

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY
STAFF SENATE

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
THURSDAY, MAY 20, 1993
ROOM 102 - PHASE II - VETERINARY MEDICINE

SENATORS PRESENT: Bill Aliff, Pat Ballard, Joyce Bohr, Janet Bryant, Clara Cox, Marge Dellers, Patrick Donohoe, Diane Kaufman, Don Massie, Sherri McConnell, Margie Murray, Diane Patty, Fred Phillips, Carlile Price, Peggy Rasnick, Lynne Schaefermeyer, Widget Shannon, Barbara Shelor, Chuck Shorter, Charlie Stott, Tony Sutphin, Sherri Turner, Deb Williams

ALTERNATES IN ATTENDANCE: Mary Ann Johnson for Kathy Eschenmann, Dave Carper for Spencer Foster, Nancy Looney for Charlie Gills, Agnes Chandler for Jane Harrison, Judy Davis for Kathy Reynolds, Pat Worrell for Wyatt Sasser, Joann Miller for Sonja Stone, Valerie Myers

GUESTS: Netta Eisler, SPECTRUM; Roy Jones, Faculty Senate Liason; Jamie Evans

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:40 p.m. by President McConnell, who welcomed senators, alternates, and guests. She postponed announcements until the end of the meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the April 15, 1993, Staff Senate meeting were approved with the following corrections: Senator Williams was present. Peggy Rasnick brought a guest, Sarah Richardson from the Virginia Water Resources Research Center and co-chair of Sponsored Programs.

President McConnell stated the first order of business was to conduct Staff Senate elections. Senator Phillips distributed biographical information on all nominees for commissions, committees, and councils. Ballots were distributed, and Senator Phillips explained how to proceed. A list of classified staff nominations will be forwarded to the President's Office for university councils and commissions. Motion was made to approve the list. Motion carried. Voting proceeded for Staff Senate officers and senate representatives on councils, commissions, and committees.

President McConnell introduced Dr. James Wolfe, Assistant Vice-Provost for Academic Affairs, to speak about the Enrollment Services project and about TQM. The basic project is to establish a new division called Enrollment Services. The purpose is to provide better services to students. Studies have assessed functions of various offices to see where improvements are needed. Enrollment at the university means a number of things to different people: sufficient financial aid, sufficient guidance in order to graduate, for example. Admissions and financial aid are separate departments

even though they are under one division. The Registrar's Office is a key player in the scheme of student services. Currently these departments are vertically aligned in the organization. Student Accounts is responsible for billing and collecting money from students. Student Systems is responsible for putting together computer systems and maintenance for these systems. Sometimes support is enlisted from one department to another, although such interaction does not operate as smoothly as it could. One purpose of combining the departments into one is to find a common denominator to increase support between departments; some departments do not have a sufficient number of employees during their busy times, but sufficient numbers cannot be employed because of the overwhelming cost. The pressure has most noticeably increased in Financial Aid because of a greater need from the students, which can affect other units. When it became obvious this was a problem, especially in Financial Aid, the Systems Analysis and Services group was asked to examine the organization. The study they provided focused on Financial Aid, but it also included Admissions, Registrar, and Student Systems. Financial Aid was benchmarked in comparison with peer institutions. The results were conclusive that Virginia Tech is seriously understaffed in Financial Aid by 32 full-time employees. To bring Virginia Tech up to the average would cost \$750-875,000 in salary costs as well as \$150-275,000 in operating costs. This improvement would create a need for significant new space and system enhancements. How does the university provide better service in such a situation? Enrollment Services would combine several groups to offer many services, thereby condensing the management of the university and possibly making the group more functional. Technical things need to be done such as training and assessment. This is a relatively slow process. Cross-training among the affected units could alleviate some of the pressure on one department at certain times. The idea is to provide team-based management for the combined division, which would alleviate some of the administrative processes. Rather than a director, an administrative process team would make decisions, keep track of expenditures, etc.

Working on a committee to plan reorganization is difficult. The introduction of team-based management has caused many highs and lows. This organization is being done because of a dire need to fill employee gaps since money is not available to improve staffing under current budget problems. The end result is to provide better service to the students.

Senator Williams asked if Enrollment Services has a target date for this reorganization to take place. Dr. Wolfe said early 1995 but added that that date was conservative. AT & T has been involved in TQM for seven years. He said the hope is that everyone will learn to work smarter, not harder. This should actually be a good time for people to learn more, to make changes in their careers without leaving their jobs or Virginia Tech.

Senator Cox asked if the management teams had been organized yet and, if so, any changes had actually taken place. Dr. Wolfe asked Senator Sutphin to address this question. Senator Sutphin, team captain for one team in Financial Aid, answered yes, changes have been made in the award package and financial aid transcripts. These are design teams which address certain specific functions, not the broader, cross-unit management teams.

Vice-President Stott asked if anything was available to help employees who are going through these changing processes. Dr. Wolfe said a training package is being put together to help accommodate employees to change. He expects \$2-3,000 to be spent on training in the next three years.

President McConnell introduced Judy Ridinger, Manager of Compensation and Benefits Administration, to speak about about the timeliness of performance plans and evaluations.

Senator Stott expressed appreciation that Benefits extended the health benefits change deadline due to packets being mailed out late. Ms. Ridinger expressed her appreciation for that feedback and stated she feels that the problem may take care of itself as people learn more about what their benefits actually are and what changes can and should be made.

Ms. Ridinger stated it is important to talk about performance management in general. It is a cycle which begins with the performance plan. The cycle starts on November 1 each year to October 31 the following year. The position description is the basis for a performance plan where each expectation should be developed in coordination with the employee. The reviewer has a major role in approving these expectations. Ideally during the year, supervisors should look at them and go over them with employees to provide feedback. This is important to keep employees informed. Near the end of the cycle the supervisor is asked to do the evaluation. This year notices to start the process will be mailed in August. Ms. Ridinger suggested supervisors get feedback from employees as to how they feel they have done. Personnel Services recommends recorded comments for all ratings so the reviewer can determine if the rating is correct. The supervisor must get comments from the reviewer as well as approval at this time. The reviewer may request further documentation and may not approve the supervisors' rating. The evaluations probably will be due the first of October this year. Part of the reason for this date is implementation of the incentive pay plan. Personnel Services believes the performance management process is a good tool whether money is involved or not. This year proposed raises put a different light on these evaluations. Evaluations below exceptional can go directly to Personnel Services. Exceptional-level evaluations must go through a different process, since they make the employee eligible for a three-step pay increase. Money will be available for about 8 percent of the maximum employment level to receive exceptional pay raises. In order to fairly distribute the dollars, each agency had to devise a plan, approved by the state, as to how it would divide the money. Most likely, Personnel Services will be dividing the money with the direction of a personnel advisory committee consisting of representatives from every college and administrative units. The unofficial draft plan would divide the agency into two major groups, the academic side and the chief business officer's side. These two groups would be divided into sub groups for each college and six administrative support departments; for a total of twenty-one groups. Each group would be given a percentage of money relative to the number of people in it's group. Some of these units have less than five percent exceptional to as many as forty percent exceptional ratings. There is a wide range of what is perceived to be exceptional. In groups where the percentage is high, decisions about who gets the raises will be more difficult. Personnel Services has worked hard to dispell the notion that meets expectations is not a good rating. Meets expectations is viewed as getting a grade of C. That was true in the old system because the standards were set to reflect minimal standards. Today's expectations are written at the maximum level. More training is needed to educate supervisors that "meets expectations" should be the norm. Some group will have to sort out which exceptional ratings appear to be the most justified. This

means the supervisor has a tremendous responsibility to document all exceptional or non-exceptional actions. Personnel Services will not be making this determination. The early October date is given in order to give this committee time to determine who actually deserves exceptional raises. In large units the head of the unit may sub-divide his/her group into groups of pay grades 1-8 and grades 9-15 to help assure the raises are evenly divided. The reviewer's role is of utmost importance in exceptional ratings. The committee will go to the reviewer first to receive additional justification.

If employees do not feel they have received an adequate evaluation, they can file a grievance, but it is suggested they go to the reviewer first and express their concerns. Maybe their performance plan needs to be changed. Again, this is why the reviewer's role is very important. An evaluation is grievable only if it passes one of four tests. One of the biggest problems in this process is supervisors who fail to get their plans done on time. Many faculty members have only one employee working for them, which makes it easy to give them an exceptional rating because they can not make comparison. These cases tend to receive higher evaluations as well as cases where supervisors have not received formal training on the new system.

Senator Schaefermeyer stated there would be some negative reactions to having only a ten-month evaluation since the dates seem to back up continually. Will there be notices about the early evaluation date? Ms. Ridinger stated there would be notices. Ideally, if employee plans were completed on time there would be fewer complaints. The administrative work required before the December 1 pay-out calls for a two-month lead time to administer all paperwork.

Senator Sutphin asked if a policy is in place for employees to evaluate their supervisor. Ms. Ridinger stated this is not required; however, a number of departments on campus do it.

Senator Aliff stated some supervisors do not do plans and this is unfair to employees. Why can't the university, DPT in Richmond, or Employee Relations set a policy? It seems there is too much advisory and not enough directives. Ms. Ridinger responded that if it were up to her, she would surely push for that.

Jamie Evans, guest, stated he found it difficult to do four evaluations at the beginning of the academic year. Ms. Ridinger, said that was a common concern. She suggested that documentation be collected during the year.

Senator Donohoe asked if provisions were being made to incorporate a space in the evaluations for people who participate in shared governance. Ms. Ridinger stated Personnel Services has encouraged supervisors to recognize special projects, team participation, and general interest in the university.

Senator Shelor stated her supervisor formally documents his impressions of his employees every two weeks and goes over these evaluations with employees every quarter. He mandates his supervisors do the same with their employees or they will receive a fair but needs improvement on their evaluations in this category. This actually helps at the end of the year because all documentation is there and it is easy to see where employees stand. The employees also have a good idea of what their rating will be,

so there are fewer surprises. He feels this is the only fair way to rate employees because people tend to remember negative things and most recent instances.

Senator Stott said there is a very fine line between a rating of meets or exceeds; are there any more specific guidelines. Ms. Ridinger stated that other than the definitions given, there are no specific guidelines. which is why the reviewer is so important. The supervisor might be putting a lot of work on employees. The expectations might be written low because the supervisor does not delegate. It is the reviewer's responsibility to maintain equity. Personnel Services is seen as the policer of the system. Actually, peers need to complain to the department head or a dean. Unless Personnel Services receives a complaint, the assumption is made that supervisors are doing their job.

SENATE COMMITTEE REPORTS

*COMMUNICATIONS--Senator Cox, chair, reported the committee had not met this month.

*LONG RANGE BUDGET AND PLANNING--Senator Ballard, chair, reported the committee meeting had been rescheduled for June 8th.

*POLICIES AND ISSUES--Senator Murray, chair, reported the committee had not met since last senate meeting but would have a joint meeting June 3rd with the Council of Staff Association Officers and the Policies and Issues Committee.

*ELECTIONS AND NOMINATIONS--Senator Phillips, chair, reported the committee had been working very hard over the past month preparing the ballots for this evening's election. Results of the election were as follows: Staff Senate Officers: Sherri McConnell, President; Charlie Stott, Vice-President; Valerie Myers, Secretary; and Betty Greene, Parliamentarian.

Council and Commission Representatives:

University Council - Bhaba Misra, Sarah Wheeler

Commission on Classified Staff Affairs - Betty Greene, Senator; Joyce Smith, Academic Units; John Ashby, Administrative Units

Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies: Joyce Bohr

University Advisory Council on Human Rights and Social Responsibility: James Evans; Fred McCormick and Sarah Richardson to be submitted to the president for single appointment

Senator Phillips encouraged all who have an interest in working in governance to let his committee know for the upcoming year. Senator Phillips thanked all members of the Elections and Nominations Committee for working so hard this year.

UNIVERSITY COUNCIL, COMMISSIONS, COMMITTEE REPORTS

President McConnell announced we would not be going over council, commis-

sion, and committee reports and asked if there were any questions.

OLD BUSINESS

President McConnell stated the senate had previously tabled discussion of a resolution concerning administrative and professional faculty. She asked if Senate wanted to remove it from the table at this time. Senator Cox stated she saw no need to bring it off the table since University Council already had approved the creation of a commission for this group.

Senator Murray shared handouts on Phase II. Several task forces have received charges, and implementation has taken place in some areas. Senator Murray requested senators read the handouts and make a list of questions. Ann Spencer and Wayland Winstead are on the agenda for the June 17 meeting to discuss Phase II.

NEW BUSINESS

*BC/BS SURVEY--Vice President Stott asked how Key Advantage is working? Are enrollees finding it difficult to get service? Are claims being rejected? His task force has not received many comments over the last few months. Would a survey of four or five questions be useful to obtain information? President McConnell asked Vice President Stott to work with Senator Murray and the Council of Staff Association Officers to distribute the survey. She also recommended working with the Center for Survey Research to add validity to the questions.

Senator Dellers made the motion that senate send a letter of appreciation for Staff Appreciation Day to Ann Spencer and her committee. President McConnell responded a letter had already been sent to Ms. Spencer, Cornell Morton, Carol Nickerson, Fred Phillips, Freda Blecher, Joyce Smith, and Shauna Bishop. The motion was therefore rescinded.

President McConnell announced that VM2 would be abolished June 14. Not everyone will be moved to VM1 automatically. She asked all senators whose ID's would be changing to notify the secretary by June 8. President McConnell's new ID will be SHERRI on VM1; Senate's ID is STAFFSEN on VM1. The 1993-94 secretary will use that ID for the upcoming year.

President McConnell thanked all the senators for their service this past year. She stated she will not be here for the June 17 meeting because she will be at the beach. President McConnell gave a special thanks to her staff senate officers and committee chairs who would not be returning next year: Barbara Shelor, Fred Phillips, and Clara Cox.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Barbara Hise Shelor
Secretary