

**Staff Senate Constituency Report to Virginia Tech Board of Visitors**  
**March 25, 2007**  
**Jean Brickey Staff Senate President**

Rector Lutz, Members of the Board of Visitors, Dr. Steger, administrators and guest. It is my honor and a privilege to talk to you about Virginia Tech's Staff Senate and staff.

At the November Board of Visitors Meeting the Staff Senate Constituent report listed goals for 2006-2007. I would like to update you on these goals

**Update on Goals for 2006-2007**

- Establish Staff Associations in areas that have been reorganized over the last few years.
  - The Staff Senate in November was working with two areas and we have added one additional area which is the National Capitol Region.
- Assist in informing and involving the Staff and non student wage employees in the policy making for the Higher Education Restructuring Act. The Senate served as a pilot focus group to assist Human Resources in the design of a more extensive focus group process conducted several hundred randomly selected employees and managers. During January the Staff Senate sent out a survey to all non faculty salaried employees to solicit names for the Employee Advisory Committee. The Committee that reviewed these names narrowed a list of almost 100 employees to 20 names which have been forwarded to the Administration for final appointment to this advisory committee. We are pleased to report that there is diverse representation of employees from different levels and types of positions, in supervisory and non-supervisory roles, and from most of our colleges and administrative areas.
- Update the Staff Senate Web pages. The new Staff Senate pages updates are almost complete. We still have some links to complete and some material to update. The page does incorporate the new Virginia Tech logo "Invent the Future." The Staff Senate web page is at [www.staffsenate.vt.edu](http://www.staffsenate.vt.edu)
- Update the Staff Senate Brochure. We are almost ready to send a new Staff Senate Brochure to the printers. This brochure is shared with new employees during orientation and introduces them to opportunities to participate in university governance.
- Work closely with Commission on Staff Policies and Affairs to communicate vital information on issues of importance to staff.

**Staff Development**

- Staff serve in leadership roles on the Commission for Staff Policies and Affairs, and with several Virginia Tech professional development networks
  - The second Administrative Staff Network Conference, The Magic of Motivation and Morale, was held March 14, 2007, with 150 employees participating in this all day program.
  - The Laboratory Employees Professional Network held two workshops, Digital Imaging Solutions was held Feb. 26, 2007 and RNS Isolation of Difficult Samples was held March 16, 2007. Both of these were attended by approximately 40 people.
- Developed a proposal for a Staff Leadership Award. The Commission is working with Human Resources to develop the criteria for a new award to be implemented next year if approved.
- The Staff Senate has been working on its annual James D. McComas Staff Leadership Seminar. It will be held May 3<sup>rd</sup> 2007. The theme is Bridging the Generational Gap in the Workplace. For the first time we are inviting two staff leaders from 10 of Virginia's state supported colleges and universities. The response to this invitation has been very favorable and our employees are looking forward to the opportunity to share this professional development opportunity with our colleagues at other institutions of higher education.

## Staff Senate Speakers to Date

- Maggie Sloane, Associate Director for Compliance in the Office of Equal Opportunity, spoke with the *Staff Senate about Conflict Resolution techniques, including the university's new mediation program*
- Larry Hincker, Associate Vice President for University Relations, spoke with the Staff Senate about Communications especially emergency communications.
- Bonnie Sutphin, Information Technology Manager for Purchasing, talked to the Staff Senate about HokieMart and how it is changing the purchasing process.
- Dr. Richard Benson Dean of the College of Engineering talked to the Staff Senate about initiatives in the College of Engineering.
- Linda Woodard, Assistant Vice President for Human Resources, has updated the Staff Senate on the Higher Education Restructuring Act and opportunities for staff to be involved in the process.
- Mike Ellerbrock updated the Staff Senate on the Quality Enhancement Plan for SACS.
- Lori Anne Sheppard updated the Staff Senate about the NCAA Compliance Review which is in progress
- Staff Senate elections are being done this week.

I would also like to take this opportunity to share briefly with you about some of the types of work performed by staff at the university. Virginia Tech has approximately 3800 salaried staff. Of these, approximately 500 technical and field staff work in a variety of departments to support instructional labs and research activities in several of our Colleges, University Centers, and Research Institutes, as well as technician roles in Veterinary Medicine. They serve as agricultural specialists, natural resource specialists, health care technologists, lab and research technicians/specialists, and veterinary technicians. Many of these positions require a degree in the related field. Staff in many of these positions are responsible for teaching our students the skills necessary for working and running a research lab. These are the employees who participate in the Laboratory Employee Professional Development Network mentioned above. This network, which is co-sponsored by Human Resources and the office of the Vice President for Research, organizes programs on technical and other work topics, provides opportunities for these employees to meet with university administrators and researchers about Virginia Tech's research agenda, and hosts an annual program of scientific vendor exhibits and workshops. In future meetings, I will share information about other categories of staff and the work that they do.

Virginia Tech's Staff Senate wants to thank you for making us a leader in the state of Virginia in Staff Governance. We have had many other staff governance leaders in other colleges and universities in Virginia contact us to see what we are accomplishing how involved we are in the Universities Governance and for assistance in getting a staff representative on their Board of Visitors. On February 22, 2007, Virginia Commonwealth University followed Virginia Tech by appointing a staff representative to their Board of Visitors. Though many will not see this as a big area where Virginia Tech has become a leader, for college's and university's staff it is a big step in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to again bring you news and updates from the Staff Senate and the staff at Virginia Tech.