

# Staff Senate

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

September 19, 2019  
Noon – 1:00pm  
2470 North End Center

## MINUTES

**Attendees:** *Judy Alford, Lisa Bishop, LaTawnya Burleson, Angel Carter, Pat Donovan, Bruce Harper, Amy Ingram, Brandy Morse, Steve Nagle, Sarah Owen, Tasia Persson, Jennifer Pike, Amber Robinson, Sally Shupe, Tamarah Smith, Teresa Smith, Steve Tatum, Judy Taylor, Wendy Vaughn, Amanda Villar, Serena Young*

**Zoom Attendees:** *Chris Akers, Nicole Akers, Zerita Montgomery, MaDonna Overstreet, Jonathon Poff, Amy Splitt, Jamie Stein*

**Excused:** *Sue Ellen Crocker, Velva Groover, Katrina Loan, Sheree Montgomery, Hannah Parks, Heather Parrish, Kimberly Ridpath, Robert Sebek, Laura Steinberg*

### **Call to order by Tamarah Smith at 12:01 pm**

The agenda was sent out electronically with no additions, the agenda was approved at the meeting.

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

### **Approval of Minutes**

Approval of August 2019 minutes was done electronically

### **President's Update – Ms. Smith**

- Attended first BOV as Staff representative to the board. This meeting was in Arlington, with three tours as well as the normal committee meetings. Smith was encouraged by the board members support of the staff and looks forward to being staff voice.
- This coming week Ms. Smith will be in Roanoke representing the staff as a member of the VP for Finance search committee.

### **Buzz Word: Diversity & Inclusion – Amy Ingram**

- What is Inclusion and Diversity? - The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), defines diversity as “the collective mixture of differences and similarities that includes for example, individuals and organizational characteristics, values, beliefs, experiences, backgrounds, preferences, and behaviors.” Inclusion, however, refers to the efforts used to embrace those differences. It describes how much each person feels welcomed, respected, supported and valued. Inclusion is about seeing employee's whole

selves, recognizing that their differences make them uniquely qualified to contribute to the organizations.

- Here at the university, Menah Pratt-Clarke is the Vice President for [Diversity, Inclusion,](#) and Strategic Affairs. The office is located in 336 Burruss Hall.
- In Menah's greeting from the inclusion and diversity website, she states the work of inclusion is consistent with our motto, Ut Prosim (that I may serve). Ut Prosim enables us to elevate the value of different ideas, values, beliefs, perspective, identities, backgrounds, and cultures, as part of the commitment to be of service to anyone, at any time, and anywhere. At Virginia Tech we should recognize the diversity of all types, supporting the mission of learning, teaching and discovery. We must build a community of diversity and trust to engage in the complex, fascinating and transformative work that occurs on and off our campus.
- The Office of Inclusion and Diversity have several programs pertaining to inclusive VT such as Advancing the Human Condition, Black College Institute Pre-College Program, Faculty Women of Color in Academy Conference, Future Faculty Development Program, Principles of Community Award, and Student Opportunity Achievement Resources also known as SOAR.
- Separate from the Office of Inclusion and Diversity, I work in MAOP, Multicultural Academic Opportunities Program - where it's our central goal to promote inclusion and diversity. We partner with various academic colleges and departments within Virginia Tech as well as other colleges and universities, and government entities to provide financial support as well as universal support in research for diverse students.
- A few weeks ago, President's Sands University Address included commitment to increasing the diversity of its student body and eliminating disparities in the university experience, which is a priority in the university's strategic plan. Moving closer to a goal of enrolling 40% of Hokies who are underrepresented and underserved, including first-generation, low-income students and veterans.
- There is an InclusiveVT Week here on campus that has already occurred this year, this is an annual week after Labor Day. It is dedicated to adhering to and promoting the institutional and individual commitment to Ut Prosim (that I may serve) in the spirit of community, diversity, and excellence.
- This year's theme was "Where Everyone Belongs," and it provided a platform for faculty, staff, and students to engage, share ideas, and connect through activities that celebrate our diverse communities and strengthen our inclusive culture.
- Some things to think about ...what are ways you can support InclusiveVT week? But not only just for that week, to me, this is not something we should just support throughout the week but be a continuous support throughout campus and our community, throughout the entire year, and beyond.
- There's a list found on the inclusive VT website, for simple, everyday things you can do to build community. **As an employee you can:**
  - Offer to help someone who is busier than you at work
  - Tell someone's supervisor they are doing a great job
  - Encourage a colleague who is struggling
  - Grab a coffee or go to lunch with someone you haven't seen in a while
  - Invite someone to join you at one of the art exhibits
  - Meet your InclusiveVT representative

- **Encourage students in ways they can be supportive amongst their peers:**
  - Suggest they Introduce themselves to someone in class who they don't know
  - Invite a friend to join them at one of the art exhibits
  - Offer encouragement to someone who is having a difficult time
  - Tell someone how much they appreciate their support
  - Sit with someone new in a dining facility
  - Visit one of the cultural centers in Squires
- Lastly, I leave you with a question to think about. What are some ways we can try to engage more in diversity and inclusion within Staff Senate?

**Ut Prosim Opportunities:**

- Lyric – best days to volunteer are Sundays and Thursdays
- Hokie BugFest – October 5 from 9-6

**Staff Senate Standing and Ad Hoc Committees:** Updates and Membership, Chair elects

- Communication: Mr. Harper – trying to meet soon for updates
- Elections & Nominations: Ms. Taylor – had 2 open positions recently & those are now filled; looking at opening in October
- Policies & Issues: Ms. Alford – reviewing Bylaws & Constitution and reviewing a resolution
- McComas Leadership Seminar: Ms. Ingram – met with Lisa Wilkes on improvements to the program for this coming year
- Child Care (ad hoc): Ms. Loan - none
- Strategic Planning (ad hoc): Ms. Smith – has not met yet and is looking for someone to take over the lead of this committee.

**Presentation on Shared Governance:** April Myers, Associate Director of Governance

- Presentation shared with minutes
- President has appointed a governance committee to look at the structure
- Participation by all, gives people a voice, and has checks & balances
- What is Shared Governance?
  - Shared responsibility
  - Major groups should have a voice, but the President has the ultimate decision
  - Open communication and transparency in decision making
  - Responsibilities are done by groups
- History
  - 1980's – Taskforce established for Shared Governance
  - 1991-1992 – new constitution was approved
  - 1993 – changes came to the University Council by-laws
  - 1995 – new by-laws implemented, which established Staff Senate and student participation

- 2004-2005 – Taskforce to review University Council membership and updates
- 2006-2007 – Staff got a seat on the Board of Visitors
- 2016 – Taskforce was created to send all resolutions to Faculty Senate for review before being sent to University Council
- 2017 – Office of the VP for Policy & Governance was created
- 2018 – Another level of review was implemented: Review of Commission Resolutions by Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, SGA, & GSA prior to forwarding to University Council
- Difference between Constitution and By-laws
  - Constitution is approved by the BOV and gives an overview of what we want to do
  - By-laws state how it should be done
- University Council Membership
  - Ex Officio
    - President\*
    - Secretary of University Council\*
    - All Vice Presidents & Deans
    - Assistant Vice President of Equity & Accessibility
    - All Commission Chairs
    - Representatives to the Board of Visitors\*
  - Elected
    - One faculty member from each college
    - Representatives from Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, Student Government Association, & Graduate Student Assembly
    - One faculty/staff representative and one student representative elected annually by the Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity
  - \* means these are non-voting members
- Why get involved
  - To be heard (give a voice)
  - Professional Development experience

**Presentation on CVC Campaign:** Ed Lener, Associate Director Collection Management in the Library

- Presentation is sent out with the minutes
- Commonwealth of Virginia Campaign
- Not a charity but the ability to give to charities
- Give by payroll deduction to prescreen and variety of charities
- Runs September 30 – December 13, 2019
- Goal is \$390,000 and up participation of 20% from last year.
- Kick off on 9/30/19 at Owens Hall from 11:30 – 1:30pm

- When you donate make sure to designate the charity you want
- Have departmental reps
- Online pledge system (cvc.hr.vt.edu)
- Paper forms are also available
- Some units will host fundraisers, so please participate

**Next meeting:** October 17, 2019 - 2470 North End Center

**Adjournment** at 1:05 pm

Respectfully submitted:  
Brandy Morse

Staff Senate Constituency Report  
Virginia Tech Board of Directors  
August 23-26, 2019  
Presented by Tamarah Smith, Staff Senate President

Good afternoon Rector Valeiras, Board of Visitors members, President Sands, Administrators and distinguished guests.

I am honored to be a part of the constituent group to advocate for our amazing staff.

As this is my first meeting as the staff representative to the Board, here is a little about me.

I was born in California but raised in West Virginia. I learned at an early age that you had to work hard for what you want. Being raised in a tight knit farming community, we knew everyone and were taught the value of communities rallying together for all situations.

From an early age, I have had a passion for leading, and a desire to help communities grow. With my 30 years of Virginia Tech Service, a certification in advanced organizational management and some college course that I have taken here, I have a passion for this university and for service. I have seen so much change over the years and support the change that is occurring.

One change I am advocating for staff this year is to expand their knowledge of change occurring at the university and take an active part in learning the “buzz” words and how they apply to our work. The “5 Minute Buzz Word” provides opportunity for a staff volunteer to share their understanding of the initiative, what it means to them, and how it impacts their work. Specific examples include Ut Prosim, shared governance, and Tech Talent Pipeline. My hope is that if staff better understand the terms faculty and administrators are using, they will feel more included and appreciated for what they bring to the table.

Another staff initiative is to offer different activities or events where we can work together in serving not only our university but our communities as well. This past month I shared the need for volunteers working as a Hokie Helper for move in. At this time, I do not have a number of those who are participating, but I am excited to start this initiative. These events will not only benefit the community but help staff to feel the sense of community that we all need.

At our past staff senate meeting we were joined by Reese Ramos, our new Director of the Ombuds Office, who very delightfully engaged the staff in what his office has to offer. The staff were very encouraged by this new resource and look forward to working with him.

As you have been hearing, affordable/quality child care continues to be an issue in this community. Staff Senate has an ad hoc committee on this issue and will continue to share this need with the university. The past staff senate president, Robert Sebek, is also a stakeholder on the University Childcare Committee convened earlier this spring by Dr. Pinkney.

Finally, compensation is being reviewed on student wage, and non-student wage positions. This past year we made great strides with increasing the minimum salaried paid amount to \$12.00 an hour. When this increase was first brought forth, there was ongoing concern that non-student wage and student wage positions may be doing the same type of work and if this is the case, shouldn't those positions be reviewed and considered for a change to the minimum wage. A separate committee has been formed to address these concerns. This committee is being chaired by Paula Stuard, Compensation Director in Human Resources and I am fortunate to have a seat on it.

I am a resource for this university advocating for staff, working beside our faculty, undergraduate and graduate student constituent leaders. I welcome encouragement and input on how we can work together to make our university stronger.