

**Staff Senate Meeting Minutes**  
**July 18, 2024**  
**12:00 p.m.**  
**virginiatech.zoom.us/j/89618402157**

**Present:** LaTawnya Burleson (presiding), Callan Bartel, Jasmine Boyd, Kristen Cox, Denise Crawford, Pat Donovan, Kari Evans, Nikki Gland-Turpin, Andrea Green, Amanda Hill, Dee Hopkins, Amy Ingram, Petie Martin, Sarah Owen, Tasia Persson, Stephanie Picado, Michelle Raines, Amber Robinson, Sally Shupe, Mary Sullivan, Christina Winkeler, and Serena Young.

**Absent with Notice:** Joseph Goodman, Gabe Petry, and Becki Smith.

**Absent:** Misti Acosta, Zai Cook, Robin Cooley, Amber Hagan, Frank Kerr, Ron Mecham, Dennie Munson, Eric Newton, Amie Pendleton, Amanda Pester, Jennifer Pike, Eric Tysor, Chris Whitlock, and Marty Wyatt.

**Guests:** Lee Bishop, Gwen Ghee, Allison Hamborsky, Jody Humphreys, Michelle Loy, Annie Machner, Daniella Miller, Jenn Million, April Myers, Alicia Pierce, Amber Pifer, Blake Smith, Dee Dee Somervell, Kim Thomason, and Chenaye Woods.

President Burleson called the meeting to order at 12:01 p.m. A quorum was present.

### **1. Adoption of Agenda**

The agenda was adopted.

### **2. Announcement of approval and posting of minutes of June 20, 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**

Kim Thomason, Program Manager for Early Childhood Education Initiatives, provided an update on the initiative which aims to support the recruitment and retention of faculty, staff, and students. She shared a link to the caregiving website (<https://caregiving.vt.edu>), which serves as a hub for resources related to caregiving, including a section focused on early childhood care. Kim also mentioned ongoing efforts to make the website more user-friendly and announced upcoming changes expected in the fall semester. Lastly, she presented an overview of the initiative's four pillars, with a primary focus on access to quality early care and education. See the attached flyer for ECEI's employee resources.

### **5. Other Items**

- President Burleson invited the chairs of the five standing committees to give brief overviews of their committee charges and encouraged attendees to reach out to the chairs to join committees or with any questions.
  - Denise Crawford, Communications: [kdenise@vt.edu](mailto:kdenise@vt.edu)
  - Tasia Persson, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging: [tpersson@vt.edu](mailto:tpersson@vt.edu)
  - Amy Ingram, Elections and Nominations: [amyli11@vt.edu](mailto:amyli11@vt.edu)
  - Nikki Gland-Turpin, McComas Leadership Seminar Planning: [ngturpin@vt.edu](mailto:ngturpin@vt.edu)
  - Amber Robinson, Policies and Issues: [hamb08@vt.edu](mailto:hamb08@vt.edu)

In addition, questions and concerns may always be sent to any member of the executive committee or sent to [staff-senate-exec-g@vt.edu](mailto:staff-senate-exec-g@vt.edu) to reach the whole committee.

- Vice President Bartel deferred to Tasia Persson to present the Staff Recognition award to Blake Smith.
  - The winning nomination is attached.
  - Please submit future nominations here: <https://forms.gle/C65u32JJeilX7wdFA>
- President Burleson updated the Senate on the survey results for the proposed change to the annual supplement program for eligible employees. Out of 200 responses, 93% of staff support the new proposal, with 7% against. The current program, established in 2019, provides a taxable \$500 lump sum stipend to salaried employees with an annual salary of \$35,500 or less, to help offset parking and childcare costs. The number of eligible employees has decreased from 971 in 2020 to 156 in 2024. The new proposal would provide a one-time base pay increase of \$608 for eligible staff with a full-time base salary of \$43,175 or less. This would eliminate the recurring annual supplement program for those earning less than \$35,500. The change would apply to current employees only and would not affect future hires. Burleson assured the Senate that more information would be provided soon about the next steps.

## **6. Announcements**

The August Staff Senate meeting will begin at 12:00 p.m. and the guest will be Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Amy Sebring. The meeting will be hybrid, with the in-person component meeting in Gilbert Place, Room 3002. 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 12:57 p.m.

## Child care resources for employees

Virginia Tech recognizes child care as an essential resource for employees who are expecting or raising children. To grow the quality, affordability, and flexibility of child care options around its campuses, the university launched the **Early Childcare Education Initiatives (ECEI)** which continues to explore new ways to support for its caregiving families.

*ECEI connects employees to resources for:*

### Care

- Partnerships with [five local child care centers](#): 3 in Blacksburg, 1 in Pearisburg, 1 in Roanoke
- Discounts towards [Cultural Care Au Pair](#)
- [List compilations of summer camps](#) for school age children, updated yearly
- Unlimited premium access to [Care.com](#) for finding child care, adult care, pet care, housekeeping, and tutoring
- Finding quality care through university and state resources

### Education

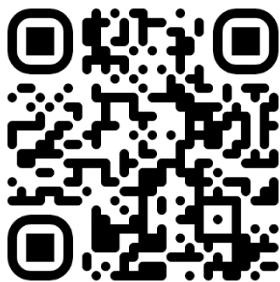
- [Monthly Lunch & Learns](#) on caregiving topics. Past speakers have spoken on: raising a child with a disability, school readiness, and choosing quality child care

### Work

- [Confidential office hours](#) with ECEI, available to all employees, to ask peers questions about being a parent at Virginia Tech\*
- For faculty, [grants for dependent care](#) when traveling for work in the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, and the College of Science\*

### Community

- The [Working Parents at VT](#) Facebook page keeps caregivers up-to-date on new resources and connects Virginia Tech employees with colleagues



For more information on caregiving resources at Virginia Tech, visit [caregiving.vt.edu](http://caregiving.vt.edu)

\* Currently being piloted



Early Childhood  
Education Initiatives

## **Staff Recognition Winner July 18, 2024**

**Winner: Blake Smith**

Nominator: Tasia Persson

When our past Staff Association President moved to a different position, we had to find new leadership for the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences Staff Association. Given that our past leader was LaTawnya, there were very big shoes to fill! Blake learned from the ground up, taking a crash course in how governance works for Staff Associations at VT. He worked tirelessly to build a presidential structure and team that functioned well for governance roles that needed to be filled in our association. After successfully running elections and nominations for the first time, he and his team revamped the bylaws, planned engaging programming, provided professional development support for staff, raised scholarship money with initiatives like a virtual 5K and staff association calendar, and helped to nominate the CLAHS Staff member of the Year for a College-level award.

In addition to his commitment and high-quality leadership, Blake happens to be a fine human being with great character and lots of personality. We're very lucky to have him in CLAHSSA!