

STAFF SENATE Minutes
Solitude Room at IVTSCC, Thursday, January 19, 2012
12:00 noon – 1:00 P.M.

Attending: Bonnie Alberts, Beth Alley, Susan Archer, Brent Bowden, Jeff Burr, Dan Cook, Joseph Goodman, Velva Groover, Jennifer Hanratty, Robena Hughes, Hal Irvin, Delbert Jones, Shelly Key, Maxine Lyons, Steve Myers, Wyatt Sasser, Becky Saylor, Robert Sebeck, Louellen Sharp, David Sindt, Sue Teel, Tom Tucker, Nick Vaught, Patricia Williams, and Jon Wooge.

Excused: Judy Alford, Dennie Munson, and Angie Robinson. **Guest:** Lia Kelinsky.

Opening: President Maxine Lyons called the meeting to order at noon. The agenda was adopted, and minutes of the December 15 were approved as posted electronically

Announcements: President Lyons reported that she has not seen any contributions to the VT Engage Canned Food Drive for the past two meetings. She encouraged resuming contributions and offered to see that they are delivered to the appropriate point of contact. The Committee on Policies and Issues had nothing to report, and Elections and Nominations did not meet in January. McComas Leadership Seminar Planning Committee has not met yet, but Susan Archer as the previous chair will convene the first meeting and work with the volunteers to find and guide a new chair for 2012. There were no reports from University Council, University Commissions or Committees.

Old Business: None. **New Business:** Staff Senate records, minutes, and reports for the years 1990 and before have now been archived in the VT President's section of Records Management. This protective step helps assure that the older documents are accessible and not subject to being shuffled from Senate President to Senate President with new slates of officers.

Program: Dr. William Lewis, Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion, focused on an introduction of himself since he came to Virginia Tech in 2010, a description of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, and a presentation of their new Strong Together campaign.

With an undergraduate degree in business administration, a master's in social work, a doctorate in higher education, six years of service in the United States Marine Reserves, and early employment in criminal justice, Dr. Lewis says that his history of "locking them up, keeping them out, and teaching" were all working with people jobs. He described Diversity as a "people working" type of industry. He expressed his hope to achieve "raving fans" beyond the Hokie Nation. Developing an environment that will create a Hokie for Life among each staff, faculty, and student on campus is his goal. This environment would be characterized by warmth and our common humanity, with intentional and sustained efforts to removing barriers.

The Office of Diversity and Inclusion, which was formed in 1998, has five objectives: 1) monitoring the Diversity strategic plan from its implementation to reporting; 2) promoting signature programs such as the Martin Luther King, Jr., Celebration week; 3) coordinating and communicating the Diversity Development Institute's courses and certificates; 4) engaging alumni and University Development in Diversity and Inclusion efforts; and 5) promoting Signature Programs. The balance of his presentation was focused on the Strong Together campaign.

Dr. Lewis discussed the Principles of Community and suggested that it is time to revisit those principles. "We can be strong only when we are together." The Principles of Community connect with VT's military tradition, its academic quality and reputation, the athletic fervor and records, the land grant mission, and our motto of "ut prosim". As a promotion of the Strong Together campaign, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion initially had 100 shirts printed, then another 150 more. Those have all sold, and University Bookstore and Volume II have ordered an additional 3,000 to sell at \$10 each. Some are orange, other maroon; some say "Strong", others say "Together". Placing each word on a different shirt with different colors was chosen with the goal of sparking conversations among folks on campus that might not necessarily make an effort to engage on another. This campaign is also offering min grants to encourage collaboration among groups that might not normally have common activities or interests.

Dr. Lewis opened the floor to questions at the close of his presentation. One senator asked him about his greatest challenge here. He replied that it is the decentralized university and the difficulty that poses to represent and coordinate a vision that speaks the same language throughout. The Office of Diversity and Inclusion has only eleven people trying to get the entire university to rally around centralized efforts. He wants them to serve as consultants to the entire university with its more than 28 units. One of the greatest strengths of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion is the university-wide ownership, for now there are resources that were not available 13 years ago.

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be Thursday, February 16, in a location yet to be determined. The guest speaker will be announced at a later date.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan L. Archer
Senate Secretary