

APPROVED 10.3.18

Mason Staff Senate

General Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, September 5, 2018

10:30am-12:00pm

Fairfax: Merten 1201, Arlington: Founders Hall 720, Science and Technology: Colgan

221

703-249-8067

Members: Stephanie Atkins, Lisa Bair, Susan Brionez, Andrew Burroughs, Sean Cox, Christina DiCicco, Liam Dillon, Kathy Dodd, Christina Frasson, Jared Hagenow, Jennifer Gantt, Joshua Griset, Erin Iacangelo, Christopher Maier, Jenna McGwin, Pamela Ononiwu, Stacey Remick-Simkins, Lauren Reuscher, Lauren Reyna, Akitta Robertson, Tiffany Sandstrum, Brett Spencer, Michael Wharton, Preston Williams, Stacy Wilson, Joanne Zimmerman

Absent with Notice: Lisa Bair, Susan Brionez, and Brett Spencer

Absent without Notice: Jennifer Gantt, Sean Cox

6 constituents present for guest speaker and 2 constituents present for general meeting

Guest Speaker:

The September Staff Senate meeting featured a discussion about the [Virginia Governmental Employees Association](#) (VGEA), a voluntary, non-partisan organization of State employees and retirees who advocate on matters of pay, health care, workplace protections, and retirement.

Business Meeting:

1) Call to Order at 11:12 am

2) Constituents' Time

3) Announcements

a. From the Staff Senate

i. Resignations:

1. Susan Brionez

a. “Would you please share with the Staff Senators how honored I have been to serve on the Senate for the past 7 years. It was a privilege and a responsibility – a responsibility which I took seriously. At times I was outspoken, but only on issues which have significant meaning to me or where I felt the outcome should be different than the direction it was heading. Please share that I have a deep fondness for Mason, the students, staff and even some faculty. I wish each of you

individually, and the Senate as a whole, the very best today and in the future.”

ii. From the Floor

1. Jenna: More discrepancies between Staff and Faculty. Staff were not invited to a mixer at the President’s house. Faculty were invited.

iii. Joanne: As a Staff Senate, have we ever looked into “equalized” pay for jobs across the University?

1. Stacey: Discrepancies in pay is a state issue. For example, State Police who have many years of service were getting paid the same as newly hired police. Five to 10 years ago, the State did compression raises. Since the Staff Senate is not governance (it is advisory), we can advocate and describe how our lack of pay is affecting us. The best solution is to write directly to your legislators. Because we do not have a large endowment, we are victim to whatever the state decides. Our President and JJ have been trying to find a way to change that, but we are limited due to a lack of endowment funds. Our best strategy is to write to our legislators. Akitta: I think part of the issue is that some departments have the funds to give raises and some do not. This causes retention issues. Jenna: Department/college/units can request raises, but HR can decline those requests. Who makes the decision on what is discretionary and what is operational? Stacey: The appropriations committee makes those primary decision. One of VGEA’s priorities this year is going after the appropriations committee and pushing to move us from the discretionary side of the spending to the operational side of the budget. Mason has a reputation in Richmond that we are so creative and innovative that we can do almost everything with almost nothing. One idea is pushing the economic argument. Companies look at this data, and it does affect their decision to come to Virginia to do business. We are going to push this issue not only because it is the right thing to do but also because it hurts our economy if we do not do something about this. VGEA will also be doing a letter writing campaign again. Statistics show that last year or the year before that 10 percent of our state salaried employees with benefits are using food stamps. Stacey will send out a list of the appropriation committee members so we can go directly to our legislators. Jenna: Would legislators be willing to come to our meetings? Chris and Stacey stay engaged with legislators. The University’s rebranding will help our cause and get the

message out to Richmond. Pamela is involved in PTA. They have a Teacher's Advocacy day. Their campaign included social media-tagging legislators. Stacey: Mason Lobbies is focused more on students versus staff. VGEA has a day where hundreds of state employees would come from the state and swarm the Capitol. Stacey: When you lobby and you work at Mason you cannot speak on behalf of the university or say that you are a Mason employee. You can use your personal email and state that you are a state employee. You cannot use any state property to lobby. Constituent: Grassroots are important, but our President's voice is more impactful. Stacey: We need to support the President and support what he is trying to do. We can make his case stronger, and he has a better chance of getting what we need.

- a. Committee Updates
 - iv. Committee Roster
 - 1. E and O: Lauren: Finishing newsletter for September-will be looking for proofreaders. Currently lining up the October guest speaker. Our November speaker will be Rose Pascarell, Vice President, University Life.
 - 2. Events: Preston and Erin decided on an early October meeting.
 - 3. Awards meets next week.

4) New Business

- a. Approve previous Meeting Minutes from May, June, and August
 - i. Motion, Seconded, and Approved
- b. Results of Summer Staff Appreciation Event Survey
 - i. Chris: Encourage you to read through on your own.
 - ii. Around Mason/E-files, E-mails from the Staff Senate, Staff Senate Newsletter top ways staff receive information
 - 1. Will continue to look at Google Analytics and improve how we get our message out to constituents.
 - iii. What do you think the Staff Senate Does?
 - 1. Advocates, provide connections, enhance employee engagement, builds moral
 - iv. How do you prefer to receive information?
 - 1. Improve website-easier for constituents to find answers.
 - 2. Direct Email
 - 3. Social Media: Kathy: Looked at analytics and deciphering what works. Putting up something daily/weekly and finding topics that engage staff has been a challenge. Chris: Sean is going to assist with Social Media.
 - 4. Amanda: People want to be engaged with us when there are hot topics. That is why I think the newsletter and direct email

are the preferred ways to receive information. Unless we draw people to our website using the newsletter and direct email they may not be engaged via the website.

- v. Everyday Heros/Everyday Patriots
 - 1. Interviewing different staff around Mason and bring them to light. Show the community how important our role is at Mason.
- c. Update from the Chair
 - i. We were all recently invited to Convocation through Dr. Wu's office. You had to sign-up in advance in order to attend. Staff were not acknowledged until late in the event by keynote speaker, Professor Angie Hattery, Director of the Women and Gender Studies Program. Jenna: Faculty stood and were applauded. Jenna wrote an email to thank Angie for acknowledging the staff. Chris spoke with Keith Renshaw, Faculty Senate Chair. Chris is going to ask that in the future we help plan the event, so we have some representation.

5) Old Business

- a. Webex Teams
 - i. Chris has sent out information on how to login. We can begin communicating on Teams. Brett is continuing his work on an operations manual for WebEx Teams.
- b. Mini Survey-QWL
 - i. The Executive Committee will take a look at the 1 page synopsis of results that HR has put together. They will edit that document and send their feedback.

6) Adjourn Meeting at 12:00pm

*Meeting documents

May General Meeting Minutes

June General Meeting Minutes

August General Meeting Minutes

Staff Senate Roster-August 2018

Staff Senate Committee Membership 2018

Staff Appreciation Survey Results

Next Meeting: Wednesday, October 3, 2018 ; 10:30am-12:00pm, Locations: Fairfax: Merten Hall 1201, Arlington; Founders Hall B119, Science and Technology; Colgan Hall 221, Smithsonian: Academic 219