

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY
STAFF SENATE
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
THURSDAY, MAY 21, 1992
ROOM 102 - PHASE IV - VETERINARY MEDICINE

SENATORS PRESENT: Carolyn Alls, Clara Cox, Patrick Donohoe, Kathy Eschenmann, Spencer Foster, Jane Harrison, Barbara Hise, Diane Kaufman, Eileen Keeney, Sherilyn McConnell, Margie Murray, Pamela Orcutt, Rocky Price, Bill Ranck, Peggy Rasnick, Widget Shannon, Buddy Shaver, Sonja Stone, Charlie Stott, Keith Tignor, Pat Worrell

ALTERNATES IN ATTENDANCE: Janet Bryant for Janis Brown, Betty Greene for Pat Ballard, Lynne Schaefermeyer for Julie Hancock, Bruce Harper for Fred Phillips, Wyatt Sasser, Dean Miller for Deb Williams

GUESTS: Margie Lawrence - Division of Student Affairs, Marge Dellars - Health & Safety, Tracey Bowers - Research & Graduate Studies, Wanda Garrison and Bill Aliff - CSAC, Richard Lovegrove - SPECTRUM, Greg Ritter -Employee Relations

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:35 p.m. by President McConnell, who welcomed guests, liaisons, Senators, and alternates.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

President McConnell announced there had been numerous conflicts trying to establish the CSAC/Staff Senate reception for this date and the decision had been made to postpone it until late August or early September. No response has been received from the Department of Personnel and Training regarding the resolution sent forward from the Staff Senate. An employee advisory committee on health care has been set up, with Minnis Ridenour serving from Virginia Tech along with other state employees from other various locations.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the April 16, 1992, Staff Senate meeting were approved with the addition of Marge Dellars to the list of guests present and Senator Alls deleted as having asked two questions on page 4.

SENATE COMMITTEE REPORTS

- POLICIES AND ISSUES--Senator Stott, chair, reported that the committee met April 30, 1992, with the discussion revolving around the new health care plan. He said that most of the university seems to be aware of all that is transpiring.
- POLICIES AND ISSUES/STAFF ASSOCIATIONS--Senator Murray, chair, reported the committee met April 29, 1992, and was working with

area associations in the process of electing officers and ratifying their constitutions and by-laws. She questioned whether information from the Staff Senate meetings is filtered to these associations and whether the Senators believe some communication problems exist. Senator Murray suggested that the minutes of the Senate meetings be distributed approximately one week after the meeting. Senator Cox noted that a suggestion by Senate Alternate Harper for the minutes to be included on INFO GOVERN in draft form before their approval by the Senate had been approved by the Senate Executive Committee. Senator Murray also reported that Greg Ritter and Spencer Foster attended the last Executive Committee meeting to request input from staff on how associations can become more involved in decision-making processes and the benefits to administrators from such involvement. Greg Ritter plans to use the information in presentations to deans and vice presidents.

- COMMUNICATIONS--Senator Cox, chair, reported that the committee met on April 29, 1992, and compiled a list of suggested issues that President McComas could address when he speaks to the staff on June 3. The list was submitted to President McConnell. The committee has contacted Ann Spencer about campus communications problems and has invited her to its June 3 meeting to discuss the issue. The committee still needs to compile a list of Senators with their telephone numbers and computer IDs for the back of the letter to new employees. Once that task is completed, the letter will go to Personnel Services. The committee's SPECTRUM article on GTA parking in faculty/staff lots has been delegated to Senator Foster. The article will include the pros and cons of the issue. Senator Cox also reported on highlights of the May 6, 1992, CSAC meeting: Bill Aliff, chair of Policies and Issues, advised Staff Senate to form an oversight committee to deal with health and safety issues.
 - o Ann Spencer announced that Personnel Services is developing a formal program to orient faculty, staff, and students to university governance, with implementation anticipated in the fall.
 - o Charlie Stott reported that the governor will establish an advisory committee on the Key Advantage health care plan.
 - o CSAC is forwarding issues it considers important to Staff Senate. The meeting was the final one for CSAC.
- CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS--Senator Tignor, chair, reported that the University Council approved the Staff Senate Constitution and By-Laws at the second reading. The documents will be presented to the Board of Visitors in August.
- ELECTIONS AND NOMINATIONS--President McConnell reported for Senator Phillips, chair, that the committee had not met.

OLD BUSINESS

Senator Cox reported that the Educational Aid Task Force met on April 22, 1992, and made the following recommendations:

- To leave the decision to supervisors on whether to limit waivers to courses that are directly job-related or required for the degree a person is pursuing.

- That departments can make exceptions to the 90-day waiting period based on special circumstances.
- To turn over to the Personnel Advisory Committee the decision on whether to pursue reciprocal waiver agreements with other state colleges and universities.

Senator Cox reminded Senators that the university is confined in its educational aid policy by the state policy. Employees should not consider educational aid a benefit since it is not available to everyone. The task force did not recommend aid for wage employees because the university could not justify the expense since these employees are considered temporary and the state requires that an employee be expected to work long enough for the employer to recoup the benefits of educational aid.

Senator Stott gave a BC/BS update. He said the State Department of Personnel and Training has made some changes to the Key Advantage health care plan to make the policy more acceptable to doctors. BC/BS and DPT personnel, state officials, and area legislators will answer questions of state employees during a May 22 meeting in Roanoke, Va., and vans are available for transportation to the meeting. Republican leadership in the state requested the health care plan be postponed until next year. The next veto session on May 27th may not convene, but a retreat has been scheduled to discuss this issue. DPT officials involved with the health care plan are tentatively planning to meet with state employees in the New River Valley. Employees should check with their respective physicians to see if they are participating. Employees should not rely on information in the sourcebook. According to Benefits, if an employee's primary care physician has too many patients, the employee could be switched to another physician. The enrollment period is in May; however, the PCP does not have to be designated until August. A new list of doctors will be issued within a few days. Once DPT feels enough doctors have signed the contract, employees will be required to select a PCP from among doctors who freely joined the program rather than doctors selected without their consent.

NEW BUSINESS-

Senator Rasnick said she thought faculty/staff parking for graduate teaching assistants was a closed issue. Senator Cox said a source told her that a request for the GTA parking will be carried to a committee other than the Parking Committee, which had denied the request earlier. Vice-President Orcutt said two groups deal with parking and transportation: Parking Services and an administrative group. She said the Senate needs to stay on top of this issue and voice staff concerns. Senator Cox agreed to ask the secretary of the Parking Committee if she has any more details. Senator Rasnick noted that if Virginia Tech truly has shared governance, staff should be represented on these committees. Vice-President Orcutt said some committees have been removed from the governance structure yet continue to function. Senate Alternate Harper explained that the administrative function and the governance function are two separate systems with no inter-connecting communication link. He said they should all be listed in the President's office but that trying to find out who is responsible for them is nearly impossible. Senator Ranck cited an example of three roads on campus having new names one day

without any prior notice or input. Senator Murray suggested Greg Ritter might be able to use this example in his discussion with deans and vice presidents. Greg Ritter explained that all committees are like cheerleaders and fall under the jurisdiction of either the administration or government structure.

Senator Foster, who is writing an article on the GTA parking issue for SPECTRUM, requested a debate on the issue to provide him with material for the article. President McConnell agreed to hear three pros and three cons before she closed discussion. Vice-President Orcutt stated that graduate students are here for only three or four years while faculty and staff may be here for thirty years. She said parking is not adequate now and with the few benefits employees have, parking is a benefit. Senate Alternate Harper did not disagree GTAs could have better parking, but faculty and staff pay twice as much and subsidize student parking. He said that towing is never enforced. Senator Eschenmann said the Media Building never has enough parking during functions in the CEC and Squires. Senator Foster interjected that he intended to request in the SPECTRUM article that GTAs pay full parking fees if they are allowed to park in faculty/staff lots. He also said he would suggest that GTAs be given the first row or two in student lots as an alternative to parking in faculty/staff lots. Senator Ranck stated the university needs to attract graduate students and preferred parking could be one way to do so. Also, he said that if the GTAs are paying full parking fees, employees may see better parking facilities. Senate Alternate Schaefermeyer feels graduate students are teachers and should be allowed to use faculty/staff lots. Senator Donohoe said he sees GTAs as a vital part of the university. He said that parking is a serious problem here no matter what happens.

CLOSING

President McConnell took time to thank the Senators for helping to get the Staff Senate operating. She went on to say the Senate had accomplished everything it set out to do in the time frame it set and commended Senators for the job they had done. She announced that she will be on vacation in June and Vice-President Orcutt will chair the June meeting.

Barbara Hise
Secretary