

University Commencement Committee Meeting Minutes

February 1, 2023

12:00PM

Zoom

Attending: Diane Zahm (Chair), Jennifer Cleveland, Jodie Brinkmann, Margaret Deck, Jenn Thomas, Monica Kimbrell, Stewart Scales, Danesh Tafti, Anthony Watson, Melissa Wright, Monecia Taylor, Pascha Gerni, Marlena Lester

Invited Guest: Keith Thompson, Mike Mulhare, Tom Gallemore, Abby Carlson, Rebecca Jones, Kailey Absher, Kenneth Wong, Eryn Peters, Zach Roland, Ciji Good, Deanna Harman

Diane Zahm called the meeting to order at 12:02 p.m.

Fall Commencement Debrief

A request was made for feedback regarding the Fall Commencement ceremony and process. Concerns were raised about the therapy dogs having been allowed onto the floor before the University ceremony through the stands. Will need to address next year the attendance of the therapy dogs through proper channels.

A recurring issue of students and guests leaving early resulted in this past fall ceremony being half empty before the end. While the spring ceremony is shorter it does not have graduates walking across the stage. Having college ceremonies in the spring allows for reading of the names. The current fall graduation structure does not have room for separate college ceremonies. It is important to families and graduates to have their name called as they cross the stage. The current length of the fall ceremony is two hours. A call for suggestions was made to the committee. Suggestions included revising how graduates are presented to follow the spring ceremony. Instead of each Dean presenting their graduates and asking them to rise and walk to the stage the Provost could make one presentation of all graduates. Graduates would walk across the stage either by college or not. A continuing conversation will need to occur to address the University Ceremony structure for the fall.

Spring Commencement Volunteer

The Committee Chair will send out a call for volunteers/marshals on the First of April. College representatives are asked to collect names of volunteers and submit to Diane Zahm. Colleges are asked to provide two volunteers to assist with seating graduates and be on the field for support for the University Ceremony and Graduate School Ceremony. These volunteers can be with or without regalia. One additional volunteer per college will be asked to assist with ADA and can be without regalia.

Spring Ceremonies Schedule

The schedule of ceremonies was reviewed. The structure of two hour ceremonies starting on Wednesday, May 10 through Saturday, May 13 has not changed from the previous year a few college ceremony times did change. College Ceremonies will be in Lane Stadium and be two hours in length. The schedule can be found on the Commencement website.

Update on DC area Ceremony

The Commencement Committee previously approved plans to move forward with the proposed inclusion of the DC commencement. Further assisting will be required to identify long term locations for their ceremonies.

College Ceremonies

A reminder was given to College Representatives that their positions on the committee are in regards to the University Ceremony and Graduate School Ceremony. Primarily in identifying volunteers/marshals. College Ceremony organizers will be contacted separately to have meetings with the Office of Special Events to assist with organizing ceremony.

A final reminder was issued regarding no committee meeting in March.

With no further business the meeting was concluded at 12:21 p.m.