

**STAFF SENATE Minutes**  
**2420 North End Center, Thursday, July 16, 2015**  
12:00 noon – 1:00 P.M.

**Attending:** Bonnie Alberts, Judy Alford, Blair Allen, Susan Archer, Cindi Booth, Dan Cook, LeeAnn Ellis, Velva Groover, Kevin Martin, Albert Moore, Steve Myers, Janet Murphy, Alex Parrish, Heather Parrish, Danette Poole, Mark Quinn Steen, Amy Tunison, Tami Watson, and Beverly Williams.

**Excused:** Robena Hughes, Robert Jacks, Steve Nagle, Leslie Thorton-O'Brien, Robert Sebek, Amy Split, Judy Taylor, Sue Teel, Sally Wieringa

**Opening:** President Dan Cook called the meeting to order, and the Agenda was adopted without change. Staff Senate won the challenge for the Employee's Spouse and Dependent Scholarship contributions exceeding the number of Faculty Senate Contributors by 16.

**Program:** Beth Lancaster from the Information Technology Security Office (ITSO), sharing tips to avoid phishing malware and the upcoming 2-factor Authentication to enhance data security.

Phishing has been used to obtain sensitive information, appear as an identical copy of a legitimate site and come with a malware attachment to infect stored data and/or infect others through following e-mail transmissions. See the attached scenarios provided by ITSO that more fully explain the methods and consequences for recent attempts.

Obtaining Personal Identifying Information (PII) is a major goal of phishing. We were reminded to set up PID recovery options, particularly those individuals using a personal PC working from home. Reminder: what's convenient for me is also convenient for hackers. Beth gave an example of one VT employee who had their passwords saved in their browser.

We were also reminded that our VT PII also gives hackers access to dorms and grades. Beth suggested that we encourage everyone in our areas of responsibility to follow the university's standards for storing and transmitting any personal information. Encryption is highly recommended, even if only used in transmitting information. Beth suggested we look for more detail about protecting our sensitive information at <http://security.vt.edu/protectdata.html>.

She encourage the senators to become department sentinels, sharing information about protecting our data, caution alerts about recent phishing events, and developing strong passwords. Authenticity of e-mails from senders who are not know to the recipient can be verified by a phone call, even outside VT. We discussed some subject lines that might be used on a college campus to get staff, students and faculty to open the way for malware: "football tickets", "past-due invoice".

Another way to protect our information, accounts, and equipment is by using strong passwords, the longer the better. Beth suggested we create a happy phrase unique to each account or information source. For example: "I just love to write Staff Senate minutes!" = ljl2wSSm! When we use the same password for all accounts, then once a hacker gets one password, they can glean personal information from our other accounts.

Ms. Lancaster encouraged us to learn more about multi-factor authentications, and set up Account Recovery Options as well. If we suspect abuse, send specific information to abuse @vt.edu.

**Standing Committee Reports** were skipped as the information presentation ran past the normal closing time, President Cook entertained a motion to adjourn and carry committee reports over to the August meeting.

**Next Meeting:** The next meeting will be Thursday, August 20, in the VBI conference room. The guest speaker will be VP of Information Technology Scott Midkiff presenting information about the replacement of Scholar and how it will impact us as staff.

Respectfully submitted,  
Susan L. Archer  
Acting Senate Secretary