

STAFF SENATE Minutes
310 ICTAS, Thursday, September 20, 2012
12:00 noon – 1:00 P.M.

Attending: Bonnie Alberts, Susan Archer, Brent Bowden, Lori Greiner, Velva Groover, Amanda Grose, Anna Hawthorne, Robena Hughes, Hal Irvin, Maxine Lyons, Steve Myers, Alex Parrish, Heather Baldwin Patel, Angie Robinson, Allison Rubio, Wyatt Sasser, Becky Saylor, Robert Sebeck, Louellen Sharp, Sue Teel, Amy Tunison, Nick Vaught, Ken Wieringo, Beverly Williams, and Jon Wooge.

Guests or Individuals Not on Roster: Katelyn Heller, Melissa Means, Hunter Gresham, Jackie Woodyard, Mandy Collins, Merry-Gayle Moeller, Val Henderson, Sandy Smith, Sheila Collins, Mitchell Holston, and Katie Gordon.

Excused: Judy Alford, and Leslie Thornton-O'Brien.

Remote Attendance: never came through from the Northern Virginia Center in the National Capital Region:

Opening: President Sue Teel called the meeting to order, and the Agenda was adopted without change.

Program: Rector of the Board of Visitors, Mike Quillen, explained his purpose as planning to meet with as many constituent groups on campus as possible in a proactive attempt to avoid the types of problems experienced at UVA and Penn State.

He believes there will have to be a change in higher education across the country in the coming years, and communicating the issues and choices will aid in the resolution of many things. While research funding is helping, Virginia Tech has no endowment protection, and we remain below the 50th percentile in Faculty and Staff salaries.

Most members of the Board of Visitors are Virginia Tech graduates, and they appreciate what the staff does for the university. Their role is strategic planning, not administrative management. The choices are tough, but Mike said that he believes that folks will fare better if the leadership communicates the issues and possible choices.

In responding to a question about his view on the way our resources have been dwindling over the last five years, Rector Quillen shared that the legislature is asking why we don't do more on-line courses, and use the facilities year round. Adapting to change is difficult and often requires a long lead time. Tuition increases are not sustainable. One of the ways to make Virginia Tech more affordable is to offer courses that are in demand, rather than including a large number that are not so much in demand. But that might adversely impact other aspects of our success. Employers are satisfied with graduates that Virginia Tech is turning out. Another way to make it more affordable is to outsource some of the services and teaching of basic courses. Utilizing the community college system would free up VT tuition dollars to cover the more specialized courses offered at the university level. The state's formula for expenses per student should have been raised six percent this year, but it only went up four percent. The percentage of funding VT receives from the state is very low, and state would like to have VT back in the fold now that we are a charter university. In fact, VT has given more money back to the state that it has been given.

Velva Groover raised the point that no staff criteria appear in comparisons between universities. Rector Quillen responded that Virginia Tech's administrative costs compare well with other universities, and agreed that staffing ratios need to be included in evaluations. He added that managers cannot take advantage of staff loyalty.

Other challenges facing the university are the fact that northern Virginia has the legislative clout, and the extension program needs funding help from the state. The previous bonus was funded by Virginia Tech, not the state, and VT was criticized for taking that initiative. Jon Wooge pointed out that while state-funded across-the-board pay raises have recently evaporated, supervisors can still initiate an in-band adjustment for specific employees.

When asked what he would like his legacy to be at the end of his term on the Board of Visitors, Mike said that it would be to have communicated that their job is to make hard decisions, but they also need to explain why. He closed by saying that he has lots to learn, and he would do it again.

Standing Committee Reports were scheduled at the end of the meeting to allow more time for Rector Quillen. When the meeting ran past the normal closing time, President Teel entertained a motion to adjourn and carry committee reports over to the October meeting.

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be Thursday, October 18, in 117A Randolph Hall. The guest speaker will be announced at a later date.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan L. Archer
Acting Senate Secretary