Commencement Committee Minutes  
October 14, 1998

The fall Commencement Committee meeting was held on Wednesday, October 14th at 3:00 p.m. Members present were President Patton, Martha Abbott-Shim, Evelyn Babey, Gayla Domke, Ramona Hasan, Penny Hallock, Kurt Keppler, Ritu Lohtia, John Nelson, Larry Rifkind, and Roger Weed.

Speakers for commencement are selected from a general list of suggested names that Dr. Patton keeps adding to as new names are sent to him. Committee members were encouraged to make suggestions. Jane Fonda was suggested because of her work with teenage pregnancy. Mr. J. Mack Robinson, for whom the College of Business was recently named, was also suggested. Others included Fred Massey, Roger Kinzel (AJC), university presidents (Bill Chace, Mary Bullock), news personalities (Monica Kaufman, Sally Sears, John Pruitt, etc.), James T. Laney, Asa Hilliard, Rosalind Carter and Steve Smith (Atlanta Hawks).

The December 20th ceremonies will be held at 1:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. rather than one ceremony at 3:00 p.m. since there could be as many as 1,350 graduates attending. The funding from the SGA, which is used to pay for food and plants or flowers, has been reduced by half. Therefore the reception food will be limited to punch and cookies. Some students suggested an increased graduation fee, but this is not recommended. Dean Keppler plans to talk with the new SGA. The rental for the organ will be built into the Graduation Office budget. Grades for graduating students are difficult to have in on time for some areas. The deans need to remind faculty of this, and a list of seniors will be sent out. A sample of the new diploma was shown. This is printed in house on special paper with the seal embossed. It was suggested that the U.S. flag used at the ceremony needs to be replaced.

Honorary degree nominations received were for: John Portman, J. Mack Robinson, W.J. (Bill) Usery, Carol Ruckdeschel (scientist), President Henry Konan Bedie (Cote d'Ivoire), President Demirel of Turkey, Linda K. Barrett (mathematician), and Scott Sydell. The degree is usually presented at the end of the academic year. In the past we have been able to give two honorary degrees. Criteria to consider include support for higher education and for Georgia State University and personal successes and accomplishments. Please make additional nominations.

Dean Keppler discussed the procedure for awarding posthumous degrees. When the situation arises, he usually talks to the Dean, the family and the President to work things out. George Rainbolt is head of a Senate subcommittee considering this, though only for undergraduates. The need to maintain flexibility was discussed. Dean Keppler will request that the Commencement Committee have input into any policy which is drafted.

Submitted by,  
Frances B. Stone