

STAFF SENATE Minutes
Graduate Life Center, Room B
Thursday, February 17, 2011
12:00 noon – 1:00 P.M.

Attending: Bonnie Alberts, Judy Alford, Susan Archer, Jean Brickey,Carolyn Dudding, Velva Groover, Karen Hall, Jennifer Hanratty, Hal Irwin, Delbert Jones, Denise Jones, Lori Anne Kirk, Maxine Lyons, Tracy McCoy, Tim McCoy, Steve Myers, Karen Nicholson, Wyatt Sasser, Robert Sebeck, Llyn Sharp, Louellen Sharp, Sue Teel, Tom Tucker, and Ken Wieringo.

Excused: Becky Saylor.

Opening: President Maxine Lyons called the meeting to order at noon. The agenda was adopted without change. The minutes were accepted as electronically approved.

Announcements:

Staff Senate continues to collect non-perishable food for the Canned Food Drive and items for Micah's Back Pack, per Lori Anne Kirk. While limited in the number of trips she can make, she will continue to deliver contributions.

In Jon Wooge's absence, Maxine Lyons announced that the Elections and Nominations Committee is still looking for volunteers to run for election as representative to the Library Committee, the Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity, the Commission on Staff Policies and Affairs (Academic), the Commission on Student Affairs, and the University Council.

Policies and Issues had nothing to report.

Jean Brickey, for the Communications Committee, announced that she did not get the January minutes posted on the web site yet before this meeting, but that they would be up within a week.

Susan Archer announced that the McComas Leadership Seminar Planning Committee has met twice and has a third meeting scheduled for Friday, February 18. The McComas Staff Leadership Seminar is scheduled for Reading Day, Thursday, May 5, and the working theme is "Enhancing Our Spheres of Influence".

The Staff Career Achievement Award Resolution put forward by the Commission on Staff Policy and Affairs, was presented with a call for Staff Senate Support. Jean Brickey made a motion of Staff Senate support; Wyatt Sasser seconded; and the motion was unanimously approved.

Student coordinators Kyle Pride and Nathan Livingston made a short presentation on The Big Event in an effort to encourage staff to submit projects for the volunteers to do as well as to motivate more staff to participate as volunteers. April 4, 2011, will be the tenth anniversary of The Big Event, and they are hoping for 8,000 volunteers and as many as 11,000 projects. Travel distance within Montgomery County and Radford plus "no power tools required" are the only limitations on what projects can be accepted.

Maxine Lyons called for Old Business, and Hal Irvin reviewed the VGEA announcement about the Governor's retirement plan proposals, and reminded the Staff Senate that the Virginia General Assembly session closes February 28.

When President Lyons called for New Business, Delbert Jones reported that the Commission on Research is now reviewing Institutes by Colleges, but not the Centers. Bonnie Alberts announced that the Employee's Spouse and Dependent Scholarship Committee met last week, determined that there is \$8,000 available to be awarded, and announced a deadline of March 1, 2011, for applications to be submitted. Tom Tucker announced that S.A.F.E. (Staff Association for Facilities Employees) would be having a chili/soup luncheon on Tuesday, February 22, as the Sterrett Scholarship Fund Raiser, and passed out pre-order forms.

Standing Committee Reports:

None were given.

Program: Alan Grant, new Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences presented an "Update from the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences: Highlights and Challenges".

Among the highlights was the growth of the College in the past five years. Virginia Tech's agricultural sciences research is ranked fifth in the US by NSF. Sponsored funding has increased 40% in five years. The College has 13 academic departments, and is establishing its reputation in civic agronomy, or Sustainable Food Systems.

Characteristics of CALS programs are a career-ready curriculum, experiential learning, study abroad opportunities taken by 25% of the students, and student involvement.

One challenge for Dr. Grant has been the effort to restructure Virginia Cooperative Extension for the 21st century. This includes 12 ARECs, 106 county Extension Offices, Virginia Tech faculty and Virginia State faculty. Dr. Grant has learned that people are very passionate about Extension in Virginia. His efforts are now directed toward developing a system to enhance campus-field interactions and to support greater collaborations with local governments.

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be Thursday, March 17, in 1100 Torgerson Hall (not August 19, as the Agenda indicated). The guest speaker will be Dr. Charles Steger, President of Virginia Tech.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan L. Archer
Senate Secretary