Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

Attendees


**Ex-officio members in attendance:** Alex Sevilla, Andre Churchwell, Ben Harris, Brett Sweet, Cleo Rucker, Cybele Raver, Daniel Diermeier, David Raiford, Donald Brady, G.L. Black, John Lutz, Padma Raghavan, Tracey George, and Vanessa Beasley.

**Ex-officio members absent:** Anders Hall, Candice Lee, Doug Christiansen, Eric Kopstain, Gordon Bernard, Jennifer Pietenpol, John Penn, Kathy Gould, Nathan Green, Ruza Shellaway, and Steve Ertel.

**Guests in attendance:** Alissa Hare, Belinda Otukoalo-Saltiban, Christin Essin, Holly McCammon, Houra Merrikh, Ian Morrison, Jeff Johnson, Jessica Brotherson, Jordan Bowen, Mariann Piano, Mary Dietrich, Melissa Rose, Nancy Carrasco, Sheree Wright, Stacey McCarty, Steve Meranze, and Thomas McGinn.

**Call to Order**

A meeting of Vanderbilt Faculty Senate was held on December 9th, 2021, on Zoom. It began at 4:10pm and was presided over by Chair Mark Magnuson, with Vice Chair Ryan Middagh as secretary.

Quorum as specified in the Faculty Senate Constitution (revised 4/5/2019) Article II.B.1. was met with the recorded attendance of 33 voting members of the Faculty Senate.

**Approval of Minutes**

Chair Magnuson motioned for approval of the minutes as circulated of the November 4th 2021, meeting. Chair Magnuson asked whether there were any corrections to the proposed minutes. Corrections were not made.

Secretary Middagh confirmed that the minutes were approved (37 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstentions).
Chair Magnuson proceeded to the next item of business.

**Report of the Executive Committee**

Chair Magnuson remarked:

- About activities that the Executive Committee (EC) has achieved over the past month:
  - Held pre-discussions with guest speakers
  - Conducted monthly meeting with the Chancellor and Provost
  - Held weekly meetings with the EC
  - Communication between EC and senate committees
  - Communication with Task Force on Administerial Effectiveness (TFAE) co-chairs
  - Presented to the Board of Trust
  - Finalized the upcoming senator survey

- Recapped about the senate’s goals for this semester:
  - Discussing the top issues of interest
  - Finding opportunities for synergies and symbioses
  - Talk more as a senate
  - Examining senate’s organization and procedures
  - Recommending changes where necessary

Chair Magnuson then revisited the senate’s top issues of interest and how these were all accomplished, besides the effects of the VU-VUMC split. He then moved onto what the spring semester will bring, and mentioned the March, April and May meeting content has not yet been established.

Chair Magnuson proceeded to the next item of business.

**Chancellor Remarks**

Chair Magnuson turned the floor over to Chancellor Diermeier.

Chancellor Diermeier remarked:

- Regarding shared governance, it is one of the most distinguished features of governed universities. It is important to look periodically into what works and what does not as a university. Chancellor Diermeier says how the most important thing to him is the culture that we have as a university, and how we interact with each other. This is a high strength of the university for faculty and administration to interact, as well as resolve conflicts together.

- Chancellor Diermeier shared examples of interaction between admin and faculty:
  - Remind everyone that faculty manual itself is written by the faculty and changes to it must be voted on by the faculty senate. He says how this represents an important pillar to the university’s shared governance.
  - Related to this are other responsibilities the faculty senate has, like the grievance process, as well as material changes to academic programs. These are core components of what it means to be faculty members, and in showing how the university does what it does.
    - Chancellor Diermeier referred to the piece that he wrote on academic freedom in the USA Today and the Tennessean about faculty senate’s resolution passed a few months ago, which was a great example to show how this is a shared value across the university.
He said how pleased he was to be able to refer back to this resolution, and how the response to this was shockingly positive - both from faculty and alumni.

- Chancellor Diermeier mentioned that there is always the issue of communication, and he wants to work toward making sure that the lines are open from Chancellor/Provost and to the rest of the faculty.

Chancellor Diermeier turned the floor over to Provost Raver.

Provost Raver remarked:

- Emphasized Chancellor Diermeier’s point of communication being a pillar to shared governance. Provost Raver described communication as central to success as a university. She mentioned how she has been speaking with as many faculty members as she can – wanting to learn about research, doctoral affairs, and creative expression. Provost Raver said how she has attended seven different departmental faculty meetings and will continue this process into the next semester (including 15-30 faculty members at each meeting). Provost Raver also mentioned how she has attended 33 faculty events including workshops, town halls, receptions, and other workplace events to engage and get to know the faculty. She said how impressed she is by faculty’s deep commitment to students, teaching, and scholarly efforts in communicating their knowledge to larger communities outside of higher education.

- Provost Raver assures senators that G.L. Black will be speaking at some point in the spring to address questions around student mental health. Mentioned specific resources for faculty to have and provide to students if needed or to address student concerns through reporting. Through the student of concern reporting form, the university is able to track student need and be responsive in making sure the follow-up actions are addressed in a timely way.

Chair Magnuson opened the floor for questions, and hearing none, proceeded to the next item of business.

**Standing Committee Reports**

Chair Magnuson called for reports from the standing committees. No reports were made.

Chair Magnuson proceeded to the next item of business.

**Ad Hoc Committee Reports**

No reports were made.

**Old Business**

Chair Friedman reported for the Faculty Manual Committee (FMC) putting forth a motion regarding the renaming of the tenure process at Blair and Nursing to the Promotion and Tenure Review Committee (PTRC).

Chair Friedman read the following motion:
Faculty Senate Motion: Changes to Faculty Manual: Changes to composition of Promotion and Tenure Review Committee (PTRC)

➢ Whereas, the Faculty Manual is an important resource for faculty to understand the policies and procedures of key aspects of university life as it pertains to their roles in it, benefits from it, and obligations to it,

➢ Whereas, these changes will be effective after they have been approved and published under the process set out in the Faculty Manual, Part I, Chapter 5,

➢ Whereas, as a result of the transaction recommended by the Chancellor and approved by the Board of Trust on April 22, 2016, which brought about the separation of the Vanderbilt University Medical Center from Vanderbilt University, responsibility for the tenure and promotion process for the School of Nursing was transferred to the Provost and that process includes review of candidates for tenure and promotion by the PTRC,

➢ Whereas, on the recommendation of the Chancellor and Provost, on June 24, 2021, the Board of Trust approved of the addition of the Blair School of Music to the tenure and promotion process within the Provost’s area, including review of candidates for tenure and promotion by the PTRC,

➢ Whereas, schools within the Provost’s tenure and promotion process are represented on the PTRC,

➢ Whereas, all references to the current Faculty Manual are to the revision dated August 19, 2021,

In accordance with notice given of this motion:

**Be it resolved**, consistent with the Faculty Senate’s role in shared governance, that the Faculty Senate express its acceptance, by vote, of the following proposed revisions to the Faculty Manual for inclusion by deletion, addition and substitution in the following parts and chapters as set out specifically below:

Appointment and Tenure, Part II, Chapter 3

- Part II, Ch. 3, D.1.c (The Promotion and Tenure Review Committee)
- Part II, Ch. 3, D.3 (Procedures in the Blair School of Music)

**Be it resolved** that in Part II, Chapter 3, section D.1.c, in the second paragraph, that the Blair School of Music and the School of Nursing be added to the list of schools from which one representative will serve on the PTRC.
Therefore, the language in that paragraph shall be deleted, the language in the paragraph below will be substituted for the current paragraph, and it shall now read:

The PTRC is composed as follows: one representative from each of the three divisions of the College of Arts and Science; one representative each from the School of Engineering, the Divinity School, Peabody College, the Owen Graduate School of Management, the Law School, the Blair School of Music, and the School of Nursing; and the Dean of the Graduate School.

Be it resolved that the heading and the six paragraphs describing the tenure procedures in the Blair School of Music (Part II, Ch. 3, D.3) will be deleted.

Be it resolved, that consistent with Part I, Chapter 5 of the Faculty Manual, upon passage of this Motion by the Faculty Senate, this proposal for changes shall be sent in writing by the Chair of the Faculty Senate on behalf of the Senate to the Chancellor and the Provost as the Faculty Senate’s proposal for a change in the Faculty Manual, and will then follow the approval process set out in the Faculty Manual.

Faculty Manual Committee

Katherine Friedman, Committee Co-Chair Mark Magnuson, Executive Committee Liaison Brian Bachmann
Leon Bellan
Brett Byram
Jason Pollack
Colleen Niswender
Tamika Hudson
Andrea Capizzi
Houra Merrikh
Brian Heuser
Mariann Piano
Steven Meranze

Proposed to the Faculty Senate on December 9, 2021.

Chair Magnuson opened the floor for discussion of motion, and hearing none, closed the floor for discussion.

Chair Magnuson called for the vote, and voting members were sent to breakout rooms to vote.
Secretary Middagh reported the results of the motion. The motion carried with 50 ayes, 0 nays, and 0 abstentions.

Chair Magnuson proceeded to the next item of business.
New Business

There was no new business.

Chair Magnuson proceeded to the next item of business.

Scheduled Remarks

Chair Magnuson introduced shared governance:

- The report on shared governance by the Association of American Universities’ point that the success of shared governance lies in communication and cooperation among the different groups involved. He mentioned that the university should ensure that different voices are being heard and integrated into a cohesive vision.

- Chair Magnuson then shared Vanderbilt’s success in shared governance from 2016 to 2020 in a few comments:
  - The 2016 COACHE report identified six areas of concern.
    - Showing that the satisfaction with shared governance at Vanderbilt scored the lowest of all survey questions, as well as lower than our peers.
  - From 2016 to 2020, the satisfaction ratings of almost every category in shared governance have improved.
    - However, in 2020, shared governance continued to receive the lowest satisfaction scores out of all areas surveyed.

Chair Magnuson turned the floor over to the guest speakers.

Professor of Sociology, Holly McCammon, presented on the shared governance report:

- The background of the 2016 Shared Governance Committee report:
  - The charge of the committee was to gather information on Vanderbilt’s shared governance practices to consider the best current practices at the time and to ponder new ways of engaging faculty voices and university initiatives.
  - There were 11 faculty members (one from each school plus two from School of Medicine) on the committee.

- Professor McCammon mentioned the specific aims for the Shared Governance Committee:
  - To investigate, understand, describe, and compare existing college, school and university governance practices, processes, and structures.
  - To identify successful governance policies and structures, as well as recommend implementation or expansion where they see as beneficial.
  - To discern areas for which faculty input is necessary and valuable.

- Professor McCammon mentioned how the committee understood that a primary objective of shared governance is decision-making when allocating scarce resources, and the communication behind this (both top-down communication, as well as bottom-up communication). To improve the communication and information flow, the committee’s reports centered around the university’s shared governance website, committees, and individuals.
o A key step was establishing a website to serve as an online gateway to share information at Vanderbilt and give faculty a voice. The collaborative engagement of individual faculty members engaging in this website as well.

Professor McCammon turned floor to Senior Associate Dean, Richard Willis.

Professor Willis added to Professor McCammon’s report on shared governance:

- A three-step process in which communication could ultimately occur:
  o Early-stage discussion between faculty and context-specific leaders
  o Decision process which should be clearly articulated and defined who will be a part of it
  o A follow-up report including rationale and basis for the decisions made.
    ▪ The goal of this process is to improve the overall information flow, as faculty want to know how decisions and solidified outcomes are reached.

- Professor Willis showed and described the university’s shared governance website, which is constantly updated and maintained. The goals of the website are to educate Vanderbilt stakeholders about shared governance and provide opportunities for enhanced involvement.
  o He then mentioned the committees and how members developed guidelines for committee best practices to enhance the efforts of committee work (which reside on the website) and to broaden faculty representation on committees, prepare faculty for service, and maximize faculty contributions.
    ▪ Many of the recommendations are discussed in more detail on page 20 of the report.

- Professor Dean Willis then said how engagement amongst collective individuals is important. This committee provided individual-level themed recommendations:
  o Culture, trust, knowledge & skill, succession planning, recognition, and balance.
    ▪ These things already exist at Vanderbilt, which the committee recognized.

- He talked about how there a lot more information in the report itself, like background of committee formation, discussions of engaging with stakeholders, suggestions for future work, and details to expedite the recommendations in the report. In the committees’ view, the Faculty Senate at Vanderbilt is very much in line with peers in terms of structure and authority.
  o Professor Willis reminded everyone how this report was a group effort, and thanked Faculty Senate for inviting the committee to give an overview of their findings.

Chair Magnuson opened up the floor to discussion.

- Q: What kind of shared governance committees are there in each school?
  o A: At the school level, decision rights amongst faculty are context-specific relating to the school. It is difficult for the bigger schools to engage faculty by email than for the smaller ones. Not every school has as Shared Governance Committee.
  o A: Seemed to be a good fit between the structure of the school, and what the school needed.

Chair Magnuson closed the floor for discussion.

Chair Magnuson turned the floor over to Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs, Tracey George.
Holly and Richard did a great job in describing how shared governance works and mentioning recommendations for the future. She mentioned how all leader administrators were faculty first and are all interim. All administrative leaders are temporary in their positions and will eventually return to the faculty, and the university will still exist after their services are done.

Vice Provost George said how faculty administrators are taking on a larger service role than is typical for faculty. She said how the academic administrator role is designed to carry out the university’s research, teaching and service mission, as well as maximize their own capital. All faculty administrators understand that they are also responsible for their faculty colleagues.

Governance at Vanderbilt can be thought of through this faculty administrator role in three categories:

1) Academic mission critical activities that belong to the faculty (hiring, reappointment and promotion, curriculum, teaching, research, scholarship, creative expression). Here, the role of faculty administrators is to facilitate the will of the faculty.

2) Responsibilities that are unique to administrators, where the role is to assess all available information, make the best decision possible, and explain the reasoning behind this to the extent they can.

3) There is a grey area that exists between faculty and administrator responsibilities. Here, the role is to evaluate, consult, and make a judgement call to what belongs to each category (faculty or administration) and decide what counts as joint decision-making.
   - The faculty administrator must be prepared to explain the background of their decisions, as well as showing faculty members that the work they do is consistent with shared governance characteristics at Vanderbilt.
   - Vice Provost George emphasized the importance of faculty being in these kinds of roles.

Vice Provost George turned the floor over to Senior Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs (VUMC), David Raiford.

Doctor Raiford remarked:

That AAU’s guidance and report by Holly and Richard says that communication is what facilitates the engagement of a university like ours to be collaborative and shared to the extent that is possible. Doctor Raiford shared that those functioning in a representative role in the faculty senate serve as mechanisms to assemble ideas and concerns brought forth by faculty and deliver them in ways that can provoke discussion and help improve the governance process.

- Faculty Manual is a great example of this, as portions of it actually help to guide faculty. Sometimes the interests amongst faculty administrators are not aligned – which is important for leaders to address. Having a process by which leaders’ determinations are made to be transparent is important, as the values shared should apply to all decisions made to retain trust of the faculty.

Doctor Raiford then mentioned how the School of Medicine’s Faculty Advisory Council has representation from all departments within the School of Medicine (including basic sciences and clinical departments). These faculty deliberately take time out of their scholarly endeavors to assist in communication to the Dean of the School of Medicine to make sure there is transparency. He then said how there is a validation in the adherence to the Faculty Manual, which he and Tracey’s teams attend to. Lastly, he points out that his advocacy for things that matter to the faculty is continual and collaborative with Tracey and her team.

Finally, he said that Vanderbilt is in a better place than we were as a university in 2016. We are a living organization with a governmental structure that was here before any of us got here, and will be here.
when we are all gone. All faculty members are custodians of this body of knowledge, and should know that the shared governance structure at Vanderbilt is not going to change over the time that they work at the university.

Chair Magnuson opened the floor for discussion.

- Q: Shared governance is not something that faculty at Vanderbilt are completely satisfied with – what do we do better?
  - A: When looking at surveys on shared governance, faculty have very high expectations to be involved in decision-making processes at the university. It was highlighted that great faculty should always want to expect more from leaders. Communication is again, the most important aspect to have in shared governance. We, as leaders, need to do more here to be transparent when we can be.
  - A: Leadership is working to recover a degree of intentionality, to make communication a top priority. When evolving through current distractions and events, leaders need to reassess priorities, and communication is undoubtedly one of them. Faculty and administration members should follow the lead of our Chancellor and Provost in communicating and engaging with peers. Unless we are intentional about our communication, it risks not being as effective as we want it to be.

Chair Magnuson proceeded to the next item of business.

**Good of the Senate**

Chair Magnuson opened the floor to comments.

- A: These presentations were great to have, as they were very enlightening. This is a process that really has not changed, and with a new Chancellor and Provost, this is a great opportunity to reimagine what shared governance could look like in the future moving forward. Faculty can communicate more across campus and stay engaged in the Vanderbilt community.

- A: Shared governance is all about intentional and constructional communication. The university’s structure should always put faculty first – this topic is one to be further elaborated on to create more opportunity for discussion next semester.

- A: The nature in which we have had to respond have given us some barriers the past two years. It is important to think in the context of what will work for our students and our faculty, while thinking in the realm of future-oriented communication.

Chair Magnuson proceeded to the next item of business.

Chair Magnuson provided concluding remarks:

- He extended thanks to all the speakers for their thoughts and suggested how the topic of shared governance should remain at the forefront of our meetings into next semester. He reminded senators that nominations for faculty awards are due December 13th, which consist of four key awards given out
at the faculty assembly in April. Lastly, Chair Magnuson said how senators will be receiving an email link to a survey after the meeting concludes, and asked for it to please completed within the next few days.

**Adjournment**

It was moved that the meeting should be adjourned. There was a second and the meeting adjourned at 5:20pm.

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Ryan Middagh, Secretary        Date of Approval
Faculty Senate Vice Chair