

**STAFF SENATE Minutes**  
Torgersen Hall, Room 1100  
Thursday, July 15, 2010  
12:00 noon – 1:00 P.M.

**Attending:** Bonnie Alberts, Susan Archer, Jean Brickey, Dan Cook, Paula Van Curen, Carolyne Dudding, Velva Groover, Amanda Grose, Jennifer Hanratty, Anna Hawthorne, Delbert Jones, Denise Jones, Lori Anne Kirk, Maxine Lyons, Albert Moore, Karen Nicholson, Erika Perdue, Faye Price, Keisha Riley, Wyatt Sasser, Robert Sebek, Louellen Sharp, Chris Sokol, Hannah Swiger, Sue Teel, Tom Tucker, Ken Wieringo, & Jon Wooge.

**Excused:** Lori Greiner and Heather Baldwin Patel.

The meeting was called to order by the new President, Maxine Lyons. The agenda was approved with one correction, and the minutes accepted as electronically approved.

**Announcements:** New senators were welcomed and all attendees introduced themselves, including the departments and colleges they represented. Carolyne Dudding reported on VT-Engage and their support of volunteers assisting with student move-in and the continuing needs of the Food Pantry. The Food Pantry welcomes additional fresh produce at this time of year. VT-Engage is also supporting the Hunger Initiative with the backpacks. Senators were also reminded to support Gobbler Fest August 27. 3:00 – 8:00 PM, and Stop Hunger Now on October 2, when they will be packing rice for Haiti.

**Staff Senate Standing Committees:** Each committee's focus was outlined as sign-up sheets were passed around for senators and alternates to volunteer their service on one of the following committees. McComas Leadership Seminar Planning Committee organizes this annual leadership seminar historically presented on Reading Day for the benefit of Staff Senate representatives as well as university staff, and recently opened up to staff governance leaders at other universities and colleges in Virginia. The Policies and Issues Committee formulates resolutions to present for Staff Senate consideration, adoption, and recommendation through the other branches of shared governance. The Communication Committee is responsible for the Staff Senate web page and promotional displays and brochures. The Nomination Committee recommends individuals to run for officer positions on the Staff Senate and/or to represent the Staff Senate on various University Councils, Commissions, and Committees. Vice President Sue Teel also services as chair of CSPA, the Commission on Staff Policies and Affairs.

**Next Meeting:** The meeting, scheduled for Thursday August 19, falls in the middle of student move-in. It was moved, seconded and approved that since neither a speaker nor a location had yet been confirmed the August meeting of the Staff Senate would be cancelled. The next meeting will be September 16, speaker and location to be determined.

**Program:** Senior Vice President and Provost Mark McNamee opened his presentation with the statement that Virginia Tech "couldn't function without the staff" and additional encouragement to "keep it up."

Dr. McNamee reviewed the state of the budget, and confirmed that the Commonwealth's surplus means that staff will receive a three percent bonus as pledged in their December checks. He also shared that Virginia Tech had planned some financial recognition for its employees in case the state did not. The overall VT budget was planned carefully to avoid major disruptions in future years. The base budget reduction of 2.9% for all units this fiscal year is much better than had been expected. He anticipates not further cuts unless there are major changes. He sees a stable future.

One emphasis of the VT budget plan has been to keep the cost of education under tight control. It has historically risen only 3% per year, lower than the average inflation rate prior to 1998. It is important to communicate that it's not the total costs that have increased dramatically: it's just a shift in who pays. When asked about application volume, he responded that applications have remained steady, despite the increase in tuition.

Dr. McNamee says that FY11 looks smooth with new capital expenditures, new undergraduate programs, and increase in research and research funding, and the new medical school. The undergraduate strategic plan needs to keep pace, developing new ways of doing business because the status quo is not viable.

When he entertained questions about how he might help staff, he was asked about ways to lessen the discrepancy between departments and divisions in accessing classes for self-improvement and career development and using work time to attend classes. The possibility of the Graduate School offering an alternate residency for staff was suggested. He identified that there needs to be a clear message from higher administration that training is important, and suggested that staff make their case being clear what we want and why. Such an investment in training will lead to a greater ROI with staff and greater productivity in the long run. Questions lead to movement and professional treatment of staff.

With allocated time coming to an end, Dr. McNamee closed his presentation and the meeting was adjourned. Dr. McNamee remained to address individual questions as some senators chose to follow up the group discussion.

Respectfully submitted,  
Susan L. Archer  
Senate Secretary