

## Vanderbilt University Faculty Senate

### Task Force on Faculty Wellness

#### The Need:

Each faculty member is vital to the institution as they contribute to the education of learners (students, trainees, graduate students, and peers), research and the science of discovery, and the overall culture of the institution. The success of a university depends upon faculty wellness. Many faculty members experience stress, burnout, and/or impairment across institutions. Each can negatively impact their ability to perform at their optimal level, their productivity, and their overall satisfaction. Measures that promote and protect the wellness of faculty can reduce the need for turnover and promote a vital faculty both now and in the future. We aim to assess current states of faculty wellness at Vanderbilt and to make suggestions for improvement where necessary.

#### Purpose:

The mission of the Vanderbilt University Faculty Senate **Task Force on Faculty Wellness (TFFW)** is to identify current states of faculty wellness, resources internal and external to Vanderbilt, and to conduct a needs assessment to identify gaps for VU faculty-related to wellness. The TFFW is charged as follows:

#### TFFW Charges:

1. **Complete a needs assessment of best strategies at peer institutions:** Research and report on current data and evidence around faculty wellbeing and wellness resources at peer institutions. (Results in an interim report to the FS.)
2. **Review and interpret survey results:** Identify current state of wellness for VU faculty (wellness is defined as their total wellness of their physical, mental, emotional and spiritual wellbeing and those areas that reduce wellness such as stress, burnout, impairment, mental health (MH) fears/concerns, individual personality and preferences toward or against wellness and collegiality), their perceptions of barriers or areas/issues that reduce wellness, and their attitudes toward wellness and resources (currently available or needed resources) at VU that promote wellness. Identify gaps and needs to improve and strengthen faculty wellness for all faculty members across both campuses. Work in collaboration with Faculty Life Committee (FLC) in survey analysis and interpretation and the VU Mental Health Task Force. (Results in a secondary report to the FS.)
3. **Generate recommendations and suggest next steps:** Identify and document the needs assessment results, recommend initiatives or activities, etc. that will fill gaps in

promoting and protecting the health and wellness of faculty at VU, and outline next steps.

### **Proposed Timeline:**

April through August 2017:

- FLC review proposal and formation of task force.
- FLC will conduct FS Faculty wellness Survey.
- Request representatives from various schools/colleges or groups as listed below.
- Initiate and assemble the TFFW and present to the FS.
- First meeting in August 2017. Review of mission/charges and assign tasks.

September through January of 2017:

- Data collection on charge 1.
- Collaborate with FLC in data analysis from survey – charge 2.
- Interim report to FS EC in December 2017.

February through April 2018:

- Complete data analysis on charge 2.
- Second interim report to the FS EC on the findings of the FLC survey.

May through October 2018:

- Prepare gap analysis for needs and resources.
- Present preliminary report to EC in August.
- Address charge 3 – data gathering completed and generating recommendations and next steps.
- Prepare the final summary. Report/present findings and recommendations to the Faculty Senate at the monthly FS meeting in/or approximately in November 2018.

### **Proposed Members:**

Members of the TFFW will consist of current and past FS members and other faculty as invited by the EC of the Faculty Senate. Proposed goal is 12-17 members. Preliminary members identified to serve on the task force include:

1. Charlene Dewey: Current chair of the FS (VUMC/EC liaison and ex-officio) and chair of the Faculty Wellness Committee for VUMC

2. Past FS EC chairs: David Weintraub (A&S), Rolanda Johnson (SON), Sal March (Owen), and Donald Brady (VUMC/also serves a liaison to MH initiatives)
3. Alumni Representative: Ann Price (senator and past vice chair FS)
4. Current/Previous Senators: Scott Pearson (VUMC/chair FLC)
5. School/College Faculty/Senator Representatives: Cynthia Paschal (Engineering), Jim Blumstein (Law), Fernando Segovia (Divinity), Tedra Walden (Peabody), Jeremy Wilson (Blair), Duco Jansen (Engineering), and Mario Davidson (SOM/Biostatistics)
6. Special Institutional Representatives: Jim Pichert (VUMC – Center for Patient and Professional Advocacy), Mary Yarbrough (VU/VUMC, director EAP/Work-Life Connections), Rachel Eskridge (VU Student Center for Wellbeing), Katy Hanson (Osher Center)

### **Proposed Roles and Responsibilities:**

- The task force leader/director will be appointed by the EC.
- Task force members will be appointed by the EC and should be multi-stakeholder in nature.
- The overall task force membership may consist of 12-17 task force members with smaller sub-groups (5-6) assigned to each charge as directed by the leader/director of the TFFW.
- The Executive Committee Chair and Vice Chairs are ex-officio members of the task force.
- All members must be active participants. If not, the task force leader/director or the EC Chair must remove them.
- Meet regularly based upon agreed terms (not less than monthly during the 9-mo academic year and more frequently if needed for sub-groups).
- Generate a summary of process and outcomes. (Minutes)
- Give oral interim reports to the EC based on the proposed timeline above.
- Give an oral report to the FS based on the timeline above.
- File a final report with the EC.

**Desired Outcomes:** By initiating and implementing the TFFW, we propose the following outcomes:

1. Charge 1: Have a clear understanding of what peer institutions do/have that promote and protect the wellness of faculty. (This includes services and resources.)
2. Charge 2: Have and interpret data that outlines the current knowledge, attitudes/beliefs, and perceptions of VU faculty towards wellness (general health and wellness, challenges to health and wellness, barriers to seeking help for health and wellness issues, etc.) Use data to outline the needs for policies and resources needed to promote and protect the health and wellness of faculty.
3. Charge 3: Clearly state understandings of the gaps that need to be filled in order for VU to promote and protect the health and wellness of faculty and propose a plan for filling the gaps in the form of recommendations and next steps for the Faculty Senate, VU and VUMC leadership.