The meeting of the Commencement Committee was held on Friday, February 22nd at 10:00 a.m. Those attending were: President Patton, Dan Benardot, Erin Erskine, Charles Gilbreath, Sue Seago, Eloise Stiglitz and Roger Weed. The first item of business was discussion of the commencement ceremony. Dr. Patton commented that there should be more cross training of people in strategic positions. Prime examples mentioned were Larry Rifkind who announced the names of all the graduates and Bob McBath who organizes the faculty before they march in to the arena. Substitutes should be selected and trained in case there is an emergency and the person who usually fulfills the critical duty cannot be present. Photography during the last ceremony was fine. The afternoon session did begin to get noisy. As a follow up to the last meeting, there was a motion by Charles Gilbreath to adopt the university's true colors and to have the students purchase rather than rent their regalia. The motion was seconded by Dan Benardot and approved unanimously. The faculty will continue to be able to rent regalia. The Registrar's Office will notify students and this will be effective with the fall commencement in December 2002.

The number of those graduating is up, enrollment is up to an all time high and there are more freshmen. This trend is expected to continue. Since we have now reached capacity in the athletic arena some planning for the future needs to be done. It's possible that we may need to go to three ceremonies each semester instead of two. There are more traditional age students attending Georgia State and the percentages of those graduating and planning to march have increased: 1999=66%, 2000=67%, 2001=70+% and of the 2543 applicants for 2002, 77% say they will march. The arena floor capacity is 1,064. With more students participating more overflow areas will be needed. Plans are to use Urban Life Auditorium and the West Exhibit Area, with Speakers Auditorium a last choice. Dr. Patton stated that various scenarios need to be presented to Deans and others to consider. Of the graduates, approximately 66% are undergraduates.

Discussion of the calendar drafted by George Rainbolt, and being considered by some Senate committees, followed. In the current configuration the fall term would begin a week later than before. This causes fall exams to go to the last minute, which would put commencement at the last possible time. Also there would be days with students here but no staff present, and days with staff here and no students. This will need to be looked at in more detail. The reception following commencement has been costing $25,000/year. The students and guest have been passing though the reception area very quickly, many just taking cookies and going on their way. With the large numbers of attendees, it seems that now is the time to make a change from this large reception to college-based receptions. Roger Weed moved that the large reception be discontinued and that college-based receptions be recommended. This was seconded by Charles Gilbreath and passed unanimously.

Eloise Stiglitz told of the request for the awarding of a posthumous degree for a former student who was in good standing but 26 hours short of completing his degree. This request from the department has their very strong support and support from the college as well. Dan Benardot moved that this be approved. Erin Erskine seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Also, Dr. Patton stated that we received approval to award an honorary degree in May to Ben Johnson, Jr., the founding Dean of the College of Law. The minutes of the last meeting of the Commencement Committee were approved.

Submitted by,

Frances B. Stone