

# Staff Senate

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

January 16, 2020  
Noon – 1:00pm  
2470 North End Center

## MINUTES

**Attendees:** *Lisa Bishop, Angel Carter, Pat Donovan, Bruce Harper, Brandon Lester, Zerita Montgomery, Brandy Morse, Steve Nagle, Tasia Persson, Sarah Owen, Amber Robinson, Robert Sebek, Sally Shupe, Laura Steinberg Hagy, Judy Taylor, Sue Teel, Amanda Villar, Serena Young*

**Zoom Attendees:** *Chris Akers, Melanie Darden, Sheree Montgomery, MaDonna Overstreet, Kimberly Ridpath, Becki Smith, Teresa Smith, Amy Splitt, Jamie Stein, Chris Whitlock, Sarah Woodward*

**Excused:** *Judy Alford, LaTawya Burlison, Velva Groover, Doug Hylton, Amy Ingram, Heather Parrish, Jennifer Pike, Tamarah Smith*

### **Call to order by Serena Young at 12:02 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 November 2019 minutes was done electronically and is now posted on the Staff Senate Website.

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

- Communication: Mr. Harper – good turnout at the Wellness & Benefits Fair on Wednesday, January 15; we were thanked for the pay increase and asked about the parking issues, leave buyback, and handed out brochures
- Elections & Nominations: Ms. Taylor – currently 15 open positions; Judy gave out the listing of positions expiring in June 2020. If you have questions, please reach out to Judy Taylor or Tasia Persson. Nominations are currently being accepted until the end of January.
- Policies & Issues: Ms. Alford – the following resolutions have been reviewed and voted to support them
  - Resolution 2019-2020.H Resolution to Change Membership to the Athletics Committee

- Resolution 2019-2020.I Resolution to Approve New Major, Community Economic Development, in Bachelor of Science in Applied Economic Management
- Resolution 2019-2020.J Resolution to Approve New Major, Food and Health Systems Economics, in Bachelor of Science in Applied Economic Management
- Resolution 2019-2020.K Resolution to Approve New Major, Environmental Economics, Management, and Policy, in Bachelor of Science in Applied Economic Management
- Resolution 2019-2020.L Resolution to Approve New Major, International Trade and Development, in Bachelor of Science in Applied Economic Management
- Resolution 2019-2020.M Resolution to Approve New Major, Arabic, in Bachelor of Arts in Foreign Languages
- McComas Leadership Seminar: Ms. Ingram – meeting on Thursday, January 23 to set the schedule
- Child Care (ad hoc): Ms. Morse – none; will need new chair
- Strategic Planning (ad hoc): Ms. Burleson – email Ms. Burleson if you want to join; has not meet yet

**Ut Prosim Opportunities:** Please share any opportunities as they arise.

**Presentation on Board of Visitors:** Rector Horacio Valeiras

- 1<sup>st</sup> year as the Rector
- Only member of the Board that does not live in the Commonwealth – lives in San Diego, CA
- 1980 VT Grad in Chemical Engineering
- All BOV members are volunteers in their positions
- Development for Staff
  - We see a lot of opportunities for Faculty to go to trainings and such, but not so much for staff
  - Need to communicate with people to not have to change jobs to grow
  - The Board does not get into that much detail in their meetings but can allocate resources for things like these
  - Really must reside at the department level
  - Meeting with Dr. Sands about this issue so he can help as well
  - They always encourage supervisors to allow staff to go to trainings
  - Need a mindset change that these employees will grow and benefit their own department and not necessarily leave
  - Hopefully can see some of this with the new Supervisor Training

- With enrollment increases, there are many issues that come with that, such as the housing market
  - Housing issue in the NRV as well as Northern VA with the Innovation Campus
  - Working with the Town of Blacksburg on this issue trying to help resolve some of this problem
  - Constant subject at every meeting
  - Not an easy fix and will require constant work
- When we hear about the growth of the University, we hear about students and faculty, but what about more support staff.
  - Staff members are getting spread thin
  - Making them more inefficient
  - University cannot match salaries and some other benefits of working in private industry
  - AP Faculty are also treated more like staff than faculty
  - Too many staff positions open in the University – trying to get more compensation to compete, but not wanting inversion, where the new employee comes in making more than the employees already there in that position
  - Trying to get employees up to market rates by prioritizing how the money is spent
  - Prioritizing by supporting students, having an infrastructure for faculty to thrive, and have an efficient administration.
  - Really have to allocate to get that prioritization. Currently working on this with the Finance Group to find the gaps and see the costs of closing them.
- Staff always feel put on the back burner and not appreciated
  - The Board has heard this for a while now and are working on it
  - The Capital Campaign launch did not mention staff and that was inconsiderate and taken to heart and will not happen again.
  - Staff are essential to the University
  - Many staff members are alumni and felt left out intentionally
  - That was not so, but something should have been done
  - Taken to heart how it made people feel
- Compensation
  - Working on this by currently gathering information
  - Don't know what the state will do, but VT will do something
  - Trying to get to where are the gaps and how much do we have to spend to cover the gaps
  - Hopefully after gathering information this year, the results will come in for next year
  - Are they going to do a buy out for those close to retirement?
    - No they are not, because there is not enough people out there to replace them

- Could make the staff problems worse and not better
- Parking
  - Always and issue
  - Looking to do the \$500 supplement again this year
  - Aware that this and child care are the biggest issues for everyone
  - Have looked at many solutions and nothing has worked so far
  - Recruiting is hard because of spaces more than the cost
- As we look at recruiting staff, especially in IT, is there a change in benefits for those harder to recruit positions.
  - Board is looking at this currently
  - Not just in compensation, but benefits as well
  - Board is limited though because of the state
- Why do family members of VT employees not get a discount?
  - Many places do that, but he was not sure why VT does not
  - Board is going to look into to get us the information
  - Might be a taxable issue or a state code
- The Board really appreciates all we do and that it takes time and effort.

**Next meeting:** February 20, 2020 - 2470 North End Center with Rosemary Bliezner to talk about the Sesquicentennial (150 years)

**Adjournment** at 12:49 pm

Respectfully submitted:  
Brandy Morse