Rector Nolen, members of the Board of Visitors, President Steger, administrators, and guests: I hope that you have had a wonderful summer. I appreciate this time that I have to talk with you about the VT staff today.

There is normally less activity with the Staff Senate during the summer months than during the other months of the year due in part to many people taking vacations, others working diligently to get the end-of-the-year accounting completed, and others working to get their offices and departments ready for the new school year and influx of students. Taking this into consideration, there was no Staff Senate meeting in July but even though August 18th was student move-in day, there was good attendance at the meeting that day. Francesca Galarraga, Director of Diversity Education and Training spoke at this meeting. She informed the Senate about the newly formed Diversity Development Institute and encouraged all staff to take the courses as they become available. There will be certificates presented to all staff or administrative faculty who complete the curriculum of three required courses and three elective courses.

Since classes for staff and staff training continue to be issues of concern for many VT Staff and have been discussed at various Senate meetings, John Massey, Assistant Director for Professional Development, University Organizational & Professional Development (UOPD) addressed the Senate meeting in June of this year. Mr. Massey provided to each Senator, a Spring, 2011 catalogue covering the January through June offerings. (Fall 2011 catalogues with the September through December opportunities were not available at the time.) Professional Development presents workshops of a specific workplace effectiveness nature, such as delegation, communications, team building, and problem solving. Individual Development offers courses in time management, communications in management, and other skills needed for Executive Development and succession planning. Another area of training is the Certificate Programs in administrative excellence, customer service, leadership excellence, and office software. Consulting Services, headed by Amy Hogan, is the fastest growing piece of UOPD. This area designs programs to meet a variety of organizational needs after a collaborative meeting with departmental leadership to learn the needs as seen by those on the departmental work team. The professional development offerings address one facet of the needs of staff. Another area is the desire of some staff to pursue higher education degrees at Tech, but for various reasons such as job time constraints, lack of tuition waivers, class seating availability, etc. some staff are not able to pursue a degree. The Senate will continue to look for ways to help resolve some of these issues.

The speaker for the May Senate meeting was Teresa Craig, Membership Development Director, Virginia Governmental Employees Association (VGEA) and she brought information regarding bills that were in progress in Richmond at that time along with membership information into the VGEA.

The staff who are working in Northern VA, continue to receive information and Senate meeting notices electronically and through one representative to the Senate. The structure in NoVA is so complex that an ad-hoc committee needs to be formed to review the structure and meet with them to discuss how best to represent all staff who work there.

Thank you for your continued interest in the VT Staff. I appreciate any questions or comments that you might have for me.

Respectfully,
Maxine Lyons
President, Staff Senate