

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY
STAFF SENATE

Minutes of the Regular Meeting
Thursday, August 17, 1995
Room 102, Phase II, Vet Medicine

Senators Present: Spencer Allen, Phoebe Crofts, Judy Davis, Betsy Davis-Jones, Marge Dellers, Debra Duncan, Matt Gart, Wanda Grubb, Patti Hall, Cindy Harrison, Tom Hergert, Delbert Jones, Adelene Kirby, Eileen Moccia, Valerie Myers, Fred Phillips, Vivian Rich, Wyatt Sasser, Widget Shannon, Padma Verma, Virginia Viers, and John Wooge.

Alternates and Guests Present: Janet Wimmer for Sandy Graham, Netta Smith for Richard Lovegrove and Spectrum, Nancy Phillips for Chuck Shorter, Richard Alvarez, and Curtis Lynch.

The meeting was called to order at 5:35 p.m. by President Phillips, who welcomed each senator and alternate to the August meeting. Phillips introduced the guest speaker, Richard Alvarez, director of Public Safety, Health and Transportation and Curtis Lynch, manager of Parking Services. Mr. Alvarez gave an overview of his responsibilities. These include oversight of the Virginia Tech Police Department, Environmental Health & Safety Services, the Virginia Tech Airport, Parking, and Motor Pool. He brought Senate up-to-date on new happenings around campus. The plans to pave the Drillfield included parking being changed to a straight-in parking inside the Drillfield to gain back the parking spaces which have been lost to the bike lane. This plan was changed because of the Whittemore parking lot spaces lost to construction. It was also believed that this type of parking would create problems due to lack of visibility backing out into the road around the Drillfield. The Whittemore construction site has started. Additional faculty and staff parking behind the math models by the Power Plant is currently being worked on. There is a lot next to the paved area on Stanger Street, which should be completed by the first day of classes. There is a plan - which has not been approved but is in the talking stages - to improve parking in the stadium lot.

Alvarez then opened the floor for questions. Senator Cindy Harrison asked when Spring Drive was going to be moved, if at all. Mr. Alvarez commented that there has no decision made concerning Spring Road. Senator Wyatt Sasser asked about the closing of the road between the Field House and the Greenhouse for the new Athletic Facilities. Once again, no decision has been made concerning this. A question was raised about whether Parking Services publishes an annual report, and if it does, where is it available? Mr. Alvarez commented that the Advisory Council on Strategic Budgeting and Planning does publish a report containing all auxiliary unit budgets. President Phillips is the Staff Senate representative and that information is made available to the senate through him.

Mr. Alvarez commented that the most frequently asked question was why funds from parking were not used in the general university fund. He explained that all auxiliary units must support themselves due to state laws. Currently, Parking Services gets half of its funds from parking fines and half from fees. One senator asked how the number of faculty/staff passes sold compared to the slots available. Curtis Lynch commented that it is close to 3-to-1 or 4-to-1. However, he cautioned, these figures are not entirely accurate because some individuals purchase parking passes once a

year and others purchase them twice a year.

There was a question about whether a parking building is possible. Mr. Alvarez answered that a parking deck or building would be very expensive. The cost for a 500-space parking building would be \$6 million to build. That would require a \$40-50 per person increase in fees. Then, at the end of the life of that parking deck, it would have to be torn down and replaced at that day's prices. There has been some talk about the possibility of a parking deck near Donaldson Brown but a decision has not been made yet.

Another questioner asked why Virginia Tech employees have to purchase a parking decal at the Corporate Research Center when other companies can park in those areas without one. Mr. Alvarez answered that the only lot that is maintained by Parking Services is the Computing Center lot, and anyone parking in that area is required to purchase a decal. All other lots are not maintained by Parking Services.

Another questioner asked how parking fees are determined. Mr. Alvarez answered that the Budget Office determines parking fees. They use a formula that considers the number of parking permits purchased by faculty, the number purchased by commuter and resident students, and the number of improvements made in the past. The student's fees have doubled because of improvements to their lots. They have compared fees around the country, and Virginia Tech has some of the lowest fees. There are people who are paying close to \$1,000 per year in parking fees in other areas of the country. Does the Transportation and Parking Committee have any input as to what improvements are to be done in the future? Not necessarily, commented Mr. Alvarez. A bond issue approved by the state controls many of those improvements.

Another questioner asked how an individual can make the new decal stay on the window. Mr. Alvarez commented that a bad lot had been purchased from the vendor and they were trying to correct the problem. Anyone who has a faulty decal can take it to Parking Services and exchange it for a new one. Are fees going to be assessed if the parking decal falls off the window? The answer was yes, however an individual can bring the ticket to Parking Services and appeal it.

Senator Sasser commented on the positive changes made in Parking Services. Mr. Alvarez thanked Sasser and encouraged each senator and alternate to say kind words to the Parking Enforcement Officers, who have a very hard job.

President Phillips thanked Mr. Alvarez for coming to speak to senate.

The minutes for July 20, 1995, were approved with one correction. In the fourth paragraph, fifth line, it should read "1995-96" instead of "1995-95." Secretary Hall also reported that the May 18 minutes were approved with two corrections. These corrections are: Under Approval of Minutes, it should read "Minutes of April 20, 1995" instead of "May 18, 1995" and under Old Business, second line, it should read "lunch should last longer" instead of "lunch should start later and end later." The June 15, 1995, minutes were approved with no corrections.

President Phillips then asked for Senate Standing Committee Reports. Phillips reported that the Senate Executive Committee is working on a more efficient and manageable way to handle communications to senators and

alternates. It is hoped that senate will do a better job this year of communicating with their senators and alternates. Senator Valerie Myers commented on the problems with transferring data between Eudora and PCs. Phillips said senate is working on the problem and hopes it has been solved. Senator Hall asked that anyone who does not receive an electronic copy of the agenda or minutes to let her know. Her telephone number is 1-4591.

One correction was made on the agenda under the Senate Standing Committee Reports, the Ad Hoc Committee for Government Task Force Reform Committee has been dissolved.

Phillips asked for reports from the University Council, Commissions or Committees. There were no reports.

Under Old Business, a question was raised about the hours of the Staff Senate Office. Senator Marge Dellers reported that she and Secretary Hall met and decided that Staff Senate would hire a work-study student for five hours a week to help with the distribution of minutes and agendas. She said she is looking for volunteers to help in the office. Dellers reported that the order has gone into CNS for the ethernet connection to be installed. She hopes that the office will be running by September 1. Phillips said that once an e-mail address and office hours are established, he would announce the information. Any employees who volunteer will have to do so on their own time.

President Phillips explained that the Staff Senate Office would be used to store historical information, such as commission reports, meeting minutes, agendas, and other important information.

Under New Business, President Phillips asked Alternate Netta Smith to speak to senate about health benefits for part-time employees. Smith reported that at this time, there is not an insurance policy "worth anything" available to wage employees. Because of a personal situation, Smith found herself and her daughter without health benefits. She contacted Ann Spencer who said that there were health benefits for part-time employees. Upon further investigation, Smith found that the benefits were for faculty only. Because faculty sign a contract, Virginia Tech is required to offer a health plan to them. Smith reported that health benefits for part-time employees is a legislative issue and since Staff Senate is not a lobbying body, there is nothing they can do. She asked the senators to invite her to their local staff association meetings so she can discuss this issue with them. Smith is also talking with Senator Mayre and Delegate Shuler to make them aware of this situation and ask for their help.

Senator Cindy Harrison asked Smith if she knew about the Odd Fellows Policy. Smith commented that she did not. Harrison said this might be an option for Smith. Harrison agreed to check on the Odd Fellows Policy for Smith.

Senator Shannon encouraged Smith to check with VEGA, which is the lobbying body for state employees. Smith asked all senators and alternates who would like to help her with petitions to send her an e-mail note to NETTA@VT.EDU.

President Phillips reported that Dr. John Muffo contacted him asking for three groups to help him on the Core Value Assessment, which is linked to the Self-Study the university is undergoing. Dr. Muffo is looking for a

fair representation of staff. Phillips gave him the names of the chairs for the Elections and Nominations Committee and Policies and Issues Committee and the names of the members of the Senate Executive Board. Phillips asked that each person help Dr. Muffo by attending the focus groups meetings in September or October.

President Phillips reported that he had been contacted by Dr. Tom Sherman, President of the Faculty Senate, concerning the user fees for gym facilities. Dr. Sherman asked that Staff Senate co-sign a letter to Dr. Torgersen about the unfairness of these fees. Because of concerns about the wording, President Phillips suggested that the Executive Committee draft a letter supporting Dr. Sherman's position but not co-sign the letter drafted by Dr. Sherman. One senator was concerned that the money has to come from somewhere - if not from an individual fee from those who use the facilities, then through taxes. President Phillips commented that the student user fees are used to cover the operational expenses of the different sports clubs and the overhead operation of Recreational Sports. Because the student user fees cover all these expenses, there is no reason to charge the faculty or staff. The user fee for faculty/staff is \$42.50 per person. Senator Sasser said that he was told that the fee which is being assessed now is going to be used to help build a new facility and was also told that Intramural Sports was going to come under UUSA, which is an auxiliary funded by user fees. Sasser's biggest concern is that while Physical Plant maintains the facilities, they receive no compensation from UUSA for upkeep of this building.

President Phillips suggested that there may be several issues that senate is not fully aware of and that he invite Bill Campion to speak at senate in the future. A senator asked if Tom Sherman's letter could be sent electronically to the Executive Committee. Phillips said it could and he would send it to them.

It was pointed out that CommonHealth will waive the gym user fee for the duration of any of its programs. All other programs are doing the same.

It was suggested that the letter going to Dr. Torgersen point out that the equipment in the gym is in poor condition. Phillips agreed to add this to the letter.

The next item was the required Sunday work for Express Check-In. President Phillips asked if those who were required to work were given advance notice. Most were. Phillips received a call from someone concerning this issue so he sent an e-mail note to Provost Meszaros asking for clarification on who was required to work on Sunday. He noted that this issue came up about a year or two ago in senate and it was decided that working on the weekend would create problems for many staff members. Phillips contacted past President Sheri McConnell, who sent him a copy of a letter that was drafted pointing out these issues. He incorporated those issues in the note he sent to Provost Meszaros. He pointed out that the real problem was the lack of communication and sufficient notice. Her comment was that Express Check-In had been planned for a long time and could not be changed, but that she wanted to get away from Express Check-In. She promised to pass his suggestions to Wanda Dean, registrar.

President Phillips' main concern was the lack of staff participation in the decision to open offices on Sunday. Phillips asked those senators and alternates who have been or know someone who has been inconvenienced by

this decision to let him know so he could pass this information along to Provost Meszaros.

In other new business, Senator Cindy Harrison reported she had heard a rumor that the health care HMO program may be dropped because of lack of participation of physicians in this area. She followed this up with a call to the Benefits Office for more information and was told that there would be an additional open enrollment for all programs in November because they are changing to a January to December year. It was pointed out that the Employee Benefits Committee should be checking on this. Senator Sasser will check with the representative to Staff Senate on this committee and follow-up to senate.

President Phillips then handed out the Staff Senate Committee Assignments. Those assignments are as follows:

Elections & Nominations Committee

Jeanie Baker	Mark Kidd
Joyce Bohr	Julia King
Shannon Casey	Adelene Kirby
Judy Davis, Chair	Denise Orden
Wanda Grubb	Ben Poe
Kathy Haden	Vivian Rich
Brenda Husser	Virginia Viers
	John Wooge

Communications Committee

Spencer Allen	Milko Mayjowskyj
Danny Belcher	Valerie Myers
Shelia Blankenship	Mary Pennington
Sharon Donohue	Nancy Phillips
Les Fuller	Rocky Price
Bruce Harper	Widget Shannon
Tom Hergert, Co-Chair	Debbie Wilson
Richard Lovegrove, Co-Chair	

Policies & Issues Committee

JoAnn Craven	Eileen Moccia
Phoebe Crofts	Peggy Moles
Betsy Davis-Jones	Debbie Rhea
Marge Dellers, Chair	Sherri Settle
Debra Duncan	Chuck Shorter
Susan Edwards	Lorena Sowder
Matt Gart	Tom Susano
Nancy Gruber	Tony Sutphin
Cindy Harrison	Tami Tomasello
Barbara Hise	Padma Verma
Matt Martelli	Janet Wimmer
	Pat Worrell

McComas Leadership Committee

John Bollig	Trevia Moses
Billie Cline	Byron Nichols

JoAnn Craven
Vicky Duncan
Sandy Graham
Delbert Jones
Adelene Kirby
Joyce Longrie

Beverly Parkins
Mark Robertson
Karla Soukup
Netta Smith
Deb Williams

It was requested that all committee members send their PIDs to their committee chair so all information can be disseminated quickly.

There being no further business, Staff Senate was adjourned at 7:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Patti Hall
Staff Senate Secretary