

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY  
STAFF SENATE

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING  
THURSDAY, APRIL 15, 1993  
ROOM 102 - PHASE II - VETERINARY MEDICINE

SENATORS PRESENT: Bill Aliff, Carolyn Alls, Pat Ballard, Joyce Bohr, Clara Cox, Marge Dellers, Betty Greene, Julie Hancock, Linda Haney, Jane Harrison, Eileen Keeney, Margie Lawrence, Don Massie, Sherry McConnell, Bhaba Misra, Diane Patty, Rocky Price, Peggy Rasnick, Kathy Reynolds, Wyatt Sasser, Buddy Shaver, Barbara Shelor, Charlie Stott, Tony Sutphin, Sherri Turner, Sarah Wheeler

ALTERNATES IN ATTENDANCE: Mary Ann Johnson for Kathy Eschenmann, Lisa Jansen for Charlie Gills, Joyce Smith for Carlile Price, Lola Yelverton for Widget Shannon, Lynne Schaefermeyer for Bill Ranck, Valerie Myers

GUESTS: Netta Eisler, SPECTRUM; Linda Woodard, Robin Ball, Kathy Worner, Janice Scarrette from Personnel Services; Shauna Bishop from University Relations

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 announced that the agenda would be reordered and that Shauna Bishop and Joyce Smith would discuss Staff Appreciation Day and then Linda Woodard would make a presentation on sexual harrassment.

Shauna Bishop stated the First Annual Staff Appreciation Day is scheduled for May 12, 1993, from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. All wage and salaried staff report to their regular place of work and will be excused to attend the events at mid-morning. The time may not be substituted for leave. All employees are encouraged to attend. The Drillfield will be the center of festivities, with two bands providing live entertainment. The picnic is scheduled 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. Bring lawn chairs, frizbees, etc. Two tours are scheduled. Since seating on the busses is limited, interested parties must register. Tickets are transferable for those unable to make the tour. Casual business clothing is encouraged. The day reflects appreciation for staff from the administration. Senators should poll their local organizations to learn how many will attend in an effort to assure adequate food. In case of rain the Squires' Ballroom will house the bands and food.

Alternate Schaefermeyer asked if the event would be held annually and if so she asked that another date be looked at because of the cleanup that must take place the week after students leave. Joyce Smith said she did anticipate this would be a yearly function and she would share comments with the

planning committee.

#### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the March 18, 1993, Staff Senate meeting were approved with the following corrections: Correct Ms. Spencers' title to Associate Vice President throughout the body of the article. There was some confusion about Senator Phillips' statement under the Parking/Transportation Committee report about parking "fines" supporting the bonds that pave the lots. Senator Phillips felt the statement was correct as reflected in the March 18 minutes but suggested checking with Parking Services. Parking fines and fees all go to the university, where Parking Services receives a portion of those monies for it's operating budget as well as funds for bike paths, lot improvements, signage, and other projects. Therefore the statement was correct as stated, just not all inclusive. Senator Greene asked that the humor regarding Senator Cox being difficult be removed.

President McConnell introduced Linda Woodard, Robin Ball, Janet Scarrette, and Kathy Worner from Personnel Services, who spoke on sexual harrassment on campus.

Ms. Woodard informed the group there are many questions concerning what actually constitutes sexual harrassment. Handouts were distributed to all senators. Ms. Woodard said the military is conducting one of the strongest training programs in the country. Sexual harrassment poses some serious issues for industries and organizations. It has an impact on morale and productivity; not only is it unethical but it has serious legal risks as well. Sexual harrassment is any comment or gesture that is unwelcome and not returned. The fact it takes place in the work environment makes it an organizational issue. The employee has a responsibility to let the offender know in subtle instances. In gross instances the employee has less of a responsibility. There is generally only a question in subtle cases. Senator Sutphin asked about actions if a co-worker is being harrassed by another. Ms. Ball responded there have been several questions about those instances. The victim should express their offense, and yes, it is harrassment. If you think sexual harrassment is occurring, you may call the Equal Opportunity Office and make an informal complaint or ask questions. When an issue is brought to the attention of the university, it must act, sometimes by simply helping the employee address the problem themselves. Help is sometimes in the form of explaining how to inform the offender that his/her actions are offensive. Often, employees are coached on how to deal with harrassment to prevent formal complaints. Personnel Services will stay in touch to make sure the problem has improved. If it does not, Personnel Services will talk to the supervisor for the employee.

Senator Williams asked if this was all done outside the grievance procedure. Ms. Ball said yes, formal complaints go to the Equal Employment Office. In 1992 there were two formal and two informal complaints. Personnel Services received four or five informal questions from staff.

Ms. Woodard said the low numbers may indicate employees feel too uncomfortable to check avenues available to them, or some supervisors may have become educated enough on the subject to handle it themselves. Senator Ballard asked if informal complaints are kept confidential. The answer was yes, but at a certain point complaints must become formal to ascertain all

the facts. Most of the time Personnel Services gives advice on how best to handle the situation. Joking may be a departmental problem and might be handled by handouts or a talk to the whole department. The individual is asked what is best to resolve these types of problems and who they would be most comfortable talking with.

Senator Ballard said she imagined employees would find the formal route very tough when it came time to sign their name on the dotted line. The group added it felt that was why most are handled informally and noted disappointment that people tolerate sexual harrasment because the formal complaint process is painful. Senator Williams added the formal complaint is important because the defendant should have a right to face the accuser; there are times when charges are false. Ms. Woodard stated the rights of the accused are protected with the formal complaint. Also, discipline actions are spelled out carefully. President McConnell asked if a mechanism or red flag notes excessive turnover under one supervisor. Ms. Ball added there is no systematic way and even the exit review fails to address this information. Personnel Services hopes to have a mechanism in place with the new automated system being developed. Many employees take the safe route and do not make any accusations. President McConnell asked if an individual will not come forward, can someone else. Ms. Ball suggested you offer to go with them to Personnel Services. If you found out by overhearing, it is still their responsibility to come forward. Once it is known, the individual has an obligation to notify the university. Many people just leave their jobs. Personnel Services has several videos available to offer role models.

Senator Sasser asked if supervisors who are handling the problem among their employees should notify Personnel Services about instances. There is no responsibility for supervisors to notify the department about a problem that has been dealt with successfully. Personnel Services would like to know the scope of the problem and to make sure the action taken is consistent. It would be beneficial to have a file to identify repeated patterns.

A senator posed the question what should be done if sexual harrasment is only suspected. Ms. Woodard suggested talking to the recipient about the abuse and calling Ms. Ball or Ms. Scarrette. It is also possible to be harrassed by students or customers. Supervisors have a responsibility to see that this does not happen. Senator Sasser asked if a couple involved in a relationship break up, causing an emotional situation, does this constitute harrasment. Ms. Woodard answered that sexual harrasment is inappropriate even if there has been a prior relationship. If it hinders their job, it is harrasment. The policy is listed on the mainframe system. Ms. Woodard said to call her office with additional questions. She recommended a book, SEXUAL HARRASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE, by Susan Webb.

#### SENATE COMMITTEE REPORTS

\*COMMUNICATIONS--Senator Cox, chair, reported the committee met with Ms. Woodard and others from Personnel Services to discuss the formation of a team of literacy volunteers. The decision was made to work toward better communications on campus to make employees aware of available assistance in Personnel Services with completing forms. She said an attempt would be made by Personnel Services to emphasize the need to share information. Personnel Services also will notify Staff Senate when paperwork is required from staff so the senators can take the information back to their staff as-

sociations.

\*ELECTIONS AND NOMINATIONS--Senator Greene reported for Senator Phillips, chair, that the committee recently met and discussed the proposed amendment to the Staff Senate Constitution about the replacement of senators on university councils, commissions, and committees in mid-year. Senator Rasnick will present the resolution for second reading at Senate meeting.

Senator Patty will conduct the nominations procedure for vacancies on university council, commissions, and committees. The committee will take names from the recently created data base and will accept nominations from the floor at Senate meeting. The committee discussed the importance of making sure senators had talked with nominees prior to placing names in nomination, and that nominees would need to forward biographical information to the committee within one week of being nominated. The committee discussed the election procedure to be held at Senate meeting in May.

\*LONG RANGE BUDGET AND PLANNING--Senator Ballard, chair, reported that Assistant Provost Pat Hyer met recently with the committee and that Laurie Martinson will be the guest speaker at the next committee meeting.

\*POLICIES AND ISSUES--Senator Greene reported for Senator Murray, chair, that the committee recently met and discussed the inclement weather policy and the Phase II Report.

#### UNIVERSITY COUNCIL, COMMISSIONS, COMMITTEE REPORTS

\*UNIVERSITY COUNCIL--Senator Cox said the only issue pertinent to staff was a presentation by a graduate student leader calling for faculty/staff parking privileges for graduate students. She said the graduate student accused the Parking and Transportation Committee of being unwilling to work with students. Senator Cox suggested that receiving a "no" answer does not indicate unwillingness to work with students. She said President McComas will appoint a committee from University Council to study the issue.

\*ADVISORY COUNCIL-HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY --Senator Aliff reported the council had not met.

\*STRATEGIC BUDGETING AND PLANNING--President McConnell reported the committee discussed tuition, fees, salary increases, and promotions.

\*COMMISSION ON CLASSIFIED STAFF AFFAIRS--Vice President Stott announced the postponement of the communications forum until fall to allow more time for planning and to identify topics for discussion.

Vice President Stott said the commission has been discussing ways to recognize classified staff service to the university and the possibility of including a statement of service in performance evaluations to encourage staff participation in different kinds of direct service, not just participation in governance activities. He reported that there have been adverse evaluations because of participation in shared governance, which he said defeats the purpose of shared governance. The commission is working on a draft statement that could be included in performance evaluations plans to indicate that shared governance is an educational process. Supervisors would see up front that participation in shared governance is approved and

expected. The commission is discussing ways to recognize support staff who fill in while their staff participate in shared governance activities. The commission will seek voluntary units to implement the elements of the statement in performance descriptions on a trial basis for one year before considering any recommendations that become available on a university-wide basis.

\*COMMISSION ON FACULTY AFFAIRS--Alternate Smith announced that minutes of the March meeting were included in the mailing with the April Staff Senate meeting minutes.

\*COMMISSION ON GRADUATE STUDIES AND POLICIES--Senator Haney told senators there were no staff issues discussed at the last meeting. At the April meeting the committee will discuss discontinuance of Lexus/Nexus database on the mainframe. The library will contact users.

\*COMMISSION ON RESEARCH--Senator Rasnick told senators that minutes of several meetings were on the front table. She reported that Dr. Janet Johnson, chair of the Intellectual Properties Committee, spoke to the commission at the April meeting and reported that the IPC reviewed 32 disclosures, 28 were referred to CIT and 3 were referred to sponsors, one has been retained by VTIP. Dwight Shelton of the Controller's Office discussed indirect costs and audits.

\*COMMISSION ON UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES AND POLICIES and SCHEDULING AND REGISTRATION COMMITTEE--Senator Wheeler reported that the Commission for Undergraduate Studies appointed a committee to realign the committees reporting to CUS. Senator Wheeler distributed copies of the Commission on Undergraduate Studies report for 1992-93.

Senator Wheeler distributed a copy of the Scheduling and Registration Committee report of 1992-93 and announced that the calendar for 1994-95 cleared. This committee will become defunct in the fall due to restructuring of committees that report to the Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies.

\*COMMISSION ON UNIVERSITY SUPPORT--Senator Sasser stated that the commission will send back to Staff Senate the issue of the mail confidentiality policy. Staff Senate recently forwarded the issue to the commission and the commission wants clarification on several questions to determine if this is a major problem or if it is an isolated problem. The commission elected it's chair for next year. The next meeting will be in the fall.

\*EO/AA COMMITTEE--President McConnell reported that the committee had not met.

\*PARKING AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE--Senator Ballard announced that copies of the March meeting minutes were on the front table. She reported that there will be different parking decals next year, and the regulations book will be finalized and distributed in the near future. The committee will discuss the graduate parking issue at the next meeting.

\*VIRGINIA TECH INTELLECTUAL PROPERTIES COMMITTEE-- Senator Sasser announced that patents and new technology are confidential and that members of the committee are not allowed to discuss business conducted at the meetings. Senator Sasser was asked to talk with the chair of the committee to determine if any information can be made public and reported to senators.

FACULTY SENATE LIAISON--Senator Rasnick reported that Faculty Senate recently held elections for vacancies on university councils, commissions, and committees.

#### OLD BUSINESS

\*ELECTIONS AND NOMINATIONS--Senator Patty distributed a list of classified staff vacancies on university councils, commissions, and committees and stated that the Elections and Nominations Committee plans to take names from the recently created data base and would also accept nominations from Senate floor. She reminded senators that nominations would be accepted only if a nominee has agreed in advance to be nominated. She also stated that senators making nominations should ask nominees to forward a brief biographical statement to include tenure at Virginia Tech and participation in classified staff activities. Nominations will be accepted through Friday, April 22, and senators were instructed to forward nominations and the biographical statements to Senator Patty at STAFF3@VM1.

Senator Patty reminded senators that the document mailed to local associations last fall by the Elections and Nominations Committee provided a description of all councils, commissions, and committees. She stated that the mailout secured about 56 names of staff interested in serving on councils, commissions, and committees.

In preparation for nominations for Staff Senate officers, the current Senate officers gave a brief description of their responsibilities as officers.

Nominations from the floor for Senate officers for next year were taken. Betty Greene was nominated for Parliamentarian, Valerie Myers was nominated for Secretary, Charlie Stott was nominated for Vice President, and Sheri McConnell was nominated for President.

Nominations were then taken from the floor for vacancies on 14 councils, commissions, and committees.

Senator Patty stated that the Elections and Nominations Committee will finalize the ballot, and elections will be held at the May Senate meeting.

\*RESOLUTION SECOND READING--Senator Rasnick of the Elections and Nominations Committee asked for discussion on the resolution, which was presented in March. The resolution provides for an amendment to the Staff Senate Constitution to allow a senator to remain on a university council, commission, or committee in the event the senator transfers to another local association.

After much discussion, President McConnell asked Vice President Stott to contact Larry Moore to determine the policy for replacing a senator in the event of a transfer to another local association. Senators agreed that the resolution should be discussed again in May after Vice President Stott has an opportunity to talk with Dr. Moore.

#### NEW BUSINESS

\*INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY--Vice President Stott read a statement expressing appreciation for staff who worked during the March blizzard.

There was much discussion about application of the university's leave policy to Tuesday, March 16. Several senators expressed their local associations' concerns about the "misapplication" of the leave policy for March 16. The consensus among senators was that the release of information on how March 16 would be handled on leave reports was ill timed because classified staff had to wait until the last minute to complete monthly leave reports. Senators in general felt that this was a controversial issue among classified staff, and they discussed several ideas for expressing staff concern about use of leave for March 16. Due to a lack of quorum, no motions were completed.

\*PHASE II DISCUSSION--President McConnell announced that the discussion which was to be led by Senator Murray would be postponed due to Senator Murray's absence.

#### OTHER BUSINESS

Senator Cox distributed a copy of a resolution concerning participation in governance by professional and administrative faculty. She asked Staff Senate to go on record of supporting representation of administrative and professional faculty on university councils, commissions, and committees and the creation of a Commission on Administrative and Professional Faculty Affairs. Due to lack of quorum, the motion was not finalized.

Senator Misra asked that the floor be re-opened for additional discussion of the inclement weather policy. Due to lack of quorum, a motion to re-open the discussion failed. In exercising executive power, President McConnell stated that Senate Executive Board will write the administration