Call to order

Approval of the minutes of February 14, 2013

Report of the Executive Committee

Remarks by the Provost

New Business
  1. Presentation by Cynthia Cyrus: Update on the Honor System
  2. Presentation by Cynthia Cyrus: State of Online Education at Vanderbilt
  3. Discussion of Online Education Issues: David Weintraub

Good of the Senate

Adjournment

Voting Members present: Aschner, Balser, Barth, Blume, Bond, Brady, Cannon, Clark, Dever, Does, Dow, Enterline, Guelcher, Hall, Harrington, Huffman, Hurder, Johnson, Kirshner, Lind, March, Mihalik, Rohde, Tarpley, Tellinghuisen, Tsinakis, Turner, Wayman, Wehby.

Voting Members absent: Anderson (regrets), Atack, Baker (regrets), Benbow, Bradford, Braxton (regrets), Calico, Conway-Welch, Dayan, Fauchet (regrets), Fischer (regrets), Fogo (regrets), Fountain, Gervais (regrets), Gigante, Gokhale (regrets), Guthrie (regrets), Hemingway, Hudnut-Beumler (regrets), Hughes (regrets), Hyman (regrets), Johnston (regrets), Lim, Moore, Morrill (regrets), Mulvaney, Nanney (regrets), Niswender (regrets), Powers (regrets), Ramanujam (regrets), Schoenfield (regrets), Schwartz (regrets), Skaar, Smrekar, Southard-Smith, Tansey, Watters, Winder, Wait (regrets), and Yarbrough (regrets).

Ex Officio Members present: Bandas, McCarty, McNamara, Weintraub.

Ex Officio Members absent: Barz (regrets), Bernard (regrets), Fife, Fortune, Miller, Raiford, Stalcup, Sweet, Wcislo, Wente (regrets), Williams, Zeppos (regrets).

The meeting was called to order at 4:10 p.m. by Chair Sal March.
Next Item on the Agenda – Approval of Minutes of February 14, 2013

Chair March asked for an approval of the minutes. Minutes were approved unanimously.

Next Item on the Agenda – Report of the Executive Committee

Chair March said that much of the Executive Committee’s time has been working on understanding issues surrounding the budget, and he thanked Brett Sweet for his presentation at last month’s Senate meeting. He also reminded senators about the upcoming chair-elect and vice chair-elect in May—he reminded them that all first-year senators are eligible to stand for nomination. The Spring Faculty Assembly will be held on Wednesday, April 3, and Dr. William Shaffner will be the faculty speaker.

Next Item on the Agenda – Remarks by Provost Richard McCarty

Provost McCarty mentioned that we have a new general counsel who started on Monday, Audrey Anderson. Within the next few weeks, the Chancellor will be announcing our first Chief Information Officer. Also, the Chancellor and others will be working to replace Matthew Wright as Vice Chancellor for Investments. He also said that our investments are going well as per the most recent report from Brett Sweet. We are now in the midst of the sequester, and we are dealing with challenges as they come up. He said that it affects the Medical Center more than University Central.

Provost McCarty then turned to online education. He said that the landscape has changed rapidly in the last eighteen months. He mentioned that Coursera is the company that Vanderbilt is working with to offer online education. They are now up to 62 university partners. He would like to suggest a parallel process going forward: 1) we need to be involved in online education or we will be left behind, but also 2) we want to make sure and keep our eyes on our on-campus residential experience.

Next Item on the Agenda – Presentation by Cynthia Cyrus: Update on the Honor System

Provost McCarty introduced Associate Provost Cynthia Cyrus. She gave a presentation on the Honor System report follow-up: 23 tasks delivered, 5 tasks in progress (e.g. tutorial for grad students), 3 tasks await new General Counsel, and 4 planned for next year. They have built a website that was edited by the Provost’s office: (http://www.vanderbilt.edu/academicintegrity/). They put up a new reporting form online. There is also a focus on consultation and presentation/education about the Honors System. They have created a Vanderbilt Visions module for the VUceptors. They also changed the Honor Code signing process. They made some mechanical fixes to secure all files, adjusted the ARB processes, changed the reporting structure, and now have 10-school meetings. Forms for incoming freshmen and graduate students have been changed, too. There is also new staff: GL Black (new director), Cara Tuttle Bell (new assistant director) and a case manager who will be hired. Pending work: “Opportunities
for intervention” task force, writing a new FAQ for faculty, discussion of faculty roles
and expedited options, development of a 10-school statement of the code, and General
Counsel review of process and constitutions and by-laws. She said that statistics of
Undergraduate Honor Council Outcomes is on the website. Recommendation: more
detailed report to be submitted annually to the Student Life committee of the faculty
senate (adding this as a formal charge). She also mentioned that graduate/professional
schools are adopting the undergraduate honor council report as their template for
reporting data.

Next Item on the Agenda – Presentation by Cynthia Cyrus: State of Online
Education at Vanderbilt

Associate Provost Cyrus gave an overview of digital learning at Vanderbilt. She
mentioned that Coursera is our partner in this venture. There are 169,000 students
currently enrolled in VU Coursera offerings. There is 30% participation rate for VU
Coursera courses (10% national average). Faculty for pilot program: nominated by
deans, reviewed by Online Education Task Force, and final selection by Provost.
Compensation is through overload or credit toward service obligations. Next steps:
rounding out the pilots, demographics and assessments (alumni and outreach metrics),
organizational and support planning, and other projects (course “wrapping,” IRB research
and data mining, review of possible additional partners, work copyright and on IP
issues—in conjunction with the Faculty Senate).

Question: What is the mission here?
Associate Provost Cyrus: We are trying many things, but right now I would say it is:
“Make it work and take from it what is going to be best for Vanderbilt in the long haul.”
Learning what works and what doesn’t work is part of the process.

Question: Are you looking at ways to generate revenue?
Associate Provost Cyrus: We’ve been invited to participate in the certificate program,
but we aren’t there yet. There are conversations around publishing and sharing courses
that will be revenue-sharing. Until VU has recouped its investment, they won’t share
with the faculty member, but after that, they will.

Next Item on the Agenda – Discussion of Online Education Issues: David Weintraub

Past Chair David Weintraub introduced what SPAF (Strategic Planning and Academic
Freedom committee) has been talking about and doing about the issue of online
education. He gave a history of SPAF’s work on the issue over the past year. The initial
conclusions are: 1) it is a complex rapidly-evolving issue with potentially huge but
unknown implications, 2) it is critical for the Faculty Senate to proactively (and
continuously) work with the administration, 3) where possible, online courses should be
administered with the policies and procedures that are currently in place for classroom
courses.

Issues for initial discussion:
1) Intellectual property rights
2) Selection of faculty and subjects for online courses
3) Recognizing online courses for credit

Past Chair Weintraub said that SPAF wants to start the conversation about this very important and ever-changing issue. He opened up the floor for questions.

Question: Once a course is delivered, can VU just continue to offer the course as many times as they want?
Associate Provost Cyrus: Within Coursera, the decision to run a course is left to the institution with the faculty member. The contract with the faculty member specifies that the course can run over at least three years. It has to be run at least once.

Question: Once the course is launched, is it self-sufficient?
Associate Provost Cyrus: The amount of engagement is up to the faculty member. The contractual obligation is that the faculty member monitor the discussion the first go-round, but other than that there is no technical obligation. The second time the course runs, there is no obligation for monitoring.

Question: Is the course synchronous or asynchronous?
Associate Provost Cyrus: It depends on the faculty member and the course. Generally, the course is laid out synchronously. Some faculty members want the class to move ahead as a group through the course. It is mostly synchronous.

Question: Is the material available at other times or could a person download and store information and use it in a different setting?
Associate Provost Cyrus: It’s up to the faculty member, but most faculty allow students to download their videos. If you download videos or materials illegally, Coursera is prepared to take legal action. There is also bartering between partner universities, as well. Our current model is that it is co-owned: the faculty member owns the content, but the university also owns the course.

Statement: It’s important to hold to existing procedures and structures that we have. This upholds the quality of the courses and faculty governances.
Provost McCarty: I would disagree that we don’t have goals—the potential to learn about student learning is there like never before. We have the ability to experiment on campus like never before, and our students will be expecting that. One of our biggest goals is to sell our brand to the world. But this is an uncertain future since these are changing times.
Past Chair Weintraub said that we can’t afford to do things slowly on this issue, and he looks forward to the ongoing discussion on this important issue.
Next Item on the Agenda – Good of the Senate

Chair March asked for any news under good of the Senate. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to adjourn.

Next Item on the Agenda – Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 5:34pm.