

Commencement Committee Agenda Fall 2021 Meeting

Meeting via ZOOM on October 18 at 3pm

ZOOM LINK: <https://ufl.zoom.us/j/98575481695?pwd=MUE4N2MzQldrNi93NVF5QiswbGdTQT09>

ATTENDEES- van Oostrom, Bowie, Bretan, Bridgewater-Alford, Carodine, Goldberger, Green, Hathorn, Lee, Lindner, Lord, Pritz, Reinhart, Trejos, Watkins, Wilkerson; McBride

UNABLE TO ATTEND- Bloom, Byrd, Kwan

START- 3:03pm

ITEM #1: Review of plan for 2021 Fall Commencements (December 17 & 18)

- 1 doctoral ceremony; 3 Bachelor/Master/Specialist ceremonies
- Full schedule can be found here: <https://commencement.ufl.edu/fall/event-schedule/>
- Currently, there are not specific changes in place for COVID. This could change as the semester continues, depending on CDC recommendations, as well as state protocols.

Discussions:

Staffing of O'Connell Center and/or Commencement Crew

- The O'Connell Center will not be able to fill all its staffing needs with its workers (a common problem in the fall specifically due to its proximity with holiday break); they will outsource with an outside staffing agency called "SAFE."
- The commencement crew is staffed through the colleges participating in the respective ceremony. Names of faculty and staff helping in this semester's ceremonies are due today, so it is unknown if all slots are filled, but based on what has been received thus far, it looks good.
- It was noted that anyone in this committee is welcome to help with commencement (more detailed notes, as requested, can be found at the end of this document).
- A question about using outside organizations/volunteers was raised:
 - Lynda Reinhart (O'Connell Center Director) noted there are restrictions to paying outside persons for internal work.
 - Steph McBride (Commencement Director) noted that there is an HR component to using volunteers from outside of UF/Shands. Details about this can be found here: <https://hr.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/volunteer-policy.pdf>

ITEM #2: Approved plan for 2022 Spring Commencements (April 28-May 1)

- Schedule and plan overview (see attachment for full schedule for University and colleges)
- This can also be found here: <https://commencement.ufl.edu/spring/event-schedule/>

Discussions:

- The spring ceremony calendar was reviewed.
- It was confirmed President Fuchs is present only for the Doctoral and University Wide Ceremony.
- It was confirmed the celebrity speaker is present only for the University Wide Ceremony and should be announced in January.

ITEM #3: Proposed 2022 Summer Ceremony Schedule (August 5 & 6)

Proposal for Summer 2022

To meet the needs of the increased interest in participation in the summer ceremonies, we should combine the Bachelor's & Master's as we do in the spring and fall. This will keep us at 3 ceremonies and maintain appropriate ceremony size. We can maintain the same schedule times, just adjust the colleges and degrees participating.

Friday, August 5 at 2pm in the Stephen C. O'Connell Center

Doctoral Ceremony

- All colleges except Law & Dentistry, which don't have grads this semester
- Assume 300-ish grads + escorts

Friday, August 5 at 7:30pm in the Stephen C. O'Connell Center

Bachelor/Master/Specialist Ceremony #1

- Art (45)
 - Design, Construction & Planning (31)
 - Education (34)
 - Health & Human Performance (172)
 - H.W. College of Engineering (72)
 - Medicine (10)
 - Pharmacy (29)
 - Nursing (140)
 - Public Health & Health Professions (31)
 - Veterinary Medicine (11)
 - Warrington College of Business (229)
- 804

Saturday, August 6 at 10am in the Stephen C. O'Connell Center

Bachelor/Master Ceremony #2

- Agricultural & Life Sciences (266)
 - Liberal Arts & Sciences (385)
 - Journalism & Communications (166)
- 817

Discussions:

- Registrations were higher than the attendance in 2021 due to the COVID surge. We're using the HIGHER numbers, as it is better to plan for higher attendance than lower attendance.
- Fire code dictates no more than 1100 persons on the floor total because of egress. We can change that by pulling out bleachers and reconfiguring the floor if need be. Math indicates we can maintain our typical set up if we combine Master's, Specialist's & Bachelor's.
- It was asked whether 2 ceremonies on Saturday were more ideal than 2 on Friday.
 - Lynda Reinhart (O'Connell Center Director) indicated that staffing on a Friday is easier for her venue and makes move-out easier for campus.
 - Steph McBride (Commencement Director) only added that persons working the ceremony are already on campus on Friday.

A motion to approve the schedule as proposed above.
The motion carried unanimously.

The schedule will now go to President Fuchs for final approval.

OTHER DISCUSSIONS

Committee members requested more information about how to volunteer for commencement and what that would look like. That information is below:

- **Check-in helpers:** arrive about 2 hours before the ceremony, ensure the students are robed properly, have what they need and line up in the right space, leave about 30 minutes into the start of the ceremony. (total volunteer time- no more than 3 hours)
- **Marshals:** arrive about 2 hours before the ceremony, help throughout the ceremony with assigned tasks ranging from line leading, to seating, to dismissing them for crossing the stage, to ushering them back to their seats, to providing them safety instructions, leave about 15 minutes after the ceremony ends. (total volunteer time- approximately 4 ½ hours)

Fall Ceremony Schedule:

- Friday, December 17 at 2pm: Doctoral Ceremony
- Friday, December 17 at 7:30pm: Bachelor's & Master's Degrees for HHP, CLAS, MED, NURS, PHARM, PPHP, and VET
- Saturday, December 18 at 10am: Bachelor's, Master's, and Specialist's Degrees for EDU, H.W. ENG, and CJC
- Saturday, December 18 at 3pm: Bachelor's and Master's Degrees for CALS, ARTS, DCP, and WCB

It was noted that students on this committee are an exception, and that we typically do not use student volunteers for commencement because there isn't adequate time for training if they don't have a background in events, UF policy, procedures, etc.

ADJOURN- 3:42pm

Note: After the meeting adjourned, a remaining student committee member suggested we consider using Cicerones, who are trained in events and UF policy. This was something we had not mentioned earlier in the meeting, but we did try to use them in the ceremonies in 2017 but were met with limited participation, likely because it was the end of the semester (the same problem faced by the O'Connell Center with their staff)

UPDATE SINCE THE MEETING: The president has approved the schedule proposed by the committee with one small change. The Friday evening ceremony has been changed from 7:30pm to 7pm.