



Encouraging Participation

Staff Associations and Staff Senate



Staff Associations

- ▶ Staff associations send senators to Staff Senate. They are the foundation of our participation in shared governance.
- ▶ Senate is hoping to start(or restart) associations in areas currently unrepresented.
 - ❑ College of Natural Resources and Environment
 - ❑ Athletics
 - ❑ Student Services (Bursar, Financial Aid, Hokie Passport, Registrar which are all in the Student Services Building- Located departments.)
 - ❑ VT Transportation Institute
 - ❑ Life Science Research (Fralin Life Science Institute and Biocomplexity Institute)
 - ❑ National Capital Region (one big one or one each for the 2 campuses: Falls Church/NVC, Alexandria and Arlington)
 - ❑ After July 1st (College of Medicine)(Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine)
- ▶ Possibly split large associations so communication is easier.
 - ❑ Provost Areas(in order to improve on communication and makes sense size wise)?
 - ❑ Research institutes (currently under Research)
 - ❑ Split International Affairs from Outreach (Outreach has all the senators positions in the combined group now, and they don't really communicate with each other now)?
- ▶ Any suggestions on how the senate can better help staff members serve on staff associations?

Why should you serve on an Association?

- ▶ Provides a voice for staff members to advocate for and improve your College.
- ▶ Provides many ways to participate in various community outreach programs.
- ▶ Provides multiple opportunities to connect with other staff members within the College through special events and meetings.
- ▶ Provides a voice in the Staff Senate and in the University Governance to help create a satisfying place to work and improving communication among staff and administrators.
- ▶ Provides excellent leadership skills which helps boost your resume.
- ▶ Understanding on how the University is Govern as a whole.
- ▶ Provides you more insight on your Dean of the College, by becoming a liaison for your college and the staff.
- ▶ Gives you opportunity to gain more skills to improve your working environment. (such as grants created for staff members within the association)

Ideas to recruit participation

- ▶ Speak with the Dean of your College to get funding for the Association so that you can use that funding on programs what will benefit the staff members in your department, such as:
 - ❑ Awards for the staff, such as Employee of the year, Service and Outreach.
 - ❑ Setup Staff Development Grants which allow the staff to attend classes and workshops that will improve their job skills.
 - ❑ Organize Staff Retreats, Special Events and Community Outreach programs
 - ❑ Benefits to having a Staff Association would help promote their College, as well as create a better working environment for their staff. *(Great morale booster to know the College is encouraging the staff members to become more knowledgeable about how the University is Govern and development more skills for their job.)*
 - ❑ Have the Dean of your College to encourage the departments' Supervisors to allow you to participate on the association and staff senate.
 - ❑ Become liaison for the College so that they can see it was all worth it to have you serve on an Association for their College and the staff senate.
 - ❑ Create a brochure for your association and pass them out at different events such has award ceremonies to encourage staff members to join.

- ▶ Any more suggestions on how we can gain more participation is welcomed?



Senators

- ▶ What barriers exist that discourage staff from becoming senators?
 - ❑ Supervisor issues (did Sands' Statement help?)
 - ❑ Time issues
 - ❑ Awareness issues
- ▶ Serving in leadership roles in the Senate (standing committee chairs/vice chairs, officer positions)
- ▶ Outreach to unrepresented areas where we are trying to form staff associations.

A statement from President Tim Sands on staff participation in governance

September 20, 2017

Dear Colleagues,

At Virginia Tech, we are fortunate to have a robust system of shared governance — not quite like any I have encountered elsewhere. I believe its effectiveness derives from its inclusiveness and the collaboration that comes from having students and staff involved along with faculty.

However, I hear increasingly of staff being discouraged from serving on the various committees and commissions or being required to use leave in order to do so, which is inappropriate.

Of course, an employee's primary job responsibilities must take priority, but active engagement in university governance is essential for the university to thrive. Such involvement also offers professional development opportunities that are unique and impactful. Communication between employees and supervisors is vital.

When considering involvement in governance activities, it is important for employees to discuss the role and projected time commitments with their supervisors so that expectations are clear and plans can be put in place to manage workload and accomplish time-sensitive projects.

I also hope that supervisors will take advantage of the opportunity to ask their employees about what items are being dealt with in the governance system.

I met with the commission chairs last week, as I do every semester, to learn about each commission's plans. This will be a busy year! Thank you for your efforts to support our system of shared governance and to ensure that it benefits from the perspectives of our staff as well as our students and faculty.

Sincerely,

Tim Sands

President



Senator responsibilities

- ▶ Attend our monthly meeting (3rd Thurs of month--except December--at noon, usually in Torg)
- ▶ Become a member of at least one our standing committees:
 - **Communication** : manage our website, listserv, social media, and outreach events
 - **Elections & Nominations** : manage the spring election of officers and senators to the various commissions and committees (see below)
 - **McComas Leadership Seminar** : organize our annual seminar on leadership issues
 - **Policies & Issues** : write resolutions to effect changes in policies or express concerns from the senate, also reviews our constitution and bylaws for needed updates
- ▶ Communicate issues from the staff you represent to the Senate, and communicate info and issues from the Senate to your constituents
 - What kind of listservs do you have access to?



Additional opportunities

- ▶ Serve in leadership roles in the Senate (standing committee chairs/vice chairs, officer positions)
- ▶ Serve on the university's shared governance bodies
 - University Council: the highest body to vote on policy changes below the president and Board of Visitors
 - Commissions: 10 groups to initiate changes to policies through written resolutions
 - Committees: groups that communicate needed changes to the various commissions they report to
- ▶ Serve on temporary groups: like search committees for high level administrators, ad hoc committees for issues like budgets, curriculum, state regulations, etc.
- ▶ Outreach to unrepresented areas where we are trying to form staff associations



How to keep up

- ▶ Read the University Council minutes on the Governance website (www.governance.vt.edu)
 - See what issues are being discussed
 - Review resolutions being passed; note which Commission they originated in (you might want to run for a position on that commission)
- ▶ Attend your staff association meetings (listen for issues to bring to senate; relate info presented at senate)
- ▶ Read the daily email: great info on events, people, and policies
- ▶ Staff Senate website: <https://www.staffsenate.vt.edu/>
- ▶ Any suggestions on how the senate can better help staff members serve on the senate?
- ▶ Any suggestions on how we can get staff members to attend the senate meetings?



Contact Information

► Staff Senate Officers

- ❑ President- Robert Sebek- (540)231-1849/ rsebek@vt.edu
- ❑ Vice President- Tamarah Smith –(540)231-7327/ tjsmith@vt.edu
- ❑ Communication Chair- Katrina Loan—(540)231-6544/ katrl1@vt.edu
- ❑ Election Chair- Judy Taylor—(540)231-9595/ taylor1@vt.edu
- ❑ Policies and Issues- Judy Alford --- (540)231-2309/ judy.alford@vt.edu
- ❑ McComas Leadership Seminar Planning- Zerita Montgomery – (540)231-6316
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