Vanderbilt University  
Faculty Senate Meeting  
October 13, 2011, 4:10 p.m.  
Room 161—Nursing Annex**note room change**

Call to order

Approval of the minutes of September 15, 2011 meeting

Report of the Executive Committee

Remarks by Chancellor Nick Zeppos

Presentation by Vice Chancellor Doug Christiansen on undergraduate admissions

New business

Good of the Senate

Adjournment


Voting Members absent: Aschner (regrets), Atack (regrets), Bachorowski (regrets), Balser (regrets), Benbow, Bradford, Carbone, Conway-Welch, Dawant, Galloway (regrets), Guthrie, Hall, Halpern (regrets), Hughes (regrets), Hurder (regrets), Hyman (regrets), Johnston, Kirshner, Miller, Moore (regrets), Ramanujam (regrets), Ramey (regrets), Smith (regrets), Tansey, Tellinghuisen Turner (regrets), Wait (regrets), Winder, Wollaeger, and Yarbrough (regrets).
Ex Officio Members present: Bandas, Bodenheimer, Fife, McCarty, Raiford, Williams, Zeppos.

Ex Officio Members absent: Bernard (regrets), Christman (regrets), Fortune, McNamara, Miller, Stalcup, Sweet, Wcislo (regrets), Wente (regrets), and Wright.

The meeting was called to order at 4:10 p.m. by Chair David Weintraub.

Next Item on the Agenda – Approval of the minutes of September 15, 2011 meeting

Chair Weintraub asked for these minutes to be approved. Motion to approve passed unanimously.

Next Item on the Agenda – Report of the Executive Committee

Chair Weintraub then gave the report of the Executive Committee:

1. SPAF (Strategic Planning and Academic Freedom task force) generated suggestions for Provost’s Office for how to increase number and diversity of nominations for faculty awards
2. SPAF subcommittee will be meeting this month with Vice Chancellor Matthew Wright and Provost Richard McCarty to discuss certain investments about which some faculty have expressed concerns
3. Investigated question of unequal and perhaps expensive medical benefits for graduate/professional students, as requested by students and faculty at Owen: all have same plan across university; Vanderbilt graduate/professional students have better plans than peer institutions, but pay more for it
4. Held discussions with university leaders about public release of teaching evaluations of faculty: Executive Committee supports doing so, with some limits (e.g., minimum class size, limited release for faculty in first two years). Provost McCarty and Vice Chancellor Balser will next consult with deans and faculties of individual schools and colleges
5. Responded to a multitude of faculty inquiries (athletics, size of administration, benefits, facilities access)
6. Held discussions about forthcoming roll-out of new methods of reimbursement for business-related expenses (issue in hands of Faculty Life committee)
7. Held discussions with university leaders about nondiscrimination policy

Next Item on the Agenda – Report of the Chancellor

Chancellor Zeppos said that there have been a number of articles in The Atlantic Monthly about higher education. He mentioned that one of them had to do with costs of running a university. He said that his philosophy is that money goes to the students and faculty first before administrators. He said that you do need administrative staff to run a university smoothly. He mentioned that the figure that was quoted in the article (1 student for every
62 administrators) needs explanation since they included our medical center staff. He said that these figures are not useful for this reason. Since the university is growing its research enterprise, more administrators are necessary to support this growth. Also clinical enterprise drives it, along with childcare centers, expansion of the police force in 100 Oaks, the Commons, and other necessary staff. He said that he’s not keen on growth in Information Technology—he said that we have a lot of duplication in this area. He said that Human Resources has to grow to support this increase in staff as well.

Chair Weintraub thanked Chancellor Zeppos for his remarks.

**Next Item on the Agenda – Presentation by Vice Chancellor Doug Christiansen on undergraduate admissions**

Chair Weintraub introduced Vice Provost Doug Christiansen. He gave a presentation on undergraduate admissions: Enrollment Data; Holistic Admissions Process; Application Numbers, The Commons and our Competitors; Freshman Class profile, Expanded Aid Impact and Student Indebtedness; Transfer Class Profile; and Student Life Cycle.

He then opened the floor for questions

A question was asked about the PAVE Engineering program: how do they compare to the regular student body?

Vice Provost Christiansen: Whether they are PAVE students or international students, we look at the same issues (TOEFEL scores, course loads, etc.). We also see the same graduation rates.

What is the biggest challenge you will face in the future?

Vice Provost Christiansen: Continuing to think about access and affordability, and helping kids to understand the need-blind loan assistance program. Helping our alumni understand that students admitted ten years ago might not be admitted today. Worry about making too many offers of admission.

A question was asked regarding GPA comparison on the transfer students—are you comparing the first-year experience of regular admits with first-year that a transfer student comes here, and did you take into account that freshmen courses are easier than sophomore and subsequent year courses?

Vice Provost Christiansen: We tried to compare this as much as we could, but we know this isn’t exactly an apples-to-apples comparison.

How do you incorporate faculty input into the admissions process?

Vice Provost Christiansen: Through faculty focus groups, we asked what they wanted in their student body. We would be open to any discussion regarding “are we meeting your needs?” with faculty members.
Chancellor Zeppos: There has been a dramatic shift since Vice Provost Christiansen arrived at Vanderbilt. It has been an amazing transformation.

There was a question about the 8% who don’t graduate—what happens to them?

Vice Provost Christiansen: I would say that at least 5-6% of these students are graduating elsewhere. It is a case-by-case scenario of why they don’t graduate with us. We want to get the graduation rate closer to 95% like our peer institutions.

Hearing no further questions, Chair Weintraub thanked Vice Provost Christiansen for his presentation.

Next Item on the Agenda – New business and Good of the Senate

Chair Weintraub asked for any new business or information for the good of the senate. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to adjourn, which was received and seconded.

Next Item on the Agenda – Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 5:30pm.