

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY
STAFF SENATE

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
THURSDAY, AUGUST 20, 1992
OOM 102 - PHASE IV - VETERINARY MEDICINE

SENATORS PRESENT: Bill Aliff, Lisa Barroso, Larry Blankenship, Freda Blecher, Janet Bryant, Clara Cox, Marge Dellers, Patrick Donohoe, Kathy Eschenmann, Spencer Foster, Betty Greene, Julie Hancock, Linda Haney, Jane Harrison, Barbara Hise, Diane Kaufman, Eileen Keeney, Margie Lawrence, Don Massie, Sherilyn McConnell, Bhaba Misra, Margie Murray, Diane Patty, Carlile Price, Peggy Rasnick, Kathy Reynolds, Widget Shannon, Charlie Stott, Deb Williams

ALTERNATES IN ATTENDANCE: Valerie Myers for Pat Ballard, Wyatt Sasser for Pat Worrell

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:35 p.m. by President McConnell, who welcomed senators and alternates. There were 29 Senators and two acting Alternates in attendance, which constituted a quorum.

ANNOUNCEMENTS President McConnell announced that two guest speakers had been added to the agenda to speak prior to New Business. They are Richard Alvarez and Ralph Byers.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the July 16, 1992, Staff Senate meeting were approved with one correction: Senator Aliff was present.

SENATE COMMITTEE REPORTS

* POLICIES AND ISSUES--President McConnell for Senator Murray, chair, reported the committee had not met.

* COMMUNICATIONS--Senator Cox, chair, reported that all Staff Senators would be added to the Dean's, Director's and Department Head's mailing list. The committee is soliciting help in identifying unofficial mailing lists on campus to forward to Ann Spencer. Alternate Senator Myers has begun distributing SPECTRUM to outlying areas of the campus. President McConnell and Senator Aliff have been approached about writing articles for SPECTRUM's shared governance column. An article is being developed for the column on opening up Staff Senate committees to staff who are not Senators. Senator Cox also reported that the Communications Committee is looking into the impact of the Americans with Disabilities Act on campus communications.

* LONG RANGE BUDGET AND PLANNING--President McConnell for Senator Ballard, chair, reported the committee had not met.

* ELECTIONS AND NOMINATIONS--President McConnell for Senator Phillips, chair, stated this committee had no report for this month.

OLD BUSINESS

Senator Stott gave a Key Advantage update. Dr. Lucian Robinson has agreed to join the list of providers, and a number of other doctors are still signing up. A new list of doctors and handbooks should be out before October 1. There are many

questions as to how one deals with participating hospitals whose radiology/pathology/emergency rooms are non-participating. The Faculty and Staff Task Force, which is monitoring the Key Advantage plan, will hold its initial meeting August 24, 1992. Senator Stott asked that any questions or notes about the health care plan be forwarded to Senators Eschenmann, Rasnick, or Stott. No major changes have been made in Key Advantage in the past month. Senator Cox stated Dr. Dyer was omitted from the updated list but is participating. State employees should be sure the doctor they select as a primary care physician is accepting new patients. The deadline is August 31 to submit the PCP form to Benefits. Senator Barroso said everyone should be careful how they use the term "PCP," since it is also used for the the drug Angeldust. Senator Williams stated that everyone should be aware that follow-up care is no longer covered as part of emergency room care. She said that each follow-up trip will cost \$30 in out-of-pocket expenses.

Senator Cox announced that the Educational Aid Policy Task Force met on July 28, 1992, to finalize its report, which went to the Personnel Advisory Committee today. At the meeting the task force proposed that part-time salaried employees should work at least 20 hours a week to qualify for educational aid, that employees on educational leave should serve their repayment period at Virginia Tech, that the PAC determine whether the service repayment period for educational leave be restricted to service in the department sponsoring the leave, and that the PAC determine whether the maximum number of hours for waiver/reimbursement should be extended from nine to 12 per academic year by considering the two summer sessions as two semesters rather than one. Senator Cox said she learned from Dennis Eavey, who chaired the task force and presented the report to the PAC, that the committee tabled acceptance of expanding the number of hours from nine to 12 for which tuition waivers would be available. The committee wanted first to determine the extra cost to the university of giving tuition waivers for six hours per year to part-time salaried employees who work at least 20 hours per week. The PAC also decided to have the repayment period limited to service at Virginia Tech rather than to a particular department or unit. The PAC endorsed all other recommendations of the task force. The proposed educational aid policy changes will now go before the appropriate commissions. Senator Cox also reported that the Employees Educational Assistance Act has passed the House of Representatives and is now in the Senate. Employees presently are taxed on 100 percent of any educational benefits; the proposed legislation would give each employee an exemption from paying taxes on up to \$5,250 in educational aid.

President McConnell introduced Richard Alvarez, Director of Public Health, Safety, and Transportation, who provided an update on current parking lot construction. Mr. Alvarez stated that most of the activity with parking lots has been delayed due to the usual bureaucratic hoops. The Litton-Reaves large commuter lot should be completely finished by Saturday morning, providing 500 additional spaces for the university. One hundred spaces for faculty and staff will be added in the northeast corner behind Wallace. The Engel lot will be completed in time for the student move-in Saturday. This lot will provide 45 additional faculty and staff parking spaces. New road stripes have been completed on West Campus Drive to help ensure the safety of pedestrians crossing this road. Construction will begin in mid-October on the Price's Fork Road B-Lot. Mr. Alvarez went on to explain the rationale behind the parking meters. They were installed to provide "premium parking" at an extra cost. Many times, students or visitors need a space for a short time. Before the meters were added, people were parking on the yellow curbs and leaving their flashers on. The 15-minute parking limit was impossible to enforce. They will monitor the metered spaces and remove any that are not being used. Parking Services feels that the metered parking provides an added service to the university. Mr. Alvarez asked that the staff bear with them during the Express Student Check-In in the Squires area next week since parking is critical and will be

a challenge for everyone using the area. Parking Services is committed to making adjustments to improve the situation for next year. Students will be treated with leniency during the first few days of school. Enforcement officials will be strict with faculty and staff who park illegally. Senator Barroso reminded Senators that parking officers receive tremendous verbal abuse for doing their job.

President McConnell introduced Ralph Byers, Director of Governmental Relations and Special Activities. Mr. Byers spoke on the upcoming bond issue. He informed Senators that three bond issues will be on the ballot on November 3, including one for higher education. Virginia Tech would benefit from the passage of this bond, which would provide funding for buildings, renovations, and infrastructure improvements. It is important that employees support the bond issue because of the general climate in the state at this time. Mr. Byers also noted that there will be an estimated 70,000 new students by the end of the century; the university is currently overcrowded. The local economy is not good; the work on campus funded by the bond issue could provide work for local people and businesses. Interest rates are currently low. Radford University and New River Community College also would receive funding for projects if this bond referendum passes. The university is competing with other areas for state monies. If this bond should be voted down, the legislators will not be concerned about helping higher education. If the Staff Senate should decide to support this cause, Mr. Byers would be happy to work with it. The floor was opened for questions. Senator Shannon asked who pays for the bonds. The provision is already there for the next biennium as bonds get started. The bonds would constitute 1 percent of the general fund. Senator Stott asked how much is already appropriated. Currently, \$25 million is appropriated; this figure would increase to \$60 million if the referendum is approved. A general obligation debt cannot use bonds for programs or operating expenses, only capital outlay. Alternate Senator Sasser asked if any money was appropriated for maintenance of these new buildings. Mr. Byers indicated maintenance money is not attached to this bond. Senator Donohoe asked if there were any ties with the new football stadium in Arlington. There is no connection between this bond and the stadium. Senator Kaufman asked when should staff begin to push this issue. The September 3 issue of SPECTRUM will include information about the bond issue, and a media blitz is scheduled for October 1. Mr. Byers expressed concern that if publicity begins too soon, people will become tired of the issue. He asked the Senators to do whatever they can to stimulate positive thoughts. Senator Williams suggested they appeal to the items that affect us directly, e.g., work space, instruction space. Mr. Byers said he had mostly allowed the Student Government to handle that area. Senator Haney suggested making all pleas simple and to the point. Mr. Byers said all suggestions were welcome and to remember we cannot tell people they should vote for the bond. He asked that inquiries and suggestions be sent to him at BYERSR on VM1.

NEW BUSINESS

OTHER BUSINESS President McConnell announced the new committee assignments. A list will be included in Senators' packets. Senator Williams shared concern over committees not being able to meet during the summer until the new assignments are made. President McConnell stated that committees should have met with those senators who were re-elected. Senator Murray said there are many administrative changes currently going on and some associations may be starting all over. This is one of the first orders of business for her committee. Senator Sasser suggested we develop some written guidelines since these changes do happen frequently.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Barbara Hise
Secretary

