

**VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**STAFF SENATE**  
**1810 Litton Reaves**  
**Minutes of the Regular Meeting**  
**Thursday, January 20, 2000**

Senators present: Jeannie Baker, Becky Barlow, Harry Biggs, Reba Crawford, Sue Ellen Crocker, Jackie Davis, Elva Douthat, Jessie Eaves, Cathy Hansen, Delbert Jones, Jimmy Martin, Hilda Reynolds, Virginia Viers,  
Jon Wooge

Alternates present: Deb Williams

Excused: Gwen Ewing, Janet Francis, Cindy Harrison, Ben Poe, Christy Porterfield, Pam Raines, Kathryn Young

The Virginia Tech Staff Senate was called to order by President Delbert Jones.

It was moved that the agenda be accepted. The motion was seconded and approved.

**Announcements:**

1. Just to let everyone know, when Tech is open (during times of inclement weather), we will have our scheduled Staff Senate meeting.
2. The new president, Charles Steger, responded to our resolution that we sent on November 18 congratulating him on becoming the president. He has called a meeting of the Executive Committee of Staff Senate to meet with him on March 1, 2000.
3. President Steger will address the McComas Leadership Seminar, May 4 at 8:45am.

The minutes for the meeting of November 18, 1999 were approved electronically.

**NOTE:** In sending the minutes of Staff Senate, senators/alternates should wait until the minutes are approved by the Senate body and announced by the Senate Secretary before sending the actual minutes out to staff. Senators may, however, distribute their own "notes on the Senate meeting," but not the actual Minutes.

**Standing Committees:**

**Communications Committee** Senator Douthat stated that the next meeting will be January 25. The newsletter is planned for publication in January, 2000.

**Elections and Nominations Committee** Senator Barlow explained the distribution of the nominations forms Any classified staff interested in serving on

university-wide councils, commissions or committees should fill out the form(s) and mail them to her. Some committees/commissions require that the staff member be a senator; but many committees are open to staff members at large. Names are being gathered so that in May, when Senate has an election, we have a pool of volunteers/nominations to select from among these names for vacancies that exist on a council, commission or committee. Please be sure that each staff member in your area receives a nomination form. This is the process used to get the names to be appointed; the President of Virginia Tech will send an official letter appointing them to the requested council, commission or committee. A letter of appointment from the university's President excuses the person from his/her job during working hours.

**McComas Leadership Seminar Committee** Senator Eaves reported the date set for the seminar is May 4, 8am-12pm at Owens Banquet Hall. Three speakers have agreed to speak at this time: President Steger, 8:45am, will speak on his vision for staff; Dr. Beth Wagenspack, "Tools to Communicate More Effectively;" and Dr. Benjamin Dixon, "Tools on Changing Ideas About Diversity." The title of the seminar will be "Tools for the New Millennium." There will be a continental breakfast from 8-8:30am in Owens Banquet Room. The seminar is open to Staff Senators, Staff Alternates, and Staff Association Officers. Registration forms will be distributed for reservations.

**Policies and Issues Committee:** Senator Martin provided an update on the Staff Senate resolution to amend our Constitution so that changes to the By-Laws do not have to be approved by University Council and the Board of Visitors, as the Constitution presently stipulates. The resolution has been unanimously accepted by all staff associations who reported back to him, which was over two-thirds majority. The resolution will be carried to the University Council on February 7 and, hopefully, before May, the change will be in effect. Two official readings are required by University Council before a vote of that Council.

President Jones stated that all senators and staff alternates are requested to actively participate on one internal committee and one university committee/commission. The member is required to report about the meeting and share any information pertaining to staff at the next Staff Senate meeting. That is why the Senate has Standing Committees and reports. Reports are requested in writing with enough copies to be distributed to Senators/alternates attending the meeting. Or, the reports may be sent electronically to the Senate secretary no later than the Monday before the next Senate meeting. Last minute essential reports may be given verbally at the Senate meeting. However, the Senate meeting time is just one hour and the Senate prefers written reports to save time.

President Jones went Round Robin and asked each senator to introduce his/herself, tell which area s/he represents, on what committees/commissions s/he is presently serving and to give an opinion about what to do about the staff associations that no longer have an active association because these staff

members have no representation at all; therefore, they aren't hearing anything at all about parking changes or policies or anything.

Suggestions:

1. We should contact the key people, the secretary or someone, to send information to the other people in her/his department.
2. If any senator knows someone who works in any of the areas which have no representation, s/he could make a personal contact.
3. Deb Williams, who was one of the original writers of the Constitution and By-Laws, stated that one of the intentions when the Constitution was written was to give the Senate the power and authority to appoint a senator because they knew there would be situations where there would be area associations that would fail to operate for whatever reason. She suggested to use that power and authority to step in and make some phone calls. Check w/the directors or deans of the colleges to see if they can find a volunteer who would act as a senator. This could help to start a core group for the association.
4. President Jones stated that we do have a budget in which to invite staff of the areas of defunct associations to a breakfast to at least get a senator.
5. Other associations could just "shadow" an area to help them get started.
6. One senator stated that people had a qualm about meeting after working hours, and that people complained that it's so time consuming; but now that we are meeting at lunch, interest might pick back up.

Joy Thorn has been gracious enough to help send out the nomination forms (Elections and Nominations Committee) and she was targeting people she knew either through the phone book or through Staff Senate alumni, or people she had on a mailing list. Thank you, Joy!

President Jones spoke about the letter given by the President which gives the staff member the authority from the Board appointing him/her to a committee or commission. Time that is spent in the meetings is as important as the time you are working in your office. It's an excused time. Now, the time spent at Staff Senate meetings is the staff member's own personal time.

**Note:** If any member of committees or commissions cannot attend a meeting, and if s/he can't find someone (a designee) to substitute for her/him, please contact President Jones, Vice President Cindy Harrison, or Secretary Cathy Hansen.

President Jones, who is on Strategic Budget and Planning Committee, stated he had told this committee that he felt there was a need for more staff development and training. He suggested that if any staff is interested in planned training workshops, discuss it with the supervisor, the dean, and ask to be able to attend. Personnel has listed training opportunities on the web at <training.vt.edu>.

**New Business:** First reading of a new Resolution: "Revision to the Constitution:" Right now Senators have a limit of two consecutive terms to serve as Senators from a specific staff association. The proposed revision would permit the staff associations to decide, independently, if they want to put a term limit on their senators. Otherwise, there will be no limit. The Resolution will be read a second time at the February Staff Senate meeting.

[Deb Williams explained that the reason the limit was put into the Constitution was for more people to be involved; but, at this point in time, there are some areas not being represented at all because of this.]

**Should the annual leave be changed?** We (staff) never equal faculty in the number of annual leave hours received. As it stands right now, new faculty immediately receive 16 hours of annual leave; and we (staff) can work here 30 years and never receive more than 14 hours. A proposal has been put forward by the College of Agriculture & Life Sciences to increase annual leave two hours at 5, 10, 15, and 20 years. An approval vote of Staff Senate would put this proposal forward to the Commission on Classified Staff Affairs. The item is currently a part of the Virginia Governmental Employees Association (VGEA) agenda for the General Assembly 2000. President Jones is following the legislation which proposes to separate Lee/Jackson/King day into a Martin Luther King Day and a Lee/Jackson Day on the Friday and Monday of the same weekend so that there would be a 4-day state employee holiday.

Staff Senate adjourned at 1:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy Hansen, Secretary  
Staff Senate