

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY  
STAFF SENATE  
1810 Litton Reaves  
Minutes of the regular meeting  
Thursday, August 21, 1997

Senators Present: Spencer Allen, Sherry Burlingame, Reba Crawford, Barbara Day, Judy Fielder, Janet Francis, Cindy Harrison, Tom Hergert, Delbert Jones, Nancy Phillips, Ben Poe, Peggy Rasnick, Joy Thorn.

Alternates: Sherri Settle and Rebecca Barlow

Visitors: Jill Elswick (Spectrum)

Excused: Mary Conrad, Karen Frazier, Terry Lawrence, Kathleen McNinney, Tina Shanklin, Janet Town, Virginia Viers, John Wooge.

Spencer Allen called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM

Approval of Minutes: Minutes from July 17, 1997 were approved without correction.

Announcements: Spring Road is now open.

**Senate Standing Committee Reports:**

Communications: Tom Hergert said the logo contest received only a few entries and all of them were unacceptable mostly due to incorporation of the acronyms SS (because of Third Reich connotation) or VT (because of copyright). Entries will still be accepted by the Senate but the original deadline has passed and the contest may in effect be defunct. The Communications Committee is also working on a brochure for the general staff about governance participation and improving the web site.

Elections and Nominations: There is a vacancy on the Commission on Student Affairs. A special election will be held next month to fill it.

Policies and Issues: Sherrie Settle mentioned that this committee's function is currently not well defined. It basically functions as a referral committee for issues that are pertinent to staff including "lag pay". Meetings are only held when there is an issue to be discussed. Sherrie would like to see the "legislative interface" issue/committee shifted to the Policies and Issues Committee. The committee has not formed this year.

Staff/Faculty Officers Meeting: No Report

**University Council, Commission, Committee Reports:**

Commission on Classified Staff Affairs: First meeting of this year was held on August 12, 1997. There was a presentation by Dr. Richard Harshberger on how to hold effective meetings and the costs involved in holding meetings.

**Old Business:**

Lag Pay: The latest word is it does affect current employees if they run vacation or sick leave down to low levels or use it up. There has been a one week delay added to the earning of leave. The new leave policy is available through the Personnel Office. Sherrie Settle offered to try and decipher the new policy and give a report at the next meeting.

VGEA: Cindy Harrison reported on the two day strategy meeting where issues were discussed. She asked Jim Schuler about legislation that would help classified staff. Medical benefits for 1500 hr. wage employees is the only issue that will be pursued until after the gubernatorial election. There is a thank you letter to Jim Schuler in the works.

**New Business:**

Self Study: Random surveys were sent out. There will be three presentations of the results of the Self Study Survey and all staff are encouraged to attend at least one.

W 9/10 3:30-5 Bowman Room

M 9/15 12-1:30 Pamplin

W 9/17 8-9:30 Donaldson Brown

Staff Senate Information: Spencer Allen handed out information about the Staff Senate which included “The Purposes of the Staff Senate”, “Staff Senator Responsibility” and “Description and Purpose of Staff Senate Standing Committees”.

Spencer Allen said we need to make sure the Staff Senate By-laws are clear and consistent with other By-laws. He strongly suggested that new senators look over the description of committees and express a preference prior to being appointed to a Senate Standing Committee. In addition, the schedules for senatorial elections need to be synchronized such that committees can be set up efficiently. The Staff Senate should have 40 senators and right now there are only 27. Spencer urged senators to encourage interested staff

members to become involved with governance.

Spencer Allen held a discussion as to who can serve on Senate Standing Committees, University Commissions, Committees and Councils. The Senate By-Laws need to be updated because the interpretation of the existing one is unclear.

Legislative Interface Committee: Cindy Harrison asked about the progress in formation of the Legislative Interface Committee. No decision has been made yet as to where to fit this in.

CPS: Cindy Harrison announced the existence of the "Certified Professional Secretaries" group. There are thirteen people that hold the CPS rating at Tech. There will be a luncheon in November, by invitation only, at the Donaldson Brown Hotel and Conference Center.

New Issue: Ben Poe brought up the issue of a change in restricted employees status on sponsored research funds. The problem seems to be that classified staff can no longer be paid from sponsored research funds. The principal investigator must pay from overhead funds. This will be confusing for those who currently work on more than one project or for more than one PI. Extensive discussion ensued about why no one was notified of this change and who will actually be affected by this change. The Senate agreed to request that someone from Sponsored Programs be asked to attend a Staff Senate meeting that could provide information concerning this.

The meeting adjourned at 7:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Joy Thorn, Secretary  
Krissie Thrasher, Recorder