

**Staff Senate Constituency Report
Virginia Tech Board of Visitors
November 02, 2008
Thomas Tucker, Staff Senate President**

Rector Lawson, members of the Board of Visitors, President Steger, administrators and guests.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak to you about the Virginia Tech Staff Senate. It is an honor and privilege to share with you information on the activities and initiatives of the Staff Senate.

The Staff Senate continues to be actively involved in University Governance and we consider it honor to serve Virginia Tech on the various committees, commissions and council.

Promotion of Diversity: The Staff Senate provided support for the annual **Multicultural Faculty Staff Luncheon**, held on September 11th, both through participation and funding. The Senate also supported the **ADA Access Honor Roll Awards**, held October 20th, again by participating in the event and with funding. These awards recognize individuals for their “achievements in providing an accessible and accommodating environment” for the various constituents of the University. Eighteen awards were presented for the following groups: **Teaching Faculty, Staff, Administrative Faculty, Students, Outreach, Research** and **ADA Executive Committee**. The Staff Senate continues 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 compose the Hokie Nation. Due to a scheduling change, Dr. Kevin

McDonald, Vice President for Equity and Inclusion, will be presenting a program at the January 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. This year the Staff Senate chose to continue to support the Blacksburg Interfaith food pantry as our group project. Senators will volunteer work hours at the pantry and also collect donations of food and other items needed. Additional needs have been recognized in these challenging economic times and the Senate will be supporting the Montgomery County Christmas Store as well.

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 continued working to plan the proposed conference to be held in 2009. Recognizing the budget challenges resulting from the current economic situations, the committee has proposed a different approach. The McComas Staff Leadership Seminar has had a very successful history. Over the past 14 years the McComas Seminar has grown from a program initiated to build leadership skills among staff senators, to promoting leadership skills for all staff at Virginia Tech, to including staff from other Universities in the Commonwealth. The previous two programs presented at the McComas Staff Leadership Seminar included: "Defining Our Role in Developing an Inclusive Community" and "Bridging the Generation Gap in the Workforce". The committee is proposing that instead of a separate national conference, the McComas Staff Leadership Seminar be expanded to include invitations to ACC Member Universities and also

regional Colleges and Universities. The proposed date would be in early May 2009. The committee is interest in inviting a member or members of the Board to speak at the conference.

Staff Support - Spouse and Dependant Scholarship Funds: The two funds supporting spouse and dependent scholarships are: The Employees' Spouse and Dependant Scholarship Fund, and The Presidential Dependent Scholarship Endowment. 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.

Recognition and Communication - Commission on Staff Policies and Affairs: The CSPA goals for the year include: maintaining open communications, HR Policies, safety, Staff development, and Staff Recognition. Emeritus Staff Policy will also be reviewed.

Communications: CSPA was intimately involved in the development of new Human Resource policies for University Staff which were approved by the Board in August. The Commission and the Senate will continue to assist in the dissemination of information to staff regarding these new policies.

HR Policies: Assist in dissemination of information on proposed Holiday changes.

Safety: Discussion of sidewalk safety and sharing of information on improved campus security.

Staff Development: Address questions of varying level of support for staff training (funding and work release).

Staff Recognition: Support for the Staff Employee of the week program and Virginia Tech Staff Leadership Award will continue.

This concludes my report. Thank you for your attention.