The spring Commencement Committee meeting was held on Tuesday, March 16th at 3:00 p.m. Members present were President Patton, Martha Abbott-Shim, Evelyn Babey, Penny Hallock, Kurt Keppler, Ed Miles, and Roger Weed. Dr. Patton stated that the speaker for our May 15th commencement will be Alicia Philipp, Chair of the Metropolitan Foundation. He asked that the group continue to give him suggestions for possible speakers. The following individuals have been nominated for an honorary degree:

J. Mack Robinson, businessman & philanthropist
John Portman, architect
W. J. Usery, former Secretary of Labor
Scott Seydel, international business leader
Carol Ruckdeschel, scientist
Lida K. Barrett, mathematician
President Henry Konan Bedie of the Cote d'Ivoire
President Demirel of Turkey

Discussion resulted in the selection of the name of J. Mack Robinson to be forwarded to the Board of Regents for approval for awarding an honorary degree at May commencement. The possibility of a second honoree for August was discussed and Dr. Patton will explore that also.

The ceremony in May will be very full. With approximately 2200 graduating, as many as 1700 are expected to attend. In that case there will be no extra tickets. Ideally there will be about 800 graduates at each of the ceremonies. Mr. Charles Barber, who has sung the national anthem and the alma mater at commencement since 1993, recently passed away. He had done an excellent job and will be greatly missed. A special comment about Mr. Barber will be placed in the May commencement program. Dr. Haberlen has agreed to locate a senior student to sing at both ceremonies for the usual honorarium. The use of the organ has been successful and it will continue to be used for future ceremonies. Dean Keppler stated that the Student Leader Award has been given only when the selection sub-committee deems it appropriate, i.e., when there is a candidate who is outstanding in all areas of scholarship, involvement in activities, and leadership. The committee agreed that this should continue to be done. It was noted that spring grades will come in at one time, so the situation should be smoother than in December when some were hard to collect. Golden Key honorary society has agreed to usher at commencement as one of their service projects.

The new diplomas were discussed. The committee reviewed the process for deciding to change the diploma and reconfirmed its decision. The new design enables the graduate to have honors correctly in place even at the last minute. The old paper was actually not parchment but card stock which could crack and wrinkle when rolled (for the ceremony) and often did wrinkle after being framed for some years. The new paper is acid-free, archival paper with textured linen design, and can be dry-mounted. The old diplomas incurred a 15 = 25% waste each quarter or semester since they had to be ordered so far in advance. Enlarging the name of the graduate on the diploma was discussed and it was agreed that this and other possible formatting adjustments would be worked on.

Frances B. Stone