

Vanderbilt University Faculty Senate Faculty Life Committee

Final Report for the 2016-2017 Academic Year

Committee Chair: Scott Pearson

Executive Committee Liaison: Charlene Dewey

Standing Committee Members:

Leah Lowe, A&S

Liza Weavind, Medicine

Ray Friedman, Owen

Mark Cannon, Peabody

Fernando Segovia, Divinity

David Merryman, Engineering

Teresa Goddu, A&S

Ingrid Wuerth, Law

Committee Charge #1:

New: Identify the evidence toward a diverse, equitable, and inclusive faculty.

Goal: Review committee recommendations on diversity, equity, and inclusion and select recommendations that focus on faculty.

Measurable: Determine how these recommendations best inform the work of Faculty Senate committees.

Work accomplished:

The committee accessed and reviewed **reports** from the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion including the Vanderbilt Community Profile and report from The Chancellor's Committee on Diversity, Inclusion and Community.

We discussed the need to gather data on **hiring** (junior hires vs senior hires) and **retaining** faculty with a focus on diversity. Regarding tenure, who is promoted, who is turned down, and why? These questions have direct implications for retaining diverse faculty members. We pursued the idea for an **Ombudsman** for faculty who would provide an open, safe space for discussing these issues. We gathered data on ombudsman at peer institutions.

On 2-3-17, our invited guest was **John Geer, Vice Provost of Academic and Strategic Affairs** who spoke with the committee on how the promotion and tenure process affects retention of faculty in relation to D/E/I.

Outcomes:

- Identified the need for more transparency by the PTRC. This may be improving with the names of the committee members now publicly known and with the initiation of publishing statistics on the successful and unsuccessful promotion cases.
- Identified that a crucial point occurs prior to deliberations by the PTRC, ie. who does or doesn't enter the promotion process. We need to understand and collect this data. This may be a point where we do not retain faculty.
- Vice Provost John Geer agreed to revisit the FLC with updates as additional data is collected. This may help inform the new Faculty Senate standing committee on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

Committee Charge #2:

New: Faculty Wellness

Goal: Assess Faculty Wellness.

Measurable: Implement a survey instrument to assess wellness and mental health.

Work accomplished:

The initial charge was: assessing faculty wellness for Heads of House in the Commons. After presenting the charge and discussion at our first meeting of 12 September, 2016, the Faculty Life committee felt strongly that no specific faculty group should be singled out for assessing wellness. Therefore the charge was revised to be less specific and more broadly representative of the body of faculty.

The chair and committee reviewed the COACHE survey questions to identify questions that may inform us on the faculty perspectives of wellness. Overall, there appears to be few questions directly relating to wellness. Therefore, we planned development of a survey focusing on wellness to be delivered to all faculty via the Faculty Senate.

At our 5 December, 2016 meeting, also discussed was the possible consequences of the VU/VUMC split on faculty wellness and how to gather information from faculty on both intended and unintended sequelae and repercussions that may be now becoming known from the university split.

Outcomes:

- The **Faculty Wellness Survey** was developed largely through the work and expertise of our Chair of the Faculty Senate and liaison to the EC, Charlene Dewey. This survey went out to all faculty (VU and VUMC) on April 3rd with email notices on each Monday morning for three weeks before closing the survey on April 28th. Initial indication is that the number of responses has been favorable.
- The FLC will assist the newly formed **Task Force on Faculty Wellness (TFFW)** with obtaining evidence from the Faculty Wellness Survey and identifying gaps in promoting and protecting health and wellness of our faculty.

Committee Charge #3:

Continued: Faculty Surveys

Goal: Review and analyze results of COACHE survey to faculty.

Measurable: Identify gaps of faculty life and concerns that this survey does not address. Use to inform development of the Faculty Senate Faculty Survey. (Work in collaboration with Academic Policies and Services Committee and Senate Affairs regarding faculty surveys.)

Work accomplished:

By mid-year, we still did not have COACHE data to review as a committee. COACH survey data seemed to be in gradual release process.

Outcomes:

- We proceeded with our Faculty Senate initiated **Faculty Wellness survey** which went out to all faculty during the month of April.

Committee Charge #4:

Continued: New Faculty Club space

Goal: Determine if this space will meet the faculty's needs and interests. Should be accessible by Emeriti.

Measurable: Meet with representatives from the administration for discussion and fact finding.

Work accomplished:

During our meeting of 12 September, 2016, we discussed at length the current University Club which does not function as a Faculty Club per se and we identified qualities in a potential Vanderbilt Faculty Club which would be necessary. These included: accessibility for faculty on campus, an appealing space to take potential faculty recruits, and a common space to collaborate with other faculty in the spirit of trans-institutional programs and ideals.

The chair of the FLC visited space at Alumni Hall on three separate occasions and found the space to be appealing and conducive to meetings of the faculty. There is also an exercise room on the bottom floor. However, initial indication from administration is that this space is not available for development as a shared space for faculty club functions.

We invited **Eric Kopstain, Vice Chancellor for Administration**, to attend our October meeting which he did, along with Laura Nairon from his office. He updated us on the current status of the University Club and discussed potential venues for a Faculty Club including the previous HealthPlus space above Kensington Garage and the recently acquired space at 1101 19th Avenue site at the Disciples of Christ Historical Society .

We requested benchmarking data from peer institutions with Faculty Clubs and we received this data from Eric Kopstain and his office and conducted a preliminary review of this data at our meeting of 5 December.

Outcomes:

- The chair of the FLC, along with Ally Sullivan, Director of Vanderbilt University Real Estate, and Meredith Hunter, Property Manager, toured the previous HealthPlus space above Kensington Garage and the recently acquired space at 1101 19th Avenue at the Disciples of Christ Historical Society.
- The space above Kensington Garage is not ideal and overall not suited for what we envision as an excellent faculty club
- In contrast, the building at 1101 19th Avenue, the Disciples of Christ Historical Society, appeared to be an excellent space for what we envision as a dynamic, collaborative, multiple-use facility to which diverse faculty from across the university will be drawn. This is the **Vanderbilt Faculty Commons**.
- A proposal package, including exterior and interior photos of the building, was developed for presentation to the Executive Committee, the Vanderbilt Administration, and the Board of Trust.
- A memorandum of the proposal for a **Vanderbilt Faculty Commons** was sent to Provost Susan Wente, Chancellor Nick Zeppos, the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate and to Eric Kopstain, Vice Chancellor of Administration, and Allyson Sullivan, Director of Real Estate. This memorandum is attached as an addendum.
- Initial response from these individuals is favorable to develop a full proposal for the **Vanderbilt Faculty Commons**.

Committee Charge #5:

Continued: Retired Faculty Association (RFA)

Goal: Consider issues related to funding, dues, use of free space periodically for meetings, web presence - how updated and maintained.

Measurable: Fact finding on feasibility.

Work accomplished:

We are approaching this charge in conjunction with the Faculty Club charge. Members of the committee emphasized the potential benefit of having retired faculty remain invested with the university for multiple reasons including mentoring and insight for young faculty.

Outcomes:

- The retired faculty association is to be developed along with the faculty commons initiative and ideally would be in the same space of current and retired faculty and well as faculty being recruited to Vanderbilt.

Additional Committee Work

Faculty Senate Resolution

In November, the FLC was asked by the EC to review a draft resolution from the Faculty Senate with the purpose of reassuring our students and university community of our core values and unwavering support for them during a time of national unrest. The FLC reviewed the document at our meeting of 5 December and minor edits and changes were suggested. This was discussed in an open forum at the following Faculty Senate meeting that week. The resolution is included as an addendum to this report.

Within our committee, we also discussed concern from committee members of how the legal administration of new and proposed **online courses** was being handled at the departmental and university-wide level. This issue was discussed in open forum at our monthly Faculty Senate meeting.

Addendum:

- 1) Memorandum for the Vanderbilt Faculty Commons
- 2) Faculty Senate resolution

Memorandum

Date: April 14, 2017

To: Nicholas S. Zeppos, Chancellor
Susan R. Wentz, Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

From: Scott Pearson, Chair, Faculty Life Committee
Charlene Dewey, Chair, Faculty Senate

RE: Proposal for Development of the Vanderbilt Faculty Commons (VFC)

We write to propose the development of the Vanderbilt property located at 1101 19th Avenue, South for the **Vanderbilt Faculty Commons or VFC** which will benefit the faculty and larger community of Vanderbilt University. We envision a dynamic, collaborative, multi-use facility to which diverse faculty from across the university will be drawn to in a collaborative spirit that has characterized Vanderbilt University from its earliest beginnings. Located in the prior Disciples of Christ Historical Society Building, this facility was built in 1952 in Tudor Gothic style from the 12th to 16th centuries.

We intend to use the VFC facility for the following: meetings (i.e., the Faculty Senate, collaborative scholarly projects and research), educational programs directed at advancing faculty relationships, knowledge and skills, a place for recruitment of potential faculty, and a location to be used by our emeritus and/or retired faculty community in order to maintain a productive and giving association with their former colleagues. This proposal has been developed with the assistance of Eric Kopstain, Vice Chancellor of Administration, and based on a tour of the property with Allyson Sullivan, Director of Real Estate.

We further envision the VFC to uphold every spirit of diversity, equity, and inclusion, to be friendly to faculty and their families alike, to be an active space, used during the day time hours of university life as well as continued collaborative interactions at the completion of the day. The Vanderbilt Faculty Commons will enhance the One Vanderbilt philosophy of uniting our outstanding schools and colleges. This engaging space will be the site of creativity, collaboration, and development of many future faculty initiatives from faculty, the Faculty Senate, and the Provost and Chancellor. An example of a creative and collaborative activity includes the TIPS program and the design and administration of University courses.

We invite you and other key stakeholders and leaders to tour this remarkable building with us and to consider initiating the next steps in moving the proposal toward action items. We are contemplating a task force on the development of the Vanderbilt Faculty Commons. We very much welcome both of your thoughts on this exciting project.

Thank you for this opportunity and the continued support for the faculty and the Faculty Senate. Photos of the main spaces of the future Vanderbilt Faculty Commons are attached.

cc: Eric Kopstain, Vice Chancellor of Administration, Allyson Sullivan, Director of Real Estate
Executive Committee Faculty Senate

PROPOSED: A Faculty Senate Resolution Affirming our Guiding Principles

- Whereas, many members in our academic community have felt alienated, offended and marginalized by recent actions and discourses lacking basic civility or decency;
- Whereas, it is imperative to our mission to affirm our ongoing commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion, and to our common values to all of our stakeholders and the larger community;
- Whereas, we, the faculty of Vanderbilt University, wish to communicate to all of our students in a spirit of free inquiry, moral support, and open discourse;

Be it resolved:

The Vanderbilt University Faculty Senate, as the deliberative and representative body of the Vanderbilt University faculty, affirms our commitments to the following guiding principles:

- 1) That all members of our University community – students, faculty, and staff – must be treated with the justice, respect, and civility that all humans deserve;
- 2) That the diversity of our University is a major strength that helps us learn from and connect with people from different backgrounds;
- 3) That our academic community has an obligation to reach across social, political and geographical borders to serve the common good through open discourse;
- 4) That systematic inquiry in the arts, humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences should play a fundamental role in informing public decision-making;
- 5) That the security, well-being, and education of all our students – while embracing differences, including, but not limited to, gender, race, religion, ideology, ability, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, national origin, immigration status, gender identity and sexual orientation – are our guiding responsibilities.