

**STAFF SENATE Minutes**  
**1100 Torgersen Hall**  
Thursday, September 18, 2008  
12:00 noon – 1:00 p.m.

**Attending:** Bonnie Alberts, Judy Alford, Jean Brickey, Holly Carroll, Shelby Cole, Dan Cook, Linda Correll, Mike Cutlip, Carolyne Dudding, Jessie Eaves, Andy Fortin, Laurie Good, Karen Hall, Geraldine Hollandsworth, Jennifer Hundley, Travis Hundley, Delbert Jones, Denise Jones, Cindy Koziol, Joyce Landreth, Rob Lowe, Maxine Lyons, Tracy McCoy, Tim McCoy, Sharon Proffitt, Becky Saylor, Bradley Scott, Louellen Sharp, Melissa Simpkins, Jerry Surface, Hannah Swiger, Chris Thomas, Tom Tucker, Hubert Walker, Vicki Scarrat, Jon Wooge, William Gibbs, Julin Mays, Barbara Moore

**Excused:** Robin Atkins, Cindy Booth, Catherine Caldwell, Lori Anne Kirk, Sue Teel, Ken Wieringo

The meeting was called to order, agenda amended and approved, and minutes amended and accepted.

**Announcements:**

BOV Update – Tom reported that the BOV approved the HR policies for University Staff and the conversion of pay band 5 and above staff to AP Faculty.

Staff Senate National Conference Update – Maxine Lyons reported that the committee is working on a contact list and that a planning meeting will be held with the Hotel Roanoke.

VT-Engage Update – Carolyn Dudding reported that Gobblerfest had good attendance. The staff senate discussed and approved the continuation of support for the food pantry as the Senate's VT Engage project.

2008 ADA Access Honor Roll Award Program - Tom Tucker reported that this award is presented yearly. They are asking for support to help cover their luncheon and plaque. Award recipients can be faculty, staff, or students. It was proposed and approved that the Staff Senate will provide \$100 in support for the award.

VT Employees' Spouse and Dependant Scholarship Fund – Tom Tucker reported that his staff association was considering collecting contributions and then making a onetime donation with all of the funds collected.

November Meeting Date Change - Tom Tucker proposed changing the November Staff Senate meeting to November 13<sup>th</sup> to accommodate Thanksgiving and Kevin McDonald's schedule. This will be discussed at the October meeting.

**Program**

Dr Charles Steger, President of Virginia Tech, spoke on several topics regarding Virginia Tech.

Discussion Topics:

- This year Virginia Tech has received the largest number of applicants in its history. In addition, a greater percentage of students who received offers accepted those and the in-coming Freshman Class is one of the largest in University history.
- Virginia Tech has moved from 54<sup>th</sup> to 42<sup>nd</sup> in the National Science Foundation ranking in research funding. This is one of the largest increases by any institution. The University is 7<sup>th</sup> in the nation for research funding by the NSF among universities without a medical school. The Campaign for Virginia Tech fundraising effort has passed \$700 million towards the \$1 billion goal.
- It is currently unknown how much the budget cut will be. The Governor cannot call for budget reductions without first requesting a new budget forecast, which is expected in October. The state has asked all agencies to prepare plans for 5, 10, and 15 percent cuts by the end of September. The first plans for the budget cut are being prepared centrally. The budget shortfall continues to grow and at this date stands estimated at \$1.4 billion for the biennium. It is expected that for the biennium the budget shortfall will be less in the first year and possibly greater in the second year. Virginia Tech

cannot rely solely on cuts to solve this round of budget issues. Options to increase revenues are currently being studied. The University completed studies looking at efficiencies compared to peer institutions and they have shown that VT is operating very efficiently. It would be very difficult to reduce costs by increasing efficiency; however the University will continue to review every option to continue providing excellent service to our students in the most efficient manner possible.

- Energy costs have recently increased significantly. A new contract for coal just went into effect and the cost increased by \$3.8 million. VT is working to increase energy efficiencies by replacing light bulbs with more efficient ones and retrofitting old buildings to be more energy efficient.
- A pilot program is in place for a 4 day work week and for telecommuting. With these programs it is very important that employees understand their supervisors expectations and how they will be evaluated to avoid mixed expectations. There are currently policies in place for both variable work schedules and telecommuting. Departments interested in these programs should contact Hal Ervin or Cathy Jacobs in HR.
- To decrease energy costs and reduce carbon emissions, several programs are being explored including: storm water being retained on site to reduce runoff & erosion, natural meadow plantings instead of grass lawns to save on personnel time and gas in mowers to maintain them. Some campus vehicles have been converted to run on biodiesel and natural gas, and geothermal energy is being considered for new construction projects.
- Virginia Tech Carilion Medical School and Research Institute: The new medical school will allow Virginia Tech to increase research programs and compete for NSF grants which award a greater overhead rate. The building for the school will cost \$59 million and the research institute is expected to generate \$40 million in research. The medical school will enroll its first class in the fall of 2010. The new center will provide opportunities for research in areas such as Cancer cures and ““Laser Guided” Medications targeting only infected cells.

**The Next meeting** will be October 16, 2008, and the guest speaker will be Chief Wendell Flinchum. The meeting location has not been determined and a notice will be sent out as soon as it has been decided.

With no more discussion the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Jennifer Hundley  
Senate Secretary