

STAFF SENATE Minutes
2420 North End Center
April 17, 2014
Noon – 1:00 pm

Attending: Bonnie Alberts, Susan Archer, Dan Cook, Velva Groover, Anna Hawthorne, Dennis Herron, Robena Hughes, Hal Irvin, Janet Murphy, Alex Parrish, Wyatt Sasser, Becky Saylor, Robert Sebek, Louellen Sharp, Amy Tanner, Sue Teel, Leslie Thornton-O'Brien, Tom Tucker, Christine Watkinson, Jon Wooge

Excused: Judy Alford, Cindy Booth, Bhadra Gunesequera, Maxine Lyons, Donna Raines, Katie Reaves, Amy Splitt, Sally Wieringa, Ken Wieringo

Guest: Steve Myers

Opening: Adoption of Agenda. All minutes have been sent out electronically.

Announcements: Please send Leslie Thornton-O'Brien (lthornto@vt.edu) a note if you will not be in attendance at the Staff Senate meeting so that she may mark you excused.

Discussion:

Updates to Policy 1025 – No resolution as of yet, share the discussion with your departments so you can get a foundation with your groups

Program – Mike Quillen, Rector, Board of Visitors

What's on your mind?

- Don't want to be rector when you're hunting for a new president
 - Also hired a new police chief, basketball coach, AD, etc.
- Complimented Sue Teel – lots of work went into the presidential search; time, clandestine meetings, national search, confidential, wasn't going to work to bring in all the candidates to be interviewed by the campus; there were a dozen other big universities looking for President's or other main positions at the same time
- 100 applicants; 20 from Texas
- Search committee nominated the top three candidates and recommended them to the board
- Clemson put no faculty on their search committee
- We chose to have every college represented
- Rector has made it clear to Dr. Sands that we (the staff) are very important to the university
 - He's very personable
 - Open
 - Executive board met with them at lunch last week – very nice time
- There is lots of senior administration that have been here for years and we recognize that a lot of senior people will retire. There will be some turn over at the university.
- We are caught up in the general assembly and the governor doesn't have a budget yet. We can't set tuition until we get that budget. Affects our enrollment numbers. Affects salary increases and purchasing equipment.
- The only revenue we receive is from tuition and what we receive on the research side.
- Probably won't do a budget until June.
- Rector lives in Bristol and the TN Governor said everyone was getting a 2% raise and then they had to take the raise out of consideration.
- We're going to get hit with some costs for health care and retirement.
- He does not know what the future holds but he doesn't think we're going to get any more money out of the state than what we are getting right now.
- Our plan is to fill the gap right now with the proceeds from research.
- Tuition raises are not sustainable; makes education unaffordable.
- 200k+ alumni; 100K under 40. Not at the stage where they can give back to the university; our endowment isn't at the level of someplace like UVa.
- 20 years away from having an endowment that will help supplement the costs of the university.
- Staff has done a great job of managing costs over the years
- Concern – 4 board members terms end this year. Governor could reappoint, but the trend has been that they will not reappoint people.
- 70% of the board will have 2 years or less with a new president coming in
 - It takes 2 years to get your bearing when you're on the board
 - Takes 2 years to really contribute

- 3 top appointments by Governor are to the Board of Visitors (BoV) of UVa, VT, and to the Department of Transportation
- The BoV serves at the pleasure of the Governor
- Rector has tremendous respect for the staff
- Two things that are impressive about Dr. Steger –
 - He spends a lot of time understanding the money side of the university and how you have to balance everything
 - He understands how important staff is to this university; how they aren't compensated as they should be; how loyal they are to the university. We don't have a lot of turn over for a business this size. Staff is here for a long time and it shows how much we love this place.
- University will continue to grow; great thing to have Dr. Sands come in and have a fresh look at this place
- May affect staff – never replaced Minnis Ridenour's position – Rector hopes Dr. Sands considers hiring a new Vice President of Operations. Problems we have might be solved quicker if we have someone in that position. A position that is not academic but can deal with other issues.
- Rector would like to hear other comments to pass onto next year's board
- Debbie Petrine will most likely be the next Rector and the first female Rector that VT's ever had
 - From Roanoke
 - Health care industry
- No news on a Vice Rector yet
- What else is on our mind?
 - How do you see the economic forecast in the future as far as VT expanding its infrastructure?
 - Governor McDonnell challenged us to add 5000 STEM students; when we looked into that, we said we'd have to build a whole new campus across 460 and we'd need more money, we don't have the resources. We're going to try to grow the graduate side by 1000 over the next 4 – 5 years.
 - There will be a traffic circle at the end of the drillfield near Alumni Mall with two way traffic
 - We can't add more numbers and not add more staff
 - Life's about money... regrettably, but it is. You have to figure out where the money is coming from.
 - Last time you were here, you talked about concerns regarding outsourcing. Recently passed a policy change for outsourcing security at student events. Is security something we want to outsource with the problems we've already seen with outsourcing (lack of back ground checks, etc.)?
 - First he's heard about it
 - Lots of respect for VT police
 - They are well respected around the country, not only as a campus police force
 - Outsourcing you have to look at the benefit across the board, not just the dollars
 - Our officers are well compensated because they are 'registered'
 - Something that needs to be looked at because that is a good point... you might save a few dollars by outsourcing security, but when something does happen (which it probably won't) that decision won't look good
 - WE have to be aware people who aren't stable may be attracted to VT and we have to be very careful about this decision
 - VT – April 16th – WE had to make the decision to pay the Clery Act fine. Difficult decision. Every other college in VA wanted us to fight it, but the cost of legal fees vs. the cost of the fine, and it needed to be put behind us before Dr. Steger left had to be considered.
 - He will look into the outsourcing of security
 - One thing all board members need to know is that all your emails are public.
 - What would be your advice to us as staff leaders of something(s) that we could do proactively to support the university, Dr. Sands, and move us forward?
 - Communication – biggest thing is that you learn so much by communicating. He doesn't know how we do that through administration. But there are some BoV's that feel they shouldn't get very involved with campus stuff, but he feels differently because he's an alumnus.
 - Tell us what you're thinking and what's on your mind. He's never heard that staff has gotten out of line with bringing something forward. He believes the flow of information is better.
 - You always want information to pass through to the BoV and at the very least they listen.
 - The BoV works by committee structure. The full Board doesn't know everything that is going on. There are a few board members that know a lot, but no one knows everything that is going on.
 - We as staff will see the real issues before they even get to the board.
 - Communication also means feedback. Give the board feedback.
 - Decisions have to be made, sometimes money affects those decisions, but communication on those and feedback on those decisions is needed. We have to communicate and continue to talk to each other.
 - The staff is the breadth of the university

- Need to think about how to open up lines of communication from staff to the BoV and to the new president
- It's going to be very different to see Dr. Sands come in and how he will learn the university
- The Staff has the ideas
- The whole of Burruss hall could leave and the staff could run the university for a year without anyone knowing
- How would you like to see staff grow?
 - Rector: Turn that question around – how do they allow you to grow? Is there a mentorship program?
 - There used to be a lot more opportunities for staff to grow
 - Summer would be a good opportunity for staff to learn
 - Rector: Something we need to look at, he's sure money had something to do with it
 - Would love to see a program to show supervisors (staff) how to grow in developing their staff, but we can't afford to send the supervisors for \$150 for them to go
 - Like a lumber jack who doesn't sharpen his tool
 - HR used to play an integral role in training staff
 - It's been 8 years since we've really had great trainings
 - Rector: So they offer the trainings but it comes out of department budgets?
 - We're at a university where it's world renowned, but we as staff don't always have access to that training/learning/education
 - There's a thought of they are paying to have an employee doing the work, and then on top of that they have to pay for them to get education? Supervisors aren't supportive. It's not supported across campus. The policy is supported across campus, but not through individual supervisors in individual areas. The supervisors feel the employee's should be taking their own time to take the training. No consistency across campus.
 - Tuition waiver comes out of the department. Some it does and some it doesn't
 - The 'haves and the have not's of funding
 - If the university is providing the opportunity, they should just forgo that amount of tuition
 - Rector: If a staff member sits on a course, it doesn't cost anymore to the university.
 - For every semester hour it has to be reimbursed. Someone is paying the money back to the university somewhere. A reason why we can't have the spouses, etc. taking classes at VT. Not like a private university.
 - We've run into the issue on children going to VT. We used to have a better policy.
 - Labs – it's an issue we need to understand. When you get into expensive labs, we are professionals and we take it seriously, grad students not so much. Is it still an issue?
 - Yes. What staff offers is continuity.
 - Rector: We all know the Higher Education model is going to have to change. He doesn't have a solution, but 10 – 15 years from now, the universities are going to have a solution and it's not going to be all things to all people – online training is a whole new thing – there has to be some changes because we can't change everything.
 - Working on the whole thing on labs, they're expensive and have a lot of things involved with them and trying to translate that into online is difficult. Labs seem to be a hurdle RE: online training.
 - Rector: Neither the board nor the administration has found a good model. On campus experience is important across the board. No one is making money doing this.
 - As he closes out his time as Rector, he really has enjoyed getting to know us and working with us. Has a strong appreciation of what we all do across the disciplines. The presidential search (compliments to Sue again) took a lot of time.
 - Thanks to the Rector for his service.
 - Rector: It's been an honor. Never thought he'd be on the Board.
 - Sue wanted to share with everyone that Mike didn't really know what "staff" meant, he still can't define it, so broad, but he knows we are the foundation of the university.
 - Rector: The four years he's been on the board, you get a different appreciation how complex this business is.

- **Would you be willing to encourage the BoV to meet with us? It means a lot to us as individuals and as Staff Senate members that you asked to meet with us. Encourage the next Rector to meet with us.**
 - **Rector: He will do that.**
- **You pointed out in the first 10 minutes that a precedent has been set by this Rector.**
 - **Rector: A good example is that he went with Chief Flinchum to see the conditions the police were working in in the trailers and they couldn't get the money to move into the new building. Magically somehow they're in the new building now.**
 - **Rector: A huge change once runway is extended. Huge change on this side of campus when new engineering building comes online.**

Staff Senate Standing Committees – Updates

McComas Leadership Seminar Planning Committee – Dennis Herron & Sally Wieringa *look for emails – sign up as soon as possible because there is an incredible day planned*

Next meeting:

May 15, 2014

Speaker: Becky Morris, Insurance Coordinator

Location: 2420 North End Center

Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,
Leslie Thornton-O'Brien
Senate Secretary

University Athletics Committee
April 23, 2014

- Discussed nominations for the Faculty Athletic Representative (FAR) to replace Dr. Larry Killough who is retiring after serving for 23 years. Nominated names will be submitted to the President to choose his replacement.
- Reviewed end of the year reports from:
 - Academic Integrity Subcommittee– Student Athlete Academic Support Services (SAASS)
 - Equity & Student Athlete Well-Being
 - Governance & Rule Compliance

Robena B. Hughes