Commencement Committee Minutes
April 26, 2000

The meeting of the Commencement Committee was held on Wednesday, April 26th at 10:00 a.m. Members present were President Patton, Evelyn Babey, Gayla Domke, Victor Flatt, Penny Hallock, Kurt Keppler, Ralph LaRossa, Ed Miles, Roger A. Morin, Shannon Mosher, Larry Rifkind and Roger Weed.

Dr. Patton stated that he maintains a running list of suggested names for commencement speakers, and reminded the group that there are no funds to pay honoraria to speakers. Christine Jacobs, President of Theragenics will speak this May. She is an excellent role model for our students. David Bottoms, just appointed Poet Laureate for the state, will be invited to speak. Sherm Day remains on the list and Bill Dahlberg will be asked following the completion of the Capital Campaign. Suggestions included Johnny Isakson, John Lewis, Angie Allen (alum and business leader), Rosalind Carter, Hank Aaron, Coretta Scott King. Members were asked to continue giving suggestions to Dr. Patton.

The spring ceremony will be large, with approximately 1600 graduates attending. The signed diplomas will be given in May and August. Beginning in December this will not be possible. Students believe it is more important to have their names called, walk across the stage and shake hands with the President and Dean than to have the signed diploma given at that time. The vocalist (Amber Gale) who substituted at the last minute in December was excellent and she will sing at future commencements. Dr. Keppler discussed the posthumous degree for a student who dies within their last semester and how it may be presented to the family at the small reception just before commencement. The committee approved an exception for the student who was murdered by accident, but two semesters before completing the degree. The problems finding ushers for the ceremonies was also mentioned.

The December ceremony was on a week day, and it went well. The new calendar passed by the Senate has graduation on a Saturday, a Sunday and a Monday for 2001. It was pointed out that on a week day the graduates may bring their families to campus while all the offices are open. Regarding faculty gowns, it was suggested a department might rent or buy gowns for group use within that department. Honorary degrees were discussed. The president puts out a call for nominees and those names are brought to the Commencement Committee. The recommendation is forwarded to the Board of Regents for approval. At that point Dr. Patton makes the offer to the awardee. The list of awardees to date was read. The Committee endorsed the nomination of Herman Russell who has longtime linkage to Georgia State and recently supported the entrepreneurship program in the RCB. If approved, the award will probably be made at the August ceremony. Other names will be kept on the active list, and suggestions were requested.

Penny Hallock discussed the issue of the GPA "tolerance" issue for students to graduate. Last semester of those on the border list, 49 graduated and 46 did not. The border list is selected by staff. The question is whether the risk is higher in semesters because more courses are taken. Are there more late dropout from the graduation list? The Committee agreed with the recommendation that, during the term before graduation, students who have completed all other requirements must have a 2.0 cumulative GPA (without rounding) or higher (3.0 or higher for graduate students) on course work to be eligible to participate in the graduation ceremonies.

Submitted by,
Frances B. Stone