Vanderbilt University
Faculty Senate Meeting
May 4, 2015, 4:10 p.m.
Frist 140

Call to order

Approval of the minutes of April 2, 2015

Report of the Executive Committee

Remarks by the Chancellor & Recognition of Third-Year Senators

Old Business
1. Motion from Senator Richard Willis on electronic voting and changes to the Senate Rules of Order
2. Report on the motion referred to the Senate Affairs committee (Senator Buddy Creech)

New Business
1. Election of Chair-Elect and Vice Chair-Elect of the Faculty Senate
2. Discussion of Year-End Committee Reports

Good of the Senate

Adjournment to reception


Voting Members absent: Baker (regrets), Brown, Cliffel, Delpire, Enterline (regrets), Fauchet, Fountain (regrets), Friedman, Guelcher (regrets), Guthrie, Hemingway (regrets), Hetherington, Hopkins (regrets), Johnson, E., Johnson, J. (regrets), Johnson, R. (regrets), Lamb, McCammon, McCain, Price (regrets), Rohde (regrets), Slayton, Wait, Wittig, Wright, Wright-Rios, and Ziegler.

Ex Officio Members present: Anderson, Bandas, Brady, Cyrus, Fortune, Johnston, Lutz, Miller, Stalcup, Sweet, Wente, and Zeppos.

Ex Officio Members absent: Bernard, Combs (regrets), Kopstain, Hall (regrets), McNamara, Raiford, Weislo, and Williams.
Call to order

Chair Lim called the meeting to order at 4:10pm.

Approval of the minutes of April 2, 2015

Chair Lim asked for a motion to approve the minutes from April 2, 2015. A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Report of the Executive Committee

Chair Lim gave the report of the Executive Committee:

1. He said that the process for forming the Task Force on University Athletics is moving right along. He said that we have drafted a charge and have recruited two co-chairs for the task force—Sandra Barnes from Peabody and Marc Hetherington from Arts and Science (both senators).

2. Updates on Concur: He said that a number of faculty have emailed and talked to him and other senators about this. He said that the Deans’ local options will be honored regarding whether faculty will use Concur or not for booking travel. Each Dean will submit plans for export controls and ISOS compliance for provostial approval.

3. Follow up on tertiary educational benefits for children with special educational needs: This has been brought to the Executive Committee and there have been several conversations with the Chancellor, Provost and Vice Chancellor for Health Affairs. Most recently, Eric Kopstain, Tracy Nordberg, and the three movers of this issue (Dawn Turton, Vanessa Beasley and Katherine Donato) and I met to talk about some of the possible future actions regarding it. The result of this conversation is that there will be a motion brought to the Senate in the fall.

4. After the letter and the elected-senators only meeting: He said that at the elected-senators only meeting, we talked a good deal about both the Senate Affairs committee survey as well as the anonymous letter. Our general consensus is that many of the issues are already raised in the Senate Affairs committee survey data. He said that the other big concern was that when surveys are done, it needs to be brought back to inform a more robust conversation about this among faculty members and also for future implementation. We are thinking further about future endeavors to analyze and propose actions at the behest of the Faculty Senate, which we believe to be the representative body of the faculty.

5. He asked for any questions.

   a. There was a motion made at the September 2014 Senate meeting to update the Constitution. And a motion made at the October 2014 meeting to have the committee reports available electronically. Could you tell us the progress on those two motions?

   b. Chair Lim: Yes, for the motion on updating the Constitution, we were supposed to have it done in the spring, but since it wasn’t done, we are going to have to take it up next year. The reason for this is that it has to be
voted on at the Faculty Assembly. As for the committee reports, they are available on the Senate website.

Remarks by the Chancellor & Recognition of Third-Year Senators

Chancellor Zeppos recognized the third-year senators who are rotating off the Faculty Senate. He also talked about commencement, the new medicine and diversity chair, and a diversity strategy for the university.

Chair Lim recognized outgoing Past Chair Donald Brady and Past Vice Chair Jeff Johnston.

Old Business

3. Motion from Senator Richard Willis on electronic voting and changes to the Senate Rules of Order

Chair Lim presented the motion from Senator Richard Willis on electronic voting and changes to the Senate Rules of Order for a vote (it was distributed before the April Senate meeting and discussed at that meeting):

“Whereas the Faculty Senate passed a motion to amend the Rules of Order on April 10, 2003 to state: “Voting on matters before the Faculty Senate shall normally be by "ayes" and "nays" (voice vote or show of hands) or by electronic voting.”

And whereas this wording allows for the possibility of electronic voting when needed and served the Senate well for many years due to the flexibility it gives in choosing the best voting mechanism for each situation,

And whereas the Faculty Senate passed a motion to amend the Rules of Order on February 5, 2015 to state, “Except for routine matters such as the approval of minutes and adjournment or when a roll call is effected, or in the matter of electronic disruption, all voting in the Faculty Senate shall be electronic and anonymous.”

And whereas the Senate Affairs committee of the Faculty Senate issued this statement on the proposed motion:

“On December 9, 2014, the Senate Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate discussed the motion regarding anonymous electronic voting. In general, the committee was very supportive of electronic voting, recognizing the advantages of voting that is anonymous, efficient, and precise; however, the committee expressed concern that the amendment is an unnecessary change to the current rules of order. Based on the April 10, 2003 amendment to the Senate Rules of Order, “voting on matters before the Faculty Senate shall normally be by “ayes” and “nays” (voice vote or show of hands) or by electronic voting.” Given that the current Rules of Order allow for the normal use of electronic
voting, the Senate Affairs Committee recommends that the Senate simply adopt electronic voting, in a format of the Executive Committee’s choosing, as a normative means of voting on Senate business. The Committee holds that this meets the spirit of the amendment without unnecessarily complicating the Rules of Order.”

And whereas the motion passed on February 5, 2015 to amend the Rules of Order gives limited flexibility when choosing the best voting mechanism for each situation,

And whereas the need for anonymous voting can still be achieved by a written ballot,

Be it resolved that the Senate Rules of Order be amended by deletion and insertion. First deleting, “Except for routine matters such as the approval of minutes and adjournment or when a roll call is effected, or in the matter of electronic disruption, all voting in the Faculty Senate shall be electronic and anonymous.” and in its place inserting, “Voting on matters before the Faculty Senate for routine matters such as approval of minutes or when a roll call is effected shall normally be by "ayes" and "nays" (voice vote or show of hands). All other voting shall be anonymous by either electronic means or by written ballot.’”

Chair Lim asked for any discussion.

Motion

Senator Mark Cannon moved to suspend the Rules of Order and use paper ballots instead of electronic voting for this session only. The motion was seconded. The motion was passed unanimously by a show of hands.

Chair Lim then asked for an anonymous paper ballot to vote on the motion proposed by Senator Willis. The motion was passed virtually unanimously, with only one abstention.

4. Report on the motion by Senators James Steiger and Myrna Wooders referred to the Senate Affairs committee (Senator Buddy Creech)

Senator Buddy Creech presented the modified motion from the Senate Affairs Committee. This is a reading of the motion and it will be voted on at the first Senate meeting of the next academic year:

“Whereas the Faculty Senate desires to conduct meetings that are effective and efficient,

Whereas it is helpful for Senators to review materials that are discussed during Faculty Senate meetings,

Be it resolved that:
1. The normative order of business, which may be modified at the discretion of the Chair of the Faculty Senate, will be the following:
2. Materials presented during scheduled remarks, either in original or redacted format, will be posted to the secure Faculty Senate website at the discretion of the Executive Committee and the approval of the presenter.”

Senator Creech gave some background on this motion. He said that during the last meeting, this motion came forward asking to restructure the order of the meetings so that faculty business precedes invited remarks. The other part of the motion would require invited speakers to attend two Senate meetings. The first meeting would be to present invited remarks, and the second would be to answer follow-up questions. The last part of the motion was to require invited speakers to share their presentation materials, which would be posted to the Senate website.

He said that the Senate Affairs committee discussed this motion, and had two goals in mind. We first thought about the unintended consequences of keeping this motion just as it is. The second was if we modified it, how could we maintain the spirit of the motion even if the letter of the motion was modified.

He said that they discussed the need for a quorum, whether or not this would place an undue burden in terms of time on invited speakers, and the need for confidentiality of prepared remarks. With these thoughts in mind, he said that they are presenting this modified motion. He said that there is no action on this motion today, but this is the recommendation of the Senate Affairs committee. The motion will be voted on at the September 2015 meeting. He opened the floor for questions or comments.

Senator Wooders: I believe that this is a very good friendly amendment.
Question: It doesn’t say when the materials will be posted. Do you want to say “in advance of the meeting?”
Senator Creech: It would be fantastic to have them beforehand, and I’m happy to take that back to the Senate Affairs committee. But I like the wording to be flexible.
Comment: You could say “when possible, the materials will be posted in advance of the meeting.”
Senator Creech: I think if the presentations are ready in advance, that would be fine.

New Business
3. Election of Chair-Elect and Vice Chair-Elect of the Faculty Senate

Chair Lim said that we have five candidates for chair-elect today: Tom Christenbery, Brian Christman, Brian Heuser, Peter Martin, and Erin O’Hara O’Connor. He said that this vote will be done on paper ballots. He reminded the Senate that this vote requires a simple majority, and if no one wins by a simple majority during the first round, the person with the least amount of votes will be dropped and there will be more rounds of voting until a candidate receives a majority of the votes. He also explained that we cannot have a chair and vice chair-elect from the same school or college.

After many rounds of voting, Erin O’Hara O’Connor was elected chair-elect.

Chair Lim said that we have two candidates for vice chair-elect, Charlene Dewey and Donna Webb. In addition, any unsuccessful candidate for chair-elect can put his name up for vice chair-elect. All of them elected to do this, so Tom Christenbery, Brian Christman, Brian Heuser, and Peter Martin also stood for vice chair-elect.

There was a motion to suspend the rules and allow for a show of hands vote for two vice chairs-elect serving on the Senate Executive Committee this next year if it is ruled by the Parliamentarian that it is within the rules to do this.

Comment: Our by-laws do say that we elect “a vice chair-elect,” which says to me that it allows only room for one and not two. So, this motion is not valid under our by-laws.

After many rounds of voting, Charlene Dewey was elected vice chair-elect.

4. Discussion of Year-End Committee Reports

Chair Lim stated that the year-end committee reports are available on the Senate website for review.

Good of the Senate

Chair Lim asked for any Good of the Senate. Hearing none, he moved to the next item.

Adjournment to reception

Meeting was adjourned at 5:30 p.m.