

Commission on Staff Policies and Affairs

MINUTES

April 23, 2019

2:00-3:00 p.m.

Attendees: Judy Alford, Lori Buchanan, Robert Sebek, Mary Helmick, Bryan Garey, Teresa Lyons, Margaret Radcliffe, Susanna Rinehart, Hazem Sharaf, Tamarah Smith, Betty Wilkins, Dani McNiel, Leisa Shelor (Employee Benefits Committee), Kim Dulaney (Employee Benefits Committee), Marie Bliss (Employee Benefits Committee).

Minutes:

- Call to order and Welcome by Tamarah Smith – 2:02 p.m.
- Approval of April, 2019 Agenda
- March 2019 Minutes were sent out and approved electronically
 - Sent to University Council for review
 - Update on BOV presentation by Robert Sebek, President of Staff Senate
- Robert gave 2 presentations at BOV:
 - Constituent report
 - Success of McComas Staff Leadership Seminar
 - Share excitement for the raise of minimum pay
 - Called for increase for part time employees as well
 - Childcare discussion
 - Robert suggested that university should form task force similar to compensation task force, which worked very well
- Staff senate elections – Judy Taylor will be sending the results out soon
- Employee Benefits Committee Presentation on the winter closing feedback survey
 - Benchmarking research showed that Virginia Tech is the only public university in the state of Virginia that does not move holidays to cover winter closing.
 - Employee Benefits Committee sent out a survey to all staff employees asking if they would rather keep the current policy (employees are required to use leave to cover winter closing) or move the holidays to cover.
 - The survey had over a 50% response rate – comments were very passionate.
 - 54% opted for no change; 42% opted for proposed change; 4% did not choose either option.

- Employee Benefits Committee is not pursuing the issue any further – the survey comments showed that the winter closing is a topic with a lot of strong feelings/opinions, and there’s not enough people who want the change to justify “reopening” the issue.
- The survey data will be maintained in the CSPA Sharepoint site so that the next time the issue comes up, whoever takes it on can use it to inform the process.
- The Employee Benefits Committee is going to send out a follow up email to summarize the results, let employees know their voices matter, and that the issue is not being pursued any further.
- The presentation has been uploaded into the CSPA SharePoint site.
- Subcommittee Reports and Next Steps
 - Pay Benefits
 - The employee assistance list was given to Benefits in HR. Minh-An Pence and her team formatted the document and added it to orientation materials. It will also be available on the HR website at a later date.
 - Recruitment/Retention/Trainings
 - Subcommittee has taken on two main focuses:
 - Improving communications with staff
 - Improved supervisor training
 - For communicating with staff, the subcommittee has made a list of possible next steps:
 - a) First recommendation – establish a standing communications subcommittee in CSPA to take on the issue
 - b) VT staff – create listserv
 - a. How would that be managed/updated?
 - c) Address the VT News email – format needs to be more useful – has become more promotional
 - a. Put campus notices higher up on the daily email.
 - b. New VT news website format does not work for internal uses like giving operational guidance
 - c. How do we prove that employees don’t find the VT news email to be useful to them? A survey?
 - d. Submit our concerns to university relations and let them take ownership
 - d) Develop a communications plan – develop concept by May
 - a. List of suggestions so they don’t start from scratch
 - e) Communications plan should be reviewed annually – check in to see if it works
 - f) Stagger subcommittee members according to their CSPA terms so the subcommittee doesn’t leave all at once.
 - ACTION ITEMS:

1. Margaret to send out communications report and get feedback from CSPA members
 2. Invite John Massey to give update about his supervisor training class pilot
 3. Suggest to the people who run Business Practices Seminar to focus on supervisor skills – coaching/mentoring – as a topic for next year
- Updates:
 - Faculty Senate
 - Very excited about minimum pay – the group literally cheered when it was announced. Faculty Senate wants to keep the momentum going – what else can be done?
 - New model for term length – both the President and VP have agreed to do another year. Senate is also adding a “president elect position” and is trying to revise the leadership structure to be provide continuity to the group.
 - President Sands visited last meeting – the faculty senate sent questions ahead of time and President Sands came prepared.
 - Faculty Senate wants to continue to build relationships with other governance groups.
 - GSA – currently holding elections
 - Adjournment – 2:56 p.m.

Next meeting May 28, 2019; 2:00-3:00; 3600 North End Center