

## **Employee Benefits Committee (EBC) Meeting**

**9/18/2019 2:30 – 3:30 PM**

- 1) Call to order: The meeting was called to order at 2:30 p.m. Margaret Radcliffe, Committee Chair, explaining the charge of the Employee Benefits Committee
- 2) Margaret reviewed the membership of the committee and attendees introduced themselves.
  - Richard Ashley – Faculty Senate
  - Margaret Radcliffe, Chair - CAPFA
  - Marie Bliss – Ex Officio
  - LaTawnya Burleson – Staff Senate
  - Jennifer Early -Staff Senate
  - Sara Leftwich – Ex Officio
  - Leisa Shelor – Ex Officio
  - Eric Smith – Faculty Senate
  - Sam Doak – Appointed to fill Faculty Senate vacancy, not in attendance
  - Sue Teel – Appointed to fill Staff Senate vacancy, not in attendance

Efforts are underway to fill the two remaining vacancies: one representative from Commission on Staff Policies and Affairs (CSPA) and one from the Commission on Faculty Affairs (CFA).

- 3) Appointment of representative to the Virginia Tech Employees' Spouse and Dependent Scholarship Committee: LaTawnya Burleson volunteered and was duly appointed.
- 4) Future meeting dates and time: The group in attendance worked to identify a recurring meeting day/time and settled on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month from 2 – 3 PM. If the need arises the next best option was the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday 3:30 – 4:30.
- 5) Review of committee business from previous year: Margaret briefly outlined the activities of the prior year. After deliberation of several suggestions, the Committee focused on a proposal to move four staff holidays to cover the winter closure period. A survey was sent to Staff employees to gauge support for moving the recommendation through the governance process. The survey results reflected that Staff were divided on this initiative and many were vehemently opposed; therefore, the committee decided no action should be taken. The results were reported to the CSPA during one of their regular meetings, with the recommendation that no action be taken at that time.

Margaret shared that Robert Sebek (president of the Staff Senate last year) is an advocate for the university applying authorized closing during the winter closure.

LaTawnya Burleson said that Lisa Wilkes had commissioned Staff Senate to review options to address winter closing. CSPA also worked on this proposal during the 2018-19 year. LaTawnya asked why the survey from the Benefits Committee survey only include two questions when the survey

that Staff Senate worked on included four questions. Rick Ashley responded that the Benefits Committee took the approach that was of no (or little cost) to the university.

- 6) Minutes of the March 13, 2019, Meeting: Margaret Radcliffe explained that the last minutes she had been able to find were from the March EBC meeting and they had never been approved. Although the EBC met in April and May, no minutes were circulated to members. She proposed that the March minutes be approved, since they had been circulated and no corrections had been noted. Rick Ashley moved that the March 13, 2019, minutes be approved. LaTawnya Burleson seconded the motion. The minutes were approved.
- 7) Discussion of possible issues to be addressed in the coming year.

It was brought up that Virginia Tech has some autonomy, which allows the ability to create new HR Policies for University Staff; however, the university has not taken utilized this ability. In light of this, and the disparity between 12-month faculty annual leave accrual rates and those for staff, Margaret Radcliffe suggested that the committee pursue a proposal to increase the annual leave accrued by staff.

Rick Asher suggests looking at the initiatives Staff Senate will take on and revisit the holiday closure

Margaret Radcliffe said that AP faculty should be included in any holiday changes (not just staff).

LaTawnya Burleson - will ask the Executive Committee of Staff Senate for an update regarding their movement related to the holiday closure.

Eric Smith reminded the committee of the proposal from the prior year for additional electric car charging stations on campus. Rick Asher is on the Parking and Transportation Committee and offered to arrange to have someone (i.e. Jeri Baker) speak to the EBC about electric car charging stations. Leisa Shelor shared that she had attended an EBC meeting last year. The decision was made not to extend invitation at this point, since there was no particular topic the committee wished to have addressed. Margaret Radcliffe shared that car charging stations were initially regulated by the state as utilities, making implementation difficult. These regulations are being gradually relaxed so that more entities will be able to make charging stations available as time passes.

Eric Smith posed a question about leave payments for research faculty who are in calendar year positions and paid from grant funds. Margaret Radcliffe explained the fringe funding process.

Rick Asher asked if the EBC would meet on December 18, 2019. Margaret responded that the committee would meet, unless there was no business to discuss, in which case the meeting could be cancelled at a later date.

Margaret Radcliffe asked all committee members to go back to individual units and to the governance bodies they serve on and solicit suggestions of issues for the EBC to address.

- 8) The meeting was adjourned at 3:15