

Minutes for Vanderbilt University Faculty Senate Meeting October 1, 2020, Zoom

Call to Order

A Vanderbilt University Faculty Senate meeting was held on Thursday, October 1, 2020 on Zoom. It began at 4:10 pm and was presided over by Chair Catherine McTamaneay with Vice Chair Ben Harris.

Attendees

Voting members in attendance: Sari Acra, Adam Anderson, Celia Applegate, Carolyn Audet, Brian Bachmann, Daniel Barocas, Leon Bellan, Camilla Benbow, Dietmar Bisch, James Booth, Brett Byram, Elizabeth Catania, Leena Choi, Mario Crucini, Brian Fitzpatrick, Debra Friedman, Kathy Friedman, John Geer, Ben Harris, Katherine Hartmann, Graham Hemingway, Brian Heuser, Jim Hudnut-Beumler, Dawn Iacobucci, Susie Leming-Lee, David Lewis, William Luis, Mark Magnuson, Catherine McTamaneay, Ryan Middagh, Jami Miller, Vicky Morgan, Josh Murray, Bunmi Olatunji, Abby Parish, Julia Phillippi, Lynn Ramey, Joe Rodgers, Sandra Rosenthal, Florence Sanchez, Berk Sensoy, Tracy Sharpley-Whiting, Marcy Singer-Gabella, Rebecca Swan, Emilie Townes, Greg Walker, Saralyn Williams, Yesha Yadav, Eli Zimmerman

Voting Members Absent: Victor Anderson, Jeffrey Balsler, Karen Bloch, Lorenzo Candelaria, Wonder Drake, Noel Enyedy, Lourdes Estrada, Philippe M. Fauchet, Elsa Filosa, Leonard Folgarait, Eric Grogan, Chris Guthrie, M. Eric Johnson, Lutz Koepnick, Christopher Lind, Larry Marnett, Robert Miller, Linda Norman, Lijun Song

Ex Officio members in attendance: Holly Algood, Vanessa Beasley, Donald Brady, Daniel Diermeier, Tracey George, Anders Hall, Candice Lee, John Lutz, John McLean, Laura Nairon, Ann Price, Dave Raiford, William Robinson, Ruby Shellaway, Brett Sweet, Susan Wentz

Ex Officio members not in attendance: Mark Bandas, Andre Churchwell, Steve Ertel, Nathan Green, Eric Kopstain, Jennifer Pietenpol, Padma Raghavan

Guests in attendance: Stacey Floyd-Thomas, Melissa Gresalfi, Alissa Hare, Kelsey Hatzel, Queen Henry-Okafor, Tamika Hudson, Rolanda Lister, Houra Merrikh, Paul Miller, Courtney Pitts, Jason Pollack, Mike Reisenberg, Stacy Sherrod, LeTizia Smith, Claudine Taafe, Lisa Thompson, Jonathan Waters, Sheree Wright, Stacey McCarty, Jessica Brotherson

Approval of Minutes

Minutes were approved by unanimous consent of the 49 members present.

Report of the Executive Committee

Chair McTamaneay reported for the Executive Committee.

- Chair noted that quorum is defined in the Constitution Article II, B.1 as the number equivalent to a simple majority of the elected members of the Senate shall constitute a quorum. Quorum represents 31. 49 voting members were present.
- Chair McTamaneay informed the Senate that there will be a special called meeting of the Faculty Senate on Oct. 8th. This meeting will be held to consider a proposed motion from the Senate to the

Faculty Assembly for a Constitutional Amendment that will provide authorization for the Vanderbilt University Faculty Senate to conduct business sessions via electronic meetings. This motion will be discussed under New Business.

- The proposed motion from the Senate Affairs Committee is to address the COVID physical distancing requirements. To vote on this, the Senate must meet in person.
- A quorum of voting members (31) is needed at the Oct. 8 meeting in order to vote in a way that is actionable. We still need members to sign up and attend. Please send a message to Stacey McCarty to RSVP.
- VU/VUMC Special Orientation session with Provost Wente.
 - Chair McTamanev shared that it was held earlier in September and was very well attended.
- Vanderbilt Strong Community Conversations with Vice Provosts Tracey George and Padma Raghavan.
 - Offers support for teaching, creative expression, and research interruptions since the COVID crisis began
 - Have already had 2 sessions with Tracey George (over 50 faculty in attendance)
 - Last meeting next Thursday with Padma Raghavan
- Faculty Senate is onboarding two new Graduate Assistant's
 - Jessica Brotherson and Angelica Hooten
- Updates to Faculty Senate Website are coming
- Introduction of new senate members
 - We are welcoming 15 non-senator members to 6 of our standing committees. They are full-voting members.

Chair McTamanev then recognized Chancellor Diermeier who proceeded to deliver his scheduled remarks.

Chancellor Remarks

Chancellor Diermeier made the following remarks:

- Semester has gone well:
 - Executed crisis plan well.
 - COVID-positive test rates are between .4-.6—much smaller what we see in Davidson Co. and elsewhere.
 - Vanderbilt is in a fortunate position in relation to its peers (Students were able to come back, have been able to operate extremely well, able to provide quality education, and online classes). This has been due to the Vanderbilt Community coming together.
 - Enormous accomplishments this semester
 - Personal gratitude from students (including Student Body Pres.)

- Might be the only medical program in person
- There are still problems. This is unprecedented and learning in real time, but the work done has been done exceptionally well.
- Chancellor knows that people are strained and being asked to do more than normal, he is aware how everyone has stepped up and is grateful for the demanding work.
- Students have been responsible and risen to the challenge who want to be here and are holding each other accountable. Compared to peers and what people thought would happen, Vanderbilt has done well.
- Spring plans underway.
 - Will be similar to current plan.
 - Working hard towards increasing in person classes
 - Aware of challenges ahead and are working to deal with those.
- Want to deal with this situation, but also see how this community can emerge from this crisis stronger:
 - Vanderbilt Strong
 - Destination Vanderbilt
 - Effort to make Vanderbilt a destination for the best.
 - Background: In March/April, had to make some painful financial budget cuts and not raise salaries. However, did not have to do mass lay-offs or mass furloughs, could still contribute to retirement funds, and did not have to do a hiring freeze. Since then, some of anticipated crisis costs did not materialize, leaving university stronger by end of fiscal year than was expected in Mar-May.
 - Destination Vanderbilt: a strategic position
 - Will be competing for the next couple of years and will be one of very few universities able to do so.
 - Enormous opportunity this hiring cycle
 - Available for every dept and every school
- Questions:
 - Senator: Is there rank associated with Destination Vanderbilt hiring or is it open?
 - Chancellor Diermeier: *Open. This is extra hiring on top of typical hiring. Particularly intended for exceptionally strong candidates.*
 - Senator: Have there been layoffs/salary cuts in staff because of crisis?
 - Chancellor Diermeier: *There were some small layoffs and coupled with the early retirement program that was launched in May, we did lose some people. But the overall impact (not minimizing the painfulness of those who left) is moderate compared to peers. There were no raises and we tried to minimize impact (even*

though there was some). We had to do that at that time, but things have improved now.

- Senator: Merit raises?
 - Chancellor Diermeier: *plan is to give those next year and Destination Vanderbilt will not have an impact on faculty merit raises.*
- Senator: Are there resources like Vanderbilt strong for VUMC Faculty (who do not report to a provost)?
 - Chancellor Diermeier recognized Provost Susan Wentz to answer: *That would be directed by the Medical Center, but we will follow up with them to see what funds are in place for VUMC faculty.*
- Senator: With COVID, what does the development/fundraising environment look like for said initiatives?
 - Chancellor Diermeier: *We expect some negative impact, but not as much as we feared in April or May.*

Chair McTamoney yielded the floor for Standing Committee Reports.

Officers' Reports

Report of Student Life Committee was presented by Chairs Alissa Hare and Abby Parish.

- Plans for this year:
 - Continue networking with student groups (especially EDI and Wellness)
 - Provide senate with relevant updates from athletics, graduate student neighborhood, and test bank equity
 - 5-year update report on Greek life
 - Collaborate with other senate committees (FL, Gr, DEI, SPAF)
 - Student Grievances
 - Please reach out to either Alissa or Abby with ideas/thoughts/questions.

Report of Faculty Manual Committee was presented by Chair Vicky Morgan.

- Current charges:
 - Title IX Update
 - Overview of interim changes made 08/14/2020 to VU Faculty Manual. These did not need to be ratified by Senate.
 - Will bring final wording of Faculty Manual to the Senate for ratification.
 - Grievance policy updates: The committee is working with Grievance committee on these.
- Want to focus on:
 - Updates to Faculty manual (links to resources needed, changes needed, etc.).
 - Updates and changes in manual regarding VU/VUMC distinctions.
 - Other issues: parental leave, tenure clock extensions question, live captioning of meetings

Other Reports

There were no other reports.

New Business:

Chair McTamanev recognized Senator Friedman, Chair of Senate Affairs who provided the SAC report. Chair McTamanev imposed time limit of 2 minutes per speaker with the debate lasting no more than 15 minutes total and turned the time over to Senator Friedman to explain the motion brought before the Senate.

Senator Friedman introduced a proposed motion that reads:

Proposed Motion to Amend the Faculty Senate Constitution

- Whereas, The Vanderbilt University’s Faculty Senate Constitution and the Faculty Senate’s Rules of Order have been revised on numerous occasions; and
- Whereas, the Constitution as revised on 4/5/2018 and the Rules of Order as revised on 10/11/2019 are the governing documents for the University’s Faculty Assembly and Faculty Senate; and
- Whereas, Article I, The Faculty Assembly, Section B. of the Constitution [revised on 4/5/2018] states: “The Faculty Assembly shall meet at least once during each academic year, . . . It may be called into additional sessions by the Chancellor, or by the Faculty Senate, or upon the written petition of any sixty voting members of the Faculty Assembly,” and
- Whereas, Article II, The Faculty Senate, Section B. Organization of the Constitution [revised on 4/5/2018] states: “The Senate shall meet at least four times each year....” and may from time to time be called into special sessions as authorized by Article II. Section B. 4., and
- Whereas, Article II, The Executive Committee, Section D, of the Constitution [revised on 4/5/2018] meets at the discretion of the Chair of the Faculty Senate, and
- Whereas, Article II, The Consultative Committee, Section E of the Constitution [revised on 4/5/2018] meets at the request of the Chancellor “or upon request of a majority of the Committee, or by direction of the Senate,” and
- Whereas, the Faculty Senate’s Rules of Order Article I. Authority [revised on 10/11/2019] states, “. . . Except as otherwise provided in these rules, the transaction of Senate business shall proceed according to the current edition of Robert’s Rules of Order (Newly Revised),” and
- Whereas, the current edition of Robert’s Rules of Order (Newly Revised) is the 12th edition, and states in 9:30, **Extension of Parliamentary Law to Electronic Meetings**, “Except as authorized *in the bylaws*, the business of an organization or board can be validly transacted only at a regular or properly called *meeting*—that is, as defined in 8.2 (1), a single official gathering in one room or area—of the assembly of its members at which a quorum is present” and furthermore, 9.31 states that groups sometimes desire “to transact business at *electronic meetings*—that is, at meetings at which,

rather than all participating members being physically present in one room or area as in traditional (or “face-to-face”) meetings, some or all of them communicate with the others through electronic means such as the Internet or by telephone. A group that holds such alternative meetings does not lose its character as a deliberative assembly (see 1:1) so long as the meetings provide, at a minimum, conditions of opportunity for simultaneous aural communication among all participating members equivalent to those of meetings held in one room or area. Under such conditions, an electronic meeting that is properly authorized in the bylaws is treated as though it were a meeting at which all the members who are participating are actually present.” and

- Whereas, due to the Covid-19 pandemic of 2020, holding “face-to-face” meetings of either the Faculty Assembly or the Faculty Senate on a regular basis is not generally practical due to social distancing and requirements for face coverings that make finding an adequate meeting space and/or providing for adequate aural communications among members of the assembly difficult, the AY 2020/2021 Senate Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate was charged with reviewing the Faculty Senate Constitution and offering amendments to provide for the proper authorization for electronic meetings of both the Faculty Assembly and the Faculty Senate that provide “for simultaneous aural communication among all participating members equivalent to those of meetings held in one room or area,”
1. Be it resolved that the Article I. B. of the Constitution as revised effective on 4/5/2018 be amended by addition to read: “The Faculty Assembly shall meet at least once during each academic year, at the beginning of the Fall Semester.[2018] It may be called into additional sessions by the Chancellor, or by the Faculty Senate, or upon the written petition of any sixty voting members of the Faculty Assembly. [At the discretion of the presiding party as authorized by Article I. C., meetings of the Faculty Assembly including all required sessions and additional sessions called as authorized in Article I. B. may be face to face or may be called as an electronic meeting as long as the electronic meeting provides for simultaneous aural communication among all participating members of the Faculty Assembly equivalent to those of meetings held in one room or area. \[2020\]](#) Twenty percent of the voting membership shall constitute a quorum. [1982]” and
 2. Be it further resolved that Article II. B. 1. of the Constitution as revised on 4/5/2018 be amended by addition to read: “The Senate shall meet at least four times each year, normally during September, December, March, and May. Additional special meetings may be called at the discretion of the Chancellor, or the Chair of the Senate, or upon written request of any eight members of the Senate. [At the discretion of the Chair of the Faculty Senate, a regular or a special meeting, including the last regularly scheduled meeting of the Senate each year, as authorized by Article II. B. 2. and special sessions as authorized by Article II. B. 4. of the Faculty Senate may be called as a face-to-face meeting or as an electronic meeting as long as the electronic meeting provides for simultaneous aural communication among all participating members of the Faculty Senate equivalent to those of meetings held in one room or area. \[2020\]](#) The number equivalent to a simple majority of the elected members of the Senate shall constitute a quorum. All meetings of the Senate shall be open to

members of the Faculty Assembly, to the chief administrative officers, and to other persons invited by Senate action, except as provided in Article II., Section B. 4. below. [1982] [2017]” and

3. Be it further resolved that Article II. D. of the Constitution as revised on 4/5/2018 be amended by addition to read:” The Executive Committee of the Senate consists of the Chair, the Vice Chair, the Chair-elect and the Vice Chair-elect, and, from the time of their election until July first following, the persons elected to become the next Chair-elect and Vice Chair-elect. [2004] [The Executive Committee meets at the discretion of the Chair of the Faculty Senate. A regular or special meeting may be called as a face-to-face meeting or as an electronic meeting as long as the electronic meeting provides for simultaneous aural communication among all participating members of the Executive Committee equivalent to those of meetings held in one room or area.](#) [2020] The immediate past chair and vice chair will serve as ex officio members of the committee for one year following their term. [2003] [2006] The Chair of the Senate shall consult with the Executive Committee prior to discharging the Chair's responsibilities under the Promotion and Tenure Grievance Procedure. [2000]” and
4. Be it further resolved that Article II. E. of the Constitution as revised on 4/5/2018 be amended by addition to read: “. . . The Consultative Committee shall meet with the Chancellor upon his request, or upon request of a majority of the Committee, or by direction of the Senate. [A meeting of the Consultative Committee may be called as a face-to-face meeting or as an electronic meeting as long as the electronic meeting provides for simultaneous aural communication among all participating members of the Consultative Committee equivalent to those of meetings held in one room or area.](#) [2020] No formal votes shall be taken at such consultations, nor shall the Consultative Committee take any action that might commit the Senate against its will. ([1982].” and
5. Be it further resolved that upon the passage of this motion, the Faculty Senate endorses the circulation of these proposed amendments to the Faculty Assembly as prescribed by the Faculty Senate’s Constitution, Article III, Amendments; and
6. Be it further resolved that the proposed amendments will be placed before the Faculty Assembly, will be adopted, and effective if and when approved by two-thirds of those present and voting at the Faculty Assembly’s next face-to-face meeting.

This motion will authorize the Faculty Senate and the Faculty Assembly to conduct business at electronically held meetings in which all members of the deliberative assembly shall have simultaneous aural communication. The reason for the motion as well as the resolves of the motion were explained by Senator Friedman

Senator Friedman passed the floor back to Chair McTamany. Chair opened the floor for debate. There was no debate.

Chair McTamany called for the vote for the motion to occur in the meeting on October 8. Presuming that quorum is met next Thursday, the motion will be voted on then.

Good of the Senate

Surveys for Senate input for redesign of website are available. Chair McTamany encouraged that they be completed. These surveys will be sent in email as well.

Adjournment

Chair McTamney motioned that the meeting be adjourned, and Debra Friedman moved to adjourn. All were in favor; this was agreed upon at 5:07 p.m.



Ben Harris, Secretary
Vanderbilt University

Dec. 3, 2020

Date of Approval