

Staff Senate minutes: **September 18, 2014**

Noon – 1:00pm, VBI Conference Center

Attending: Blair Allen, Susan Archer, Bonnie Alberts, LaTawnya Burleson, Dan Cook, Velva Groover, Amanda Grose, Bhadra Gunesequera, Rhonda Hawley, Anna Hawthorne, Valerie Henderson, Cathy Hill, Robena Hughes, Maxine Lyons, Albert Moore, Steve Nagle, Alex Parrish, Heather Parrish, Donna Raines, Katie Reaves, Wyatt Sasser, Robert Sebek, Louellen Sharp, Amy Splitt, Sue Teel, Leslie Thornton-O'Brien, Tom Tucker, Christine Watkinson, Sally Wieringa, Ken Wieringo.

Monty Abbas, Faculty Senate representative

Excused: Judy Alford, Cindy Booth, Janet Murphy, Amy Tanner, Jon Wooge.

Guests: Dr. Timothy Sands, University President

Opening: The agenda was adopted and the minutes of the last meeting were approved electronically.

Staff are again reminded of the opportunity to participate in President Sands' installation procession.

Alex Parrish is coordinating a video of greetings by staff to be included in the installation program. Please email x3iv@vt.edu if you want to be in the video.

Program: Dr. Sands started June 1, 2014. He commented on his appreciation of our shared governance model and that he would be attending his first University Council that day. He commented on how staff have a representative on the Board of Visitors and that Staff Senate president Dan Cook served on an advisory group along with past president Sue Teel. He then opened the floor for question:

What would he like to change and not change: He would like to know more about our shared governance processes, both bottom-up processes for proposing change and top-down processes from the BOV perspective. He would like to see more learning resources for undergraduates and a strong residential experience. He commented on the current model of dividing faculty and staff among departments and institutions and wondered if that created too much internal competition.

He commented that faculty and staff compensation was too low (for faculty, more than 10% below our peers). He and his staff are working on the budget shortfall and acknowledged that per student funding from the state is down by a factor of two, and that support is shifting from public to private funds. So we need to increase private giving. He has had several discussions at the state level with the governor and state delegates and business leaders about how to fund higher education while transforming our economy. Virginia is very dependent on federal funds, and as discretionary budgets decrease, Virginia's economy is affected. VT can play a role in diversifying the economy.

Will our focus remain on research: Sands stated that he wants the university to remain committed to research. He sees continuing growth in graduate enrollment as we keep expanding research programs. Undergrads are thought of as part of separate programs, but we need more synergy between grads and undergrads, including undergrads doing research.

Our highest growth area can be attracting student talents from other states and countries. By growing the institution with non-Virginia residents, we can keep Virginia tuition under control. There's room to grow enrollment while not taking slots away from Virginia residents. We need to preserve the Virginia Tech culture as we increase enrollment and emphasize inclusion to prepare for a more diverse student body. The non-resident population will grow incrementally, which would then drive the need for more faculty, staff, and facilities. We can use the summertime as a buffer for

expansion. Leasing space, renovations, and supporting infrastructure will need to be considered. He met former president Hahn, who tripled the size of the university in his tenure.

We need to be aware of barriers to inclusion in an increasing student population. Large groups from one culture tend to separate themselves. They need support and assistance to feel part of the larger community.

What is his vision for the next 10 years: Increasing opportunities at our remote campuses: Switzerland, India, even Alexandria. Study abroad is a transformative experience for students. The Swiss campus could expand beyond architecture to include performing arts and business. He is more optimistic about these programs now that he's visited some of them.

How do we support Extension for the next 150 years: Sands has only visited large Extension complexes so far. He wants to visit smaller, rural ones. It's great that we have relationships with 107 counties, Examples of what Extension does right: assistantships to small businesses, community engagement, and bringing things to where the people are. The county is probably not the right way to divide up Extension. We need better partnerships with local governments. Extension was exempted from the budget shortfall cuts. Other ideas: make use of veterans and their families, do more to help the wine industry in the state. VTKnowledgeWorks is becoming part of Extension (prior focus was CRC). Look at efficiencies and formal ways of bringing new ideas forward.

Where do we want to be in 5-10 years: Broaden and grow the local economy. CRC and Roanoke connections are too small to assist finding careers for partners/spouses of new faculty. CRC size should triple. It should become a magnet for people who want to see their work become products and services. (Growth of downtown Roanoke as a result of Carillion partnership as example.) Continue the momentum of integrating arts and humanities into science and technology. Student-driven new academic programs. Endowment is \$800M. Needs to increase by a factor of 5 for student and faculty recruitment and retention.

Next meeting: October 16, 2014: Dale Robinson - Compliance & Conflict Resolution Manager, 2420 North End Center

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Sebek
Staff Senate Secretary

CEOD Sept. meeting summaries:

Scheduling events and religious holidays

It was brought to the attention of the commission that a large campus event was scheduled on a major religious holiday, which precluded faculty (and potentially student) involvement. Given that major religious holidays are posted on the University Faculty-Staff Planning calendar and on the Religious and Ethnic Holidays section of the University Registrar's website (which utilize the comprehensive Interfaith calendar), a course of action to prevent such future personal and professional conflicts is needed.

Changes to the Office of Diversity and Inclusion

Dr. Jack Finney spoke with members about the open letter that had gone out to the Virginia Tech community on June 30th, 2014 from President Timothy Sands announcing changes to Diversity and Inclusion. Dr. Finney added that President Sands had asked Senior Vice President and Provost Mark McNamee to work with the university community to implement a new model of shared responsibility and accountability. This new structure is adapted from best practices at other universities and will be designed to ensure that university leadership and representatives take personal and collective responsibility for inclusive excellence. David Travis Jr. has agreed to serve as the president's advisor and interim vice provost. David added that CEOD will play an important part and role as we continue to move forward.

Role of university governance-Jack Finney

Dr. Jack Finney provided members with a hard copy of Virginia Tech's Governance Structures. He added that people who populate commissions should be communicating and reaching out to other commissions, so they can take information back to constituency groups. There was discussion of the roles of commission members in facilitating communication.

Constituent group discussion

Brought to the attention of the commission that an initiative to find affordable childcare for undergraduate students on campus is underway. Short-term solutions have been suggested but it was asked of commission members to help find long-term answers.

It was brought to the attention of a commission member in Appalachian Studies Program that staff and students from the local area and the Appalachian region feel they are treated differently (implying discrimination), based upon the way they talk. In the past, CEOD had working groups that discussed faculty/staff and student issues.

Working groups

To address concerns about campus event scheduling and religious holidays, the education of the university community on the changes to Policy 1025 (inclusion of gender identity and gender expression as protected entities), faculty/staff/student instances of harassment, and the overall mission, membership and charge of the Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity, working groups were formed.

Commission on Student Affairs summary

The CSA always starts the semester by listing potential issues and topics for future meetings. A concern that has been discussed at two meetings is availability of affordable child care for graduate and undergraduate students, with the acknowledgement that this issue also affects faculty and staff. The Grad School is working on this issue for grad students and will announce a program soon. That announcement will drive CSA to contact other constituent groups, including Staff Senate, to look at a university-level solution to this problem.

Robert Sebek, representative to CSA

University Council on International Affairs (UCIA)

The international undergraduate student population has grown with the fall semester. Chinese and South Korean students now number 600 of the total 1153. International student population is also growing at our peer institutions. International Support Services is working on increasing its cultural activities for the non-degree exchange program. The challenge is that these students do not pay the student activity fee and therefore, don't have access to some activities.

Career Services has new brochures and handouts that explain how they can help with cover sheets, resumes, study/work abroad and other services.

It was discussed as to how to increase the number of nominations for the alumni award. It was noted that there was a glitch in the People Admin system that held up about a dozen applications for a director position and it is important for departments to note that this same issue might happen to other applications.

The UCIA bylaws were last updated in 2010. A subcommittee was formed to collect feedback, make updates and bring before the committee.

There was a discussion as to who needed access to the information on the new Health Disclosure Form. There was a difference of opinion as to what constitutes relevant parties. A small group will reach out to Services for Students with Disabilities to see what might need changing.

There was a discussion as to where to house international visiting professors since the university does not have any international guest housing.

Judy Taylor