

**STAFF SENATE Minutes**  
Torgersen Hall Room 1100 (Museum)  
**Thursday, January 20, 2011**  
12:00 noon – 1:00 P.M.

**Attending:** Bonnie Alberts, Judy Alford, Susan Archer, Janice Austin, Jean Brickey, Dan Cook, Lori Greiner, Velva Groover, Karen Hall, Jennifer Hanratty, Anna Hawthorne, Hal Irwin, Delbert Jones, Denise Jones, Maxine Lyons, Tracy McCoy, Denise Munson, Becky Saylor, Louellen Sharp, Tom Tucker, Ken Wieringo, Patricia Williams, and Jon Wooge

**Excused:** Carolyn Dudding, Lori Anne Kirk, Heather Baldwin Patel, Wyatt Sasser, and Sue Teel.

**Opening:** President Maxine Lyons called the meeting to order. The agenda was adopted without change. The minutes were accepted as electronically approved with the addition of Elizabeth Visser's correction regarding the Mom and Me program for staff and faculty in their first trimester of pregnancy.

**Announcements:**

Staff Senate continues to collect non-perishable food for the Canned Food Drive.

Jon Wooge announced that the Elections and Nominations Committee is waiting of help with the listserv to send out an all-staff request for volunteers and nominations.

Susan Archer announced that the McComas Leadership Seminar Planning Committee has its first meeting scheduled for next week.

Maxine Lyons called for Old Business: there was none. She also called for New Business: there was none.

**Standing Committee Reports:**

None were given.

**Program:** Hal Irwin, Associate Vice President for Human Resources, and Angie King, the new Director of Benefits, shared with the Senators details and possible ramifications of the Governor's plan for changes in the Virginia Retirement System. There has been a problem with the fund for a long time. Recent stock market and economic downturns have impacted the fund negatively, as well as the fact that the State has not been paying its share over the past several years. The State has even borrowed \$600 million from the retirement plan with a promise to repay the loan at 7.5% interest.

The retirement plan is a defined benefit plan, meaning there is a promise that the money will be there to pay the benefits when employees retire. Defined benefit plans are not as prevalent as they once were because instability of the stock market makes funding such plans difficult and risky. VRS is only 75.2% funded on its current commitments, and by 2014 it is projected to be only 61% funded. While this isn't good news, Virginia's state employee retirement system is still in better shape than many other states.

The Governor's current proposal before the legislature is to give employees a 3% increase in their pay and require that they pay 5% of their before tax income into the retirement plan. While take-home pay will be 2.0% less under this plan, the increase in pay will help build the future benefits through Social Security.

When Hal was asked what we could do, he reminded us that Virginia Tech is not in a fighting mode. The planned Town Hall Meetings are to provide information and support the employees. The university still needs to get along with the governor.

**Next Meeting:** The next meeting will be the Thursday, February 17. The guest speaker will be Alan Grant, the new Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. The location has not yet been confirmed.

Respectfully submitted,  
Susan L. Archer  
Senate Secretary