

**Staff Senate Constituency Report**  
**Virginia Tech Board of Visitors**  
**August 31, 2009**  
**Thomas Tucker, Staff Senate President**

---

Rector Lawson, members of the Board of Visitors, President Steger, administrators and guests. As we begin a new academic semester at Virginia Tech, I wish to express what an honor it is again to be serving as the Staff Representative to the Board. I look forward to working with fellow Constituent representatives Kristina Hartman, Rebecca French, and Dr. Gary Long in the coming year. This year promises to present challenges and opportunities, as we work together to deal with, the difficult economic times and budget constraints Virginia Tech faces. The Staff Senate is prepared to work with the Students and Faculty, to assist the Administration, in guiding Virginia Tech through these changing economic times. To this end, I have proposed to my fellow constituent representatives, that we hold informal discussions aimed at coordinating our efforts to support and improve the University.

Thank you for this opportunity to bring forward issues of concern to staff, for discussion and consideration by the Board, and for the opportunity to discuss the activities and initiatives of the Virginia Tech Staff and the Staff Senate.

**Promotion of Diversity:** The Staff Senate continues to support and promote diversity at Virginia Tech. Again, this year, the Staff Senate is providing support for the Annual Multicultural Luncheon, sponsored by the Office for Equity and Inclusion. The event serves to “recognize and welcome the diversity” of incoming student leaders, staff and faculty at the University. The Senate will provide support, both monetarily and through participation at the event.

At the June meeting of the Staff Senate, Ms. Maggie Sloan, Director of Compliance and Conflict Resolution from The Office for Equity and Inclusion, presented information on the proposed changes to University Policy 1025, the “Anti-Discrimination and Harassment Prevention Policy”, related to Gender Identity Issues. At its July meeting, the Staff Senate passed a “Motion of Support” for the proposed changes to Policy 1025.

**Community Service through the VT-ENGAGE Program:** The Staff Senate provides volunteer service and support to the community through the VT-ENGAGE program. Most recently, staff members volunteered at “Gobblerfest”, (a welcome festival for students, staff, faculty, and community members) held on Friday August 28. At its September meeting, Staff Senators will select a group “community service” project for the coming year.

**Leadership and Development:** Concerns have been raised regarding the affects that the A/P Faculty conversion process may have on the Staff Senate and those employees converting, or being converted, to A/P Faculty status. The issues include the following:

- Senate representation is based on the number of staff in a College or Vice Presidential area. A reduction in numbers of senators may be required in certain staff associations.
- The possibility of reduced opportunities for A/P Faculty employees to participate in shared governance (Currently there is no A/P Faculty Senate and A/P Faculty are not represented in the Faculty Senate). The Staff Senate would be willing to discuss A/P Faculty participation in a reconfigured Senate Structure should A/P faculty wish to do so.
- Several persons expressing interest in participating in shared governance through the Staff Senate could not participate due to A/P Faculty conversions. The Staff Senate may have to replace one of its officers due to an A/P Faculty conversion.

- Economic stratification of the employee representative groups is also a concern.

**Communication and Recognition - Commission on Staff Policies and Affairs (CSPA):** The CSPA promotes Staff Recognition, open communications, and Staff development.

Staff Recognition: The introduction of the new performance Management system and the potential for merit pay increases in the future raise some questions. One issue is, how can employees be recognized for achievements in lean budget years? Recognizing that the current economic and budget situation may preclude merit pay increases, the commission discussed potentially using non-monetary means to recognize achievements. This would promote morale and offer rewards for employees rated “model performers”.

Communications: CSPA and the Staff Senate are primary conduits for transmitting information to and receiving input from Staff.

*Proposed change to the Winter Break Closing policy* – There is a renewed discussion regarding the Winter Break Closing Policy in the Benefits Committee. The Staff Senate has been asked to consider a vote of support to have the issue discussed in CSPA and to determine if it will be pursued through the governance process. Information will be reported to the Board as appropriate.

*Budget Reductions and Potential Layoffs* – Much speculation is surfacing concerning budget cuts to the University and the potential for layoffs as a result. The staff is aware that, until the Governor informs the University administration of the full impact of budget cuts, there is no information to

share. The staff requests that the administration share budget information as soon as it is practical to do so, and if feasible, to solicit staff input as to how budget cuts are addressed.

Staff Development: In tight budget times, staff development is very critical. Fewer employees are being asked to do more, with fewer resources. The need for low or no cost training/education opportunities to develop additional skills is critical and should be a priority.

**Thank you for your attention.**

**Are there any questions?**

**This concludes my report.**