

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY
STAFF SENATE
1810 Litton Reaves
Minutes of the Regular Meeting
Thursday, November 20, 1997

Senators Present: Sheila Blankenship, Mary Conrad , Reba Crawford, Jack Davis, Judy Fielder, Janet Francis, Cindy Harrison, Delbert Jones, Terry Lawrence, Joyce Longrie, Milko Maykowskyj, Nancy Phillips, Ben Poe, Peggy Rasnick, Charles Rose, Tina Shanklin, Jennifer Simba, Joy Thorn, Virginia Viers, John Wooge.

Alternates: Rebecca Barlow, Jill Elswick voting for Tom Hergert, Brenda Husser voting for Barbara Day.

Excused: Spencer Allen, Jody Bolen, Sherry Burlingame, Barbara Day, Tom Hergert, Janet Town.

The meeting was called to order at 5:35 PM

Approval of Minutes: Minutes from October 16, 1997 - The minutes were sent out by e-mail, revisions were made before the meeting, and were approved at the meeting as is.

Senate Standing Committee Reports

Communications -Has met and the web site is not ready yet.

Elections and Nominations - Every classified staff member should have received a mailing from the Elections and Nominations Committee asking for interest in participating in serving on a University Council, Commission or Committee by placing their name in a data base in case of future vacancy in one of these areas. If more information is needed, please contact Virginia Viers or John Wooge of the Elections and Nominations Committee.

McComas - Judy Fielder is the new chair of this committee. The McComas Leadership Seminar will be held April 16, 1998 in the Hillcrest Dining Room. The theme of the seminar being discussed is "Roots to the Future" of the Staff Senate. The committee members are Mary Conrad, Nancy Phillips, Tina Shanklin, Delbert Jones, and Billie Cline.

Policies and Issues - Sherry Burlingame will be the new co-chair. Rewriting the by-laws will be put on the back burner. The committee's charge will be to work with the colleges that have inactive classified staff associations to see if there is an interest in reorganizing.

The committee will also work with the active associations to re-energize. A plan of action will be discussed at the next meeting of this committee.

Council, Committee, Commission Reports

Commission on Undergraduate Studies - A report was made by Brenda Husser in the absence of Barbara Day. An announcement was made that Undergraduate Studies Policies # 177, which would change the interim class time from 10 to 15 minutes, will not go into effect until Fall 2000.

Library Committee - Milko Maykowskyj announced that they will meet on December 17 at 3PM in Newman Library.

Commission on Student Affairs - Judy Fielder reported that students that are set-up on campus to solicit memberships, etc., are not allowed to approach student/public from their table/display. They have to wait for the student/public to approach them.

Guest Speaker - Ella Mae Vaught from Personnel spoke on the topic of Family Medical Leave Act.

Purpose - Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) is a federal law that went into effect in 1993. It prevents employees from having to choose between losing their jobs and providing care for themselves or a family member when facing family or medical situations.

Eligibility - All full and part-time employees are eligible as long as they have worked for the state one year (wage employees have to work for Virginia Tech for one year) and they worked (not including paid leave) 1250 hours in the twelve months immediately preceding the beginning of their leave.

Reasons for Using FMLA - A serious health condition of the employee that prevents the employee from performing his job, or a serious health condition of the employee that is not incapacitating but requires multiple treatments to avoid incapacitation; birth or adoption of a child or a foster care placement with the employee; or a serious health condition of a family member who requires the care or support of the employee. The most common use of FMLA at Tech is pregnancy and adoption of a child. This can be used by the father as well as the mother.

Family Members Defined - 1. Parent - biological, adopted or legal guardian. 2. Son or Daughter - under 18 years of age, 18 or older and incapable of self-care, biological, adopted, foster care or step-child. 3. Spouse - husband or wife as recognized under the Commonwealth laws regarding marriage. At present in-laws, grandparents and siblings are not covered.

Serious Illness Defined - An illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves in-patient care or continuing treatment by a health care provider. A serious illness can be categorized as:

1. One-Time Illnesses/Conditions - Pregnancy or pre-natal care; or a period of incapacity that usually extends beyond three days and requires one or more visits to a health care provider such as pneumonia, outpatient surgery, complications resulting from a minor/common illness, back injury, serious allergic reaction and clinical depression.
2. Chronic/Episodic Conditions - Occasional/reoccurring periods of incapacity lasting less than three days due to a chronic serious health condition such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, rheumatoid arthritis, serious allergies, clinical depression.
3. Chronic Illnesses/Conditions - Permanent or long term condition such as Alzheimer's, severe stroke, clinical depression, terminal stages of a disease such as cancer.

Not Serious Illness - Common cold, flu, earache, upset stomach, minor ulcers, non-migraine headaches, routine dental/orthodontia problems, periodontal disease, cosmetic surgery.

Notification - Employees should notify their employer of their intention to take family or medical leave at least 30 days in advance. If adequate notice cannot be given in an emergency situation, then it should be given as soon as possible.

Leave Usage - Employees may use up to 33% of accrued sick leave to care for a qualified family member under FMLA. The leave can be taken all at one time (up to 12 weeks); periodic leave for a few hours a day or a few days a week, on an as-needed basis; or a reduced work schedule.

Job and Benefits Protection - Use of FMLA cannot result in the loss of any employment benefit that accrued prior to the start of the employee's leave. Life Insurance is continued to be paid by the Agency. Retirement contributions will not be paid if the employee is on LWOP. There will be no Leave Accrual during any period of LWOP.

In all instances in which an employee needs to use FMLA, he should work with his supervisor and Personnel Services to complete the necessary paperwork. The forms that need to be completed are:

1. Form P7 - Virginia Tech Family and Medical Leave Request - completed by the employee, the supervisor or a Personnel Services representative.
2. Form P7A - Certification of Health Care Provider - completed by the attending physician or practitioner

Job Security - The main importance of FMLA is that your job is protected when you use this leave. Also, your health insurance cannot be canceled while you are using FMLA as

long as you pay your regular part of the premium. Using FMLA can in no way affect your performance evaluation. One main point of confusion is that your supervisor may decide to place you on FMLA while you are on sick leave if they know your situation is family medical qualifying. Using FMLA is to the advantage of the employee because in addition to holding your job for you while you are out, when you return to work you return to the same or an equivalent position.

If you have more questions, please contact Ella Mae Vaught: EMVAUGHT@vt.edu

Old Business

None

New Business

Joy Thorn announced that the next meeting will be a Christmas Social. A committee was formed to plan it. Cindy Harrison, Sheila Blankenship, Nancy Phillips and Janet Francis volunteered to help. There was a motion made to move the location of the next meeting to Owens Banquet Hall. The motion was accepted unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 6:35 PM

Respectfully submitted
Joy Thorn, Secretary
Krissie Thrasher, recorder