

## **Staff Senate Constituency Report to Virginia Tech Board of Visitors**

**August 26, 2007**

**Judy Alford, Staff Senate President**

Rector Lutz, members of the Board of Visitors, President Steger, administrators and guests. It is an honor and privilege to speak to you about Virginia Tech's Staff Senate.

The Staff Senate is actively involved in University governance and we are honored to have the opportunity to serve on the many committees and commissions of this great university.

Given our broad scope of responsibility, the Staff Senate has identified certain goals for this year.

- **Promote Diversity:** In an effort to enhance understanding and bring about an appreciation of diversity, the Staff Senate will host a variety of programs and speakers throughout the year that will help with this process. By working with the Multicultural Affairs office we will have the opportunity to expand and enhance our knowledge to achieve this goal. Staff Senate is again this year supporting the Multicultural Faculty & Staff Luncheon.
- The Staff Policies and Affairs commission is working on developing a staff emeritus award and a staff leadership award. The Commission will work with human resources in supporting and educating staff on the guidelines for reporting diversity accomplishments. We will continue to support the Staff Employee of the week program. This program features staff that were nominated for the President's and Governor's award as employee of the week. We have received numerous positive comments about the program from employees and supervisors.
- **Communication:** We will continue to improve communication by working to make staff aware of programs and activities that reinforce the importance of being involved in governance. One of the primary areas of concern will include efforts to reduce confusion on the Staff Senate participation. Some staff are confused as to who belongs to the senate and how one would go about joining staff senate. We are using the website and listservs to better inform employees of who their staff senators are and how the staff senate is working for their betterment.
- Staff Senate will continue working with the staff associations. In June the senate approved the association for the Provost Office and office of Outreach and International Affairs.

- Assist with providing information to staff and non-student wage employees regarding the Higher Education Act. We have several senators serving on the Employee Advisory Committee and will have updates at each senate meeting.
- We have formed a committee that will write a proposal for a staff national leadership conference. This committee will gather information for hosting this conference at Virginia Tech. We are also in the process of making a list of universities and their staff governance units for participation in the conference. The target date for the conference is summer 2008.
- We are supporting the benefits fair on October 31<sup>st</sup>.
- The McComas Leadership Seminar will be held on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008. The committee will meet soon to begin planning the program.

### **Staff Senate Speakers:**

Ms. Linda Woodard was the speaker for July. She provided an overview of shared governance as a refresher for senators and orientation for the new senators. Linda also updated the senate on the Employee Advisory Committee.

Dr. David Ford spoke in August. Dr. Ford presented a program on the university mission and strategic plan. This will assist committees and commissions as we set the goals for the upcoming year.

The speakers scheduled through November are Mr. James Hyatt in September, Mr. Kevin McDonald in October and Mr. Sherwood Wilson in November.

I would like to take a moment to discuss the Physical Plant Operations.

Grounds Services maintains both the functional and aesthetic standards for 850 intensively managed acres, 20 miles of roadway, 20 miles of sidewalks, 70 parking lots, and a 4-acre duck pond. This responsibility involves multi-layered planning and coordination, as well as effective, quick response to a steady stream of daily demands.

The Landscape division is responsible for planting new trees and shrubs (approximately 300 trees in the last two years); renovating old landscaping sites; mowing and trimming campus turf; applying fertilizer and pesticides; pruning the campus collection of trees and shrubs; and installing and maintaining perennial and annual flower beds. This function is supported by a staff of 27 people and a variety of equipment. We currently have mowing machines that can cover up to 21' at a time.

Moving and Hauling manages the handling and transporting of office furniture, laboratory equipment, and a wide variety of special items. Moving and Hauling is primarily involved in coordinating this work among campus buildings and associated rental properties. Their moving staff is comprised of 3 employees and is supplemented by outside contract movers when larger moves occur.

Virginia Tech Recycling coordinates the educational and operational aspects of campus recycling, solid waste collection, and litter control. Additionally, the Virginia Tech Recycling office supervises yard waste mulching and composting operation, post-closure care of the Virginia Tech closed sanitary landfill, and various environmental restoration initiatives. Recycling has just received some addition staff and is in the process of bringing the recycling programs back. Since the mid '90's this function has been done by the solid waste collection staff. The total staff is 9.

Road Maintenance is responsible for the maintenance and repair of all campus streets, roadways, parking lots, and loading docks, including State Route 314, in cooperation with the Virginia Department of Transportation and the Virginia Tech Office of Transportation. In addition, Road Maintenance provides heavy equipment assistance for a broad range of in-house and contracted landscaping, utilities, and renovation work. This group is the driving force in keeping the campus open in weather related emergencies. Working with the landscaping crews campus roads, parking lots, and sidewalks are cleared during winter weather events. They also support the university Police Department and Parking Services with emergency road closings. This group has a staff of 11.