

## Minutes, June 15, 2023 Regular Meeting

The meeting was the first in-person meeting of the year, held in Room 110A in the New Classroom Building. The meeting was also available via Zoom.

The meeting was called to order by President Serena Young at 12:00 p.m. She introduced President Tim Sands, making his annual visit to speak to the Staff Senate.

Dr. Sands talked about the history of land grant colleges and how the act of 1862 has played a role in today's university. The land grant colleges were to educate a broader range of students from a variety of backgrounds and to be an "economic engine" for the state. Virginia Tech has launched the "Virginia Tech Advantage" program to provide financial assistance to low-income students, underserved minorities, and first generation students. In addition to helping incoming students financially, the program is also aimed at helping current students remain in school and have the "Virginia Tech experience" instead of having to work multiple jobs or leave school due to financial hardship.

The move to become a top 100 international research institution was also discussed. By moving up on this list of universities, Virginia Tech will be able to attract a larger group of international students and employees. The participation of Virginia Tech in international programs also attracts attention to Virginia, which plays into the economic development aspect of being a land grant school.

There were questions about the need for additional staff as the number of students and faculty grows, concerns about salaries and wages not keeping up with the cost of living in Blacksburg, and the perennial problem of supervisors not supporting staff who want time off during work to take a class or attend a meeting.

The meeting closed with the recognition of one outgoing officer, Bruce Harper, who has completed two terms as secretary and is retiring from the university at the end of June. Young introduced the incoming officers: LaTawnya, moving from vice president to president; Callan Bartel, vice president; Kari Evans, secretary/treasurer; and Frank Kerr, parliamentarian. Committee chairs for the coming year are: Judy Taylor, nominations and elections; Amber Robinson, policies and issues; and Tasia Persson, diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Bruce B. Harper  
Staff Senate Secretary