

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

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