

STAFF SENATE Minutes
Drill Field Room at IVTSCC, Thursday, August 18, 2011
12:00 noon – 1:00 P.M.

Attending: Aaron Akers, Bonnie Alberts, Susan Archer, Dan Cook, Joseph Goodman, Lori Greiner, Velva Groover, Jennifer Hanratty, Anna Hawthorne, Robena Hughes, Hal Irvin, Denise Jones, Shelly Key, Maxine Lyons, Steve Myers, Wyatt Sasser, Louellen Sharp, Sue Teel, Leslie Thornton-O'Brien, Amy Tunison, Tami Watson, Ken Wieringo, Patricia Williams, and Jon Wooge.

Excused: Judy Alford, Jean Brickey, Delbert Jones, Albert Moore, and Angie Robinson.

Opening: President Maxine Lyons called the meeting to order at noon. The agenda was adopted as sent out. Minutes were accepted with the correction of spelling out the abbreviation CASE: College of Engineering Staff Association.

Announcements:

Secretary Susan Archer requested that those present review the circulating sign-in roster and record any changes that need to be made.

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.

Jon Wooge reported that the work of the Elections and Nominations Committee in updating the roster is an ongoing process, for which he requested our patience as the changes are entered.

Associate Vice President for Human Resources Hal Irvin announced that there will be an organization climate survey conducted in September.

Standing Committee Reports: None. The following new Senators and Alternates introduced themselves to the group: Shelly Key, Leslie Thornton-O'Brien, Dan Cook, Lori Greiner, Anna Hawthorne, Robena Hughes, Joseph Newman, and Steve Myers as a new representative from Student Affairs.

Program: Francesca Galarraga, Director of Diversity Education and Training, spoke about the mission of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion and requested input from the Senate throughout the meeting. The new Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion, Dr. William Lewis, has been restructuring the Office to offer a collaborative approach in its initiatives, mission and priorities.

The Diversity Development Institute was designed to "enhance university-wide diversity and inclusion efforts that contribute to the core mission of Virginia Tech. One of its initiatives is the Diversity Ally Certificate for staff and faculty. To complete the certificate, participants are required to attend a total of six free sessions: three core course and three electives. Core courses are "Introduction to Diversity and Inclusion: Awareness—Action", "Fundamentals of Diversity: Appreciating Difference", and a "Discrimination and Harassment Prevention Workshop". The core courses are planned for both Fall and Spring Semesters, and the Staff Senate was asked for suggestions as to future times and locations that would accommodate a variety of schedules. Race and the Institution, one of the electives offering three sessions of open conversations, has been scheduled for October 3-4. A second elective, "Multicultural Conflict Management: How I Manage Conflict", is planned for Spring Semester.

The "Promoting Excellence through Inclusion Initiative" is targeted instruction of faculty and recruiters. Why don't diverse individuals come to Virginia Tech, or why do they leaving? This Initiative will expose faculty to strategies for building diverse networks for underrepresented groups and other relevant populations.

Ms. Galarraga gave the representatives a seven-point questionnaire requesting input on types of support that we need, awareness opportunities we would like to see, thoughts on book club-like activities, recommendations on working groups, obstacles to staff attendance, ways to encourage participation, likelihood of attendance during non-traditional hours. She closed by asking for our additional comments about what we as a university are doing great. Knowing where we are now will facilitate planning where we go.

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be Thursday, September 15, in a location yet to be determined. The guest speaker is to be determined as well.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan L. Archer
Senate Secretary