

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY
STAFF SENATE

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 1993
ROOM 102 - PHASE II - VETERINARY MEDICINE

SENATORS PRESENT: Pat Ballard, Joyce Bohr, Clara Cox, Patrick Donohoe, Kathy Eschenmann, Betty Greene, Jane Harrison, Diane Kaufman, Margie Lawrence, Don Massie, Sherilyn McConnell, Margie Murray, Diane Patty, Fred Phillips, Carlile Price, Rocky Price, Bill Ranck, Peggy Rasnick, Widget Shannon, Buddy Shaver, Barbara Hise Shelor, Sonja Stone, Charlie Stott, Sherri Turner, Deb Williams

ALTERNATES IN ATTENDANCE: Terry Lawrence for Bhaba Misra

CALL TO ORDER

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

President McConnell made several announcements:

-Senator Donohoe will be serving on the building subcommittee for the Athletic/Recreational Sports Area Master Plan.

-Bill Ellenbogen was contacted in the fall concerning complaints that the Ride Home of Va, Inc. busses were blocking cars in spaces in the Derring Hall parking lot. In response to the complaints, Ride Home will be moving the location of its loading zone to an area immediately behind Squires along the eastbound lane of the Mall (going towards Main Street). A Blacksburg Transit loading zone is located there, and the BT has agreed to share the existing space.

-The Staff Senate-sponsored workshop on making presentations was beneficial for those who attended, and the Senate hopes to sponsor at least one a year for all new senators.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the November 19 and December 17, 1992, Staff Senate meetings were approved. The minutes of the January 21, 1993, meeting were approved with the following corrections: Lola Yelverton is an alternate instead of a senator, and Sherrie Turner was present.

SENATE COMMITTEE REPORTS

*COMMUNICATIONS--Senator Cox, chair, reported the committee did not meet in January. At its February meeting, the committee continued its discussion on establishing a team of literacy volunteers on campus to assist illiterate employees with forms. The committee will be working with Personnel Services in pursuing the project. The committee also has received an article on health and safety from Senator Aliff that will be considered for the shared governance column in SPECTRUM.

*ELECTIONS AND NOMINATIONS--Senator Phillips, chair, reported the committee reviewed the election procedure at its February meeting. There will be seven vacancies on committees, councils, and commissions from one-year terms ending. Senator Phillips encouraged senators to nominate people who are willing to serve and to notify them prior to nomination. Individuals should be aware they can submit their own name. There will be four vacant positions on the Commission on Classified Staff Affairs; one position will be that of a non-senator. One seat will be open on University Council and two on the Advisory Council on Human Rights and Social Responsibility; one position will be that of a non-senator.

*LONG RANGE BUDGET AND PLANNING--Senator Ballard, chair, reported the committee met with Kathy Johnston and should have a report within two weeks.

*POLICIES AND ISSUES--Senator Murray, chair, reported officers of the staff associations had met and named the group the Council of Staff Association Officers. The council will meet the first Thursday of each month. Currently it is collecting articles for SPECTRUM.

Policies and Issues was asked to check on bone marrow transplants as specified in House Bill #549, which was carried over until 1993. No legislation is being discussed to mandate bone marrow transplants for coverage. Senator Murray said the committee has been talking with Doug Martin in Employee Benefits to offer catastrophic coverage to interested employees.

It has been confirmed there is a Sick Leave Bank that involves leave sharing. It basically operates under the concept of direct share, which allows employees to donate their annual leave to specific individual. Currently there are many concerns regarding implementation, and Personnel Services is having trouble deciding how to administer the program. One of the difficulties is a confidentiality problem on how to identify people in need.

Policies and Issues received a note regarding inability to access funds through ATMs on payday. It was decided people experiencing this problem should contact their bank directly. If several Tech employees are experiencing problems, they should present a unified front with their complaint.

UNIVERSITY COUNCIL, COMMISSIONS, COMMITTEE REPORTS

*UNIVERSITY COUNCIL--Senator Cox reported the council had approved minutes of commission meetings and had had a second reading of a new faculty grievance procedure, which needs some additional work.

*HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY--Senator Eschenmann reported the council is scheduled to meet on Monday.

*STRATEGIC BUDGETING AND PLANNING--President McConnell announced the Committee was going over Phase II of the Budget Plan. No allocations have

been made at this time.

*COMMISSION ON CLASSIFIED STAFF AFFAIRS--Vice President Stott deferred his report until the New Business portion of the meeting.

*COMMISSION ON GRADUATE STUDIES AND POLICIES--Senator Patty, reporting for Senator Haney, told senators to note the handout on the front table containing a resolution on graduate student parking privileges.

*COMMISSION ON RESEARCH--Senator Rasnick reported the minutes were available on the front table; nothing in the meeting pertained to staff.

*COMMISSION ON UNIVERSITY SUPPORT--Senator Donohoe stated that the meeting included discussion of who at the university level actually decides certain issues. The Board of Visitors has to decide on many things. Graduate student parking will probably go to the Board. The electronic village was discussed. Tom Head was a guest speaker who reported on a one-week PC training program for faculty.

*EMPLOYEE BENEFITS COMMITTEE--Senator Massie reported for Steve Dehart that the minutes for the meeting would be forwarded to senators. Discussion topics included a BC/BS update, Leave Sharing Program, and CommonHealth.

*EO/AA COMMITTEE--President McConnell stated the minutes were available on the front table.

*PARKING AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE--Senator Shannon stated the committee had met, with approximately forty graduate students attending as guests. The graduate student member of the parking committee made a motion that requested graduate students on assistantship be allowed to purchase faculty/staff parking permits. After much discussion the motion failed by a vote of 11 to 1. Another motion was put forward that requested the parking committee's support of the theory that graduate students on assistantship should be entitled to faculty/staff parking status. The motion received no second and did not come to a vote. Senator Shannon indicated that she did not believe that graduate student parking was a dead issue. Senator Eschenmann asked for verification of a rumor that a new employee in the office of the Vice President of Student Affairs was hired to work solely in support of the graduate student parking issue. Senator Cox made a motion that senate write an open letter to SPECTRUM concerning this employment. The motion failed.

*PRESIDENT'S AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE--Senator Phillips stated the committee had completed its selection and candidates would be announced in the Founder's Day edition of SPECTRUM.

*SCHEDULING AND REGISTRATION COMMITTEE--Senator Murray reported DPT was charged with studying an Employee of the Year Award. The state is realizing it has morale problems. Vice President Stott asked if this study would be completed without asking for staff input.

*FACULTY SENATE--Senator Rasnick reported that Governor Wilder has requested a 2 percent raise for faculty and staff. The House of Representatives recommends a two to three step increase plus the 2 percent raise. The Senate is recommending 3 percent for staff and a one-half step increase.

OLD BUSINESS

Senator Greene reported the senate contributed a total of \$252 for the Christmas project.

Senator Shannon reported that Senator Aliff agreed to contact Delegate Boucher on the legal aspects of opening confidential mail. She had not heard from Senator Aliff at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

Vice President Stott reported there was no hard and fast way to enforce openness of communications even if a policy were adopted. He suggested the senate gather ideas and alternatives through the Council of Staff Association Officers. He said the senate would like to create a smooth flow of communication, an environment that shares goals and respects the staff's right to know. The Commission on Classified Staff Affairs can hold an open forum, but the forum would need to be well policed so it did not become a gripe session. Senators should send suggestions for the open forum to John Ashby at SPECTRUM on VM2, or Pam Orcutt at CMVPSO on VM2 by March 19th. The faculty will be surveyed as well. This information will be given to the commission.

President McConnell asked if the Senate would want to adopt an inclement weather policy due to the problems incurred last month. Senator Donohoe suggested the senate follow school closings. Senator Williams suggested the decision be left to the president with notification via profs. President McConnell suggested a time frame be decided. Since only two senators are without mainframe access, the motion was made, seconded, and passed that President McConnell notify senators via profs by 4 p.m. on the day of the meetings if the meeting is to be cancelled.

OTHER

Senator Shannon asked if anyone has heard about an increase in the cost of the Blue Cross/Blue Shield Health Insurance. Senator Eschenmann said Doug Martin from Benefits had informed her there would be a price increase in July.

Senator Shannon brought up the issue of the lack of publicity about recent rapes around campus. The question was raised if more publicity was needed in order to protect ourselves. President McConnell reminded senators to use the Escort Service. Senator Williams said there has been an increase in crime overall on campus. She also added the Escort Service is fast and efficient.

Senator Cox said the Development and University Relations Staff Association has suggested that staff associations sponsor open houses for the staff appreciation day.

Vice President Stott stated DPT is hiring a consulting firm to address issues that have arisen with Key Advantage. Senator Williams asked who was absorbing the cost and why is DPT not able to sort it out. Senator Stott stated the Task Force could inquire how the firm is going to get its infor-

mation to ensure that the staff will be heard.

Senator Phillips said he thinks the staff will be very pleased with the package put together for staff appreciation.

Senator Stott asked if there were any formal safety training programs available. Senator Shelor responded the Health and Safety Department had just started some for new employees regarding asbestos, hazardous waste, and radioactive materials.

Senator Murray asked if others had read the injury report recently published. During the discussion that ensued, Senator Murray pointed out that many were illegitimate claims. President McConnell stated that we are encouraged to file a "report of injury" form no matter how small the injury may seem. If no accident/injury is reported, the employee has no recourse if problems occur later. Senator Williams said that many people lift boxes that are too heavy and that some people are allergic to carbonless paper. She said there should be training for staff.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Barbara Hise Shelor
Secretary