

# Staff Senate

<http://www.staffsenate.vt.edu/>

April 20, 2017  
12:00 Noon – 1:00 P.M  
Hillcrest Hall Room 143

## MINUTES

*Attendees:* Bonnie Alberts, Lisa Bishop, Debbie Breon, LaTawnya Burleson, Dan Cook, Chad Dalton, Pat Donovan, Kim Dulaney, Lee Ann Ellis, Linda Fountaine, Velva Groover, Bruce Harper, Anna Hawthorne, Carolyn Hopkins, Brian Huddleston, Doug Hylton, Robena Hughes, Amy Ingram, Rachel Lester, Katrina Loan, Albert Moore, Alex Parrish, Heather Parrish, Robert Sebek, Tamarah Smith, Lenora Stover, Steve Tatum, Judy Taylor, Sue Teel, James Venable III, Tami Watson, Beverly Williams, Sarah Woodward, Jon Wooge

*Webex Attendee(s):* Judy Alford, Rob Jacks, Sheree Montgomery, Robin Lawson, Robin Littleton, Amy Splitt

*Excused:* Jackie Blevins, Sue Ellen Crocker, Robin Lawson, Zerita Montgomery, Steve Nagle, Hannah Parks, Kim Ridpath,

### **Call to order at 12:00 p.m.by President, Alex Parrish**

The agenda was electronically submitted to the senators a week before the meeting. With no additions, Dan Cook made the motion to accept the agenda with a 2<sup>nd</sup> by Robena Hughes. It was accepted by majority vote.

### **Attendance sheet for check-in was available near room entrance.**

**Approval of Minutes** (electronically) The minutes were distributed by email and changes made.

Alex announced that former staff senate president Dan Cook was retiring this month. A card was circulated for all to sign and Alex presented Dan with a gift card. Anyone wishing to contribute to the gift card can send it to Alex Parrish. Dan shared his appreciation to the staff senate and wished us well.

### **Staff Senate Standing Committees – Updates**

- Communications – Katrina Loan shared that Rachel Lester is still taking pictures of Senators and alternates. The staff senate brochure lead, Chad Dalton, is working on the final touches.
- Elections and Nominations, Jon Wooge sent out the ballot and, after voting ended, alerted all appointees of their placement and terms. Names of those who were voted for appointments onto Commissions have been forwarded to the President's office for final

decisions. Typically, staff are not notified by the President (or President's Office) until August as to whether they will be appointed to a Commission.

- Policies and Issues – Robert Sebek noted that this committee is still in need of a chair. He will continue to lead the group until one is appointed.
- McComas Leadership Seminar – Heather Parrish, Chair of the McComas Leadership Seminar, shared the following updated: 225 staff signed up and 32 on the wait list. Professional Catering will be catering the event and are working on food restrictions and special requests. This year we will have 1 keynote and 5 speakers (Vice President /Provost Thanasis Rikakis, Vice Provost for Enrollment Degree Management Wanda Dean, Vice President for Student Affairs Patty Perillo, Graduate Student in Civil Engineering Siddhartha Roy, Director of the Virginia Agriculture Leaders Obtaining Results (VALOR) Megan Seibel, and Head Coach Men's Basketball Buzz Williams). We have 19 sponsors (contributing \$17,500), and 10 members on the planning committee for this event.

### **University Council, Commission, Committees**

- The University Council has set a resolution to approve Labor Day as a holiday (no classes for students, and an official faculty/staff holiday).

**Ombuds Resolution** – This has been read at the University Council. At this point, the voting is only that the university wants to establish an ombuds resolution. The 2<sup>nd</sup> reading will take place at the next University Council meeting.

**Big Event Recap** – On April 15<sup>th</sup>, three of the executive board members (Alex Parrish, Tamarah Smith, and Katrina Loan) took part in the Big Event. This event is student run and is mainly students working to make a difference in the community. The executive board wanted to get involved in giving back, as well. This initial participation went very well and felt rewarding to those who participated. Numerous senators indicated willingness to join next year, so hopefully staff participation will increase.

**Diversity Certificates** – Heather Parrish spoke on the value of earning two of the three diversity certificates that the university offers. Diversity Ally, and Diversity Advocate and the value that it has brought to her. Tamarah Smith shared about her experience with the Diversity Ambassador program, which is the final certificate in that area. The Diversity Ambassador program is broadly project-based, and continuing to be an advocate after the program is important.

**Presentation: Open Enrollment** – Special guests Susan Hughes, Interim Director, Human Resources Administration, and Minh-An Pence updated the group on the upcoming open enrollment for 2017-2018 health insurance plan selection.

**First: The period for open enrollment (if you're going to change your insurance) is shortened this year.** It's only two weeks, and it starts May 1. There should be information up on the HR website next week. The "Spotlight" magazine should be on the HR site next week.

**Second: You cannot do open enrollment online this year.** This is pretty critical. **The admin site that we have been accustomed to use is gone; you must either fax or mail your forms**

**in this year. (forms can be found on the human resources webpage. <http://hrapps.hr.vt.edu/orientation/benefits.aspx>) They must be postdated by May 15, 2017 and have been received in the Human resources department by that date as well. There will be no exceptions.** If there are staff using the Flexible Spending Account (FSA) option, that will expire on July 1” to “As a reminder, current Flexible Spending Account (FSA) option expires on July 1<sup>st</sup>. In order to re-enroll in FSA for 2017-2018, **employees must fill out the paper form, even if they aren’t changing their base health insurance plan, to re-enroll in FSA.** A notable change is that the maximum FSA amount has been raised to \$2,600 for the 2017-2018 plan year

Third: **Only about 20% of participants get the discount rewards.** Encourage your people to do this. A single user (?) will save \$17 per pay period; a married couple would save \$34 if each cover’ee participates. This year the biometric screening is no longer required, only the online health assessment. Keep in mind that the health assessment must be completed before May 15 for the savings to show on your July 1 pay check. If it is completed afterwards the savings will be delayed 6-8 weeks from when you completed it.

**For now, the things to definitely help people understand: The enrollment period is shorter (May 1-15), you have to do it on paper. If you're changing your plan, you have to do things differently than you may be accustomed to. If you are doing FSA, you must fill out the paper form.**

For questions concerning benefits, contact the human resources service center at 231-9331 or [hrrservicecenter@vt.edu](mailto:hrrservicecenter@vt.edu)

There was an update on the Employee Benefit Committee. Discussion is taking place about whether the university is really saving money during the winter closing. If this committee feels the winter closing needs to be reevaluated for cost savings and benefit this committee can start the process on sharing their concerns about it.

One staff senator asked if there was a way to encumber the winter break leave so that staff who did not have much leave were sure to have leave for that time frame. Another staff senator shared that some universities use extra staff holidays to cover their winter breaks.

Dan Cook made the motion to end the meeting and Robena Hughes made the second. The meeting was adjourned at 12:50 p.m.

**SAVE THE DATE:**

**Staff senate meeting May 18, 2017 location: The Inn at Virginia Tech, Smithfield room**