

**Commission on Classified Staff Affairs Agenda**  
**September 7, 2005**  
**1:30 p.m., 325 Burruss Hall**

**Present:** Judy Alford, Sue Ellen Crocker, Chanda Dodd,Carolynne Dudding, Mike Harness for Gerhardt Schurig, Walter Hartman, Kenneth Miller, Kellie Morris, Phyllis Olinger, Fred Piercy, Diane Reaver, Wyatt Sasser, Becky Saylor, Charles Stott, Linda Woodard, Jon Wooge

**Absent:** Emily Loudon, Shelly Nickols-Richardson

**Guests:** Jean Brickey, Staff Senate President

**A. Introductions**

Chair Judy Alford called the meeting to order at 1:35 PM. The agenda was approved as written. Commission members introduced themselves.

**B. Review Purpose of Commission and Set Goals for the Year**

Alford reviewed the commission's charge. She and the other commission chairs will be meeting with President Steger on September 16, at which time she will present the commission's goals for the coming year. After much discussion, the commission decided on the following:

1. Publicity/Awareness

The commission will work closely with Staff Senate in order to emphasize the importance of staff participation in shared governance.

2. Staff Development

The commission will work closely with Human Resources to provide input on staff training and professional development needs, promote support for staff development and publicize programs.

3. Promote Alternate Transportation

With the gas prices and shortages, we feel this is a good time to promote car pooling and alternative transportation in order to conserve fuel and save the environment. We will work with the Vice President for Business Affairs and the Director of Fleet Services on this goal.

4. Town Hall Meetings

The commission will work closely with Staff Senate to sponsor and promote town hall meetings in order to provide up-to-date information and gain staff input on the Higher Education Restructuring Act and other issues of importance to staff.

5. Staff Survey

The commission will work closely with the Staff Senate in assessing the needs of staff articulated through the staff survey and provide any assistance and guidance as needed.

Additional suggested topics for meetings include the new campus violence policy, benefits update, and task force on child care.

**C. Meeting Schedule for the Coming Year**

The second Thursday was suggested as a possible date. Members who are not at the meeting will be contacted to see if they are available.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:45 PM.

**Commission on Classified Staff Affairs**  
**October 13, 2005**  
**3:30 PM – 325 Burruss Hall**

**Present:** Judy Alford, Sue Ellen Crocker, Chanda Dodd, Carlyne Dudding, Rick Hiller for Gerhardt Schurig, Fred Piercy, Diane Reaver, Wyatt Sasser, Linda Woodard, Jon Wooge

**Absent:** Walter Hartman, Emily Loudon, Kenneth Miller, Kellie Morris, Shelly Nickols-Richardson, Phyllis Olinger, Becky Saylor, Charles Stott

**Guests:** Debbie Freed, Alternative Transportation Manager; Kurt Krause, VP for Business Affairs; Steve Mouras, Director of Transportation

Chair Judy Alford called the meeting to order at 3:35 PM. The agenda was approved as presented.

### **1. Alternate Transportation**

The Office of Transportation provides several services designed to assist commuters. These include carpool programs for both faculty/staff and students, Rideshare Matching, and Bike, Bus, & Walk. Additional information on these programs is available on their web site at <http://facilities.vt.edu/ot/parking.asp?value=alternative>. Additionally, university employees and student can ride the BT; and the new Smart Way bus provides economical transportation between the Roanoke and New River valleys. When gas prices climb, interest in alternative transportation opportunity rises. When gas prices fall, the interest and use falls as well. The Hokie Express, the campus circulator, travels around campus and to the Corporate Research Center at 15-minute intervals. While it does not go to the new Inn and Skelton Conference Center, the crosswalks on Perry Street and West Campus Drive have been enhanced to aid pedestrian traffic.

Any expansion of the Blacksburg Transit System into neighboring counties will have to have the support of and be initiated by these localities. If employees are interested in seeing the service expanded, they should contact their elected officials to encourage participation. While there may be grants available to help with start-up costs, there must be enough revenue to sustain the service once the grants end.

Improvements are being made to encourage biking on campus, including improving current bike lane and adding new ones, as well as installing new and better bike racks. A bicycle education program is being planned. Improvements are being made to the path to the Cranwell Center including call boxes and additional lighting.

The campus master plan will be delivered to the Board of Visitors at the November meeting and voted on in March. Some of the long-term plans include creating a transportation center on Perry Street to help alleviate traffic problems on the Drillfield, the inevitable use of parking lots to build structures, and parking garages. Since the

Commonwealth does not provide funds to build parking structures, these will have to be built using university funding. Parking fees will have to increase substantially to fund the structures. The challenge will be to provide choices, which could include such options as tiered or zone parking.

Virginia Tech has been recognized as one of the “Best Workplaces for Commuters,” an award given by the US Department of Transportation and the Environmental Protection Agency. The award recognizes innovative solutions to commuting challenges faced by employers and employees.

## **2. Reports:**

- **Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity – Sue Ellen Crocker**

The commission set up a task force to study campus climate and diversity. The commission also heard a presentation from a group representing lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered students. Many of the students have been the target of hate crimes and vandalism.

## **3. Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be Thursday, November 10, at 3:30 PM in 325 Burruss. There is no speaker confirmed at this time.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:05 PM.

**Commission on Classified Staff Affairs Agenda  
November 10, 2005  
3:30 p.m., 325 Burruss Hall**

**Present:** Judy Alford, Sue Ellen Crocker,Carolynne Dudding, Mike Freel, Kenneth Miller, Wanda Sparks for Kellie Morris, Fred Piercy, Diane Reaver, Wyatt Sasser, Becky Saylor, Mike Harness for Gerhardt Schurig, Linda Woodard, Jon Wooge

**Absent:** Erin Cwick, Chanda Dodd, Walter Hartman, Shelly Nickols-Richardson, Catherine Caldwell

**Guest:** Debbie Freed, Alternative Transportation Manager

Chair Judy Alford called meeting to order at 3:32 PM. The agenda approved as presented. New members were introduced: Mike Freel replaces Charlie Stott; Catherine Caldwell replaces Phyllis Olinger; and Erin Cwick replaces Emily Louden.

### **1. Discussion On Promoting Alternative Transportation**

The discussion continued regarding alternate transportation. The possibility of using the Two Town Trolley was considered as one option for employees living in the Christiansburg area. The trolley makes numerous stops in Christiansburg and Blacksburg. Employees would need permission from businesses in order to park in their lots all day. Debbie Freed will check on the trolley schedule to see if using it is a viable option. (In a follow-up note from Ms. Freed, it was reported that the Two Town Trolley does not start operating until 12:15 p.m. on weekdays. This route was established as a “shopping” route to provide transportation to and from the NRV Mall and Wal-Mart area of Christiansburg. As it stands, it is not a feasible commuter route.)

It was suggested that a survey be conducted on employee interest in “park and ride” locations for the BT. A proposal would need to be written and presented to Steve Mouras, Director of Transportation, for consideration, and then sent on to Kurt Krause, Vice President for Business Affairs.

### **2. Reports:**

- CEOD – Sue Ellen Crocker

The commission is working on activities for Martin Luther King Day including inviting Jessie Jackson as the featured speaker. Also discussed were department annual reports and what is required of departments to fulfill the diversity requirement.

- Benefits Committee – Wyatt Sasser

The committee did not meet in November; the next meeting is scheduled for December.

- Staff Senate – Judy Alford

The senate held its first annual multicultural staff reception and it apparently went over well. The senate has received good feedback. It is hoped that it will become annual event.

### **3. Next meeting December 8, 2005**

Due to schedule conflicts, it was decided to cancel this meeting unless any urgent agenda items are identified. The next meeting will be January 12.

### **4. Other Business**

- Campus Climate Workshop Forum, sponsored by Student Affairs, is scheduled for Monday, November 14. Employees may register up through Friday, November 11. It is being held after normal work hours with dinner provided. It is designed to look at issues of life, work life, and student life.
- Several commission members volunteered to assist with the Employee of the Week program.
- SAFE (Staff Association for Facilities Employees) is looking for information on the impact of sports on departments. Facilities work load is considerably increased after home games. Last year there were some break-ins in buildings. They would like to know if other areas or departments of the university are also affected in some way.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:40 PM.

**Commission on Classified Staff Affairs Agenda**  
**January 12, 2006**  
**3:30 p.m., 325 Burruss Hall**

**Present:** Judy Alford, Catherine Caldwell, Sue Ellen Crocker, Carolyne Dudding, Mike Freel, Mike Harness for Gerhardt Schurig, Kenneth Miller, Diane Reaver, Wyatt Sasser, Becky Saylor, Mary Ellen Verdu for Fred Piercy, Linda Woodard

**Absent:** Erin Cwick, Chanda Dodd, Walter Hartman, Kellie Morris, Shelly Nickols-Richardson, Jon Wooge

**Guest:** Debbie Morgan, Human Resources

Chair Judy Alford called the meeting to order at 3:35 PM. The agenda was approved with one change.

**1. Updates**

- Debbie Freed in a follow-up note after the November meeting informed the commission that the Two Town Trolley would not work as alternate transportation for employees. The trolley does not start operating until 12:15 p.m. on weekdays.
- In response to a question regarding the contract between Anthem and the only local oncology practice, Linda Woodard responded that talks are continuing and that a temporary contract is in place through April.
- Staff Employee of the Week program will resume at the beginning of the semester, January 16.

**2. Reports:**

- **Benefits Committee – Wyatt Sasser**  
The committee last met on December 6. Debbie Morgan gave a presentation on violence in workplace. Other topics included revisions to long-term disability for faculty, the Cash Match program, Part D Medicare, and short-term disability coverage.
- **CEOD – Sue Ellen Crocker**  
The commission has only met once since November. The membership is currently concentrating on Martin Luther King Day activities; Jesse Jackson will speak here on January 16.
- **Staff Senate – Judy Alford**  
The senate did not meet in December.

**3. Next Meeting – February 9, 2006**

Judy Alford requested ideas from members for topics or speakers for this year. Suggestions include Larry Bechtel, Recycling Program; new vice presidents, Zenobia Hikes, Student Affairs, and Brad Fenwick, Research; new staff members in Human Resources, Pat Burton, Employee Relations, and Kirk Wehner, Compensation Manager; new EOAA faculty, Kevin McDonald, director, and Maggie Sloane, Associate Director.

#### **4. Guest Speakers**

- **Linda Woodard – Restructuring**

Linda Woodard reviewed the latest information on restructuring. She noted that not much has changed since her presentation to the Staff Senate in November. Effective July 1, 2006, all new employees hired will become “university STAFF”, including employees who transfer to the university from other state agencies. Current employees will be given the option to remain state classified employees or change to university employees. This option will be given periodically. However, once an employee converts, there is no returning to the state classified system. The restructuring website, <http://www.vt.edu/restructuring/>, includes the management agreement that has details on the various areas covered in the restructuring plan. At the present time, the university’s plan will mirror the state classified plan since it will take some time to develop new programs. It is likely that new plans would not be developed and ready for implementation until sometime in 2007. There are already good mechanisms in place for staff involvement in the planning through the governance system. However, there are areas where the university will still not have the authority to design new programs under restructuring. These include: retirement and life insurance, health insurance, grievance procedures, and worker compensation.

- **Debbie Morgan – Campus Violence Prevention**

Debbie Morgan has spent the last several months working with many different departments on campus to prepare and implement a workable campus and workplace violence prevention policy. The effort included assessing the type of training needed, the front-line employees who need the training, determining the different types of threats that exist in the classroom and workplace. There is a widespread perception that a campus is a safe environment. Individuals often do not take safety precautions that they would in another environment. A draft manual has been written and is being circulated for review. Training programs are being developed and it is hoped that training will begin this summer.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned 5:00 PM.

**Commission on Classified Staff Affairs Agenda**  
**February 9, 2006**  
**3:30 p.m., 325 Burruss Hall**

**Present:** Judy Alford, Catherine Caldwell, Sue Ellen Crocker, Carlyne Dudding, Mike Freel, Mike Harness for Gerhardt Schurig, Walter Hartman, Kellie Morris, Diane Reaver, Wyatt Sasser, Linda Woodard, Jon Wooge

**Absent:** Erin Cwick, Chanda Dodd, Kenneth Miller, Shelly Nickols-Richardson, Fred Piercy, Becky Saylor

**Guests:** Kelly Oaks, Associate Director for Equity Initiatives, EOAA Office; Maggie Sloane, Associate Director Compliance & Conflict Resolution, EOAA Office

Chair Judy Alford called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. The agenda was approved as presented.

**1. Guest Speakers: Equal Employment Opportunity Office**

Kelly Oaks, Associate Director for Equity Initiatives explained that the Office for Equal Opportunity provides many services including addressing issues of diversity on campus, harassment of any kind, and discrimination. Because the university receives federal funding, the office is also responsible for compliance with federal funding regulations. The office identifies problem areas in hiring and assists in making underrepresented groups aware of job openings. The office also has an education component, such as anti-harassment training.

Maggie Sloane was recently hired as the Associate Director for Compliance and Conflict Resolution. She said that it was her role to work with employees to steer them in the right direction. She works with individuals to find the solution that works for them. In addition to investigating discrimination complaints, she is also working on the development of a mediation program to provide options for individuals who do not wish to file formal complaints. However, by law, some complaints such as harassment must be formally investigated. She explained that the EOAA office does not discipline or terminate employees; that must be done by management.

**2. Discussion / Updates from Previous Meetings**

- **Alternative Transportation**

Judy Alford noted that the Office of Transportation is exploring the possibility of implementing vanpooling for employees. While the program has not yet received approval from Richmond, the pilot program would consist of a van pool for many of the counties neighboring Montgomery. Employees would be allowed to lease passenger vans. At this time, there are not estimated costs for the leave. Interested employees should contact Debby Freed in the Office of Transportation.

### **3. Reports:**

- Benefits Committee – Wyatt Sasser  
The committee did not meet in January.
- CEOD – Sue Ellen Crocker  
Topics of discussion included the candidates for the position of Director Multicultural Programs and Services, college diversity assessments, campus climate, principles of community, and reports from the commission subcommittees. Linda Woodard informed the group that a roundtable discussion on relevant policies, including the anti-discrimination, campus violence prevention, and Americans with Disabilities Act policies, will be coordinated by CEOD and scheduled in late March. The Office of Equal Opportunity has purchased a license for web-based anti-harassment training. This provides an additional avenue to provide training. The program is being piloted with the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. An updated accessibility map for the campus is now available [on line](#). Accessibility issues should be directed to Jennie Reilly, the ADA coordinator.
- Staff Senate – Judy Alford  
Kevin McDonald was the featured speaker.

### **4. Other Business**

- Judy Alford and the other commission chairs recently met with President Steger and Provost McNamee to review goals. Both were pleased with the work that the commissions have done this year. As part of her presentation, Alford noted that frequently communications and announcements refer to faculty and students, but classified staff is not always mentioned. Staff employees sometime wonder if their contributions are recognized and appreciated. It was suggested that other commissions, such as Faculty Affairs and Administrative/Professional Faculty Affairs, be invited to review what issues they are working on and if there are any common areas of interest that commissions could work on jointly. It was decided to invite Ray Plaza, Chair of the Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity, to discuss the differences between faculty and staff, identify potential issues of concern for staff, and suggest ways that these could be addressed.
- The Student Affairs representative will not be able to attend this semester because of a class conflict. After a discussion and review of possible alternate dates, it appeared that there was not other time that worked for a majority of the members. It was moved and seconded that the meeting date and time remain the same. The motion passed unanimously.
- In response to a question about research associates being represented and allowed to serve in the Faculty Senate, Linda Woodard offered to contact the senate president to clarify their status.
- Linda Woodard also briefly discussed the university's policy on conviction checks following some questions about who was covered by the policy. Woodard noted that not all classified staff positions require a conviction check. Checks are only done for

positions that meet certain security criteria. Further, conviction of a crime does not automatically disqualify an applicant from being hired. The conviction must be job-related, and each situation is evaluated carefully.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 9. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:55 PM

**Commission on Classified Staff Affairs Agenda**  
**March 9, 2006**  
**3:30 p.m., 325 Burruss Hall**

**Present:** Judy Alford, Jean Brickey for Walter Hartman, Sue Ellen Crocker, April Hylton for Gerhardt Schurig, Kenneth Miller, Fred Piercy, Wyatt Sasser, Becky Saylor, Jon Wooge

**Absent:** Catherine Caldwell, Erin Cwick, Chanda Dodd, Carolynne Dudding, Mike Freel, Kellie Morris, Shelly Nickols-Richardson, Diane Reaver, Linda Woodard

**Guests:** Ray Plaza, Office of Multicultural Affairs

Chair Judy Alford called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. The agenda was approved as presented.

**1. Guest Speaker: Ray Plaza, Projects Specialist for Diversity Initiative, Multicultural Affairs Office**

Ray Plaza also serves as the chair of the Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity (CEOD). There has been discussion in various groups on campus regarding the sense that there is a growing gap between faculty and staff. Areas of concern discussed include: professional development where funding is provided for faculty, but little or none for classified; ability to participate in governance—often staff members have to give up their lunch hours to participate or are not allowed to participate during working hours; treatment of staff by faculty; requiring conviction checks for staff while not they are not required for faculty working in same area; perceived restrictions on payment by the Controller's Office for certifications pursued by staff; varying treatment of staff in different departments, particularly regard sick leave usage. Frequently, when administrators and spokespersons speak to the media and other groups, they will talk about the faculty and students, but never mention staff.

**2. Reports:**

- Benefits Committee – Wyatt Sasser

The committee met on February 23. Topics included: short term disability for grant-funded faculty; Roth 403b plans; ORP oversight committee; agreement between SW Virginia Oncology and Anthem announced; and upcoming open enrollment for health care, including a new high deductible plan. Human Resources would be offering information sessions for employees about the health insurance changes.

- CEOD – Sue Ellen Crocker

A roundtable discussion will be coordinated by CEOD on March 28 to address the Principles of Community and several supporting policies, including Campus and Workplace Violence Prevention, Anti-Discrimination and Harassment Prevention, and Accommodation of Employees with Disabilities. The purpose is to identify

concerns and suggest strategies to enhance the understanding and use of the Principles of Community and these related policies and programs. A one-year celebration is being planned for the “Principles of Community.”

- Staff Senate – Judy Alford

President Steger met with the Staff Senate in February, and discussed such topics as the university’s plans for buildings and renovations, budgets, Higher Education Restructuring, and the branding project, “Invent the Future.”

### **3. Nomination of Members to Fill Expired Seats (1 year terms)**

- Employee Benefits Committee – Wyatt Sasser volunteered to serve again.
- Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity – Sue Ellen Crocker will serve, assuming she is elected to Staff Senate for the coming year.

It was moved and seconded that both appointments be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

Wyatt Sasser was requested by his staff association, SAFE, to ask whether free computer access to the Virginia Tech modem pool could be given for employees with 30 years of service, just as is free parking. Judy Alford will contact Linda Woodard.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:00 PM.

**Commission on Classified Staff Affairs**  
**May 11, 2006**  
**3:30 p.m., 325 Burruss Hall**

**Present:** Judy Alford, Catherine Caldwell, Walter Hartman, April Hylton for Gerhardt Schurig, Kenneth Miller, Wyatt Sasser, Becky Saylor, Linda Woodard

**Absent:** Sue Ellen Crocker, Erin Cwick, Chanda Dodd, Carolynne Dudding, Mike Freel, Kellie Morris, Shelly Nickols-Richardson, Fred Piercy, Diane Reaver, Jon Wooge

**Guests:** Tony Gambill, Director, Director, Leadership and Employee Development; Doug Martin, University Benefits Manager

Chair Judy Alford called meeting to order at 3:30 PM. The agenda was approved as presented.

### **1. Human Resources Updates**

- Higher Education Restructuring – Linda Woodard

The Governor has not yet signed the Higher Education Restructuring bill; however, he is expected to sign it soon. Input from the university community will be sought in preparing the policies and procedures for new staff members hired on or after July 1, 2006. For the present time, these will be identical to those for current classified staff, with minor exceptions. It will take time to do the research, get input, and design the new policies. It is expected that a preliminary timeline will be developed by mid-summer. A special issue of *Spectrum* will be mailed to all employees with updates on aspects of restructuring early this summer. This year's McComas Leadership Seminar provided helpful feedback from employees on a variety of issues, such as the effectiveness of our performance evaluation systems in providing feedback and recognition, the importance of employee development, and staff opportunity for input. This information will be shared with the university administration and others involved in the design of the new HR systems.

- Benefits Update – Doug Martin

Open enrollment for health care ends May 15. Informational meetings have been held, and particular attention was given to the new high deductible plan offered this year. The Benefits staff has received numerous calls from retirees regarding Medicare Part D. The state plan does include an approved plan that automatically folds around the Medicare supplement. Enrollment is automatic, and retirees are not required to take any action. Retirees continue to express concern over the cost of health care and reiterate the need for an increased state subsidy. VSDP now includes a return-to-work mandate for all disabilities, i.e. job related and non-job related.

- Introduction of Tony Gambill, Director of Leadership and Employee Development

Linda introduced Tony Gambill, recently hired as the Director of Leadership and Employee Development. Tony comes here from Columbia, Maryland, where he worked for a large non-profit organization in a similar role. His primary focus for the next year will be management, leadership, and supervisory development. The most frequently requested training is for supervisors and managers. He is currently meeting with other departments, such as Multicultural Affairs, Equal Opportunity, and Information Technology, to see how these department can work together to identify needs and design programs that will have a valuable impact. Another focus will be looking on ways to deliver training to off-campus employees by taking advantage of technology. More information on the programs provided by University Leadership Development is available on their web page, <http://www.uld.vt.edu/>.

## **2. Discussion / Updates from Previous Meetings**

- Alternative Transportation

There is no news about the vanpool proposal. The Transportation Office is still waiting for a response from Richmond.

## **3. Reports:**

- Benefits Committee – Wyatt Sasser

The committee met on April 27. Topics included: restructuring; open enrollment and the new health care plans; return to work program; short-term disability for grant-funded faculty; and long-term care.

## **4. Next Meeting – September**

Judy Alford will chair the commission again next year, and will send out note in August to plan the meeting dates. Members are asked to be thinking about issues to discuss for next year.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:50 PM.