

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY
STAFF SENATE

Minutes of the Regular Meeting
Thursday, March 16, 1995
Room 102, Phase II, Vet Medicine

Senators Present: Joyce Bohr, Janet Bryant, Joann Craven, Judy Davis, Betsy Davis-Jones, Marge Dellers, Patrick Donohoe, Wanda Garrison, Leslie Graham, Wanda Grubb, Brenda Husser, Delbert Jones, Julia King, Valerie Myers, Peggy Rasnick, Vivian Rich, Wyatt Sasser, Widget Shannon, Chuck Shorter, Tony Sutphin, Sarah Wheeler, Deb Williams

Alternates and guests present: Netta Eisler for Mary Holliman, Matt Martelli for Bhaba Misra, Nancy Rooney for Donna Norman, Diane Santolla for Brenda Neidigh, Sherrie Settle for Virginia Viers, Gwen Ewing, Sandy Graham

The meeting was called to order at 5:33 PM.

Guest speaker

Dr. Doug Martin addressed health care benefits and reduction in workforce policy.

The two extremes in health care were Blue Cross/Blue Shield and Health Maintenance Organizations (HMO). The middle was a PPO which was Key Advantage. Initially there were very few participating physicians. You can keep the Key Advantage as it is now, with the exception of a new prescription card. The new cost will be \$20.00 per prescription, \$15.00 through the mail. Well Baby coverage goes to age six.

With standard Key Advantage there will be a rate decrease. An employee with dental care will still pay \$8.00/month; employee + 1 will be \$91.00/month; family plan will be \$157.00/month; and if both husband and wife are state employees, the cost will be \$82.00/month.

Expanded benefits will be available. This will include access to bone marrow treatment (with a 12-month waiting period, but there is legislation to have this changed). Physical exams would be covered. Expanded coverage can cover orthodontics up to \$1,000 per year.

If you go outside the state without a referral, you will pay 25 percent of the cost. If you want this covered, instead of paying 25 percent you pay 20, 15, 10 or 5 percent, depending on your expansion.

There may be as many as 100 different choices. If you have a spouse who is out of state or a child in college, there is no change in rates. You can make changes to your coverage annually.

The low-end coverage is Cost Alliance. It will basically cover just in-area health care. You would pay \$20.00 for doctor visits. Well Baby care is \$20.00 per visit, routine gynecology is \$20.00, pap smear is \$35.00. Maternity will have a \$100.00 co-payment. There is no dental coverage under Cost Alliance.

A third option is an HMO in this area called Health Keepers. There will be a directory of providers for each of the plans. There is no co-pay for diagnostic testing, maternity, or home health. One hundred-eighty days hospital stay and dental is covered. The cost is \$15.00 per month, employee plus one is \$105.00, family plan is \$176.00, and where both husband and wife are state employees, the cost is \$101.00.

Martin advised that you do your homework and read through all the information. Make sure it is understood to your satisfaction and help colleagues to understand.

They are going away from United Behavioral Services. It is being replaced by Green Spring. They will even help with your retirement planning. They have a referral system with 24-hour/day, seven days per week help. All crises will be handled in a confidential nature. Mental health will be limited to 30 days full coverage or 30-day partial coverage.

A new program called KATY will allow access on-line to make changes in your PCP's and make telephone inquiries 24-hours-a-day. It does not change open enrollment options.

Vision care is part of expanded coverage under Key Advantage. You must use a participating physician. The plans covers one visit per year for those under age 19, and two visits per year for those over age 19. They pay for one pair of glasses every two years.

For bone marrow transplants, our local hospitals are UVa, MCV, or Georgetown. You may go to any approved BC/BS Facility offering this service.

Workforce Transition - there are 1200 people eligible. It has changed almost daily. You must be 50 years old by date of retirement with 10 years service. Prior to 50 years, you can get severance pay. You cannot have both severance pay and retirement. With severance pay you get two weeks pay for each year of service, for a maximum of 36 weeks. There must be no break in service. You cannot come back to work at Virginia Tech for two years. You also have to agree not to work for a contractor or as a consultant for the state.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the February 16, 1995 meeting were approved with the following additions and corrections. Judy Davis and Julia King should be added to Senators Present. Page 3, EO/AA Committee, third sentence, should read "The concern is that if staff are not educated about the new policy, then choices of options and rights to confidentiality could be compromised." Also, after the sixth sentence a sentence should be added to read "With the visit to the site, rights to confidentiality could be compromised."

University Council, Commission, Committee Reports

Communications - no report

Elections and Nominations - report available

Policies and Issues - report available

McComas Leadership Seminar - no report

Ad Hoc Committee for Government Task Force Reform - no report

Transportation/Parking Committee meeting was postponed to March 27. A letter will be sent to this committee requested that a bus stop be relocated at Southgate to get it out of the mud and gravel.

EO/AA - Committee did not meet this month, but the first sexual harassment training will be March 20 at noon in Squires.

Strategic Budget and Planning - They are in the process of reviewing next year's budget to see what the tuition rate should be. Provost Meszaros has set up a Senior Leadership Seminar that will be happening soon. She is doing a lot of useful things and should prove beneficial to this committee.

Old Business

Provost Meszaros contacted President Sasser and asked for input on her new office in the President's Suite. She wants to have wall space that features books or art by faculty, staff, and students.

Discussion on elections to fill mid-term appointments was tabled to the next meeting.

New Business

President Sasser read a letter from a senator that expressed concern that the perception of some staff of the staff associations and senate is that they have done very little to change policy or to effect positive change. If the perception is still there, what can be done to change it? Perhaps promoting our accomplishments, no matter how small, such as being instrumental in getting payroll deduction for parking decals. Discussion is being held on having a staff page on the Virginia Tech home page on the World Wide Web. The senator who wrote the letter was bothered that some people feel that the governance system does not work and that only the administration can change things.

President Sasser stated that the associations are having trouble staying organized and keeping attendance up because they feel nothing is being done. Some of the comments have been directed at him; that they don't like the job he is doing. He is quite willing to accept that kind of positive criticism, but the associations and senate are bigger than one or two people. He feels that we have made a difference. We have had a lot of influence on the Key Advantage issues. We advised the staff on how to go through the proper channels to get results. He has talked to the Communications Committee chair about the possible need for a staff newsletter to highlight the issues that have been brought forth to senate or what staff associations are doing. He asked for input from senators.

Senator Shorter stated that he felt that we are now getting access to a lot of critical information that staff has never had before. We have the

opportunity to dig out information and take it back to our constituents. President Sasser stated that this is one of the purposes of the associations and senate, to keep a channel of communication open.

A suggestion was made that perhaps senators could report at each meeting on any accomplishments made during the previous month, and perhaps it could be reported in Spectrum.

Senator Williams expressed concern that senators or representatives are not reporting back to their associations or departments. We should not wait for the minutes to be sent out each month to disseminate information. We need to report back with what issues were discussed or accomplishments made.

President Sasser stated that the way the system is supposed to work is that the Commission on Classified Staff Affairs is our policy-making body. For example, there is discussion about allowing classified staff to teach courses for three semester hours and to be paid an adjunct professor's salary. This is not in writing and is being brought before the commission. Senators are responsible for getting information out; if this happens then the system works. We must renew interest in our associations and senate.

Senator Sutphin stated that the draft policy proposal for reductions in force (Faculty Handbook, section 2.11.2) has a section concerning the definition of a financial crisis that he questions. It reads "A financial crisis does not exist and the process described in this section is not required when financial conditions can be alleviated through existing personnel policies such as layoffs of classified staff (or prescribed by state policy) or elimination of administrative and professional faculty positions (as described in section 3.6 of the Faculty Handbook).

If this is a new policy coming out, maybe people need to start writing Pat Hyer. This policy is under discussion in the Strategic Budget and Planning Committee and is being reviewed by the Commission on Faculty Affairs. When it was read in the Strategic Budget and Planning Committee, their conversation concerned 208 versus 229 accounts. With tenured faculty, you have to give them five years' advance notice before you can terminate their position. Five years is too long. What if the governor's budget had been approved and they cut \$14 million in Extension? That would basically bankrupt Extension. There would be no money to pay salaries. President Sasser said Senator Sutphin is concerned that if a college is faced with a financial crisis, it could avert the crisis by laying off A/P faculty and classified staff. He asked if this had been brought before Faculty Senate.

Faculty Senate liaison Rasnick stated that it had not been discussed at the last meeting. President Sasser will pursue this further. This is a faculty policy, but it could affect staff.

There was concern raised that there is talk of eliminating parking around the Drillfield. Senator King told the group that physical plant was replacing the sidewalks and are planning to redo parking spaces and pave the road around the Drillfield. President Sasser stated that he does not know of any plan at this time to eliminate drill field parking.

In the Staff Senate Constitution and Bylaws, Section 2.2, Article 2, Elections - "The elections for Staff Senators from the staff associations shall be conducted by staff associations before March 31 each year. This

process will be assisted and monitored by the Elections and Nominations Committee." President Sasser charged senators to tell staff associations that we need these elections. Nominations for the Staff Senate Executive Committee and representatives to Councils, Committees, and Commissions will be made at the April meeting. Election of officers will be done by secret ballot at the May meeting. We cannot elect senators to fill positions if they have not been elected.

With no more New Business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:48 PM.