

Staff Senate

Jean Brickey, President
Mail Code (0434)
Blacksburg VA, 24061
(540) 231-9244 E-mail staffsenate@vt.edu
www.staffsenate.vt.edu

Staff Senate Report to Virginia Tech Board of Visitors**March 27, 2006**

- Rector Davenport, Members of the Board of Visitors, and Dr. Steger. It is my honor to present to you a report from Virginia Tech's Staff Senate for 2005-2006.
- I would like to thank you for giving me the chance to speak before you today and bring you news from the more than 4,000 staff at Virginia Tech.
- This has been a busy year for the Virginia Tech Staff Senate.
- In July 2006, a survey was sent to members of the Staff Associations and Staff Senators for distribution to their staff. Of the 47% who responded to the open-ended questions, three major issues were identified
 - Employees were not fully aware of the Staff Senate, its role and its impact.
 - Employees were concerned about the level of their pay and lack of salary increases.
 - Employees wanted to stay informed and involved regarding Higher Education Restructuring
- Based on the outcome of the survey one of the Senate's major goals this year has been publicity about the Staff Senate meetings and initiatives.
 - This has been facilitated by updating the Senate webpage, ensuring that Senators keep their members informed, and reaching out to areas that do not have representation due to reorganization over the last five years.
 - Linda Woodard, Assistant Vice President for Human Resources, provided an orientation about the history and role of the Senate in university governance, and facilitated a discussion of strategies to establish associations for areas currently not represented.
 - The Staff Senate joined with the Vice President for Multicultural Affairs and Human Resources to sponsor the first reception for Multicultural Staff, attended by 75 employees. This was a good opportunity to make staff more aware of the Senate.
 - The Senate sponsored an information booth at the Virginia Tech Benefits Fair.
 - The Senate President and the Assistant Vice President for Human Resources met with several administrators and employees about the formation of new staff associations.
- The Senate provided opportunities to increase the understanding of Virginia Tech's goals, operations, and initiatives.

Invent the Future

- Dr. Brad Fenwick, Vice President for Research, addressed the Staff Senate about the Research Division and how it is changing, and discussed how staff fits into the university's research initiatives.
 - Dr. Mark McNamee discussed the University Strategic Plan in a joint meeting of the Staff Senate and the Commission for Classified Staff Affairs. Staff contributed many ideas to the plan, and will have an opportunity to provide additional feedback in April.
 - Mr. James Hyatt, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, provided an update on Higher Education Restructuring and discussed the implications for Virginia Tech and its employees.
 - Mr. Kevin McDonald, Director of the Office for Equal Opportunity, spoke about his goals for his office and how staff could assist.
 - Dr. Steger discussed a variety of topics, including Higher Education Restructuring, the branding campaign and new logo, and salary issues especially for the lower salary bands.
 - Dr. Zenobia Hikes, Vice President for Student Affairs, spoke with the group about her program areas. This is the area with the largest number of staff.
- The Senate is very proud to have played an instrumental role in two initiatives of importance to staff.
 - Employee of the Week: In 2005 The Commission on Classified Staff Affairs and the Staff Senate requested the assistance of Human Resources to create the *VT Employee of the Week*. Each week a Classified Staff employee is featured. They have been nominated for the President's Award for Excellence or the Governor's award. The link for the employee of the week is www.hr.vt.edu. Digital Library and Archives has archived all the past winners.
 - Computer Access for all Employees: VT Employee Connect was launched during the summer of 2005, with the assistance of Human Resources, Leadership Development, Information Technology, and numerous administrative and academic offices. To date approximately 200 employees have been trained to retrieve their e-mail, view VT News, learn about VT employment opportunities, and access their leave and pay information on-line. The Staff Senate continues to work expanding this program within the university.
 - Spring 2006 will include Staff Senate Elections and additional updates on topics of interest to staff, including employee benefits and the Campus Master Plan. The annual James D. McComas Leadership Seminar for staff will be held in May. The theme is "The Yellow Brick Road -- Where we are now, Where are we going?" The program will include round-table discussions of the results of the Faculty/Staff Exit Survey and ways that staff can make a difference in the workplace.