



# Staff Senate

<http://www.staffsenate.vt.edu/>

2018-2019

## STAFF SENATE OFFICERS

**President: Robert Sebek**

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## STANDING COMMITTEES

### CHAIRS

Communications

**Bruce Harper** ([bharper@vt.edu](mailto:bharper@vt.edu)),  
University Relations/Creative Studio  
(0336)

Elections and Nominations

**Judy Taylor** ([taylor1@vt.edu](mailto:taylor1@vt.edu)),  
Provost Office (0132)

Policies and Issues

**Judy Alford** ([judy.alford@vt.edu](mailto:judy.alford@vt.edu)),  
TLOS (0292)

McComas Leadership Seminar

**Amy Ingram** ([amy.ingram@vt.edu](mailto:amy.ingram@vt.edu))  
Honors College (0427)

April 18, 2019

Noon – 1:00pm

3100 University Gateway Center, corner of Prices Fork Rd and University City Blvd.

(Use the parking deck just behind the building, or  
one of the Blacksburg Transit routes that stop nearby.)

## AGENDA

### Call to order by Robert Sebek

**Attendance:** Please sign the attendance sheet, including guests

**Approval of Minutes:** electronically

**President’s update:** Mr. Sebek: Board of Visitors presentations

### Standing Committee updates:

Communication: Mr. Harper

Elections & Nominations: Ms. Taylor

Policies & Issues: Ms. Alford

McComas Leadership Seminar: Ms. Ingram

**Resolution For University Divestment From Fossil Fuels:** Ryan Wesdock, Graduate  
Student Assembly

**Parking and Transportation Update:** Jeri Baker, Director of Parking and Transportation

### Adjournment

### Zoom Video Conferencing Information

Initial meeting <https://viriniatech.zoom.us/j/213933318>

**Next meeting:** May 16, 2019 UGC 3100: Master Plan update

## **University Council, Commissions, Committees - Staff Senate Representative (term of office)**

University Council – LaTawnya Burleson (2020), Velva Groover (2021), Brian Huddleston (2020), Katrina Loan (2020), Erin Poff (2019), Teresa Lyons (2019), Sue Teel (2021)

### **Commissions**

Commission on Administrative and Professional Faculty – MaDonna Overstreet (2021)

Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity – Tracy Newton (2019)

Commission on Faculty Affairs – Robert Sebek (2021)

Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies – Hannah Parks (2020)

Commission on Outreach and International Affairs – Wayne Crotto (2021)

Commission on Research – Steve Nagle (2019)

Commission on Staff Policies and Affairs – Tammie Smith - Chair, (2019), Nicole Akers (2021),

Judy Alford (2021), Lisa Boothe (2021), Lori Buchanan (2020), Sally Shupe (2020), Sue Teel (2020),

LaTawnya Burleson (2019), Teresa Lyons (2019), Betty Wilkins (2019)

Commission on Student Affairs – Jonathan Poff (2020)

Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies – Steve Tatum (2019)

Commission on University Support – Sarah Woodward (2020), Judy Alford (2021)

University Advisory Council -Strategic Budgeting and Planning – Robert Sebek (2019)

### **Committees**

Academic Support Committee – Tammie Smith (2019)

Athletics Committee – Robena Hughes (2020)

Campus Development Committee – Laura Steinberg (2020)

Commencement Committee – Nicole Akers (2021)

Employee Benefits Committee – Kim Dulaney (2020), Katrina Loan (2019), Melissa Thomas (2019)

Energy & Sustainability Committee – Judy Taylor (2019), Alex Guest (2019)

Information Technology Services and Systems Committee - Judy Alford (2021)

Intellectual Properties Committee – Steve Tatum (2021)

Library Committee – Sally Shupe (2020)

Parking Appeals Hearing Committee – Kelli Hall-Manning (2019)

Transportation/Parking Committee – Sandra Gabbert (2020), Kimberly Higgs (2020), Megan Coulter (2021)

Undergraduate Curriculum Committee – Michelle Czamanske (2019)



Graduate Student Assembly of Virginia Tech (GSA)  
155 Otey St  
25 Graduate Life Center (0186)  
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061  
P: (540) 231-1693 | gsa@vt.edu |  
www.gsa.vt.edu

## Resolution GSA2018-19E

### Endorsing Delegates

Ryan Wesdock

Kevin Akers

John Legg

### Approval Timeline

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### RESOLUTION FOR UNIVERSITY DIVESTMENT FROM FOSSIL FUELS

**WHEREAS**, the Virginia Tech Foundation (VTF) holds assets of approximately \$1.9 billion of which approximately \$1.15 billion is held in the university’s endowment [as of 2018](#);

**WHEREAS**, the [stated goal](#) of the VTF which oversees the university’s endowment, is “to advance the university’s missions of discovery, learning, and community engagement”;

**WHEREAS**, the [university’s adopted mission statement](#) in 2006 states that, “Through its focus on teaching and learning, research and discovery, and outreach and engagement, the university creates, conveys, and applies knowledge to expand personal growth and opportunity, advance social and community development, foster economic competitiveness, and improve the quality of life”;

**WHEREAS**, the [Britannica Encyclopedia defines](#) fossil fuels as “any of a class of hydrocarbon-containing materials of biological origin occurring within Earth’s crust that can be used as a source of energy”;

**WHEREAS**, fossil fuel related industries include companies primarily involved in the extraction, production, distribution, and refinement of fossil fuels;





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**WHEREAS**, according to *The Collegiate Times* [approximately 10%](#) of the university's endowment is invested into fossil fuels and fossil fuel related industries;

**WHEREAS**, a [study by the research firm Corporate Knights found](#) that the New York State Common Retirement Fund (NYSCRF) “would be an estimated \$22.2 billion richer had it decided to divest its fossil fuel stocks ten years ago”;

**WHEREAS**, a [study commissioned by the University of Mary Washington](#) found that divesting its portfolio almost entirely from fossil fuels made “financial sense”;

**WHEREAS**, the [University of Edinburgh announced](#) in February of 2018 that it would divest its £1 billion endowment (~\$1.29 billion) completely from fossil fuels;

**WHEREAS**, in May of 2015 the [University of Hawaii announced](#) it would divest its holdings from fossil fuels;

**WHEREAS**, after 18 months of deliberation, in April of 2016, the [University of Ottawa announced](#) it would divest its holdings from fossil fuels in order to “prudently manage...risk, to stay abreast of emerging market dynamics, and to promote investment practices likely to meet fiduciary responsibilities to optimize investment returns”;

**WHEREAS**, people [are increasingly being employed](#) in renewable energy fields, with over ten million jobs globally last year;

**WHEREAS**, the 2017 U.S. Energy and Employment Report [found](#) nearly one million jobs in renewable energy and energy efficiency in the United States, almost five times the amount in the fossil fuel electric generation sector;

**WHEREAS**, the [same report](#) found jobs in solar electric generation in Virginia alone totaled 4,338 while fossil fuel electric generation jobs numbered barely more than half at 2,324 in 2017;



**WHEREAS**, economist Jeremy Rifkin, in a speech at Virginia Tech on February 6, 2019, spoke about the importance of moving away from fossil fuels and according to *The Roanoke Times*, he mentioned how “Virginia Tech needs to take the lead in shaping how resources are shared”;

**THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED**, that the GSA encourages the Board of Visitors (BOV) to request the Virginia Tech Foundation (VTF) to divest its liquid holdings in fossil fuels and fossil fuel related industries within 90 days of this resolution’s adoption by the BOV;

**LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the GSA encourages the BOV to request the VTF to divest its illiquid holdings in fossil fuels and fossil fuel related industries in five years of this resolution’s adoption by the BOV;

**LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the GSA recommends that those funds be re-invested into renewable energy, energy efficiency, and other clean technology stocks;

**LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the GSA encourages the BOV to request the VTF either to divest gifts of stock or other investment vehicles that contain investments in fossil fuels and fossil fuel related industries as quickly as possible, if feasible, or to refuse such gifts if not;

**LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the GSA encourages the BOV to request the VTF to not invest into additional fossil fuels and fossil fuel related industries after beginning the process of divestment.

## APPENDIX

1. <https://www.vtf.org/portfolio>
2. <https://www.vtf.org/philosophy>
3. <https://www.president.vt.edu/Office/mission-statement.html>
4. <https://www.britannica.com/science/fossil-fuel>



5. [http://www.collegiatetimes.com/news/virginia\\_tech/group-petitions-tech-to-divest-in-fossil-fuels/article\\_6d988f53-d84f-5118-b0ed-8e2f8c5eab40.html](http://www.collegiatetimes.com/news/virginia_tech/group-petitions-tech-to-divest-in-fossil-fuels/article_6d988f53-d84f-5118-b0ed-8e2f8c5eab40.html)
6. <https://www.corporateknights.com/channels/climate-and-carbon/divestment-made-ny-pension-fund-22b-richer-15386364/>
7. <https://ufc.umw.edu/files/2016/02/PCS-Divestment-Report-Small-File.pdf>
8. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/feb/06/edinburgh-university-divests-from-all-fossil-fuels>
9. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/college/2015/06/03/university-of-hawaii-becomes-largest-institution-to-divest-from-fossil-fuels/37403409/>
10. <https://www.uottawa.ca/administration-and-governance/response-executive-committee-report-finance-and-treasury-committee>
11. <https://www.cnbc.com/2018/05/09/jobs-in-renewable-energy-hit-10-point-3-million-last-year-report-finds.html>
12. <https://www.nrdc.org/experts/lara-ettenson/us-clean-energy-jobs-surpass-fossil-fuel-employment>
13. <https://www.energy.gov/sites/prod/files/2017/01/f34/2017%20US%20Energy%20and%20Jobs%20Report%20State%20Charts.pdf>



**Staff Senate Constituency Report**  
**Virginia Tech Board of Visitors**  
**April 1, 2019**  
**Presented by Robert Sebek, Staff Senate President**

Good afternoon Rector Treacy, members of the Board of Visitors, President Sands, administrators and distinguished guests. It is an honor to present to you updates from staff at Virginia Tech.

Staff Senate hosted over 200 staff employees last week at our annual James McComas Staff Leadership Seminar. This year's theme was Empathic Leadership, and our speakers explored leading others while considering those followers' needs and concerns, an interest that has guided my leadership of the Senate. The day-long seminar was well received and planning has already begun for next year's seminar.

Today I am asking for Virginia Tech to invest in its future. We have done a great job investing in our students: we have amazing residence halls for our students to live in, award-winning dining halls where they can eat, innovative classrooms and laboratories where they can learn, and outstanding networks and technology for them to communicate and collaborate. It's now time to invest in the employees that support those endeavors: the custodians who keep those residence halls clean, the chefs, cooks and nutritionists that make those award-winning meals, the grounds workers who clear the snow to allow students to get to the classroom buildings, the lab managers who set up equipment and guide students in its use, and yes, the faculty who teach, advise, and collaborate with our students.

Last August, the Board discussed means to budget for increasing faculty and staff salaries, to increase faculty percentile placement among our peer institutions and staff salaries to market levels for this area. At the November meeting, you directed the administration to report on compensation levels, parking, and child care access.

I served on the Total Compensation task force that reviewed full-time and part-time staff wages and parking issues. The university seems to have committed to raising the floor of our lowest salary bands to a market level of \$12/hour. I appeal to the university administration to commit to similar pay reforms for our part-time staff. Our *Principles of Community* state that, "We affirm the inherent dignity and value of every person and strive to maintain a climate for work and learning based on mutual respect and understanding." Paying part-time staff, who are doing the same work as full-time staff, significantly less does not affirm their value, nor respects their contributions to our campus.

Many of our part-time employees have worked in those positions for years—they are not transient employees. Some choose to remain part time because they cannot afford afterschool child care. Others are waiting to move into full time positions as they become available. Still others work in areas that are not active 12 months of the year, like Dining. [I understand the Division of Student Affairs is planning to review select, long-term, part-time positions in Dining for conversion to 9-month, full-time positions, which I highly endorse.]

Raising part-time wages is more complicated, since part-time positions are paid from operating budgets. Any solutions needs to account for this difference in funding to ensure departments and auxiliaries can afford market-level wages without a significant decrease in work force size.

On the other hand, no similar university task force investigated access to affordable child care. I have directed the Staff Senate's child care committee to continue to research solution proposals. I will present at tomorrow's Governance and Administration Committee session to follow up on my November presentation to the Board on access to child care, including the suggestion to form a similar university-wide task force to continue exploring short- and long-term solutions to the problem on access to affordable child care in the New River Valley region.

The need for child care options only continues to grow as the size of our work force and student body increases. The ability to recruit new faculty and graduate students with families will be impacted by the lack of capacity in the New River Valley as well as the lack of affordability. I understand any solution will cost the university money, but it is an investment that will pay off in terms of recruitment and retention of quality employees and students, better engagement and loyalty of employees, and a more productive work force.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Sebek  
President, Staff Senate