

**Staff Senate Constituency Report**  
**Virginia Tech Board of Visitors**  
**August 25, 2008**  
**Thomas Tucker, Staff Senate President**

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

The Staff Senate remains actively involved in University Governance and we consider it honor to serve Virginia Tech on the various committees, commissions and council. The theme for the Staff Senate in the coming year will be “Past, Present and Future – Learn from the Past, Create Change in the Present, Build a better Future”. The Staff Senate has identified the following goals for this year:

**Promotion of Diversity:** The Staff Senate will continue to support the ideals expressed in the “Virginia Tech Principles of Community” with various programs through the year to generate awareness and understanding of the diverse cultures that make up our community. Staff Senate will again support the Annual Multicultural Faculty Staff Luncheon held in September. Dr. Kevin McDonald, Vice President for Equity and Inclusion, will be presenting a program at the November Staff Senate meeting.

**Community Service through the VT-ENGAGE Program:** Staff Senate will continue to provide volunteer service and support to the community through the VT-ENGAGE program by selecting a project to support as a group. In the preceding year, the Staff Senate chose to support the

Blacksburg Interfaith food pantry . Senators volunteered at the pantry, and also collected donations which included general food items and specific items needed for the summer when children are out of school and families are not able to benefit from school lunch programs.

**Leadership Development - National Staff leadership Conference:** The goal of this conference is to promote sharing of ideas and best practices related to governance, among universities across state, region and nation. The Virginia Tech Staff Senate - National Staff Leadership Conference committee has been working through the summer planning the proposed conference to be held in 2009. The committee is working with representatives from the Hotel Roanoke and Conference Center and Continuing & Professional Education to investigate securing a grant to support the conference from the Center for Organizational and Technological Advancement (COTA). A tentative date of May 27 & 28 2009 has been selected. The committee has expressed interest in inviting members of the Board to speak at the conference.

**Staff Support - Spouse and Dependant Scholarship Funds:** There are two funds supporting spouse and dependent scholarships, they are; The Employees' Spouse and Dependant Scholarship Fund, and The Presidential Dependent Scholarship Endowment. Contributions to the former are used to directly support current scholarships for eligible individuals. Contributions to the later are invested in an endowed account to ensure that there will be funding for these scholarships into the future. This scholarship program has great potential as a tool in recruitment and retention of quality employees. The Staff Senate goal is to promote greater awareness of these scholarship funds, there-by encouraging increased donations which would allow larger awards and awards to more applicants.

**Recognition and Communication - Commission on Staff Policies and Affairs:** Support for the Staff Employee of the week program, which highlights staff nominated for the President's and Governor's awards will continue. The commission will work with University Professional Development and Human Resources to provide continued support of the Virginia Tech Staff Leadership Award. CSPA was also intimately involved in the development of new Human Resource policies for university staff which were approved by the Board earlier in this meeting.

**Staff Hi-light:** To continue the practice of acquainting the Board with various groups of staff that serve the University, I would like to take a moment to discuss the Human Resources staff at Virginia Tech. This 56 person department, which includes 43 staff, is responsible for supporting one of the University's most important assets – its approximately 6850 salaried employees and 850 wage employees.

HR Staff deliver a variety of services and support programs for the employee community in areas including: benefits, compensation and performance management, recruitment, employee relations, records administration, ADA services, work life and wellness, and professional and organizational development.

From the new service center, HR staff members provide improved front-line services including phone, e-mail, and walk-in support, and web-based chat sessions. Service center staff provide: high-tech, high-touch customer service to Virginia Tech employees.

A recent external consulting review noted that in addition to HR staff processing transactions there are opportunities to provide strategic services to assist campus leaders and managers. To expand the opportunities highlighted by the external consultants, Human Resources staff are working on two major initiatives.

First, HR staff are focusing on enhancing their own services through process improvement efforts and customer service training. A major customer service training initiative has been developed for the entire campus.

Second, HR staff are taking a more strategic approach by focusing on professional development, succession planning, management consulting and strategic planning services, to support development of employee talent and improve the organizational capabilities of departments across the campus.

The staff of the Human Resources department provides valuable assistance to the university, by improving HR services and leading the effort to recruit and retain talented employees for Virginia Tech.

This concludes my report. Thank you for your attention.