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University Commencement Committee
January 13, 2010

The University Curriculum Committee met from 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, January 13, 2010, in the Small Conference Room of the College of Liberal Arts. All members were present: Jacob H. Dorn, chair; Jillian Fraser, Student representative; Fred Garber, College of Engineering and Computer Science; Deborah Hess, College of Education and Human Services; Carol Loranger, Department of English; Joan Lumpkin, College of Business Administration; Kenneth Schatmeyer, College of Education and Human Services; and Joel Parker, Student representative. Theresa Mileo, Director of Event Services, attended ex-officio.

Following introductions, Ms. Mileo reviewed the commencement ceremony in November 2009, focusing on the amount of time taken by each part of the program. Lasting until 11:59 a.m., this ceremony seemed longer than most commencements in the fall in recent years. The committee agreed that the processional moves too slowly and that other parts of the ceremony take longer than necessary. The committee was concerned that, if the trend continues, commencement in 2010 with substantially more names of graduates to recognize would be far too long.

There was substantial agreement that there are segments that can be abridged without serious loss. The processional could be faster if faculty are at the bottom of the stair ready to move immediately when the platform party has passed. There could be some reduction in redundancies among the various speakers, as, for example, in the opening “good morning” that need be said only once. The introduction of the recipient of an honorary doctorate could be shorter. Instead of introducing the entire platform party, including deans, deans might be introduced in turn as they presented the graduates of their colleges and schools. One member suggested the possibility of a narrator who would draw segments together quickly without being visible to the audience. Various speakers could begin advancing to the podium without waiting to be called.

The committee was unanimous in urging further tightening of the program script and staging and asked Ms. Mileo to convey that opinion to those to whom she reports in administration.

Ms. Mileo explained a possible conflict in November when the Nutter Center staff schedule a tournament on Friday night before the Saturday ceremony, which would have forced the School of Nursing to hold its annual pinning ceremony elsewhere, in reduced space and with less convenience to graduates and families. On the motion of Mr. Garber, the committee agreed to recommend to President Hopkins that the Nutter Center be reserved for commencement related activities on Friday night and Saturday of commencement weekend as a matter of policy. Mr. Dorn is to address President Hopkins on this matter.

Mr. Dorn reviewed the procedure for nominating individuals for honorary degrees. He explained that he had received only one inquiry about a nomination, and when it was impossible for the full committee to meet at the end of the fall quarter, with Ms. Lumpkin’s approval, he notified the inquirer to proceed to gather a complete nomination for consideration in early March. The committee agreed that the nominee in question seemed fully without the guidelines for the award of honorary degrees. Mr. Dorn reported the various ways in which the university community had been invited to consideration making nominations.