Minutes for Vanderbilt University Faculty Senate
April 7th, 2021, Meeting

Attendees


Ex-officio members in attendance: Vanessa Beasley, Donald Brady, André Churchwell, Daniel Diermeier, Steve Ertel, Tracey George, Kathy Gould, John Lutz, Eric Kopstain, John Penn, Padma Raghavan, David Raiford, Cybele Raver, Ruza Shellaway, and Brett Sweet.

Ex-officio members absent: Gordon Bernard, Doug Christiansen, Nathan Green, Anders Hall, Ben Harris, Candice Lee, Jennifer Pietenpol, Cleo Rucker, and Alex Sevilla.

Guests in attendance: Jordan Bowen, Nancy Carrasco, Bapsi Chakravarthy, Mary Dietrich, Quentin Eichbaum, Judy Garber, Ellen Goldring, Alissa Hare, Brian Heuser, Christine Konradi, Stacey McCarty, Melanie Moran, Andrea Moro, Belinda Otukolo Saltiban, Todd Peterson, Kim Petrie, Tracy Sharpley-Whiting, Adriane Seiffert, Tiffany Tung, Dawn Turton, Markus Voehler, Christine Whitmore, Sheree Wright, and Zixiu Xiang.

Call to Order

A meeting of Vanderbilt Faculty Senate was held on April 7th, 2022, 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 34 voting members of the Faculty Senate.

Approval of Minutes

Chair Magnuson motioned for approval of the minutes as circulated of the March 3rd, 2022, 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 (32 ayes, 0 nays, and 3 abstentions).

Chair Magnuson proceeded to the next item of business.
Report of the Executive Committee

Chair Magnuson:

- Remarked on the activities that the Executive Committee (EC) has accomplished over the last month since the previous senate meeting. These activities included the monthly meeting with the Chancellor and the Provost, the ad hoc meeting with the Provost, discussion with chairs/co-chairs of committees, beginning the revamp of the senate website, and strategic planning related to the next academic year with the incoming chair and vice chair.

- Chair Magnuson then reviewed the themes discussed in each senate meeting thus far in the year, and stated that the upcoming May meeting will go over reports of ‘One Vanderbilt’ and elections for new senate leaders. He then reminded the Senate that the positions that need to be elected for the following academic year are the chair, vice chair, and committee chairs/co-chairs. He also reminded committee chairs/co-chairs that end of the year reports need to be prepared by the May meeting.

Chair Magnuson proceeded to the next item of business.

Chancellor Remarks

Chair Magnuson turned the floor over to Chancellor Diermeier.

Chancellor Diermeier:

- Thanked the EC for the conversations that they have been having together since the last meeting. Chancellor Diermeier mentioned that leadership is preparing for the investiture celebration this weekend, which will include a celebration of Vanderbilt in our community and marking the transition of leadership. He highlighted that two panel discussions are to take place the next day regarding the role of higher education in today’s age, as well as a discussion on athletics.

- Chancellor Diermeier then discussed the topic of communications for this meeting, and also mentioned the changing of EDI structure last year, which brought together all EDI activities at Vanderbilt under one roof. He mentioned how Dr. André Churchwell has spent the last year really organizing this and developing a structure for EDI at the university. He also thanked the DEI committee of the senate for their contributions to this work, especially regarding identity centers and the history of the land the University stands on. Chancellor Diermeier stated that the key to these initiatives is how we think about identity and view of belonging, and that the identity centers play a role in this.

Chancellor Diermeier then turned the floor over to Provost Raver.

Provost Raver:

- Expressed appreciation for the opportunity to address these two points that Chancellor Diermeier highlighted, and how she likes to base her decisions and thoughts off of informational examples. Provost Raver said how the growing focus on intersectionality and recognition and embrace of students having multiple identities, has given light to answering the first point. She then stated how the second point highlights a sense of physical belonging to the University versus a steady cultural debate and discussion regarding a sense of belonging. Provost Raver would like to better understand what principles and objectives hope to be achieved through an identity center. She lastly expressed how identity is changeable over time, and she would like to ensure that there is a space for students’ identities and self-understandings to be deeply supported, and to provide opportunity for transformation and change.

- In terms of research on the Land Acknowledgement Resolution, Provost Raver encouraged the University to engage in candid and extended history of the land. She said that she is seeking more clarity in understanding what the university is not currently doing in regard to this, but she does not want to
direct any research as this would conflict with the freedom of intellectual inquiry. She lastly said how she needs to better understand the nature of the resolution’s request, so the administration can address that request in a more thoughtful and comprehensive way than they are right now.

Chancellor Diermeier:
- Highlighted the topic of communications, and that Steve Ertel will be presenting on this topic momentarily. He said that it is important for the Senate to see the value of this for the faculty at the university. Chancellor Diermeier stated how the success of leading research universities lies in thinking of this like a wheel. The university starts out with a great reputation which attracts students, faculty, and staff, making it easier to secure funding and resources to support these individuals joining. When students, faculty, and staff join, the university can use these resources to create an environment for them to do great things. Then when great work at the university is discussed, this enhances its reputation, making this a virtuous cycle. Chancellor Diermeier said that the next step is talking about these achievements, because it is not the case that people just know these things. He said that the general public, as well as certain stakeholders, tend to underestimate the social benefit that the research university brings to the community.

Chancellor Diermeier turned the floor back over to Chair Magnuson.

Chair Magnuson opened the floor to any questions for the Chancellor and Provost, and hearing none, moved onto the next line of business.

Chair Magnuson brought forward a motion to suspend the Rules of Order. Secretary Middagh seconded the motion. The rules were then suspended.

Chair Magnuson proceeded to the next item of business.

Scheduled Remarks
Chair Magnuson turned the floor over to the Vice Chancellor of Communications and Marketing, Steve Ertel.

Vice Chancellor Ertel:
- Thanked the Senate for the opportunity to speak and talk about what the Department of Communications does, as well as the current state of the department. He said that unified communications work has increased in importance over the last few years, especially with the pandemic, and there was a need for Vanderbilt to reorganize our communications strategy.
- Vice Chancellor Ertel then mentioned that Vanderbilt’s identity is something that they work to define and sharpen, and is a constant cycle of pondering how to highlight the university in a distinct way that allows it to stand out. He then said that the communications team has put a focus on managing the gap between VU’s identity and its reputation, bringing these closer together by telling stories and creating experiences that align the reputation with the identity. Vice Chancellor Ertel highlighted Chancellor Diermeier’s point that the University’s identity and reputation help us to attract talent as well as funding and influence. This allows us to advocate for things that are critical to our mission as a university.
- Vice Chancellor Ertel highlighted the areas of the Communications Department that involve faculty, which are ‘university communications’ (to build alignment between research and academic enterprise and the communications team) and ‘public relations’ (to determine how the university tells our stories with the press and in social media, as well as managing issues on messaging).
- He then discussed the difference between school-based communications, which handle communications work at the school level (i.e., internal communication to students and faculty), and institutional
communications, that handle communications involving the entire institution (i.e., social media and media relations). These two are highly connected.

- Vice Chancellor Ertel then gave examples from the areas of communications that relate to faculty. In regard to media relations, faculty are positioned as the experts so when media contact VU about certain topics, these faculty experts will be referred. Vice Chancellor Ertel also mentioned the Global Voices Fellowship, which was designed to create a space for faculty to work on their communications platform. He believes this is a great way to bridge the academic sphere in the public sphere, as it helps push faculty expertise out to the public. He mentioned that the communications team also works on signature events like Endowed Chairs investiture ceremonies, faculty assemblies, webinars, and townhalls with faculty experts.

- He stated that one thing the communications team is trying to work on is getting more involved in institutional projects and campaigns, which would consist of choosing relevant topics in the world and pushing them for a period of time in order to tell a whole series of stories. Some examples Vice Chancellor Ertel gave on these projects and campaigns were the capital campaign, Vanderbilt Project for Unity and American Democracy, Sesquicentennial, and COVID-19. He also mentioned that communications also handles university social media as well as internal communications like My VU and Vanderbilt Magazine.

- In terms of the identity refresh, Vice Chancellor Ertel referenced the initial slide of defining identity and reputation, as well as the overlap of authentic engagement. He described that logos evolve over time, in big and small ways, and that the communications department did a deep dive into the history of Vanderbilt’s logo changes before they began the rebranding. The team found that there was a range of unofficial marks around campus alongside the official ones (an unofficial example being the ‘V’ on the bridge over 21st Avenue on campus).

- Vice Chancellor Ertel then talked about how there are so many aspects that contribute to making Vanderbilt what it is, and therefore the university needs a logo that is flexible. In terms of making the logo flexible, the communications team wanted to come up with marks that feel connected, but also allow for customization to particular constituency groups. The team started with thinking of how often individuals were wearing the logos, and the star ‘V’ was 31 times more popular in retails compared to the seal and the oak leaf ‘V’. He said that the star ‘V’ had a number of design flaws, and did not work in terms of flexibility to each different constituent group. The communications team wanted to take advantage of the ‘invisible square’ around the logo, as the more space the logo owns, the more powerful and strong the mark is.

- He said the overall goals of this rebrand were to unify athletics and university marks, as well as own the ‘V’ and own the gold. The wordmark was first formed, and from this, the new ‘V’ was created. From here, the ‘V’ was incorporated into the new seal, which is indicative of who we are today and where we are going as a university, but still with a nod to history. The seal also includes the star for commodores, as well as a compass for a directional attitude. Vice Chancellor Ertel then discussed the athletic ‘V’, which has secondary marks, or a black outline around the ‘V’ shape. He showed the new version of the star ‘V’, which is a ‘V’ on a star, representing the idea of ‘V forward’ where the ‘V’ is not consumed by the star.

- Lastly, Vice Chancellor Ertel noted that with the current supply chain issues, the rebranding is beginning to roll out, but will take some time. We will see these new marks being more prevalently used as we move forward.

Chair Magnuson opened the floor to questions for Vice Chancellor Ertel. Hearing none, Chair Magnuson read a couple questions from the anonymous faculty portal.

- How much did this rebranding cost?
  - Vice Chancellor Ertel:
• Were faculty involved in some of the dialogue before this rebranding took place?
  o Vice Chancellor Ertel:
    • The process started with the sense of sharpening our identity about 18-24 months ago, where multiple projects started to merge together, one of these projects being the Brand Design Principles Project. In this project, many faculty were interviewed one-on-one, through surveying, and in workshops about sharpening the sense of who we are as a university. These faculty members showed the current marks and asked what they like/do not like about them, and what they would like to see in future marks. A lot of this input was used to drive the process.

Hearing no further questions, Chair Magnuson proceeded to the next item of business.

Standing Committee Reports
Chair Magnuson called for reports from the standing committees.

Academic Policies and Services (APS) Co-Chair, Adam Anderson:
• Discussed a new program proposal, which is a Master of Imaging Science (VUSM). This program’s purpose is to prepare students for leadership roles in biomedical imaging through offering a focus on imaging technology, understanding the information available from existing imaging data, as well as applying this information to clinical and industrial usage. Co-Chair Anderson mentioned that the full proposal is available for viewing on the faculty senate portal.

Senate Affairs (SAC) Co-Chair, Debra Friedman:
• Thanked committee for all their valuable input and hard work on this initiative. Co-Chair Friedman discussed the recommendations to SAC committee charges. These recommendations consisted of addressing the unintended consequences of the VU and VUMC split, and an ad hoc committee be organized to further evaluate the benefits and challenges of the separation. Co-Chair Friedman announced that the committee believes the following charges for the ad hoc committee would be fitting. These charges include evaluation of challenges to the educational mission resulting from the split, evaluating challenges to the research mission resulting from the split, developing a prioritization strategy for addressing these challenges, developing a strategy whereby recommendations to address challenges may be operationalized, and evaluating future policies changes as needed in either institution that challenges collaborative work.

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

Ad Hod Committee Reports
No reports were made.

Old Business
Chair Magnuson opened the floor to Strategic Planning and Academic Affairs (SPAF) Committee Chair, Saralyn Williams:
Committee Chair Williams thanked the entire committee for all of their hard work on this motion.

Proposed: A motion to change the standing charges for the Strategic Planning and Academic Freedom (SPAF) Committee of the Faculty Senate.

> Whereas the Faculty Senate Constitution and the Rules of Order govern the process by which the Faculty Senate conducts business,

> Whereas the current Faculty Senate Rules of Order both define the Standing Committees of the Faculty Senate and set forth the rule for the charges of each committee,

> Whereas the Rules of Order section IV. A. 2. h states that the standing charges for the SPAF committee are as follows,

“To be concerned with long-term strategic planning and governance issues of the university. To be concerned with policy regarding professional ethics, conscience, and academic freedom under Article I, Section C. 5. of the Senate Constitution.”

> Whereas the SPAF committee does not have direct oversight of the strategic planning for Vanderbilt University as this is in the purview of the senior leadership of Vanderbilt University,

> Whereas SPAF envisions the committee’s role as a conduit for faculty concerns about the impact of strategic planning and governance on the faculty’s ability to perform their duties as faculty of Vanderbilt University,

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 Rules of Order section IV. A. 2. h to modify the standing charges of SPAF.

**Be it resolved** that the Rules of Order section IV. A. 2. h be modified to change the standing charges for the SPAF committee. 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:

“To be concerned with the impact of university-wide strategic planning on faculty self-governance and on the ability of faculty to perform their teaching, research and creative expression, service, and other professional responsibilities effectively. To be

**Be it resolved that consistent with the Rules of Order sections X and XI, upon passage of this Motion by the Faculty Senate, these changes to the Rules shall enter into force on the day they are passed by the Faculty Senate.**

Submitted to Faculty Senate on February 9, 2022

**Strategic Planning and Academic Freedom**

Saralyn Williams, Committee Chair
Ryan Middagh, Executive Committee Liaison
Brooke Ackerly
James Booth
David Lewis
Lutz Koepnick
Paul Miller
Courtney Pitts
Jan Price
Jacob Sauer

Chair Magnuson opened the floor to questions, and hearing none, turned the floor over for voting on the motion.
Secretary Middagh announced that the motion passed (37 ayes, 2 nays, 2 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.

**Good of the Senate**

Chair Magnuson opened the floor to comments.

EC Member:
- Don’t know if they heard answers regarding the background on the new visual identity, especially to answer where faculty input was heard prior to the change. If there is a national and international identity being created, I think it would be beneficial for Steve Ertel to come back and speak on this.

Voting Senator:
- I second this statement – as this reimaging came out of nowhere. The gravity of this rebranding was immense, and I do not know of anyone that heard of this change before it was launched, and I have been a faculty member for 25 years. The oak leaf was an intentional symbol of what Vanderbilt is about – planting a seed of knowledge in students and the world. This is a big deal not to include faculty.

Voting Senator:
- I also second this. On top of this, Vanderbilt’s policy with regards to people with disabilities and in-person teaching. I do not know of any faculty member or any senator that has been considered with this – which is deeply problematic.

Chair Magnuson proceeded to the next item of business.

**Adjournment**

It was moved that the meeting should be adjourned. There was a second and the meeting adjourned at 5:17pm.

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Ryan Middagh, Secretary
Faculty Senate Vice Chair

May 5, 2022

Date of Approval