

STAFF SENATE Minutes  
Huckleberry Room at IVTSCC, Thursday, May 19, 2011  
12:00 noon – 1:00 P.M.

**Attending:** Bonnie Alberts, Susan Archer, Joseph Goodman, Lori Greiner, Velva Groover, Maxine Lyons, Steve Myers, Louellen Sharp, Judy Taylor, Tom Tucker, Patricia Williams, and Jon Wooge. Also attending were two graduate students brought as guest by Judy Taylor.

**Excused:** Dan Cook, Carlyne Dudding, Wyatt Sasser, Becky Saylor, and Sue Teel.

**Opening:** President Maxine Lyons called the meeting to order at noon. The agenda was adopted without change. The minutes were accepted as electronically approved with the change in spelling Joe Hutson's name.

**Announcements:**

Senators were reminded that the Staff Senate continues to collect non-perishable food for the Canned Food Drive and items for Micah's Back Pack.

Policies and Issues had nothing to report.

Jon Wooge reported that the Elections and nominations Committee will be sending the Senate's roster to the various staff associations to obtain updates on their officers and Senators.

Susan Archer, on behalf of the McComas Leadership Seminar Planning Committee, reported that the committee will be meeting on May 24 to review the post-conference survey results, write thank-you notes, and make a notebook of information and recommendations for the committee members planning the 2012 McComas Staff Leadership Seminar.

**Standing Committee Reports:** None

**Program:** Teresa Craig, Membership Development Director of VEGA, the Virginia Governmental Employees Association. Teresa gave a short history of the organization, outlined their past and current areas of focus, and presented a membership recruiting message. VEGA, started in 1943 by a group of retirees whose retirement benefits kept getting cut, is open to all employees who pay or have paid into VRS, the Virginia Retirement System. VEGA lobbies the state legislature on behalf of employees and retirees with respect to pay, retirement, and policy changes. Their basic goals are to keep jobs, keep pay at least where it is, take care of retirees, and keep health care affordable – essential to keep the legislature from taking things away.

A question was raised about their representation of University versus Classified employees at VT. Classified employee benefits are governed by Richmond; university employee benefits are governed by the Board of Visitors.

Virginia Tech has the smallest group of employees represented by VEGA. Across the state there are 110,000 employees eligible for membership, but only 18,000-19,000 are active dues-payment members of VEGA. When asked about the lobbyist's leverage with the legislature, Ms. Craig responded that it is their track record and the ability to say that they represent "x number of people". That is why there is a push to increase the number of active members as a percentage of the eligible employees.

When we were told that VRS holds information meetings/workshops across the state to help employees plan for retirement, senators present expressed the thought that it would be good for the Staff Senate to sponsor such a meeting on campus.

Other VEGA benefits besides lobbying the legislature include discounts from Verizon, Dell, Apple, Comfort Inn, car rental companies, and amusement parks. They also offer negotiated life insurance policies and memberships to Sam's Club, Cosco, and BJ.

**Next Meeting:** The next meeting will be Thursday, May 19, in Room B of the Graduate Life Center. The guest speaker will be John Massey, Assistant Director Professional Development at Virginia Tech.

Respectfully submitted,  
Susan L. Archer  
Senate Secretary