

Strategic Planning and Academic Freedom Committee
Vanderbilt University Senate
Report for Academic Year (2014-2015)
Chair: Joyce Johnston (School of Medicine)

Committee Members:

Eric Delpire (Medicine)
Charlene Dewey (Medicine)
Raymond Friedman (Owen)
John Greer (Medicine)
Joel Harrington (Arts and Sciences)
Joyce Johnson (Medicine) – Chair
Xenofon Koutsoukos (Engineering)
Leah Marcus (Arts and Sciences)
William Turner (Peabody) – for Dr. Sandra Barnes, on leave in the fall semester
Richard Willis (Owen) – Executive Committee Liaison

Charges Assigned for 2014-2015:

Charge # 0.5: Prior to beginning work on our charges, SPAF was convened at its first meeting to serve as a focus group for the Chancellor's faculty survey regarding the cost of compliance with federal regulations.

The resulting report, "Recalibrating Regulations of Colleges and Universities: Report of the Task Force on Federal Regulation of Higher Education" was prepared by the Task Force on Government Regulation of Higher Education. The task force was co-chaired by Chancellor Zeppos and University System of Maryland Chancellor William Kirwan. Chancellor Zeppos testified before the US Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee on February 24, 2015 regarding the findings of the report. The report is available at:
http://www.help.senate.gov/imo/media/Regulations_Task_Force_Report_2015_FINAL.pdf

Charge #1: Review and evaluate the concept of the Transinstitutional Programs (TIPs) portion of the Academic Strategic Plan.

We met several times to explore the charge and its specific suggestions for inquiry regarding the TIPs initiative. After familiarizing ourselves with the TIPs portion of the current Plan, we revisited the TIPs concept as proposed in the 2002 plan, and the outcomes of those programs. We then formulated a list of questions for Drs. John Geer and Larry Marnett in advance of a meeting with them, which took place in early November. The questions are appended as **Appendix I**.

After outlining the current process and deadlines for proposals, they addressed our written questions and engaged with the Committee in a discussion of multiple details, including 2002 programs that are no longer functioning, the specific fruits of those that are, sources of administrative support for new programs, definitions of success, and the mechanics of how decisions will be made about whom to fund, among a number of other issues.

A summary of the discussion:

The 2002 Plan:

Academic venture capital fund started around 2000, just before the market deflated. Vanderbilt kept investing, which was good because no one else was investing. Eventually what was a \$200M commitment became a \$100M commitment. 11 centers were created.

In 2002, relatively few centers or initiatives were started, and each received relatively substantial funds, and those in the sciences got the most funding. The goal was to have these centers in place to recruit faculty, to establish core facilities, to attract students, and to create seed funding to bring people together.

Of the 11 started, there are 4 still functioning supported by VU funding, primarily in ANS (sciences) and Medicine:

1. Institute of Chemical Biology—chemistry in ANS; Medicine. This is Dr. Marnett's center.
2. Institute for Nanoscale Science and Engineering—ANS, Chemistry, Physics, Engineering
3. VU Institute for Imaging Sciences—Medicine, Engineering
4. Law and Medicine Center—Law, Medicine

When asked about measuring return on investment, the response was that these are so big and complex, with rhizome-like growth, that return on investment cannot be calculated.

Seven did not survive; SPAF members asked why. The response was that there are no clear answers, but five hypotheses have been offered:

#1: Centers that succeeded provided advanced technologic equipment and added value to some people's research. This is true for science centers.

#2: Ineffective leadership.

#3: The Humanities Centers were rushed to market and the rush is what made them fail.

#4: Imprudent use of funds.

#5: Some of the Centers were composed of personalities that did not work productively together.

Other lessons from 2002:

-There was a goal that the Centers would be self-funding after five years, but in hindsight that was unrealistic.

-The other lesson from the ones that did not survive: investments in these institutes were not linked with philanthropy or development. If a successful center is to be created, it will need to interface with a college, so that a Dean will be aware that funding needs to be raised to help support it. Deans are much more involved with the centers now; after five years the Dean will have to pick up the cost, by raising more money to support, convince the Provost to provide additional funding, or eliminate something else to support the center.

The 2014 Plan:

1. We are making small bets on many ideas as opposed to big bets on a few ideas.
2. We expect there will be failures.
3. TIPS is not about establishing centers.
4. There is a five-year roll-out of \$10M per year for five years.
5. There is a bigger role of learning (teaching as a component of the proposal) and research. The 2002 plan was criticized that it was too research-focused and there was not a teaching component.
6. The process in the current plan is more transparent.
7. The process in the current plan is more faculty-driven.

Q/A from SPAF about the current TIPS:

Can the money be used to pay support staff or facilities?

The TIPS are not for staff or for facilities. The Dean must supply this.

***There was faculty concern about the sustainability of the 2014 TIPS initiatives under this principle.*

Details about proposal review?

Pre-proposals will be evaluated by TIPS Council to gauge the demand. Someone on a review panel can participate in a TIPS application; their proposal will go to another review panel.

Then ensure we have the expertise on the panels to review the proposals that come in. *Followup question from Committee member: Will we need people on an ad hoc basis to review certain proposals?* We would like the process to provide feedback: e.g. you propose this in your pre-proposal, and we will offer feedback on additional things you should consider in your final proposal.

We want as many people as possible to submit. Proposals are randomly assigned to review panels. The review comments come to TIPS Council and are communicated by review panel chairs, with some prioritization. TIPS Council will take all those recommendations for those proposals and make recommendations on the fundability. Allotment of funds will be done by Provost Wenthe and Vice Chancellor Balser, who will make decisions in concert with the Deans.

How was the Council chosen?

Each Dean was asked for recommendations. Then there was discussion about how large the Council could be: small enough that it could deliberate, but large enough to represent the whole University. 8 initially, then settled on 10 members. The list was sent to Drs. Balser and Wenthe, who sent it to Dr. Zeppos, who approved it.

As yet the term of a Council member was not specified. Likely, the members will serve on a staggered term basis. TIPS Council members cannot submit applications. hence they may wish to resign so they can construct and submit a proposal.

The strategic plan discusses problems affecting the world. Are you looking for something in particular?

We view it as a grass roots effort to get as many good ideas as possible, that can be addressed with teams of faculty across campus. We have heard good ideas, but there are no preconceived notions about what the focus needs to be for the proposal to be selected for funding.

Will there be a central repository that tells us what came out of this \$50M investment? It would be great if there were an electronic publication where this could all be tracked.

We envision a web presence of what was funded and what is the status of it. Let's say 50 proposals. Let's say 25 are funded. We will announce the 25 proposals that will be funded so people can see.

The 2002 plan was difficult to evaluate in terms of what succeeded.

The pay offs are not just in grants. Can also be in culture and values. We are taking advantage of the unique literature we have.

Follow-up question: We want to track how information is measured and reported about the funding initiatives and milestones along the way. How will we measure success and outcomes? How will those measures be reported?

No specific forum is currently in mind.

RECOMMENDATION for 2015-16: Evaluate who and what has been funded, any progress to date, and any changes to the process in year two.

Charge #2: *Continue to monitor the findings of OETF.*

We met on Monday 12/1/14 with Dr. Ranga Ramanujam of the Owen School, who heads this Task Force. He shared with us their initial charge, their process, and the current draft document regarding the rights and responsibilities of faculty with respect to online teaching activities. Topics addressed included proposed revenue sharing and conflicts of interest and commitment related to online teaching for certification and/or academic credit, among others. The discussion was wide-ranging, touching on issues of intellectual property and the use of Vanderbilt space, equipment, and tech support for online teaching activities.

Dr. Ramanujam presented his task force's work at our March meeting. We anticipate that this task force will not be in existence after this academic year, because it has fulfilled its charge. The OETF was charged with developing a conflict-of-commitment statement with regard to faculty involvement in online educational offerings.

Summary of discussion:

Dr. Ramanujam told us his task force is trying to be very specific on two issues:

Conflict of commitment. Right now, VU and Coursera have an arrangement to offer MOOCs. If a VU faculty member who doesn't teach a Coursera course is approached by another vendor of MOOCs what should s/he do?

Revenue sharing. Some MOOCs generate revenue for universities. Coursera has an option that students can pay some amount for a course. For some courses, like Android, there is a large enough market that some might be willing to pay. Some courses have as many as 10,000 students, and at \$60 to \$70 per student, may generate significant revenue.

Since the course content is owned by the faculty member, what should be the revenue sharing arrangement between the faculty member and VU?

A “Vanderbilt MOOC” is defined as any formal partnership between VU and MOOC provider that is approved and sanctioned by VU.

We would like to place a motion in front of the Senate to add an addendum to the Faculty Manual on conflict of commitment. **[This motion was later submitted by the OETF to the full Senate and approved on April 2, 2015. -JJ]**

On revenue sharing the VU administration favors using the same agreement we have for technology transfer. After VU recoups its investment, the faculty member gets 50% and then the remainder goes to other parties. For above \$100,000, then faculty member gets 40% and then the remainder goes to other parties.

Dr. Ramanujam shared this with the Faculty Manual committee, who pointed out that developing a course is not the same as technology sharing. Developing a course is a creative act, similar to writing a textbook. We need to be careful that we do not imply that developing MOOC is like technology. It would matter in terms of ownership and revenue sharing. If you publish a book the royalties are between the faculty and the publisher.

Right now VU faculty engage in activities outside of VU; it is part of our scholarly work, or it is consulting. We considered treating a MOOC as one of those two things. Could I call a MOOC consulting, or part of my scholarly work? There might be an issue if a VU faculty member offers a course through EdEx, which competes with the VU-Coursera partnership.

University of Pennsylvania has concluded that if you do any online course AT ALL, you must get permission from your dean.

Committee member noted the following: Conflict of Commitment has been moved to be under Conflict of Interest. They are not the same. Conflict of Interest is done with much more stringency and it is part of our annual disclosure to the University.

Distinction: course for credit requires Dean’s permission; course for certification requires disclosure. The receiving university decides if it is for credit, not the vendor (Coursera).

If we make it “any online course,” then a TED talk or YouTube video could be included. That is why the OETF is labeling it as “courses for academic credit,”

If a VU faculty member is approached by a vendor, s/he may decide if it is reasonably likely it will be offered for credit. Coursera puts courses out there and doesn’t typically know if it is being offered for credit somewhere. They have no idea. **[The motion that was ultimately passed includes the language “offered or can be reasonably expected to be offered for credit” -JJ]**

You could create the course, and then years later it may be used for credit. Then at that point would the VU faculty member have the right to pull it off the Coursera offering? Could the professor rescind ownership?

We want to have a faculty voice in what needs to be disclosed when, and what requires permission.

What are the penalties if you violate a conflict of commitment?

RECOMMENDATION for 2015-6: Because the Faculty Manual Committee will become a standing committee effective July 1, 2015, we recommend that the Faculty Manual Committee monitor changes to the Faculty Manual in response to the OETF motion passed by the Senate.

Charge #3: *In tandem with the Faculty Manual Task Force, consider the Faculty Manual’s current statement on academic freedom, and make recommendations for revision as appropriate.*

We discussed the current statements regarding “academic freedom” and “academic responsibility” in the Faculty Manual:

Chapter 1: A Statement of Principles

Section A

Academic Freedom and Responsibility

“Academic freedom” in the traditional sense refers to the University’s continuing policy of maintaining conditions of free inquiry, thought, and discussion for every member of the faculty in professional activities of research, teaching, public speaking, and publication. These conditions are regarded as necessary rights accruing to appointment on the faculty. Faculty members have the correlative obligation to speak and write with accuracy, with due respect for the opinions of others, and with proper care to specify that they speak on the authority of their own work and reputation, not as special pleaders for any social group or as purporting to represent the University. Such rights and obligations presuppose that faculty members adequately perform other academic duties and that they do not accept pecuniary return for activities outside of the University without a proper understanding with University authorities.

Some persons broaden the meaning of academic freedom beyond individual rights and duties to include faculty participation in determination of University policy. At Vanderbilt, the faculties of the College of Arts and Science, the Graduate School, and the professional schools (the Executive Faculty in the School of Medicine) determine the requirements and recommend all candidates for degrees. Through their collegial bodies and their elected representatives in the Faculty Senate, the faculties are free at any time to examine, debate, and make recommendations concerning any educational policy, program, or practice of the University.

“Academic responsibility” means adherence to the following values and standards of conduct (adapted from the Beach Report on Issues of Conscience and Academic Freedom, 1960):

Vanderbilt University is a community of men and women devoted to the search for truth. A self-governing institution, it professes freedom from both internal and external interference which hinders accomplishment of that purpose. It is an institution that transcends, as much as it challenges and accepts, the customs and values of society. It has its own standards of excellence and responsibility that do not always conform to those of the persons and groups who support it. The University is also part of the civic community in which it exists. Its members, both faculty and students, are entitled to exercise the rights of citizens and are subject to the responsibilities of citizens. A member of the Vanderbilt community gives thoughtful consideration to the image of the University reflected in his or her public behavior.

Members of the Vanderbilt community share a due regard and respect for law. In the event that one of its members is in jeopardy before the law, either for the sake of conscience or for the purpose of testing the validity of particular provisions of law through deliberate violation, the University will not seek to protect him or her from due process of law. Regardless of the action of the courts, however, the University reserves

the right to determine whether a faculty member is fit to retain membership in the academic community, and maintains its own procedures for taking action upon, hearing, and deciding complaints against one of its members.

The previous (2013-4) SPAF Committee looked at the Academic Freedom policies of multiple peer institutions. These are quite variable but nearly all are more detailed than ours. Details are in SPAF's formal year-end report and will not be reproduced here, but their summary table and final recommendation are:

University	Summary/Observation/Notes
Duke University	Focused primarily on tenure and protection to do research without censorship
University of North Carolina	Broader in scope and describes freedom for research, teaching, internal criticism and participation in public debate. They cite books on academic freedom: (a) "For the Common Good: Principles of American Academic Freedom," by Finkin and Post, and (b) "Academic Freedom in the Wired World: Political Extremism, Corporate Power, and the University," by Robert O'Neil.
Rice University	Quotes the Supreme Court Justice William Brennan in the Keyishian versus the Board of Regents case of 1967 to highlight the importance of academic freedom. They also refer to AAUP's "1940 Statement of Principles" focusing on three facets of academic freedom: freedom of inquiry, teaching and extramural utterances, however, calling for restraint on each.
University of Texas	Provides full freedom in research and classroom subject to some constraints. For example, controversial material not related to the subject matter cannot be used in classroom. Faculty members speaking or writing as a citizen are free from institutional censorship, however, the faculty member must make it explicit that they are not an institutional spokesperson
Stanford University	The statement of academic freedom are based solely on the principles of providing an environment in which freedom of inquiry, thought, expression, publication, and assembly (which is free of violence) are given the fullest protection. The academic freedom supports expression of the widest range of viewpoints that is not constrained by institutional pressures and interferences.
Cornell University	The statement on academic freedom involves freedom of expression in the classroom on matters relevant to the subject and the purpose of the course and of choice of methods in classroom teaching; freedom from direction and restraint in scholarship, research, and creative expression and freedom in the discussion and publication of the results to speak and write as a citizen without institutional censorship or discipline. While academic freedom is highly valued at Cornell,

	it does not imply immunity from prosecution for illegal acts, nor does it provide a license to faculty to do whatever they choose to do.
Washington University in St. Louis	The academic freedom statement describes the freedom available to scholars, teachers, and students within the University to pursue knowledge, speak, write, and follow the life of the mind without unreasonable restriction. The statement further states that although a faculty member may pursue subsidiary interests, these should not hamper or compromise their scholarly pursuits and teaching responsibilities. Moreover, although the academic freedom includes faculty member's full freedom as a citizen, if these result in acute conflicts, e.g., engaging in political activities, faculty may request leave of absence for the duration.
Purdue University	A faculty member is accorded full freedom as a researcher, scholar or artist. This freedom includes freedom to communicate the work, to advocate solutions to human problems and to criticize existing institutions. While freedom is accorded in the classroom, a faculty member cannot introduce irrelevant subject matter. The academic freedom also accords the right to speak or write in the capacity as a citizen. In doing so, however, a faculty member should not become a spokesperson for the university.
Columbia University	The university is fully committed to protecting and upholding academic freedom in research and teaching, and freedom of expression. The university does not penalize faculty for statements made in public debate. The statement indicates that such freedom is not unlimited, e.g., a faculty cannot threaten or intimidate students for expressing their viewpoints or faculty cannot use the classroom as a means of political indoctrination.
University of Chicago	Their academic freedom statement appears as the Statement on Principles of Free Expression. The university supports the culture of inquiry and informed argument. The university aims to nurture an environment that fosters and protects rational discourse that includes both rigorous challenge of ideas and tolerance for the expression of multiple viewpoints. In summary, the university supports the rights to free expression. This statement did not delve into the details of freedom in academic research and teaching. However, their Board of Trustees Statute 18.1 refers to the complete freedom of research and unrestricted dissemination of information. Several other published articles also refer to the academic freedom for research and teaching.

“Recommendation: After surveying other University statements on academic freedom and comparing them with Vanderbilt’s statement on academic freedom, the general consensus among the SPAF members was that although Vanderbilt University’s statement on academic freedom is appropriate in general, it could be enhanced by including more details on freedom of inquiry and freedom of pedagogy. Moreover, considering that Vanderbilt students will be expected to negotiate an increasingly heterogeneous society, the committee also recommends that future iterations of the academic freedom statement include verbiage about the importance of faculty intentionality and latitude to instruct and provide professional development such that students become more cognizant and comfortable as global citizens. Part of this charge would facilitate helping students become more aware of cultural diversity and social justice issues, broadly defined.”

The current statement on Academic Responsibility in our Manual derives from a 1960 special report, the Beach Report, penned by Dr. Leonard Beach. This document was not easily available to us, on the web or otherwise. Dr. Maggie Tarpley, Committee on the Faculty Manual, tracked down a copy in the University’s archives after a good bit of digging; she met the actual typist along the way, Ms Marian McAlpin, who is a 55-year Vandy veteran who started work here in 1959. The full title of this June 3, 1960 report is “Statement of Principles and Procedures to Be Followed in Cases of Student Discipline Wherein Issues of Conscience or Academic Freedom are Raised.” The context is of interest. Chancellor Branscomb had formed the Faculty Senate only the year before, in 1959. In 1960, James Lawson was expelled from Vanderbilt’s Divinity School. Many faculty and students protested, prompting Chancellor Branscombe to ask for an ad hoc Senate Committee, headed by Dr. Beach, to address the issue. Our current Faculty Manual contains a small snippet of that report as the basis for its Academic Responsibility policy.

RECOMMENDATION for 2015-6:

55 years later, as a step toward maintaining and enhancing the health of our university culture and community, the Faculty Manual statements on academic freedom and responsibility need to be updated and better defined. Their implications within the university community need more detail and clarity in order to serve us well in 2015 and beyond.

The work of the OETF, our 2014-5 Charge #2, is an example of an issue that could benefit.

We propose that a task force be appointed to research this issue for the current era, and to create a robust statement regarding Academic Freedom and Responsibility at Vanderbilt. The task force should be composed of experienced faculty knowledgeable about this issue from national, historical, social, philosophical, and legal standpoints. Their process should be transparent and provide ample opportunities for all faculty to have input, including faculty in the new entity “Vanderbilt University Medical Center.”

APPENDIX I

10/30/14

Questions for Drs. Geer and Marnett regarding the TIPs portion of the new Strategic Plan

From the Faculty Senate's Committee on Strategic Planning and Academic Freedom:

Eric Delpire (Medicine)

Charlene Dewey (Medicine)

Raymond Friedman (Owen)

John Greer (Medicine)

Joel Harrington (Arts and Sciences)

Joyce Johnson (Medicine) – Chair

Xenofon Koutsoukos (Engineering)

Leah Marcus (Arts and Sciences)

William Turner (Peabody)

Richard Willis (Owen)

2002 Plan

1. What TIPs/interdisciplinary centers/programs (“Centers”) were newly established as a result of the 2002 plan? What portion of the resources allotted for TIPs in the 2002 plan went toward expansion and strengthening of previously existing Centers?

The following questions pertain only to the Centers established in the 2002 plan:

2. Which Centers are not active?
3. What were the lessons from the Centers that survived, and the Centers that did not survive?
4. Of those Centers that are active, what are the strengths of each? Have these strengths evolved or changed since 2002? If so, are there notable patterns

and similarities or dissimilarities in these evolutions that might be useful in planning future Centers?

5. What portion of the resources allotted for TIPs in the 2002 plan went toward expansion and strengthening of previously existing centers?

2014 Plan

1. What is the scope of TIPs? How broad is the vision? The definition in the Strategic Plan is brief.
 - a. Will all disciplines compete on equal footing, including those less able to generate revenue directly, such the Humanities?
 - b. What kinds of 21st century problems will be targeted, and
 - c. How is this decided?
 2. How will the TIPs be administered?
 - a. How will connections across disciplines be established and fostered?
 - b. How will funding be administered?
 - c. Will external reviews of proposals be part of the process?
 - d. Will oversight of joint degree programs and graduate education be included in the newly established TIPs? If so, how? New courses and/or majors?
 - e. What other incentives, broadly defined, might be included in TIPs?
 - f. How will a TIP's "success" be defined and measured? (e.g. #graduates in a new major; new lecture series; \$\$ made; establishment of new cross-disciplinary relationships; other)
 3. What will be the incentives for faculty and students to develop new TIPs, or participate in existing TIPs? How will discipline-specific barriers be addressed (e.g. physical location, class schedules, commitments specific to faculty in a given discipline)?
 4. Should there be access to funding and other types of programmatic support by those outside the formal TIPs process? What are the alternate routes to establishing interdisciplinary collaborations, and how do these differ from those that will be part of the TIPs program?
 5. What are the anticipated relative benefits of TIPs to the university's educational mission, vs its research mission?
 6. What is the relationship of projected TIPs to other pillars of the Strategic Plan? Will the TIPs' initiation and support be focused on programs that have the potential to play a role in the Undergraduate Residential Experience, Healthcare Solutions, and Education Technologies?
4. Where would faculty input be beneficial? Will there be accessible tools for faculty input and feedback (e.g., a website; other)?