

THE UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA AT MONROE

Commencement Committee Minutes

November 26, 2007

Members Present: Brett Bennett, Carlette Browder, Deanna Buczala, Richard Chardkoff, Sean Chenoweth, Karen Crowley, Sally Davidson, Donna Eichhorn, Anthony Feig, Riccardo Fiorillo, Marlena Koper, Carolyn Lee, Marge Michel, April Picard, Beth Smith, Julia Tidwell-Ellington, Emily Williamson, Maria Blanca Wortham.

Members Absent: Ralph Brown, Mary Caldwell, Sharon Chaney, Jean Cottingham, Telitha Doke, Larry Ellerman, Kelly Friery, Laura Harris, Aleecia Hibbets, Sandra Hill, Scot Humes, Sandra Jones, Ross Keiser, James McKeithen, Lauri Mondschein, Ulas Ograk, Shirlee Owens, Michael Ramsey, Linda Reid, Laurel Rodden, Rebecca Stephenson, David Stokes, Carl Thameling, Neil White.

The November 26, 2007, meeting of the Commencement Committee (CC), held in the Arts and Sciences Conference Room, was called to order at 3:34 p.m. by Committee Chair Karen Crowley. The meeting was comprised of the following agenda items:

1. Welcome and Introduction of Members

Ms. Crowley welcomed all members of the committee and thanked them for their attendance, after which members introduced themselves.

2. Approval of 05/07/2007 and 08/13/2007 Minutes

The minutes of the May 7, 2007, and the August 13, 2007, Commencement Committee meetings were reviewed and approved (motion made by Ms. Browder, seconded by Dr. Chardkoff).

3. Overview of 2007 Fall Commencement

Ms. Crowley made the following remarks about the 2007 Fall Commencement:

- As of this date, we will award 442 degrees to 439 students, with 13 graduating *in absentia*; however, we can expect those numbers to change when we remove those who did not meet degree requirements and identify additional students who will graduate *in absentia*.
- The selections of the announcer and the soloist have not been finalized.
- Governor-Elect Bobby Jindal may possibly deliver the Commencement Address. Since the CC will not meet again prior to Commencement, this information is intended to apprise members of possible changes in commencement-day protocol. Until the keynote speaker's name has been confirmed and officially released, this information is not for public consumption.

Pursuant to discussion in previous meetings, Ms. Crowley reviewed how the following issues have been/will be addressed at the upcoming ceremony:

- **Marshals' kits:** Additional bobby pins were added for the 2007 Summer Commencement. Kits also included doorstops and hooding diagrams, as requested in our August 13, 2007, meeting. At Ms. Picard's request, Ms. Williamson will also include additional tassels in the kits.
- **Water for policemen:** Chilled water will be provided to ULM policemen after they return from traffic duty (at the beginning of the ceremony).
- **Assistance for wheelchair-bound guests:** Ms. Eichhorn is attempting to engage a student organization to assist wheelchair-bound guests as they enter/exit Fant-Ewing via the ramp entrance.
- **Robing areas:** Mirrors have been purchased for both the faculty and the administration robing areas. Ms. Williamson will purchase a hanging rack for the faculty robing area. Sugar-free mints will be provided in both areas. If available, a second CC member will be assigned to the faculty robing area.
- **Placement of chairs:** Ms. Williamson will email Dr. Keiser to remind him to bring his laser level to aid in the placement of chairs on the arena floor.
- **CC representative on upper concourse of Fant-Ewing:** Dr. Cottingham will likely be placed on the upper concourse on commencement day to give directions to candidates, marching faculty, and guests entering the building. She will also be responsible for contacting the appropriate authorities (e.g., ULM police, Ms. Michel) should emergency situations arise in that area.

4. Review of Rehearsal and Ceremony Instructions

Ms. Williamson reviewed the rehearsal and ceremony instructions with the committee, highlighting the following details:

- The final seating diagram and written instructions will be distributed to CC members at the Friday rehearsal.
- Candidate seating lists will be posted on both the upper and lower concourses of Fant-Ewing.

- Each line of candidates will have three marshals - front-line, mid-line, and end-line.
- Dr. Anthony Feig and Dr. Michelle McEacharn will serve as faculty marshals, escorting the degree candidates onto the arena floor and leading them through the ceremony.
- Rehearsal is at 9:00 a.m. on Friday, December 14; CC members should arrive at 8:30 if possible, but no later than 8:45.
- The commencement ceremony is at 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, December 15; CC members must check in with Ms. Williamson by 1:00.

5. Status of Summer Commencement Ceremonies

Ms. Crowley reviewed the results of the email poll conducted regarding the CC's recommendation to discontinue summer commencement ceremonies. CC members voted overwhelmingly to stage one final summer ceremony in August 2008, and Ms. Crowley reported that she submitted a corresponding recommendation to the administration. Ms. Crowley provided copies of the recommendation to CC members. When the administration's decision in this matter is made known, Ms. Crowley will notify members of the CC.

6. Other Business

- Ms. Tidwell-Ellington reported that she recently attended commencement exercises at another institution. She noted that the ceremony appeared disorganized and haphazard, particularly as compared to ULM's finely-tuned event.
- Ms. Williamson said that Cushman carts will not be used to shuttle guests between Fant-Ewing and distant parking lots, as our intention is to utilize them for our large spring crowds
- Ms. Koper, Ms. Tidwell-Ellington, and Ms. Wortham volunteered to help hang signs in Fant-Ewing on December 13.
- Ms. Michel requested that Ms. Crowley include the following in her rehearsal remarks:
 - Children who are not disabled themselves are not allowed to sit at floor-level during the ceremony. Space is limited, and floor-level seating is restricted to one non-disabled guest per disabled guest.
 - Guests sitting at floor-level are not allowed to stand to take photos during the ceremony.
- Ms. Williamson asked that faculty be reminded to bring or wear all regalia when dressing for the ceremony.
- Ms. Williamson and Ms. Picard reminded marshals to check candidates' regalia for prohibited writing and/or symbols on mortar boards and gowns. Such "graffiti" detracts from the dignity of the ceremony. Students who wish to pay the \$100 fine in exchange for wearing such should be referred to Ms. Crowley or ULM Police if necessary.
- Ms. Wortham suggested that a marshal be placed at the foot of the stage stairs to assist graduates as they descend the stage. Some need direction as they return to their seats, while others need assistance in descending the stairs.

7. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Karen A. Crowley, Chair
Associate University Registrar

Minutes Approved as Presented
1 February 2008