Call to Order

Approval of Minutes of October 1, 2009

Report of the Executive Committee
   (Cynthia Paschal, Chair of the Faculty Senate)

Delegation Reports
   (Peabody College—Paul Yoder; College of Arts & Science—David Weintraub)

Remarks by Chancellor Nick Zeppos

Graduate Education Task Force panel discussion (Senator Tony Weil, moderator)
   Introduction (Provost Richard McCarty); Panelists: Jay Clayton, Craig Anne Heflinger, Bridget Rogers, and Susan Wente.

New business

Good of the Senate

Adjournment


**Voting Members absent:** Barr (regrets), Beauchamp (regrets), Blackett, Bloch, Bradford, Collins, Conway-Welch (regrets), Floyd-Thomas, Guthrie, Hall (regrets), Halpern, Oppenheimer, Peek, Smrekar (regrets), Wollaeger (regrets), Yarbrough (regrets), Wait, and Young.

**Ex Officio Members present:** Bandas, Dowell, Fife, Fortune, McCarty, McNamara, Miller, Shepherd, Stalcup, Sweet, Wcislo, Wente, and Zeppos.
Ex Officio Members absent: Bernard, Christiansen, Kovalcheck, Raiford, Retzlaff (regrets), Williams, and Wright.

The meeting was called to order at 4:10 p.m. by Chair Cynthia Paschal.

Next Item on the Agenda – Approval of Minutes of October 1, 2009

Chair Paschal asked for any changes to the minutes (they were corrected before the meeting). She then asked for approval of the minutes. They were approved unanimously.

Next Item on the Agenda – Report of the Executive Committee

Chair Paschal said that the Executive Committee continues to meet with the Chancellor, Provost, Vice Chancellor for Health Affairs, and the standing committee chairs to further the work of the Senate and the interests of the faculty. She said that key issues that are being discussed in the committees include: academic freedom (including privacy of communications), the role of Senates at Vanderbilt and elsewhere when reorganization or discontinuance of academic programs is proposed. She also mentioned that the annual federal lobbying disclosure memo to faculty will be revised in response to Senate input. She said that the Office of the Dean of Students, with input from the Senate and others, has developed a “Students in Distress” website. She urged all of the faculty members to familiarize themselves with this website. Finally, she mentioned upcoming interactions with Board of Trust and the Senate. Senators Tony Weil, Bridget Rogers, Brian Christman and Cynthia Paschal have all been invited to the upcoming Board of Trust meetings in November.

Next Item on the Agenda – Delegation Reports

Delegation Reports
(Peabody College—Paul Yoder; College of Arts & Science—David Weintraub)

Chair Paschal introduced Senator Paul Yoder to give the delegation report for Peabody College. Senator Yoder said that Peabody is the number one college of education according to US News & World Report with 140 full-time faculty, and 1900 students (mostly undergraduate). 75% of these students are not seeking to become teachers. The college’s external funding was over $32 million in 2008. Peabody faculty are among the most productive when it comes to external funding per faculty member. A major concern of the faculty currently is how to stay on top in tough economic times. The combined result of current university and federal policies inadvertently penalize the most research productive faculty. The only sanctioned methods to pay for time to write grants results in
a reduction of resources to the PI. A requested solution is that, upon request, Vanderbilt
would pay for 1 month of summer salary. He then opened the floor for questions.

Dean Camilla Benbow: Any research professor who is fully funded during the summer
gets money from the college. And you can apply for money from our Office of Research
Enhancement.

Senator Peter Rousseau: Is writing grants part of our research job?
Chair Paschal: When we are funded, we are working and can’t write grants.

Vice Provost Tim McNamara: It’s illegal to write a proposal while funded by the federal
government. A&S and Engineering also have similar programs that allow faculty to
write proposals during the summer.
Provost Richard McCarty: There is nowhere to pull the 1 month of salary supplement for
these initiatives.

Chair Paschal then introduced Senator David Weintraub to give the delegation
presentation for the College of Arts and Science. Senator Weintraub said that the correct
name for his college is College of Arts & Science (not Sciences). He said that there are
22 academic departments in the humanities, social sciences, and sciences. There are
4071 undergraduates, with 44% from 10 southern states, and this has changed over the
years. There are 891 graduate students, and 380 tenure/tenure-track faculty. Major
issues for A&S include: comprehensive review of AXLE curriculum, a redesign of pre-
major advising program, articulating the value of a liberal arts education during a period
of economic recession, developing strategies for providing support and mentoring to
tenure-track faculty, and linking excellence and diversity in faculty recruitment.

He said that the major challenge of the college is one of diversity—intellectual diversity
of the college itself. He provided a link to the Dean’s State of the College address given
a few weeks ago (link here: http://sitemason.vanderbilt.edu/cas/facultycouncil/FM0910)

He asked for any questions. Hearing none, Chair Paschal thanked him for his
presentation.

Next Item on the Agenda – Remarks by Chancellor Nick Zeppos

Chair Paschal then introduced Chancellor Zeppos. He said that we are here to talk about
graduate education, and this is an area where we will see considerable investment in the
years ahead. He then opened the floor for questions.

Senator Mike Stone: How much investment?
Chancellor Zeppos: The money is easier to get than the great and transformative ideas.
What I will be looking for is: what are those things that are essential to Vanderbilt’s
progress forward? I have read the report carefully. I know we have challenges just in
getting the graduate students to visit. I tend to be focused on what outcomes should we
see in 1 year or 5 years or 10 years. I thought that this report was outstanding in laying
out all of the ideas and strategies. I will be looking at recommendations that will take Vanderbilt to the next level. I know that resources are tight, but we will find what we need. I tend to be more idea-driven.

Senator Agnes Fogo: Do you envision the idea and concept of The Commons to include more students?
Chancellor Zeppos: I believe that we need to invest more money in getting people together to share ideas. We will see more investments in these kinds of transinstitutional initiatives. I spoke about an Institute for Advanced Studies where faculty and students might come together for an extended period of time, and that’s an idea that is being looked at. I would like to see more time for grant-funded faculty to have time to teach freshmen seminars or other types of classes. Eventually, I believe that our ability to be better than others will depend on the public good and our ability for faculty to work together across disciplines.

Senator Tony Weil: Are you interested in investing in underperforming programs to try and bring them up to the level they need to be at?
Chancellor Zeppos: I’m interested in looking at what we can do well, and finding ways to do it. I don’t think you’ll see winners and losers, because I think the university is strong across the board. I am interested in looking curricular innovations and then taking some sense of what are the future needs of these basic areas like humanities, sciences, etc. And then looking at what are the expectations for jobs and a meaningful career at the end of our students’ program of study. I would like a focus on what we can see bear fruit in the next 5 or 10 years. I view myself as trying to support the work of the faculty.

Chair Paschal thanked Chancellor Zeppos for his report.

**Next Item on the Agenda – Graduate Education Task Force panel discussion**

Graduate Education Task Force panel discussion (Senator Tony Weil, moderator)

Introduction (Provost Richard McCarty); Panelists: Jay Clayton, Craig Anne Heflinger, Bridget Rogers, and Susan Wente.

Chair Paschal then introduced Provost McCarty. He said that this is what he views as the most critical issue for Vanderbilt—focusing on graduate education. The subcommittee chairs did an excellent job. They worked with colleagues and graduate students to create this report. The earlier report in 2003 was a very different report for a very different time—it had a tremendous impact and we have largely followed it. This new report had more faculty involvement and came from specific disciplines. This is the beginning of a series of conversations about graduate education here at Vanderbilt. This is not a one-year fix. When you commit to improving graduate education, you are looking at a 10 to 15 year time horizon in seeing change. Going forward, we will have discussions with DGSs and with other faculty. He said that we will meet with Tony Weil’s committee (APS) in December, and we will have town hall meetings, too. Our first question is: what are our immediate priorities? This will affect the hiring and recruiting season that is upcoming. We have a multi-dimensional problem in that there are no “one size fits all”
solutions for every graduate program. The students are also pushing on interdisciplinary training, and this report includes that. We also have to pay attention to diversity as well. My office is always open if you have any suggestions or concerns. We have a tight timeline in order to affect change before this upcoming recruiting season.

He then opened the floor for questions for the panelists.

Senator Dave Piston: It was great to hear Provost McCarty talk about interdisciplinarity. I don’t see the steps here that are going to allow us to be poised for that, though. I’d like your opinion about that.

Professor Jay Clayton: This is a topic that is important to all of us. We were appointed committees. Successful interdisciplinary programs should come from the faculty and not from our committee. Instead, we should provide the framework for graduate education that will allow these programs to come up from the faculty and then supported by the administration.

Senator Dave Piston: It is not always transparent as to how to do that.

Professor Jay Clayton: We were asked to specify which administrative units should be responsible for that, but we welcome input from the Senate and other units on campus.

Senator Piston: Who holds this report now?

Provost McCarty: We have the report, but we need to work with the faculty for implementation. I see the “next steps” document as a blueprint for that. We need help with this.

Associate Vice Chancellor Susan Wente: It was raised in my subcommittee about IGP students who want to take Chemistry courses, and how do we create models for that. We didn’t present solutions for how to do that, but we raised that issue and said that it needed to be addressed. We viewed our mission as summarizing and not coming up with solutions. We turned it over to the administration to come up with solutions.

Past Chair Virginia Shepherd: I’d love to hear from each of you what your top recommendation would be for an immediate step.

Senator Bridget Rogers: From my viewpoint, our facilities are getting obsolete if not already there. So enhancing our physical space would be an important investment. It is a main priority.

Professor Craig Anne Heflinger: From my area, the highest priority was bringing in more graduate students to support the research faculty who have increased in number.

Associate Vice Chancellor Wente: Finding ways to reward faculty effort in graduate teaching.
Professor Clayton: Finding innovative replacement for the services that the four closed centers brought to graduate education.

Vice chair-elect Bobby Bodenheimer: Congratulations on a well-structured report. Many of the shared recommendations echo throughout several of your reports. One of them, though, was the need for a Graduate Commons, and I was not convinced why this would be a good thing. I’d like to know why this is a shared recommendation and why this is a priority.

Senator Rogers: A lot of it came out of our discussions, and the idea of interdisciplinarity and having a community for our graduate education was important to us. We were thinking about how to increase the interaction among graduate students. We didn’t say it was the highest priority, but we were trying to enhance the experiences of the graduate students.

Associate Vice Chancellor Wente: This did not come out of my subcommittee, but that is probably because we already have a BRET office. If we didn’t have that, there might be more of a call for that.

Professor Clayton: The Graduate Commons seemed to be a way to symbolize the importance that Vanderbilt gives to graduate education.

Professor Heflinger: It’s a big agenda item among the graduate students, and we all had graduate students on our committees.

Senator Michael Aurbach: Are there any negative repercussion for a department that doesn’t want a graduate program?

Provost McCarty: That’s an issue for each dean or school to look at. We won’t punish those that don’t have graduate programs.

Chancellor Zeppos: The departments that do not have Ph.D. programs are fundamental building blocks of a liberal arts education. This would not affect those departments.

Vice Chancellor Jeff Balser: 60% of the School of Medicine departments do not have graduate programs and have no plans to start them. That doesn’t mean that they don’t participate in the academic life of the university.

Senator Stone: Recruitment of top faculty is key to graduate education. We need to bring in more endowed chairs in A&S--attracting top faculty helps us to attract top graduate education.

Associate Vice Chancellor Wente: Faculty reputation is the foundation in the graduate programs. We make that point in our report.
Chair Paschal: What are the barriers to changing the topping up awards?

Senator Rogers: Are there barriers? I don’t know that there are. I know that Vice Provost Dennis Hall has been looking at this. I don’t know that the money there is going to make huge changes. In the sciences, there was not a significant difference in students who got topping up awards and those who didn’t.

Professor Clayton: We couldn’t have said this any more clearly to Dennis Hall.

Provost McCarty: One of the things we could do is divide the money equally among all of the graduate programs, but I don’t think that this is a solution. I think that there is really another problem which is a lack of discretionary money. And this could be one of the changes for next year.

Senator Benoit Dawant: Incoming graduate students come in as TAs, and that links undergraduate programs with graduate programs.

Provost McCarty: We don’t have any other source of funding for these students (humanities, for example).

Chair Paschal: With regard to recommendation for new councils, a concern that has been expressed in the past for faculty members is that when they are trying to create new graduate programs, there are too many hoops to jump through. Do we need all of these bodies? How would it affect the review of new graduate programs?

Senator Rogers: We didn’t want to create an administrative body, but wanted to provide more avenues for communication.

Professor Heflinger: We recommended that the current Graduate Faculty Council be replaced by the Council of DGSs.

Chair-elect Brian Christman: With regards to emulating the BRET program on the University Central campus, which model do we want to emulate? A centralized one or a decentralized one?

Senator Rogers: BRET doesn’t help with grant writing, but they provide the information you need in order to write a grant. We found that faculty members want this help across the university.

Senator Weintraub: One way to make graduate education more affordable is to have our student graduate more quickly. Is there a plan in place to have departments do this? And how would we ensure that we do this?

Professor Heflinger: We address this in our report.

Senator Weintraub: How will we ensure that we do this?
Professor Clayton: If we can do this, it would be enormously helpful. One solution is to circulate “best practices”—programs need to talk to each other. The other solution is to call for an assessment of programs on a variety of metrics tailored to the programs. Time to degree should be tied to these metrics. I agree that someone needs to be accountable.

Associate Vice Chancellor Wente: We had a huge call for accountability for graduate programs in our report, and this is part of it. It will save us money in some cases, and make our programs stronger.

Chancellor Zeppos: Your report also talks about the retention efforts. How does that affect the quality of the programs?

Associate Vice Chancellor Wente: That wasn’t an issue for my subcommittee.

Professor Clayton: None of our committees saw retention problems. But there is one difference. Early withdrawal is a sign of health (first year or after the MA). Late withdrawal is a bad sign.

Vice chair-elect Bodenheimer: The point is made here that faculty members need to be incentivized, and DGSs need to be incentivized. I am concerned that many of the recommendations will push more and more demands on DGSs. I’d like to hear your reactions to that.

Associate Vice Chancellor Wente: They need to develop new models. Maybe two people can split the responsibilities in different ways. Each graduate program needs to be flexible.

Senator Todd Graham: As a former DGS, I can say that I spent so much time with the A&S students. We suggested that recruiting assistance within A&S would be so helpful with advertising and the vetting process. A point person to facilitate and help us with this in A&S would be especially helpful. This would be like in the School of Medicine in the BRET office. I think this is something that we can do right away to help us out, and possibly Peabody as well. I don’t think it works to spread the work around to other faculty members.

Chair Paschal indicated that we were close to the end of our time, and she thanked the panel members for their participation.

**Next Item on the Agenda – New Business and Good of the Senate**

Chair Paschal asked for any new business. Hearing none, she turned to Good of the Senate.

Chair Paschal asked for any business under Good of the Senate. She reminded the senators that at the December meeting we will welcome Martha Ingram and Brett Sweet.
Slides and text for delegations to share with faculty colleagues will be distributed on or before November 8.

Hearing no other business, Chair Paschal called for a motion to adjourn. It was seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 5:27 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jack Roberts,
Vice Chair