

STAFF SENATE Minutes  
Cascades Room at IVTSCC, Thursday, November 17, 2011  
12:00 noon – 1:00 P.M.

**Attending:** Ron Angert, Susan Archer, Brent Bowden, Jean Brickey, Dan Cook, Sue Ellen Crocket, Carolynne Dudding, Linda Fountaine, Joseph Goodman, Lori Greiner, Velva Groover, Amanda Grose, Jennifer Hanratty, Robena Hughes, Delbert Jones, Denise Jones, Shelly Key, Lori Lee, Maxine Lyons, Tracy McCoy, Robin McMall-Miller, Steve Myers, Karen Nicholson, Angie Robinson, Becky Saylor, Robert Sebek, David Sindt, Judy Taylor, Sue Teel, Leslie Thornton-O'Brien, Amy Tunison, Tami Watson, Beverly Williams, Patricia Williams, Jon Wooge and fifty guests who signed the visitor list.

**Excused:** Bonnie Alberts, Judy Alford, and Anna Hawthorne.

**Opening:** President Maxine Lyons called the meeting to order at noon and suggested that the agenda be modified to dispense with business issues and committee reports to provide time for our two speakers. This recommendation was approved and seconded.

**Program: 1.)** John Beach, Director of Strategic Initiatives in Facilities Services and Steering Committee Chair of the current Commonwealth of Virginia Campaign (CVC).

John asked to address the Senate to add extra encouragement of our giving toward Virginia Tech's goal of \$250,000. The campaign is drawing to a close and we have pledges totaling \$162,000 to date. Mr. Beach reminded the Senate that of the 1200 charities covered in the campaign, many focus on local needs. He further suggested that if every one of the 7,000 full-time employees on campus pledged \$1 per pay for the year, the CVC could raise \$168,000. In other words, "do your part".

**Program: 2.)** Hal Irvin, Associate Vice President for Human Resources, came to explain the proposed State of Virginia changes to Classified Leave Benefits, to answer questions, and outline options.

Attendees were given a two-page synopsis of the proposal. Hal opened by emphatically stating three things: 1.) This proposal was not "cooked up" by Virginia Tech; 2.) There are and will be opportunities for feedback; and 3.) We are not powerless.

The current leave system carries a high payout liability. Goals of the proposal are to make the staff leave system easier to administer, reduce available leave provided within a calendar year for some groups, and reduce the amount of annual leave that can be carried forward into the next calendar year. The reform panel suggesting rolling all types of annual, sick, family, personal, and community service leave into one category called Paid Time Off (PTO). Virginia Sickness and Disability Plan (VSDP) participants could lose 1-9 days per year depending upon their years of service, with longer-term employees experiencing the greatest reductions. Non-VSDP participants (of which there are few on the VT campus) would not see as big a reduction in their Paid Time Off. Limiting the amount of annual leave which can be carried forward into the next calendar year to 15 days for all classified employees regardless of their years of service is part of this proposal. Many questions from the floor arose regarding the possible impact on the Non-VSDP participants who have been accumulating their sick leave to serve as "disability coverage" should they need it, as well as the payout value of the proposed annual leave that would be "frozen" until the employee leaves state employment or retires.

Hal promised that he would put the synopsis that he presented to Staff Senate on the Human Resources web site. He also asked that the following link be shared with our departments as a means by which employees can provide suggestions to Ralph Beyer, our Virginia Tech representative to the Virginia General Assembly. <http://hrapps.hr.vt.edu/miscforms/>. He suggested that comments be more specific than, "I don't like it!" Perhaps our suggestions will provide needed alternatives that will be more acceptable.

**Next Meeting:** The next meeting will be Thursday, December 17, in a location yet to be determined. The guest speaker will be Cynthia Rutherford, Director of Employee Wellness,

Respectfully submitted,  
Susan L. Archer  
Senate Secretary