Call to order

Approval of the minutes of February 2, 2012 meeting

Report of the Executive Committee

Remarks by Chancellor Nick Zeppos

New business

Motion to accept the Honor System report from the Student Life committee—Senators Vanessa Beasley and Joy Calico, Student Life committee

Motion to approve the changes to committee descriptions in Senate Rules of Order—Senator Agnes Fogo, Senate Affairs committee

Motion to approve changes to the Faculty Manual regarding disciplinary action section—Senator Agnes Fogo, Senate Affairs committee

Motion to approve changes to non-discrimination policy in Faculty Manual—Executive Committee

Good of the Senate

Adjournment

Voting Members present: Andrews, Atack, Aurbach, Balser, Beasley, Beauchamp, Benbow, Bradford, Cannon, Carbone, Carlton, Clark, Dawant, Dever, Does, Donaldson, Fogo, Gokhale, Guthrie, Hall, Hudnut-Beumler, Hughes, Hurder, March, Moore, Morrill, Nanney, Powers, Ramanujam, Ramey, Rogers, Schwartz, Skaar, Tellinghuisen, Turner,
Van Kaer, Wait, Wayman, Weintraub, Winder, Wollaeger, Yarbrough, Yoder, and Zamora.

**Voting Members absent:** Aschner (regrets), Bachorowski (regrets), Barth (regrets), Bond, Barz (regrets), Brady, Braxton (regrets), Calico (regrets), Conway-Welch (regrets), Galloway (regrets), Gigante, Halpern, Hyman (regrets), Johnston (regrets), Kirshner, Miller, Mulvaney (regrets), Niswender, Tansey, Tsinakis (regrets), and Wikswo (regrets).

**Ex Officio Members present:** Bandas, Bodenheimer, Christman, Fife, Fortune, Kovalcheck, McCarty, McNamara, Raiford, Sweet, Williams, and Zeppos.

**Ex Officio Members absent:** Bernard, Miller, Stalcup (regrets), Wcislo, 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 February 2, 2012 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 gave the report of the Executive Committee:

- Regular monthly meetings with Chancellor, with Provost/VCHA, with Senate Committee Chairs
- Planning for Abby Stewart (guest of Senate) visit April 12-13, 2012

**Next Item on the Agenda – Remarks by Chancellor Nick Zeppos**

Chancellor Zeppos said that he continues to be impressed by the faculty here, and by our environment of collegiality and civility. Our general feeling in the community has an impact on our recruitment and retention. He told two stories about faculty recruiting that went well—everyone was welcoming to them on their visit. He commends the faculty for all their great work. He asked for any questions. Hearing none, he thanked the Senate for the opportunity to speak.

**Next Item on the Agenda – New business: Motion to accept the Honor System report from the Student Life committee**

Chair Weintraub asked for any further discussion on the motion that was presented at the February Senate meeting. He said that the Student Life committee chairs are scheduling a meeting with student leaders to discuss this report and its recommendations. Hearing no other discussion, he asked for a vote on the motion.
Motion approved unanimously.

**Next Item on the Agenda – New business: Motion to approve the changes to committee descriptions in Senate Rules of Order**

Chair Weintraub asked for any further discussion on the motion that was presented at the February Senate meeting. Hearing none, he asked for a vote on the motion.

Motion approved unanimously.

**Next Item on the Agenda – New business: Motion to approve changes to the Faculty Manual regarding disciplinary action section**

Chair Weintraub asked for any discussion on this motion. Hearing none, he asked for a vote on the motion.

Motion approved unanimously.

**Next Item on the Agenda – Motion to approve changes to non-discrimination policy in Faculty Manual**

Chair Weintraub turned the floor over to Chair-elect Sal March who gave a history of his ad hoc task force’s work in looking into the non-discrimination policy changes to the Faculty Manual. Chair Weintraub said that a Senate committee will be charged next year to talk about the issues of academic freedom that this task force raised. He then opened the floor for questions.

Question: Why is the wording, “In addition..” included in this policy?
Answer: Federal law governs the first half of the policy, and the second half is what Vanderbilt does to go above and beyond the federal guidelines.

Chair Weintraub then called for a motion to approve these changes to the Faculty Manual presented by Provost Richard McCarty at the February Senate Meeting.

Motion approved.

Chancellor Zeppos: One concern I have about this issue—I really cherish academic freedom. Our current academic freedom statement recognizes this. I get nervous about carve-out areas. I think you might send negative signals out about the university if we do something like this.

This is an important issue, and I’m fine with looking at it. Let’s recognize more broadly the scope of our freedoms.
Chair Weintraub also said that the Senate Executive Committee is concerned with future changes to the Faculty Manual to reflect current policy. He suggests that instead of having policy in the document itself, we should have a pointer to the current policy on the Human Resources website.

Provost McCarty: We should also wait until we know the outcome of our affirmation process for the student group; we should know the outcome in April of this year.

Chancellor Zeppos: Let’s see how it plays out; jumping into studying it immediately could be problematic. Giving us a chance to go through the affirmation process this year might be helpful. There could be a reasonable case made that the Senate should wait a year at least to see how the policy affects our culture before studying the issue.

Comment: I would be concerned not only with implications for outside issues, but also for setting a precedent for these student groups. I would feel strongly that we should all abide by this statement.

Dean James Hudnut-Beumler: I hope we won’t change this statement, but instead we should look at the academic freedom section. I think it looks like a loophole where it is currently proposed. I would hope that the effort to look at academic freedom will help make us more robust in our upholding of this policy in face of the off-campus pressure.

Vice Chancellor David Williams: There can be no exception to the nondiscrimination policy since it is federal law. Academic freedom cannot trump nondiscrimination policy.

Chancellor Zeppos: Let’s have the best section in the Faculty Manual on academic freedom in the country.

Question: Is it in the Senate’s purview to have this conversation about student groups? Chair Weintraub: We felt for most of the year that it was mostly a student issue until the issue of changing the Faculty Manual came up—then it became our issue. You all can decide as a Senate how we can take this up from here on out. There has been an issue of faculty members signing the affirmation statement. The concern was that, in signing this form, the faculty member was saying that s/he believe all of this. But the faculty member’s role is to abide by these rules, not to believe them.

Chancellor Zeppos: When I look at other issues questioning the core value of what we do, there are more pressing issues than this one.

Chair Weintraub thanked everyone for their comments and discussion on this issue.

Next Item on the Agenda – Good of the Senate
Chair Weintraub asked for any news under good of the Senate. Hearing none, he called for an adjournment.

**Next Item on the Agenda – Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 5:15pm.