

Staff Senate Constituency Report
Virginia Tech Board of Visitors
March 21, 2016
Presented by Dan Cook, Staff Senate President

Good afternoon Rector Petrine, members of the Board of Visitors, President Sands, administrators and distinguished guests: once again I would like to thank you for this opportunity to speak with you about events in the recent months with regard to Virginia Tech's staff.

Some highlights from previous Staff Senate meetings would include: a presentation with Ms. Katherine Keeney about the Beyond Boundaries Project where she explained that the group was looking into the future of our university and has identified 4 areas of focus – envisioning the campus of the future, advancing the global land-grant institution and discovering new funding models. We also hosted Drs. Rami Dalloul, Montasir Abbas and Hans Robinson from the Faculty Senate. A friendly conversation took place on how to deal with strained relations (both real and perceived) between faculty and staff members. This has been an ongoing discussion between the two senates and the combined hope is to open a channel to deal with issues before they escalate. We will continue to update you on any progress on this front. Most recently we had a discussion with Ms. Liz Howard where she introduced the Local Knowledge Survey Project. It is hoped that through this survey that the project would have a deep pool of local folks with a varied knowledge of topics from which they could tap into to further the cause and hopefully help out with next years meeting of the Appalachian Studies Association to be hosted here on the Va Tech campus. We have also been lucky enough to pull Dr. Menah Pratt-Clarke, the new Vice Provost for Inclusion and Diversity and Vice President for Strategic Affairs, away from her very busy schedule and come to speak with the Staff Senate. Dr. Pratt-Clarke shared her vision of Inclusive VT with the senate and entertained a number of questions.

The Staff Senate has been busy with the McComas Leadership Seminar to be held on April 6th at the Inn at Virginia Tech. There has been a great deal of interest in the seminar this year and we filled the available slots within 24 hours. It promises to be a great event this year with such presenters and speakers as Dr. Menah Pratt-Clark, Dr. Scott Geller, Ms. Yohna Chambers and our very own Frank Beamer. The keynote this year will be delivered by Charles Phlegar, the Vice President for Advancement.

On a closing note, the staff would like to express its gratitude to the administration and beyond for all the efforts that went into securing the significant amount of financial support and goodwill bestowed upon Virginia Tech by the General Assembly. We are pleased that after several recessions there is an uptick in the funding coming to the university. As one would expect, the staff are excited about the three percent raise that goes into effect in November.

As always, I truly appreciate the opportunity to speak to the Board on behalf of the staff of Virginia Tech and welcome any questions or comments that you may have.

Respectfully submitted,
Dan Cook
President, Staff Senate