

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
Staff Senate

Minutes of the Regular Meeting
Thursday, July 21, 1994
Room 102, Phase II, Veterinary Medicine

Senators Present: Joyce Bohr, Billie Cline, Judy Davis, Marge Dellers, Les Fuller, Patty Hall, Mary Holliman, Don Massie, Sheri McConnell, Valerie Myers, Brenda Neidigh, Mary Pennington, Peggy Rasnick, Wyatt Sasser, Widget Shannon, Elizabeth Shifflet, Charlie Stott, Sarah Wheeler, Deb Williams, and Debbie Wilson.

Alternates Present: Netta Eisler for Richard Lovegrove.

Guests Present: Clara Cox, Betty Greene.

President Stott called the meeting to order at 5:34 PM.
No business could be conducted as there was not a quorum.

Guest Speaker

President Stott introduced Richard Harshberger, associate professor of management and director of leadership development. His presentation was on leadership development and change. He used overheads as visual aids. Highlights of his presentation follow.

He stated that part of our job as leaders is to help bring about change, deal with it, and be sure it is effective. Leaders, such as staff senators, need to induce people to love change as much as they have hated it in the past.

The four phases of change are denial (withdrawal, focus on the past), resistance (anger, blame, anxiety, depression, apathy), exploration (concern about details, confusion, energy, new ideas, lack of focus), commitment (cooperation, better focus, anticipation of next challenge).

Our reward system is upside down. It seems that "No good deed goes unpunished."

Virginia Tech's strategic plan for leadership development is to develop/implement an executive team building program; provide high priority support for women's and minority leadership development programs; plan and conduct four leadership forums each year; organize and support a fall leadership conference; develop and offer a universitywide program on mission, vision and values; establish a University Academy of Leadership Excellence; design, develop, publish, and promote the university's own benchmarking/business process redesign/continuous process improvement manual and program; design and offer an expanded governance orientation training program; determine and support the future thrust of the leadership seminar program; develop an inventory of resources to assist significantly impacted areas of the university; establish level of activity and promote existing modules to organizational units; plan for the future of

the managers/supervisors certificate program; assess the need for and develop an appropriate mentoring program; needs assessment to update choice of courses for continuing leadership training; develop a continuous process for client needs assessment; develop and implement a self-directed leadership assessment process; develop a phased marketing plan for each program; write and publish a leadership development program brochure; develop a reading list for self-paced studies; and develop and publish a set of standards and procedures for managing change.

Senator Holliman asked if this is part of the decentralization plan. Harshberger replied yes, the university leadership development program is set to support all universitywide initiatives, which includes decentralization.

Senator Williams questioned a statement made by Harshberger that multiple leadership was being done beginning at the top and working down to lower levels. Harshberger replied that some of it is beginning at the top. They have started the team-building training at the management level because they would be managing multiple teams. August 8-11 they will be doing facilitator training, and they are drawing facilitators from all levels of the university; the majority are from classified positions.

One of the things they want to do is get an individual assessment in career development and what their needs are. Right now the university is in a state of flux. We have to sort out what we mean by opportunities for advancement.

President Stott extended an invitation to Harshberger to come back to the senate and address us again in the future.

Announcements

President Stott recognized Sheri McConnell for her leadership and involvement in staff affairs. He presented a plaque to her recognizing her for "invaluable service to the university and it's people." He stated "if there's anyone on this campus that exemplifies leadership, it's this woman standing beside me. The good things she has taught me I could not enumerate."

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the July 21, 1994 Staff Senate meeting were approved with no additions or corrections.

Senate Committee Reports

Communications Committee did not meet.
Elections and Nominations had no report.
Policies and Issues had no report.

University Council, Commission, Committee Reports

Parking/Transportation Committee did meet. Senator Shannon

reported that their previous chair had retired without the committee being aware of it. The committee now has a new chair and will begin meeting on a monthly basis.

Old Business

New grievance procedure -- they will meet again in August.

Letter on inclement weather -- a revised version was submitted to the senate. After discussion, it was decided the executive committee would send the letter to Ray Smoot.

Senator Holliman stated that at one of the grievance procedure meetings, the subject of inclement weather came up. There was discussion on all the different ways that agencies handle it. She stated that she would be willing to try to get information on some of these different policies so that a comparison can be made.

New Business

Senator Donohoe told the senate that a nationwide staff governance bulletin board is available through staffgov@ndsuvml.bitnet. It has a message every few days. Some topics that have been discussed recently include setting up domestic partner benefits, health benefits, and other topics. To subscribe, send a message as follows: "TELL LISTSERV AT NDSUMVMI SUB STAFFGOV your name"

Committee Assignments -- since many members were missing and the list is not complete, a list will be sent out after it is finalized.

Other

The Governor's Task Force has met with some officials and VGEA on possible changes in the leave policy. As a result of the decentralization process, the policy would eliminate the current structure of vacation and sick leave and go to a policy of earning "x" number of days combined leave. It would be a use-it-or-lose-it type policy. They were patterning it after private industry, which has a disability policy which could be used after a certain number of days. We do not have a policy for that. President Stott will try to get additional information.

Senator Sasser contacted personnel services, which in turn called DPT and talked to the policy division. VGEA is working on this. The leave policy is one of many policies presently under review. There is no time frame for reviewing or closure on those suggestions. It will be on their agenda in the future.

Senator Donohoe questioned if there is any compensation for those people who have extremely large amounts of sick leave. Senator Rasnick stated that sick leave is a fringe benefit. Senator Sasser volunteered to pursue this issue further.

A question was raised concerning benefits for part-time employees. President Stott stated that decentralization may give us more avenues to explore regarding that issue.

Senator Williams stated that we need to pay close attention to what happens with these issues. The whole state has a huge liability and that liability not only includes sick leave, your comp time and annual leave, but also the employer's share of FICA and any taxes associated with that, which amounts to millions of dollars in leave liability.

Past President McConnell took the floor. Her address to the senate follows:

Service was an essential part of my upbringing. I consider service the rent we all pay for living. I believe this philosophy also applies to shared governance. We all have an obligation to this university. Throughout the 25 years I have been at Virginia Tech, staff members have mumbled among themselves about how things were done, or about how no one ever asked for their opinion. The time to whine has long since passed. If people are not willing to participate at even some small level, then they have lost their right to complain.

Whenever there is discussion regarding the three missions of this university, people shout out teaching, research, and barely manage to mumble service. Well, I'm here to tell you that service counts, it's real, and it's important. We know the concept of shared governance has been difficult for some to accept. However, this attitude has changed and will continue to improve as staff come together to present an articulate, unified voice within the system. Discouraging participation or negative comments will be replaced with encouragement and praise.

Participatory governance is recognized as a key element of success and continued growth. It is standard practice among major corporations. It involves the process of changing a system to reflect new ideas and new ideals. The process is difficult, though.

Think about this for a moment. Has the Staff Senate changed the system?

- * When it worked to bring changes to a new health care system;
- * Or when it began electing and nominating staff to all councils, commissions, and committees;
- * Or when the first meeting of the Commission on Classified Staff Affairs was convened;
- * Or when senate provided the first southwestern Virginia representative for a Richmond task force;
- * Or when we consider that staff participation adds diversity -- for each of you represents a different facet of the university community;
- * Or when communications continues to improve through open meetings and forums and newsletters;
- * Or when senate helps resolve a conflict regarding the number of class hours an employee may take on personal time;
- * Or when staff are becoming members of department, division,

and college level committees;

* Or when payroll deduction is finally available for parking fees;

* Or when the newly elected delegate from this district establishes advisory committees that all include Virginia Tech staff members.

There is, however, a price for this type of freedom. We get the type of governance we desire, deserve, and demand only through participation. As your areas elected representatives to the governance system, your role extends beyond yourself. You will be acting for the good of the collective university. You must recognize that an essential element of the governance process is communications. Each of you must possess a true commitment to open communications. Openness requires that you create an environment that encourages sharing goals, objectives, successes, and failures. Accept everyone's right to know. Face issues before they become major problems. Recognize and be sensitive to the probability that others in the university community will have different beliefs, priorities, philosophies, and perspectives. Facilitate a multidirectional network of communications. Strive continually for efficient networking of information.

It is my sincere wish that all those before us, who worked so long and faced so many obstacles, realize how very much we appreciate what they did so that we could be here tonight conducting business. It is also my hope that those who come after us will lean back in their chairs, scratch their heads, and wonder how on earth we were able to accomplish so much.

I urge you to be a constructive voice, to keep your constituency well informed, to support the people you elect.

In essence, remember to pay your rent.

At the conclusion of her speech, she presented the president's gavel to Senator Stott.

Meeting adjourned at 7:22 PM.