MINUTES
Commission on Student Affairs
219 Squires Student Center
September 4, 1997
3:30 p.m.

Present: Ms. Jenne Ginther, Ms. Susan Anderson, Mr. Are Andresen, Mr. Adam Boitnott, Ms. Kelli Campbell, Mr. Raphael Castillejo, Dr. Lanny Cross, Ms. Melinda Crowder, Ms. Lauren Esleeck, Mr. Philip Forbes, Dr. Cathy Goree, Ms. Erin Graham, Dr. Louis Gwin, Mr. Michael Herndon, Ms. Gerri Johns, Dr. Martha Johnson, Ms. Krista Johnston, Ms. Arlene Merino, Mr. Steve Schneider, Dr. Edward Spencer, Dr. Brian Warren, Mr. Brian Wiersema

Absent: Ms. Tekisha Everette, Mr. Rajiv Khosla, Dr. Johann Norstedt, Dr. Delores Scott, Dr. Andy Swiger, Ms. Ningling Wang, Ms. Sara Wikstrom

1. Call to Order. Ms. Ginther called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

2. Approval of Agenda. The chair added the Student Budget Board minutes of April 28 and June 9, 1997 to the agenda. Motion was made and seconded to approve the amended agenda. Motion was approved by unanimous vote.

3. Approval of April 24, 1997 CSA Minutes. Ms. Ginther announced that the item under Old Business, GSA Resolution on Graduate Housing -- 2nd Reading, should read, "The resolution will be submitted to University Council for first reading at the September 15, 1997 meeting." Motion was made and seconded to approve the CSA minutes of April 24, 1997, as amended. Motion was approved by unanimous vote.

4. Approval of Student Budget Board Minutes. Motion was made and seconded to approve the August 28 and June 9, 1997 minutes of the Student Budget Board. Motion was approved by unanimous vote.

5. Old Business

A. Update on Football Ticket Distribution. Ms. Erin Graham, president of Panhellenic Council, gave an update on the policy and procedures for the athletic ticket distribution, effective fall 1997. She stated that in the fall of 1996, a subcommittee composed of various members of the Commission on Student Affairs met with University officials to discuss alternate means for distributing group tickets. It was decided that camp outs would cease to exist beginning in the fall of 1997. The new policy will eliminate the need to be first in line for ticket pick up. Each group seeking seating at an athletic event must nominate one member to represent the group. This representative may arrive at Cassell Coliseum one hour prior to the time when tickets will be available for pick up. This representative must bring an index card with their name, their group name, and the number of tickets they wish to pick up. The maximum number of tickets per person is seventy-five. During the one hour before tickets are available, students will drop their index cards into a box, and at 9:00 a.m., a student monitor will shuffle the cards and begin to draw cards from the box. The first card drawn is the first group to pick up tickets. This process will continue until all cards are drawn.

This policy does not affect distribution to individuals. The ticket window for individuals will be open during hours designed by the Athletic
Mr. Schneider informed the Commission that the policy had been brought before the Student Government House and Senate and that several concerns were raised regarding the policy, such as how to prevent groups from dropping several cards into the box. Ms. Graham indicated that she would be monitoring the box and will have a checklist of all registered organizations. As she receives the index cards, the groups' names will be noted on the sheet, and if duplicate cards are found, they will be disallowed.

The question was raised as to how group seating could be obtained for those persons not belonging to an organization. Ms. Graham reported that the group seating arrangement for individuals has not changed.

6. New Business

A. Student Health Insurance. Dr. Brian Warren, director of the University Counseling Center and Student Health Services, reported that in the fall of 1996, a University-wide committee was appointed with the primary goal of investigating, evaluating, and recommending whether the University should require all students to have health insurance coverage. The committee was to consider the current mandatory plan for international and veterinary medicine students in its evaluation of the question.

Dr. Warren reported that the committee met with principal University administrators including the President, Dean of the Colleges or their representatives, Budget Office, Financial Aid Office, and the Dean of Admissions for preliminary reactions to a mandatory proposal. A survey of Virginia colleges was also carried out to gather information regarding mandatory policies and insurance plans, and representatives from Trigon were invited to address the committee regarding the insurance carrier's position on mandatory plans and their implications. The committee also received informal feedback from the Council on International Student Organizations, Graduate Student Assembly, and Student Government Association.

A summary of the committee's discussions and findings indicated that an estimated 13-15% of Virginia Tech students have no health coverage. Students currently enrolled in the Trigon plan offered through the University include 1300 undergraduates and 1700 graduates. The current annual cost for the Virginia Tech Student Health Insurance Plan is $159-$525 for single students and $438-$2150 annually for a family plan.

Some of the advantages of required coverage would insure that students are covered against high costs of medical treatment, the coverage could be integrated into financial aid packages, a larger and more diverse pool of students could lower premiums and increase the possibility of better coverage, and the Student Health Services could serve as primary care gatekeeper of a student health insurance plan.

Some disadvantages would be higher administrative costs, and an increase in the total cost of Virginia Tech for students and parents who are not now covered.

Dr. Warren reported that the committee recommended that the University not mandate health insurance for all students. Rationale for the
recommendation included the lack of strong community support for increased student coverage, lack of documented evidence of a problem of proportions to justify a move to a mandatory plan, placing an additional burden on some students that may be a barrier to attending the University, high administrative costs, and that the issue of closing the existing gap in coverage can be addressed in other ways. The committee also suggested that the University Student Health Services should become more actively involved in the administration of the Virginia Tech Health Insurance Plan.

Dr. Warren told the Commission that a committee will be formed to review the health insurance process again, and asked that the organizations on CSA nominate individuals to serve on the committee, particularly from international students, SGA, and GSA. There will also be representatives on the committee from the faculty and Student Health Services.

B. Update on International Student Pick-up Service. Ms. Darlene Grega, director of Cranwell International Center, briefed the Commission on the international student pick-up service. Ms. Grega informed the Commission that the Student Government Association Budget Board had provided some support in the past, but that it was the Student Budget Board’s decision that this was not an appropriate use of Board funds. Dr. Cross, vice president for student affairs, and Dr. Chaloux, of the Graduate School, recommended that in this current year, the Division of Student Affairs and the Graduate School would give $1200 each to provide this service. She reported that the cost of the van this year was $2100, and costs for mailing of letters was $380.00.

Ms. Grega reported that letters to the students were sent out in June informing the students of the pick up service. Trips to the airport were scheduled four times a day and 160 new students were picked up.

Ms. Grega indicated that one of the problems they encountered was that 32% of the students never received the letter about the service. Out of the 165 students who signed up for the service, all but five were picked up. Ms. Grega thanked the Commission for supporting this initiative, and told the members that a report will be given to Drs. Cross and Chaloux soon.

C. Special Purpose Housing -- Traffic During Football Games. Mr. Mike Jones, Virginia Tech Police Chief, briefed the Commission on the traffic patterns for the Special Purpose Housing area during the football games. He reported that the routes for occupants to access that area will be the same as in past years, and that 150 additional police officers will be assigned to help with the traffic.

Mr. Schneider distributed a letter which was sent to the residents of SPH from the Student Government Association giving routes that are to be used during football games. West Campus Drive and Duck Pond Drive will be one-way roads for up to two hours prior to a home game, during the game, and up to two hours after a game.

7. Announcements. Mr. Schneider announced that an open forum will be held on September 10 in Haymarket Theatre of Squires Student Center to discuss the tailgating issue at football games.

Ms. Yeagle announced the Donaldson Brown Hotel and Conference Center is interested in employing workstudy students, and anyone who would be interested in these positions should call them.
Ms. Ginther asked the members to send her e-mail on any topics or issues which are not on the list received earlier that they would like to have brought before the Commission in the coming year.

8. Adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Betty Eaton
Recording Secretary