

Staff Senate Meeting Minutes
August 15, 2024
12:00 p.m.
Gilbert Place 3002 and zoom; virginiatech.zoom.us/j/89618402157

Present: LaTawnya Burleson (presiding), Misti Acosta, Callan Bartel, Jasmine Boyd, Denise Crawford, Pat Donovan, Kari Evans, Nikki Gland-Turpin, Joseph Goodman, Andrea Green, Amber Hagan, Amanda Hill, Amy Ingram, Frank Kerr, Petie Martin, Sarah Owen, Tasia Persson, Amanda Pester, Gabe Petry, Stephanie Picado, Michelle Raines, Amber Robinson, Sally Shupe, Mary Sullivan, Chris Whitlock, Christina Winkeler, and Serena Young.

Absent with Notice: Amie Pendleton and Jennifer Pike.

Absent: Angel Carter, Zai Cook, Kristen Cox, Dee Hopkins, Ron Mecham, Dennie Munson, Eric Newton, and Eric Tysor.

Guests: Jackie Brown, Abby Burris, Kayla Dean, Sandra Gabbert, Bryan Garey, Gwen Ghee, Kim Grandstaff, Tate Greenough, Robena Hughes, Jody Humphreys, Sammi Kent, Cassy Kost, Michelle Loy, Annie Machner, Jamie McElfresh, Daniella Miller, Jenn Million, April Myers, Alicia Pierce, Amber Pifer, Dreama Price, Amy Sebring, Becki Smith, Tamarah Smith, Heather Snidow, Dee Dee Somervell, Chenaye Woods, and Marty Wyatt.

President Burleson called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m. A quorum was present.

1. Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was adopted.

2. Announcement of approval and posting of minutes of July 18, 2024

President Burleson noted that these minutes have been voted on electronically and can be publicly accessed on the Governance Information System on the web (<http://www.governance.vt.edu>).

3. Presentation

Ms. Amy Sebring, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, discussed the university's strategic priorities, focusing on making Virginia Tech education affordable for all Virginia students and the importance of the Virginia Tech Advantage. She also emphasized the concept of global distinction and the role of enabling infrastructure in supporting the organization's strategic direction. Lastly, she touched on the upcoming community planning efforts in the Montgomery County region, highlighting the need for affordable housing and childcare, and encouraged the team to stay informed and participate in community efforts.

5. Other Items

- Vice President Bartel deferred to Amber Robinson to present the Staff Recognition award to Dreama Price.
 - The winning nomination is attached.
 - Please submit future nominations here: <https://forms.gle/C65u32JJeILx7wdFA>
- Amber Robinson gave an overview of the Staff Senate Survey responses. See attached.

6. Announcements

The September Staff Senate meeting will begin at 12:00 p.m. via Zoom. An Outlook calendar invite will be sent out prior to the meeting.

7. Adjournment

There being no further business, President Burleson adjourned the meeting at 1:12 p.m.

Staff Recognition Winner

August 15, 2024

Winner: Dreama Price

Nominator: Amber Robinson

Dreama is amazing. She not only is extremely professional and competent in her work but she is also a fabulous human being. Dreama is a team player. She is always cognizant of doing her job to the best of her ability and she knows that her attention to detail and accuracy impacts how easy or hard it will be for the next person in the chain. She is always so careful with her work that it is submitted in perfect condition nearly 100% of the time. She is quick to work to correct the rare error that may slip through and she is always working to make the next person's job easier. She is always on time and often early with submitting things and she is always on top of any requests. I never worry about whether I will get a response from Dreama. I know that whatever I need I can call Dreama and she will help me figure it out. Her exemplary work is additionally brightened by her kindness, pleasantness, and thoughtfulness. Specifically, I remember that she once sent me cough drops when I was struggling with a cough at work and a note hoping that I would get to feeling better soon. Another time I was out for an extended period of time in relation to a personal matter. Dreama cared enough to inquire about my health and to send me a card. She's not only a great colleague but a great friend.

Staff Senate Survey Update

1. 768 total respondents of 4717 staff and non-student wage which is a 16% response rate.
2. Staff and non-student wage from across the state responded.
3. 25 of 29 Senior Management areas were represented.
4. All 11 Academic Colleges and Schools were represented.
5. Some overarching themes that we have already been able to identify:
 - a. Problems with the culture and leadership, both at the “local” unit level and more broadly at higher levels too.
 - i. Most people felt that their department embodied Ut Prosim both externally and internally, but more people felt that Ut Prosim was not embodied internally than felt that it wasn’t embodied externally. (Internal culture could be an issue.)
 - ii. When asked for any additional comments that they would like to add, the most comments were about operations, how things are run, or organization and treatment of staff or staff morale.
 - b. Lack of knowledge about the full scope of benefits.
 - i. We asked people to rate the helpfulness of certain benefits or resources. The more people who rated a particular benefit or resource, the more helpful people said the benefit was. This could indicate that people are not aware of a resource or they may simply not be using it.
 - ii. When asked if they would like to provide feedback about any other benefits and resources, 20% of people provided comments about the availability, applicability, or knowledge of benefits.
 - c. Double sided coin of telework
 - i. Benefits of telework and the major benefit that it is versus inconsistencies in handling permission to telework (some are still struggling to be permitted to telework while others are able to regularly) and stress put on other co-workers while a co-worker teleworks.
 - d. Parking Problems
 - e. Low pay for the amount of work and dedication
6. We are continuing to categorize, analyze, and find the best way to visually present the data. We are working hard to have a full, interactive report available soon.