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Radford University students were given the opportunity to celebrate the culmination of their college careers and meet some of their fellow upperclassmen at the second annual ring ceremony put on by SGA.

The ring ceremony was established to give students a more formal and special means of receiving their class rings. The ceremony is a modified revival of a tradition previously held at the university.

Rather than picking them up in the bookstore, some students chose to attend a more intimate option, where they, their families and friends could celebrate their collegiate achievements while enjoying delicious food and dance.

The event was held Saturday, March 22 at Muse Banquet Hall. It was open to any students who purchased a class ring from Balfour. Those students were able to bring along any guests wishing to share in the celebration. Over 80 upperclassmen attended the ceremony. In total, the attendance was over 300.

The event was planned and organized by sophomore Evelyn Aleman as one of the responsibilities of her position as SGA Chief Activities Officer. Aleman took this responsibility seriously, attempting to make the event one that RU upperclassmen would remember long after they graduate. She had been planning the event since last semester, choosing the venue, food, DJ, and other fundamental elements.

The banquet hall was decorated with flowers and provided a variety of foods, including a chocolate fountain.

SGA Student Body President and RU senior Zachary McCoy was one of the students in attendance and functioned as MC.

“The ring ceremony is a wonderful tradition which was recently reformed to give students something nice to look forward to near the end of their school year as well as celebrate their academic success as students,” he said.

During the ceremony, Vice President of Student Affairs Dr. Mark Shanley spoke to those in attendance on the symbolic importance of a class ring and how it functions as a physical manifestation of everything a student has achieved in their years at RU.

“Their success pertains to their involvement and contributions to the RU community. This year’s ceremony gave students the praise that they deserve before leaving and moving on to the next chapter of their lives,” McCoy said.

Dr. Shanley educated the students on some of the traditions associated with class rings, including one that has the students wearing their rings facing them prior to graduation, then facing outward after they graduate.

The students were able to have their rings presented to them by their own parents, a touching act that helped establish the great significance of all they have done during school.

Aleman described another tradition practiced at the event where students wrote their names upon rocks. These rocks will be placed in the New River, so that “a part of them will always stay here.”

After the formal ceremonies finished, over 50 students remained for a dance with music provided by a DJ.

“Everybody who was there had so much fun,” Aleman said.

She emphasized the importance of these types of events in commemorating and honoring the successes of RU students, as well as providing an entertaining social event.

Aleman praised the efforts of her assistant, Jessi Lykens, in helping organize and carry out the ceremony. Through their efforts, they were able to provide, according to McCoy, “a beautiful ceremony and dance to give back to their peers as a result of their hard work.”

The ceremony works hand-in-hand with Balfour by promoting class rings and encouraging any underclassmen in attendance to get one for themselves in their junior or senior year at RU.

Aleman stressed the importance a class ring can have to students in the years after they leave college. She said, “They will have this ring and it will represent a part of them that they will never forget. 50 years from now they will be able to explain it to their kids and grandkids. It may not mean as much now, but it definitely will in later years. ”