to consider departmental affairs but is primarily concerned right now with adequate facilities (of an attractive nature) for the small programs.

The Chairman asked Dr. Wilson for any observations he would care to make. During the discussion, the following concerns were expressed:

DISCUSSION
WITH
WILSON

The Commencement Committee reports to the President and should address itself to major questions for the President's consideration. For example, when is the University too large for the personal touch? And how can we resolve the problem of uniformity versus individuality among the growing 7 colleges?

Dr. Wilson made three general suggestions:

- 1) Don't undersell the All-University ceremony; it may be impersonal but it is quite memorable and important. It is also one of the few occasions left when the university can demonstrate its unity, community and purpose. A big problem, of course, is the contingency planning necessary in event of rain.
- 2) Don't erode emphasis on an undergraduate's experience. Commencement means much more to undergraduates and their parents.
- 3) Don't give up on the idea of an all-university exercise, even in the event of inclement weather. A suitable formula can possibly still be worked out for such an event in the Coliseum. The colleges, however, must still strive for an outstanding college program.

Some of the possibilities: Remember that the Coliseum will seat around 11,000 (including chairs on floor); that rainy weather will keep many people from coming; that others will prefer to remain in motel rooms; that faculty could be excused from the inclement weather program in the Coliseum; that Blacksburg residents could be discouraged from coming; that we might even want to re-think the ticket plan. And what about the possibility of closed circuit television for spill-over into other college auditoria?

Dr. Wilson agreed to invite Chairman Robertson to meet with his Academic Deans to get their informal input and to share some of our problems of satisfying everybody.

CHAIRMAN
TO MEET
DEANS

Chairman Robertson agreed to select a subcommittee soon to initiate consideration of a commencement speaker.

SPEAKER

The next meeting of the committee (NOTE THE CHANGE) will be Tuesday Noon, November 2, in the Dogwood Room of Squires Cafateria.

NEXT
MEETING

Respectively submitted,

Alfred C. Payne