

MINUTES

1980 COMMENCEMENT COMMITTEE



NEXT MEETING: Friday noon, December 7, Cardinal Room, Squires Cafeteria. The Speaker Committee will make a specific proposal; McDaniels may report on his meeting with academic deans.

PRESENT: McDaniels, Johnson, Payne, Holt, Tozier, Powell, Lile, Acuff, Brockett, Hunt, Smoot, Wang, Haines, Keller, Strother.

WHO

This meeting was mostly brain-storming - more philosophical than programatic.

WHAT

Chairman McDaniels, having regained his voice, introduced D. K. Brockett, President of the Class of '81; then, he turned the deliberations over to Tom Lile, Chairman of the Speaker Committee.

WHY

Lile, revealing comprehensive planning, distributed three detailed lists (as follows):

RESEARCH

- (1) Tech's Commencement speakers for the last twenty years.
- (2) Recommended speakers for the past five years.
- (3) Persons and groups being contacted for further suggestions.

(Absentees who desire these lists may request them from Lile, ext. 5431.)  
Deadline for further suggestions is November 30.

There was an anything-but-unanimous discussion about the kind of speaker we need for commencement. Some feel we've had enough TV commentators for a while. What about an outstanding alumnus (like Cliff Garvin) or an outstanding cleric (like Father Hesburgh). We have two retiring deans, either or both of whom have something significant to say. What about a dramatic shift in format? Why not a dialogue instead of a lecture? Why not have both a student and a professor? (A conversation on the purpose of higher education, and how Tech fulfills this would be delightful, informative, and even newsworthy.) We were reminded, however, that our various publics prefer the more traditional format. But parents, graduates, faculty, and the press too are all interested, and would respond to any shift.

REINVENTING  
THE  
WHEEL

Ain't it time we had a woman speaker? (A number of names were proposed.) And what about other minorities? Lile pointed out that both these categories were included in recent lists of suggestions.

The visiting scholars program reveals that good speakers are mighty expensive these days. Besides, a Speaker's Bureau takes a large cut, too.

We need a good speaker; not just a big name, or a person with content. We also want to remember the importance of having a "back-up" speaker in case of bad weather or an international crisis. What about a speaker of international status? Even one from abroad? (Overseas travel is sometimes no more expensive than U.S. airfare.)

We need to continue the Friday evening informal presentation by the commencement speaker. How about a reception for parents? Let's insist that our speaker fit our pattern, not vice-versa.

Huffman reported that the old, unused inclement weather program was still intact. Johnson asked that Huffman review this plan sometime for new committee members who are not familiar with it.

There was also enthusiastic discussion about the Wine and Cheese. Generally speaking, everybody likes it, but why must it cost so much? And why does it recognize academic excellence only? We need to decide a lot of things fast; shall we have it, and where, when, and for whom? (McDaniels will probably appoint a small group to thresh out the issue and present a proposal.)

Colleges, meanwhile, would appreciate specific information on available funds for refreshment subsidies.

Amid further deliberation on college programs, it was felt that we still need to protect the "university dimension" of the whole show.

McDaniels said he will be meeting with the Provost and academic deans in December. College representatives should orient their deans prior to this session, particularly the new ones.

Noting that some college representatives were absent, the group decided to have its next meeting on a Friday, (December 7), hoping memories of Pearl Harbor might excite more loyalties and even encourage attendance.

NEXT

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P. S. (?) The discussion did not end with adjournment. Two questions, I recall, were tossed around:

- (1) How can we increase the recognition of faculty at Commencement? It might improve their participation, add to the processional, etc.
- (2) Can our utilization of music groups be extended, both in formal exercises and possibly in supplemental programs?