

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY  
STAFF SENATE

Minutes of the Regular Meeting  
Thursday, July 20, 1995  
Room 102, Phase II, Vet Medicine

Senators Present: Billie Cline, JoAnn Craven, Phoebe Crofts, Judy Davis, Betsy Davis-Jones, Marge Dellers, Debra Duncan, Sandy Graham, Wanda Grubb, Patti Hall, Cindy Harrison, Richard Lovegrove, Valerie Myers, Fred Phillips, Vivian Rich, Wyatt Sasser, Karla Soukup, and John Wooge.

Alternates and Guests Present: Nancy Phillips for Chuck Shorter, Shari Settle for Virginia Viers, Tom Susano, and Peggy Rasnick.

The meeting was called to order at 5:35 p.m. by President Phillips. He welcomed each senator and alternate to Staff Senate. He explained that in order to make Standing Committee assignments for the 95-96 year, the Executive Committee of the Senate needs to have a complete roster of senators and alternates. To help obtain this information, Phillips requested that each senator and alternate obtain the name, department, phone number, and e-mail address for all senators and alternates who represent their area, and their association officers. This information can be sent to President Fred Phillips by mail to 202 Cassell Coliseum 0328 or e-mail to FEP@vt.edu. Once this information is obtained, committee assignments will be made and announced.

Phillips then gave a brief orientation about Staff Senate. He hopes that Larry Moore will be available sometime in the early fall to give Staff Senate a more comprehensive overview of the governance system. Phillips expressed his belief that Staff Senate is a great opportunity for the staff to help make decisions concerning staff issues and policies. He then gave a brief background of how he got involved in the governance system. Phillips introduced the 1995-96 Staff Senate officers and told who serves on the Executive Committee. Executive Committee members are: President, Vice President, Secretary, Parliamentarian, and chairs of each of the Staff Senate Standing Committees.

Phillips explained there are four formal representative bodies that report to the University Council. Those are the Graduate Association, Undergraduate Association, Faculty Senate, and Staff Senate. Those representative bodies report through minutes or elected representation on University Council. Issues or resolutions go through University Council then to the President and ultimately to the board of visitors for approval. He pointed out that it is important to remember that the University Commissions, Councils, and Committees are the groups that deal with issues and formulate resolutions to be passed to the University Council for approval.

Taking a closer look at Staff Senate, Phillips explained there are 16 local associations that send representatives to Staff Senate. The Staff Senate then sends information or resolutions to the Commission on Classified Staff Affairs. This commission is the only body that can pass issues in resolution form to the University Council, which makes the final decision on issues. Phillips pointed out that senators and

alternates have a vote by their attendance on the various university councils, commissions, and committees. It is extremely important that anyone who is elected to a council, commission, or committee attend each monthly meeting. If a senator or alternate cannot attend the monthly meeting, it is their responsibility to have someone attend in their place.

There are four standing committees of Staff Senate. These committees are internal to Staff Senate and are composed of: Communications Committee, Elections and Nominations Committee, Policies and Issues Committee, and the McComas Leadership Development Committee.

Phillips outlined the purpose of Staff Senate. It is the responsibility of the senate to:

1. To serve as the representative body for the staff employees.
2. To act in an advisory capacity to University administration and governance structure.
3. To appoint or recommend staff representatives to University Council, Commissions, Advisory Councils, and Committees.
4. To provide a two-way medium for the exchange of information between the staff and administration.
5. To foster a spirit of unity and cooperation to the broader university community.
6. To provide referral for individual concerns and problems to appropriate organizations or personnel.
7. To accept and share responsibility with administration, faculty, and students in all efforts to attain the stated goals of the university.

Each of these is extremely important if Staff Senate is to work as it should.

Phillips explained that the Executive Committee is actively involved this year in Virginia Tech's self study. This is the first time the staff has had an active role in Virginia Tech's self- study since senate was not in existence the last time a self study was done.

Phillips explained the responsibilities of the senator and alternate. They are responsible for:

1. Reporting to their respective areas and local staff associations on issues brought before the senate.
2. Seeking opinions of their respective areas and local staff associations on pertinent matters concerning the Staff Senate.
3. Being accountable to their respective areas.

He then told the senator's or alternate's responsibility for serving on a university commission, council, or committee. Those responsibilities are:

1. Represent the position of the Staff Senate and staff in the discharge of responsibilities.
2. Inform the Staff Senate of pertinent matters to be considered and action taken by:
  - a. forwarding copies of meeting minutes to Senate Secretary, or
  - b. summarizing discussions and actions taken at meetings and forwarding to Senate Secretary.
3. Bring matters of staff concern before the respective University council, commissions, advisory councils, or committees.

He pointed out that if a senator or alternate is elected to a commission, council, or committee and cannot make their regular meeting, it is the responsibility of the senator or alternate to find someone who can attend in their place.

Phillips gave the steps on how a policy gets approved. General governance matters are approved through the approval/acceptance of minutes of commissions and committees by the University Council.

Academic Policy matters are submitted to University Council in resolution form. He pointed out that this is a more formal way of dealing with issues.

In summary, Phillips gave one word that he believes will make senate work. That word is "communication." It is the responsibility of the senator and alternate to communicate to the Staff Senate and their local association.

Phillips then opened the floor for questions. A suggestion was made to send the information Phillips gave to all senators and alternates either by paper or electronically. He agreed to get the information to each senator and alternate.

The minutes for May 18 and June 15, 1995 could not be approved for lack of a quorum. Phillips will check with Parliamentarian Bhaba Misra to see if minutes can be approved electronically. A question arose as to whether or not the 1995-96 Senate could approve minutes from last year. This will be checked on also.

President Phillips reported there were two chairs appointed to the Senate Standing Committees. They are: Senator Judy Davis, chair of the Elections and Nominations Committee, and Senator Marge Dellers, who will continue serving as Policies and Issues Committee chair. Senator Dellers submitted the Policies and Issues final report to the secretary. Senator Wyatt Sasser reported that Senator Deb Williams' committee, the Ad Hoc Committee for Government Task Force Reform, had submitted to the senate its responses and was disbanded as of June 30, 1995. Senator Dellers reported the Policy and Issues Committee was asking the senate to appoint an ad-hoc committee to monitor the Blue Ribbon Task Force. With much discussion, it was decided that a ad-hoc committee was not needed at this time.

Under old business, Senator Dellers reported that she received a copy of the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors by-laws and a current listing of members. A copy of the by-laws were given to Secretary Hall. It was suggested that President Phillips and Vice President Sasser ask Dr. Torgersen to appoint a staff representative to serve on the board of visitors. This member would be a non-voting member but would be allowed to enter into the discussions. President Phillips reported that he and Vice President Sasser were trying to schedule an appointment with Dr. Torgersen but because of his involvement in a university fund-raising campaign, his time was limited. They will continue to try to get a meeting with Dr. Torgersen. When they finally do meet with him, they will approach him concerning a staff representative on the board of visitors.

On other business, Senator Dellers reported on the Staff Senate office.

The address of the senate office is 323E Burruss Hall. She reported that a work study student will be hired for the academic year to help man the Staff Senate office and help Secretary Hall. Dellers will be asking for volunteers from the senate membership to help "man" the office. The target date for opening the Staff Senate office is September 1. Anyone who has suggestions or would like to help man the office should send an e-mail note to dellersm@vt.edu.

President Phillips commended Senator Dellers for the leadership she has shown in getting the senate office started. A suggestion had been made to Phillips that instead of senators or alternates serving on one of the standing committees, they could volunteer to work in the senate office. There is also a possibility of using retirees to help "man" the Staff Senate office. The days and times are to be determined at a later date after a work study schedule has been obtained.

President Phillips explained that the long-term goal of opening the Staff Senate office was to promote better communications between the Senate and staff members. Senator Dellers along with a member of the Communications Committee will work together to oversee the senate office this year with the Communications Committee taking the senate office as one of their responsibilities next year.

President Phillips reported that Senator Wyatt Sasser was working with employee relations to revamp the memo that includes Staff Senate officers and is handed out to all new employees. This is another excellent communication tool for senate. A suggestion was made to give each senator and alternate a copy of the memo when it is finished.

In other business, Senator Dellers encouraged all those who were interested to try and attend the Facilitator Workshop which is offered through the Leadership Development Program. Dellers commented that it was well worth the time and the information was invaluable. The next workshop is scheduled for sometime in October.

Senator Sasser reminded the senators and alternates that the senate has a home page on the World Wide Web. Eventually the senate will add its minutes and other important information. It was suggested that the World Wide Web address for Staff Senate be added to the memo for new employees.

There being no further business, Staff Senate was adjourned at 6:25

p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Patti Hall  
Staff Senate Secretary