Staff Senate minutes: November 19, 2015

Noon, 2420 North End Center

Attending: Bonnie Alberts, Dan Cook, LeeAnn Ellis, Velva Groover, Alex Guest, Steve Nagle, Alex Parrish, Heather Parrish, Robert Sebek, Judy Taylor, Sue Teel, Tom Tucker, Sally Wieringa, Jon Wooge

Excused: Cyndi Booth, Thomas Czamanske, Albert Moore, Janet Murphy, Louellen Sharp, Leslie Thornton-O’Brien

Mr. Cooks called the meeting to order. The agenda was adopted.

Joanne Amposta with Campus Kitchen at Virginia Tech and Perry Martin with VT Engage spoke on the Campus Kitchen project. There are currently 48 Campus Kitchens in the US. They collaborate with the university and Cooperative Extension to use resources to help the local community. They are serving 100 people per day through the Fairlawn Daily Bread, a nonprofit organization. A concern among students is food insecurity. The Wesley Foundation is operating a food bank for locals including students and serve 130 people each month.

Mr. Cook asked for volunteers to work with the SGA’s task force on tobacco. Please contact him if you are interested. There was a discussion on a potential e-cigarette policy.

Laura Tollin gave a report from the Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity. The Disability Alliance is reviewing statistics of employment of people with disabilities and other minority groups. (HR relies on people to self-report.) There was a discussion on the governance structure and the process for making changes in policies and the timeline for that process.

Other commissions and committee representatives were asked to submit written reports (attached below).

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Sebek
Staff Senate Secretary
Recent commission and committee reports

(Please send summaries to Robert Sebek.)

Energy & Sustainability Committee report

I would like to mention one of our main tasks is the Green RFP program that solicits proposals from recognized student organization that supports the vision and goals of the Virginia Tech Climate Action Commitment and Sustainability Plan. You can find a list previously funded proposals at http://www.facilities.vt.edu/sustainability/GreenRfp.aspx.

If you have any specific questions about the Green RFP program you should contact Denny Cochrane at denniscc@vt.edu. One of the things I would like to see happen is the standards for constructing new buildings extend to CRC in respect to all the energy and sustainability standards that are addressed on campus that are not when planning or building new CRC buildings.

Intellectual Properties Committee report

They have updated the Policy and Procedures for Va Tech IP and they needed now to send a copy to Roanoke Times and make sure that the students knew of the new Policies.

Transportation/Parking Committee report

Very briefly, we spoke about the changes made to the Drillfield (there were many positive comments) and the 10 year Parking and Transportation master plan update. Everyone is encouraged to give their input; the website is at vt-ptmp.com.

Employee Benefits Committee report

Our last meeting was on 4/30 (our first one for this school year is this morning). We spoke about the new leave system with a demonstration, open enrollment and insurance changes, state employees’ eligibility for FAMIS and UOPD opportunities.

Library Committee report

The University Library Committee had its first meeting for the Fall 2015 semester on 9/30/15. At the meeting we discussed several matters from last year and approved the April 2015 minutes. We then reviewed the updated committee roster, announced the new ULC chair Dr. Lynn Resler and took nominations for election of a new secretary. We concluded with a presentation by Dr. Walters Ex Officio illustrating metrics relevant to identifying action items for the upcoming year.
Commencement Committee report

It was a short meeting. We approved the minutes for the November meeting and made sure everything was in order for the fall ceremony.

Energy and Sustainability Committee report

- The Green RFP is underway and there are a record number of applications.
- From the 2014/2015 Green RFP LED streetlamps are nearly finished on Washington Street. These lights are brighter, have a longer lifespan, and are better for safety and security. Water bottle stations have been installed in McBryde and some residence halls. There will also be a solar recharging table outside.
- Poplar Manor composting services will not be able to take VT compost anymore. Other options are being explored. Without composting our current 40% recycle rate would be reduced to 30%.
- The Office of Energy and Sustainability held its first forum with student groups working on sustainability measures to enable them to meet each other, collaborate on ideas, and connect with OES.

Library Committee report

At our last meeting held on December 1, we returned to the topic of library space utilization, and also discussed how the library may support the CLE Pathways minors. Among other possible action items the Library Committee addressed concerns raised by our Graduate Student Representative on behalf of the graduate student body regarding library space dedicated as graduate student work areas.

Undergraduate Curriculum Committee report

- Approved new courses in the following: College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (2) Environmental Science, Science of Food Preparation Lab; College of Engineering (3) Vehicle Control, Nuclear Fuel Cycle, Nuclear Power Plant Operations; College of Liberal Arts & Human Sciences (1) The Sounds of Language; College of Natural Resources and Environment (4) Mammalogy, Herpetology, Geospatial Information Technology for Land Change Modeling, Food and Health Care Packaging
- Discontinued courses in the following: College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (1) Science of Food
- Approved new majors in the following: College of Liberal Arts & Human Sciences (3) Bachelor of Arts in International Studies, Major: International Public Policy; Bachelor of Arts in International Studies, Major: International Relations; Bachelor of Arts in International Studies, Major: National Security & Foreign Affairs
- New major option in the following: College of Science (1) Major: Biological Science, Option: Biomedical
- Discontinued majors in the following: College of Liberal Arts & Human Sciences (5) Bachelor of Arts, Major: International Studies, Option/Concentration: Environmental Affairs; Bachelor of Arts, Major: International Studies, Option/Concentration: Global Development; Bachelor of Arts, Major: International Studies, Option/Concentration: Business; Bachelor of Arts, Major: International
Studies, Option/Concentration: World Politics and Policy; Bachelor of Arts, Major: International Studies, Option/Concentration: Security and Foreign Policy

University Council report

They basically tabled all resolutions until February 1st. We had a lengthy discussion about the resolutions proposed from Faculty Senate and SGA and in the end nothing was passed because people wanted more time to get things correct (the student resolution submitted was not the latest version).

The SGA wanted to review the governance process, which did not pass at this time because of the outdated resolution. However, President Sands indicated he would go ahead and name an unofficial task force so they could begin work and then we would vote on the resolution in February. I guess if the resolution is voted down, the task force will dissolve???

The faculty resolution was tabled because the students wanted it approved along with their resolution as they are related. I understand these resolutions were passed by Staff Senate so they should be familiar with the content.

Faculty Affairs report

The Dec. 4 CFA meeting was short. We discussed and approved the Joint Resolution on the formation of a University Governance Task Force.

Philip Young, University Libraries presented materials on Journal Impact Factors and their use in Faculty Evaluation - after a long discussion without a clear outcome - various colleges rely more on the Journal Impact Factor than others, so eliminating it would impact some colleges more than others. Journal Impact Factor also impacts promotion and tenure. Philip will bring more info and possible alternatives to another meeting and the issue will be discussed further.