September 26, 2013

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Academic Council

FROM: Judy L. Barnes, Director of University Events

SUBJECT: Annual Report of the Commencement Committee, 2012-2013

1. Membership

The Commencement Committee is a University-wide Standing Committee appointed by the President not reporting to the Academic Senate, The University of Texas at Dallas.

The voting members of the Commencement Committee included two members of the faculty, Kathryn Evans (School of Arts and Humanities) and Doug Kiel (School of Economic, Political and Policy Sciences); and two student representatives including the President of Student Government, Rajiv Dwivedi, and Undergraduate Student, Martha Gutierrez.

Non-voting members included: Director of University Events, Judy Barnes (Chair); Speaker of the Faculty, Murray Leaf (Vice Chair); University Registrar and Director of Academic Records, Jennifer McDowell; Associate Vice President for Business Affairs, Rick Dempsey; Dean of Undergraduate Education, Sheila Pineres; Dean of Graduate Studies, Austin Cunningham; Chief of Police, Larry Zacharias; Student Health Services Director, Lea Aubrey; Bookstore Manager, Brian Weiskopf; Dean of Students, Gene Fitch; Media Services Representative, Caroline Crossley; Alumni Relations Representative, Erin Dougherty. Rena Piper, Special Events Coordinator from the Office of the President has also been a regular attendees appointed by the Chair.

2. Meetings

Two meetings of the Commencement Committee were conducted during the 2012-2013 academic year. A meeting held on September 25, 2012 discussed the Spring, 2012 ceremonies results and upcoming Fall, 2012 ceremonies. [Meeting agenda and minutes are attached.]

The second meeting of the Committee was held on January 31, 2013 to discuss Fall, 2012 results and in preparation for the Spring, 2013 commencement ceremonies. [Meeting agenda and minutes are attached.]
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Commencement Committee Meeting
September 25, 2012
Agenda

I. Welcome
   a. New Committee Members

II. Review of Spring 2012 Commencement
   a. Gonfalons
   b. Comet Cabs
   c. Ticket Allocation

III. Fall 2012 Commencement
   a. Initial Application Numbers
   b. Ceremonies
   c. Earlier Dates
   d. Countdown to Commencement—October 9

IV. Discussion
   a. Student Speakers
   b. Electronic Tickets
   c. School Advisers for Check-in
Commencement Committee Meeting  
September 25, 2012  
Minutes

I. In attendance: Judy Barnes, Caroline Crossley, Austin Cunningham, Rick Dempsey, Melinda Ellis (in lieu of Erin Dougherty), Jennifer McDowell, Murray Leaf, Sheila Pineres, Rena Read, Brian Weiskopf, Kathryn Evans, Rajiv Dwivedi, and Martha Gutierrez

II. Welcome

a. New Committee Members – members of the committee introduce themselves.

III. Review of Spring 2012 Commencement

a. Gonfalons – provided a nice backdrop for commencement and a sense of honor. Students wanted to take their picture with them after the ceremony concluded. In order to accommodate this request, we will look to place them outside towards the end of the walkway to allow access for pictures.

b. Comet Cabs – Paul Smith kept track of everyone who used them and they were used by a large amount of our campus guest with positive feedback. This Fall we will have 5 14-passenger cabs for commencement use.

c. Ticket Allocation – we only resulted in using the overflow space in the conference center for one of the ceremonies. We will add a 7th ceremony next spring that will allow for JSOM to have 3 mixed ceremonies. This will result in ceremonies being held on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.

IV. Fall 2012 Commencement

a. Initial Application Numbers – Dean Pineres would like to extend the application date or at least the late fee application date with the stipulation that if they apply after the deadline they will not be included in the program. She will discuss further among the deans.
b. Ceremonies – Egress continued to work well however, due to school parties being held prior to the ceremonies, students were arriving late. Committee recommends that we ask Dr. Daniel to restrict school parties to be held the night prior or following the conclusion of their commencement ceremony.

c. Earlier Dates – Ceremonies are held earlier in the semester this year during regular class times. It is decided that we should stress these dates to the campus in an effort to prevent other parties from being planned during this time.

d. Countdown to Commencement—October 9 – Judy Barnes will have flyers made advertising the Student Speaker Application in efforts to get more interest.

V. Discussion

a. Student Speakers – We have received poor interest during the past few ceremonies. Graduation Office sent the information out with their graduation emails. There will also be an ad in the Mercury publication on October 8 & 22. At the suggestion of Rajiv Dwivedi, we will post the information in OrgSync advertising that they will earn extra tickets if selected. Additionally, Rena Read will have information listed in the Senior Scoop that goes out on October 5.

b. Electronic Tickets – We will move forward with issuing electronic tickets this fall in efforts to decrease man power in distribution, as well as human error, and duplication of tickets. Electronic tickets are being created using University Tickets as our vendor.

c. School Advisors for Check-in – since tickets will no longer be picked up at the Graduation Office, we now need to decide how we will issue walking cards. Dean Pineres suggested that we ask the Dean’s Caucus how they would like to handle the distribution of their walking cards and ask them to settle on one choice for all schools (i.e. having the students pick them up beforehand in their office or having staff at the commencement ceremonies to pass them out at check-in). Judy Barnes will present this to the next Dean’s Caucus on Thursday, October 18.
Commencement Committee Meeting
January 31, 2013
Agenda

I. Welcome

II. Fall 2012 Commencement Recap
   a. Numbers
   b. New adds:
      Use of VCB Atrium as overflow
      Online ticketing system and allocation
      Earlier dates – took place before finals
      Schools responsible for distributing walking cards

III. Spring 2013 Commencement
   a. Initial Application Numbers
   b. Ceremonies
      Do we add a 7th ceremony
   c. Student Speakers

IV. Discussion
   a. Comet Countdown – Feb. 5
   b. Feedback from areas
   c. Fall 2013 Dates
Commencement Committee Meeting
January 31, 2013
Agenda

I. In attendance: Judy Barnes, Caroline Crossley, Rick Dempsey, Erin Dougherty, Kathryn Evans, Gene Fitch, Jennifer McDowell, Murray Leaf, Sheila Pineres, Rena Piper, Wanda Trotta (in lieu of Austin Cunningham) Brian Weiskopf, and Larry Zacharias

II. Welcome

III. Fall 2012 Commencement Recap

a. Numbers – Judy reviewed numbers with the committee. The new ticketing system allowed us to view how many guests attended as well.

b. New adds:
   • Use of VCB Atrium as overflow – It worked nicely for the Fall ceremonies. We will continue to use this space for future ceremonies.
   • Online ticketing system and allocation – Only encountered one issue when the campus network went down but we were able to work through it. Everyone had a positive reaction to the new system.
   • Earlier dates – took place before finals – A&H encountered a problem with their Fall performance so next year they will do the event the evening following commencement. Staff working commencement had an overall positive reaction to the earlier dates.
   • Schools responsible for distributing walking cards – This new process worked well and the schools will continue with this process in the future.

IV. Spring 2013 Commencement

a. Initial Application Numbers – Judy reviewed numbers with the committee

b. Ceremonies – We will reach out to Deans asking for them to talk to their faculty during their faculty meetings about earlier dates and participation in ceremonies.
• Do we add a 7th ceremony – Due to the amount of students graduating from JSOM, it will be necessary to have 3 ceremonies for them. It was agreed to move JSOM ceremonies to Saturday instead of the traditional Friday. We will have one ceremony on Thursday, three on Friday, and three on Saturday. Because the Honors ceremony uses the commencement set-up, we will have their ceremony at 1pm preceding the 4pm commencement ceremony on Thursday. This will conflict with the Hooding ceremony.

c. Student Speakers – We have experienced difficulty with getting students to apply for the speaker opportunity. Dean Pineres has agreed to reach out to the faculty and advisors to seek their help in finding suitable students.

V. Discussion

a. Comet Countdown – Feb. 5

b. Feedback from areas

c. Fall 2013 Dates – December 6 and 7, at 10am, 1pm, and 4pm – A&H as a later ceremony in order to invite guests to their performance.