

Staff Senate Minutes
February 16, 2006
1810 Litton Reaves

The meeting was called to order, Agenda was adopted with adding need volunteers for Staff Appreciation Day and President Awards for Excellence Committee, January 19, 2006 Minutes approved (electronically), and Welcome was given.

Present: Judy Alford, Robin Atkins, Sheila Blankenship, Jean Brickey, Catherine Caldwell, Sam Camden, Reba Crawford, Sue Ellen Crocker, Carolynne Dudding, Jessie Eaves, Joell Eifert, Velva Groover, Walter Hartman, C. Denise Jones, Delbert Jones, Joyce Landreth, Lori Lee, Jimmy Martin, Tracy McCoy, Deborah Morgan, Trina Pauley, Christy Porterfield, Tal Roberts, Lynn Robinson, Wyatt Sasser, Becky Saylors, Bradley Scott, Tess Sentelle, Louellen Sharp, Melissa Simpkins, Joyce Smith, Hubert Walker, Jake Waller, Ken Wieringo,

Excused: Lori Anne Sheppard, Vicki Walter

Guest: President Charles Steger, Linda Woodard

McComas Seminar – May 4, 2006 – Yellow Brick Road, Where We Are Now, Where We Are Going

A report was given on Employees' Spouse and Dependent Scholarship Program – Deadline March 11, 2006 to apply for it. Scholarships are available to new freshmen and new entering transfer students. Check block on application form.

Out of 4352 Staff only 330 do not have email availability.

Jean Brickey introduced President Steger. President Steger congratulated the Staff Senate on two of their initiatives: Employee of the Week (great way to recognize employees contributions), and VT Connect (hope to save money by using computer and not paper to inform employees). almost 19,000 applications submitted so far for Fall 2006, President Steger has been spending a lot of time in Richmond trying to protect Higher Education funding. Some of the items President Steger spoke to us about were: building an Engineering Building, improving Veterinary Medicine facilities, completely redo the inside of these buildings in the Agriculture Quad to upgrade them, and eventually have air conditioning in all campus buildings. getting Progression Money, having more Equipment funding, getting more money for Graduate Assistantships, Base Adequacy Funding (under funded \$30 million a year), energy cost (up \$3 million last year—no way to recoup this money), Restructuring Bill (expecting it to pass with some modifications), rehire some positions lost in 2002 budget cuts, Capital Construction to be managed locally (will cut 6-9 months time off of construction cost).

The Extreme Makeover Housing project for Carol Crawford-Smith was a very positive focus for VT (using the football players to move furniture, using the VT departments to help plan and work on the house, and with bringing the community together – better TV rating than the Olympics), (Career Services was involved in obtaining employees to do crowd control, etc., for the show), the new design “VT will remain about the same size as it is now (may increase Graduate students by 1000), need to treat employees we have better, Virginia Tech is now known throughout the country, VT will raise tuition but will give out more financial aid (depends on household income), will have an aggressive building project (renovations on buildings, heating/cooling system upgraded and expanded, improve infrastructure, more dorms, classroom spaces, recreation facilities, informal gathering places), build parking structures (may be near Perry Street, in Schultz parking lot, in Litton Reaves lot, and Corporate Research Park), expand the runway at the airport so Corporations can come in fast to meet people and leave quickly, build research buildings where the golf course is at now (will have a 400,000 ft deficit of research space in 6-8 years if don't continue to create some), have streets with gates to keep cars out, build a Fine Arts Center that will attract employees, help students and help the community, Shared Governance will still continue to be an important part of the University, a member of the staff is on every committee where staff is involved, hold more Town Hall meetings, continue to meet with Committee

Chairs (held the second meeting with them this year), information concerning what is being done is put on the Web, the strong institutions and companies are getting stronger so VT has to find ways to get the funding needed to keep in the game. If don't have resources, don't have quality; if don't have quality, can't compete, believes a staff member will be a member of the Board of Visitors, announce the public phase of funding in 2007. President Steger gave us an example of a gentleman who graduated from VT who grew up very poor, became very successful, and pays tuition for any high school student from his home town to go to college.

One of the submitted questions was whether "Invent the Future" was replacing "Ut Prosim"? Dr Steger said that "Invent the Future" was created to appeal to High School kids and get the message out that communication is very important – will not throw out the past logo "Ut Prosim" (That I may serve). The motto remains. A question was asked about whether Business Cards needed to be redone to reflect the new logo "Invent the Future" on them. Dr. Steger did not know about this. He was planning on using his current business cards until he needed new ones.

Dr. Steger took time for a question and answer session.

The Staff Senate congratulated Dr. Steger on how the situation with Marcus Vick was handled. There was a discussion about sport heroes (they represent VT). Seminars are given at beginning of school concerning the individual's conduct. (This situation gave people an opportunity to talk to their peers and kids on how to behave properly),

In response to questions about pay for entry level (pay band one) employees, Linda Woodard gave us information concerning the factors that are considered in these compensation studies. An analysis was completed and the employees in those positions have wages that lag behind the town and county wages and those positions have a high turnover rate. There is a turnover rate exceeding 20 percent for these positions, which is higher than other types. Additional questions relating to higher education restructuring were raised. Linda clarified that all employees will stay State employees whether they are Classified or University Staff hired under the university's HR policies. One question was whether restructuring gives VT the authority to change the exempt/non-exempt status of employees. Linda noted that the regulations for determining this are covered under the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act and will not be affected by Restructuring. It was asked if the three-rating scale in the current performance evaluation system could be changed under Restructuring. Linda indicated that it could, but added that the State may also change these policies for Classified employees. Initially, the university would not be changing staff policies, and Linda indicated that even in the future, some state policies might remain very similar to the state's policies if the university believes that these still work well. The University will have flexibility for the University employees on some of the HR procedures but will not have any on the Classified employees—those will still be governed by the State.

No Council, Commission, or Committee reports were given.

NEXT MEETING – MARCH 16, 2006

Dr. Zenobia Hikes will be the speaker

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn S. Dudding