

Faculty Life Committee  
Vanderbilt University Senate  
Report for Academic Year 2012-2013  
Chair: Christopher Lind, Medicine

**Committee members:**

Christopher Lind, Chair, Medicine (2015) Chair  
Lillian Nanney, Medicine (2014)[Executive Committee Liaison]  
Judy Aschner, Medicine (2013) [Executive Committee Liaison]  
Anne Moore, Nursing (2013)  
Kevin Niswender, Medicine (2014)  
Bruce Morrill, Divinity (2013)  
Constantine Tsinakis, A&S (2014)  
Laura Wayman, Medicine (2014)  
Claire Smrekar, Peabody (2015)  
Colin Dayan, A&S  
Scott Guelcher, Engineering (2015)

**Charges assigned at the beginning of the year:**

1. Faculty Retirement
  - a. Recommend initiatives for the faculty transition into retirement with continued meaningful involvement of emeritus faculty in the academic community.
  - b. Assess the policies and specifics for retirement benefits (e.g. office space, e-mail accounts, computers, responsibilities, opportunities)
  - c. Assess the impacts of health insurance/health care costs on faculty retirement decisions. Evaluate available products (ex. Emeriti Program) the University could make available to faculty.
2. Follow up on recommendations for the development of mid-career faculty training opportunities.
3. Follow up on recommendations to establish a committee to identify and reduce causes of non-scholarly (administrative, compliance) faculty activities.
4. Conduct the VIRGE survey on the leave policy (primarily scholarly leave) and consider recommendations based on the results.
5. Follow up on the recommendation to establish a faculty club at Vanderbilt.

Additional charge assigned at December 2012 meeting:

6. Review the parental leave policy and policy for extensions to the probationary period for tenure relative to family leave and propose appropriate changes to the Faculty Manual.

## Work Done and Recommendations:

### 1. Faculty Retirement

The committee spent most of the year focused on issues of retirement including benefits offered by Vanderbilt to individuals after retirement, options for continued involvement of emeritus faculty and the influence of the availability of benefits on retirement decisions. Initial work focused on assessing the availability of retirement benefits relative to peer institutions and availability of avenues for continued faculty involvement by emeritus faculty at peer institutions. The committee recruited Jeff Gayhart, a graduate student in Leadership and Organizational Performance, to conduct a benefits analysis of peer institutions. The report was presented to the faculty Life Committee. It was noted by committee members that some peer institutions, as compared to Vanderbilt, communicate retirement benefits and steps needed in the planning for retirement in faculty manuals in a more well defined and user friendly manner.

- a. Members were asked to identify programs for retired faculty available at peer institutions that might encourage meaningful involvement in the academic community and be mutually beneficial to the institution and retiree. Specific programs that were identified include the Emory University Emeritus College (EMEC) and the Boston College Association of Retired Faculty (BCARF). Both of these programs were founded within the past 12 years and are designed to encourage continued involvement by retired faculty within the institution. The BCARF stated mission includes: 1) to serve the retired faculty; 2) to serve the University, the community and the larger society; and 3) to promote collegiality among retired professors for personal enrichment and active service. That program includes a small suite of offices that includes 3 computers and desks and a lounge available for meetings. The active BCARF members meet at least 3 times per semester for specific programs of topical interest.

*FLC recommends that the Vanderbilt administration explore making a suite available to retired faculty to serve as a location for a retired faculty association that may promote ongoing involvement of retired faculty with the Vanderbilt academic community. As that association matures, it may be able to offer experienced educators who can participate in academic and social programs which may support the residential colleges within the University.*

- b. Members identified that some recently retired long-term faculty have immediately lost access to essential all Vanderbilt services, including e-mail accounts, library access, access to the computer network, and discounts to the bookstore and athletic tickets. Unless a retired faculty member is granted Emeritus or Emerita status, it appears that the availability for these specific benefits or “perks” is dependent on individual negotiations between the retiring faculty member and the Department Chair. Benefits available to Emeritus and Emerita Faculty Members in University Central are explicitly delineated on the Vanderbilt

Web site (<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/provost/faculty-resources/emeritus-emerita-faculty/>).

It appears that most of these benefits (except for office or laboratory space) could be provided at minimal overhead cost to the University. In addition, it was recognized by the committee that providing many of these low cost benefits to members of the faculty upon retirement may help the Development office in efforts for continued philanthropic giving and estate planning among those retirees.

*FLC recommends that a high priority be given to next year's committee to review the potential institutional costs, benefits and feasibility in offering to all retiring faculty most of the benefits currently available only to members who have been granted Emeritus or Emerita status.*

- c. Based on the work from last year's FLC and informal discussions with colleagues by committee members, it was felt that the availability of health insurance does serve as a barrier or major factor in the timing of retirement. Emphasizing this point, it was noted that the two new programs of assisted retirement offered to tenured faculty in University Central include participation in the Vanderbilt Health Care Plan for some period of time after retirement in these programs. In an effort to better understand issues related to providing health care coverage to retired faculty members, the committee met with Rick Ohmer (Senior Director of Compensation and Benefits, HR) and Jane Bruce, Director, HR) to review pertinent issues. Jane Bruce pointed out that HR sponsors workshops available for faculty who are nearing retirement. Issues discussed included availability for COBRA coverage for up to 18 months after retirement, availability of Medicare for retirees age 65 and above and alternative retirement programs offered at some institutions, including the Emeriti Program that had been identified previously. The Emeriti Program appears to be similar to a medical spending account that involves years of investment by individual faculty and the participating institution which would not be suitable to this institution. In addition, it was recognized that the formation of health care exchanges in 2014 related to the Affordable Care Act may change many of the issues related to health insurance coverage after retirement. Finally, it was recognized by the committee that the Vanderbilt Health Care Plan is a self-insured plan and adding a pool of older retired faculty to any self-insured plan may be cost prohibitive in the current health care environment.

*FLC recommends that next year's committee monitor the influence of changes related to implementation of the Affordable Care Act on the availability of health care coverage for retired faculty. In addition, communication of available resources and workshops offered by HR for retiring faculty may be expanded or delineated in a more transparent manner.*

## 2. Mid-career faculty training opportunities

The committee again addressed whether specific faculty training programs aimed towards mid-career faculty training were available within the Medical Center and/or University Central.

Many committee members felt that training programs available for faculty development within the Medical Center and University Central include processes applicable to mid-career faculty. While some programs are aimed specifically to junior faculty (e.g. Junior Faculty Development Program) or senior faculty (e.g. Academic Leadership Program), many programs are applicable for faculty at any stage of their career. Examples noted included the Faculty Development Seminars (University Central) and resources available within the Office of Teaching and Learning in Medicine (OTLM), Clinical and Translational Scientist Development program, Thomas Hazinski Faculty Development Workshops, Women on Track program and the Academy for Excellence in Teaching (Medical Center).

*FLC recommends that mid-career faculty be made aware of available faculty development programs within University Central and the Medical Center. Recognizing that successful advancement of mid-career faculty to positions of national prominence may enhance the institution's national reputation, the FLC encourages continued investment of resources by the institution in these development programs.*

3. Recommendations to reduce causes of non-scholarly faculty activities.

The FLC from 2011-2012 summarized many examples of non-scholarly (administrative, compliance) activities performed by faculty in their Summary Report. The committee sought input from the elected members of the Faculty Senate regarding additional activities that remain a significant burden. From this review, it was identified that particular areas of frustration were inconsistent application of institutional policies by different departmental administrative officers and issues regarding reimbursement for travel. The committee had addressed the feasibility of a per diem policy for travel. After making specific recommendations regarding these issues, the administration presented to the Faculty Senate a newly developed policy for travel based on a recent independent, external assessment of Vanderbilt travel policies. This new travel policy is currently being implemented.

*FLC recommends that next year's committee or the administration monitor the implementation of the new Vanderbilt travel policy and its effects on non-scholarly faculty burden. In addition, an assessment of consistent application of Vanderbilt policies between departments and schools regarding the use of extramural resources may help to streamline faculty non-scholarly activities.*

4. Conduct the VIRGE survey on the leave policy and consider recommendations based on results.

The committee tabled this issue after the first meeting of the committee. Apparently the VIRGE survey was not completed based on concerns expressed by members within the Administration.

5. Follow up on recommendations to establish a faculty club at Vanderbilt.

The committee concurred with the 2011-2012 FLC that a more formal faculty club at Vanderbilt would be a value to the faculty and support the scholarly mission of the university. Measures that may promote a sense of community among the faculty may encourage scholarly collaboration, interdisciplinary teaching and philanthropic support by the faculty members. The feasibility of developing a free standing faculty club at Vanderbilt at a time of significant financial strain within the institution was identified as an overwhelming barrier at this time.

*FLC supports the concept of developing a faculty club at some point in the future. The costs of developing a faculty club may be partly reduced based on the potential benefits identified above. In addition, a faculty club may be an appropriate suite for a retired faculty association (see FLC recommendations from 1.a.).*

6. Review the parental leave policy and policy for extensions of the probationary period for tenure.

The committee was asked to review specific recommendations from the Executive Committee regarding inconsistencies in the Faculty Manual regarding the parental leave policy and the policy for extensions of the probationary period for tenure. The current Faculty Manual is not consistent with the institutional non-discrimination policy and needs to be corrected. The committee met with David Raiford (Associate Vice Chancellor for Health Affairs, Senior Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs, Medical Center) regarding issues involved in these policies. Changes suggested by the Executive Committee were reviewed and endorsed by the FLC. However, David Raiford and Tim McNamara (Vice Provost for Faculty, University Central) felt that the overlapping issues regarding parental leave and the extension of the probationary period for tenure would need review by a task force and the Office of General Counsel to ensure compliance regarding Vanderbilt and governmental policies. A task force that included the Chair of FLC (Chris Lind) has met and completed a first draft regarding suggested changes to the Faculty Manual. This draft is currently under review by the Office of General Counsel.

*FLC recommends that next year's committee address the suggested changes that result from this task force regarding parental leave and extensions to the probationary period for tenure. Specific issues of attention include possible differences between faculty members in the Medical Center and faculty members in University Central and whether extension of the probationary period for tenure can be applied independent of whether parental leave is taken.*

Recommendations for next year:

1. Faculty retirement – see recommendations addressed above. In addition, would recommend that the FLC address how the institution can communicate retirement planning issues and resources in a more organized and transparent manner. Would also review whether incentive

packages for retirement offered to Tenured Faculty within University Central can be applied to Tenured Faculty within the Medical Center.

2. Measures to reduce the non-scholarly (administrative, compliance) faculty activities – monitor the effects of the new Vanderbilt travel policy.
3. Finalize changes in the Faculty Manual regarding the parental leave policy and the policy for extensions to the probationary period for tenure relative to family leave.