Commencement Committee Minutes
May 18, 1998

The spring Commencement Committee meeting was held on Monday, May 18th at 4:00 p.m. Members present were President Patton, Martha Abbott-Shim, Evelyn Babey, Carolyn Crutchfield, Gayla Domke, Penny Hallock, Kurt Keppler, and John Nelson.

Discussion first centered on the topic of commencement speakers. Professor Lisa Delpit, the speaker in March, was excellent. For the June ceremony Jim Lewis, founder and Executive Director of Golden Key, as well as a Georgia State graduate, will be the speaker. Dr. Keppler commented that Golden Key donated the funds for the new Golden Key Board Room in the new Student Center. Sometime in the near future, Sherm Day will speak for his "last lecture" before his retirement, but that date will be coordinated with his son's graduation from Georgia State. A speaker for August is needed. Suggestions included Chancellor Portch, Presidents Chace (Emory) and Bullock (Agnes Scott), Mark O'Connell of United Way, Truett Cathy, Bull Usery, Jimmy Carter, and Rosalind Carter. Dr. Patton will ask the Chancellor to speak in August.

Last August there were 1983 students who applied for graduation and 1491 who attended. In June there were 2122 applicants and 1632 attendees. The maximum number of students to be seated in the floor area is approximately 900. There is sometimes a problem with activity on the floors during the ceremony, especially the upper level. Police officers should be at the upper level to help keep people seated. Dr. Patton will talk to Bill Decatur and Connie Sampson about this. Only those with tickets should be admitted. Penny Hallock mentioned one graduate who has a double major out of two colleges. The diploma should list both colleges. Most of the student activities before commencement (line-up, receptions, etc.) will take place in the new Student Center. The VIP Room will be used as before for the President's party and the faculty will line up as they have in the past. Student group volunteers will assist in directing people to the various locations. The number of ceremonies and number of graduates was discussed. It would not be possible to do three ceremonies in one day. By adding two ceremonies and improving the situation a few years ago, expectations were raised. Someday, hopefully, there will be a Georgia State arena which can seat as many as 9,000. Leasing the Dome for one ceremony would cost about $60,000. This June (1998) will be difficult with a large number of graduates and no extra tickets. The August 1999 date will be Sunday, August 15th instead of Saturday, August 14th since the June graduation is on Saturday.

Dr. Babey told the committee about software with which they could print the diplomas in-house. This would save considerable money in the long run. Diploma costs for 1997 were $28,943 and in 1998 were $33,367. The one-time expense for the software and equipment would be approximately $12,000. Currently around 25% of the diplomas ordered are thrown out (usually due to the student not completing all the requirements as anticipated). Printing in-house would allow for printing much later in the process, hence saving that waste. Examples of diplomas printed this way were shown to the committee. The paper would be comparable to that currently used and any special gold seals or other unique ornamentation would be printed on the blanks by an outside firm. Following discussion, the Commencement Committee members agreed that this change should be made. Diplomas will be printed in this manner for the first time for fall semester 1998 graduation. The software company will also do the mini-diplomas. A subcommittee of Carolyn Crutchfield, Penny Hallock and Kurt Keppler agreed to study the content of the diplomas and report to the
Committee. Dr. Babey and Ms. Hallock will check on the Regents’ requirements for wording on the
diplomas.

The meeting adjourned 5:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Frances B. Stone

Please send questions or comments to Mary Nell Stone