

# Minutes for Vanderbilt University Faculty Senate Meeting September 3, 2020, Zoom

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## Call to Order

## Approval of Minutes of May 7, 2020

## Report of the Executive Committee

## Remarks by the Chancellor

## Standing Committee Reports

## Ad Hoc Committee Reports

## Old Business

## New Business

## Adjournment

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## Call to Order

A Faculty Senate meeting of Vanderbilt University was held on Thursday, September 3, 2020 on Zoom. It began at 4:10 pm and was presided over by Chair Catherine McTamaney with Ben Harris vice chair. Chair Catherine McTamaney shared that she had just received the newly revised 12<sup>th</sup> edition of Roberts Rules of Order earlier this week. Chair McTamaney explained that voting would take place through a zoom poll.

A vote (zoom poll) was taken to establish a quorum.

The voting proceeded: Tally: 55 voting members, 6 ex officio members, and 28 guests of the Senate.

Chair Catherine McTamaney proceeded to the next item of business.

## Attendees

Voting members in attendance included: Larry Marnett, Sari Acra, Adam Anderson, Victor Anderson, Celia Applegate, Brian Bachmann, Jeffrey Balsler, Daniel Barocas, Leon Bellan, Camilla Benbow, Dietmar Bisch, Karen Bloch, James Booth, Brett Byram, Elizabeth Catania, Leena Choi, Mario Crucini, Wonder Drake, Noel Enyedy, Lourdes Estrada, Philippe Fauchet, Elsa Filosa, Brian Fitzpatrick, Folgarait Leonard, Katherine Friedman, John Geer, Eric Grogan, Chris Guthrie, Ben Harris, Graham Hemingway, Jim Hudnut-Beumler, Dawn Iacobucci, Eric Johnson, Lutz Koepnick, Susie Leming-Lee, David Lewis, Christopher Lind, William Luis, Mark Magnuson, Marcy Singer-Gabella, Catherine McTamaney, Ryan Middagh, Robert Miller, Vicky Morgan, Linda Norman, Bunmi Olatunji, Abby Parish, Julia Phillippi, Lynn Ramey, Joe Rodgers, Sandra Rosenthal, Florence Sanchez, Berk Sensoy, Tracy Sharpley-Whiting, Emilie Townes, Greg Walker, Saralyn Williams, Yesha Yadev, Eli Zimmerman

Voting Members Absent included: Carolyn Audet, Debra Friedman, Katherine Hartmann, Brian Heuser, Lutz Koepnick, Jami Miller, Courtney Pitts, Jason Pollack, Lijun Song

Ex Officio members in attendance included: Daniel Diermeier, Susan Wente, Beasley, Padma Raghavan, William Robinson, Holly Algood, Mark Bandas, Donald Brady, Andre Churchwell, Anders Hall, John Lutz, Candice Storey-lee, John McLean, Jennifer Pietenpol, Ruza Shellaway, Brett Sweet, Ann Price

Ex Officio members not in attendance were Doug Christiansen, Tracey George, Steve Ertel, Eric Kopstain, David Raiford

Guests in attendance included: Steven J Eskind, Joseph Awad, Christine Whitmore, Mary Yarbrough, Megan Lawrence, Karl Hackenbrack, Emanuelle Olliveira, Cindy Kam, Lauren Woodard, Rick Hilles, Georgene Troseth, Steven Townsend, Becky Keck, Phillis Sheppard, Nina Martin, Mike Neamtu, Melissa Gresalfi, Valerie Hotchkiss, Sheree Wright, Candy (Claudine) Taaffe, Elliott Craver Mcarter, Merrikh Houra, Johnathan Waters, Holly McCammon, Stacey McCarty, Andrew Brodsky

## Approval of Minutes

Chair Catherine McTamaney shared that the Senate is running their first electronic meeting internally and managed without the support of Communications and their professionals doing the behind the scenes production management. Chair McTamaney expressed thanks to the Division of Communications for their support that they have given.

Chair Catherine McTamaney welcomed everyone on behalf of the other Senate Executive committee members:

**Catherine McTamaney, chair**

**Ben Harris, vice chair**

**Mark Magnuson, chair-elect**

**Ryan Middagh, vice chair-elect**

**John McLean, past chair**

**Holly Algood, past vice chair**

Chair McTamaney indicated that attendees would be muted during the presentation and later can use the raise hand feature to ask questions following the Chancellor's remarks.

The voting proceeded: Tally 52 affirmative, 1 opposed, 5 abstentions.

A motion to approve the minutes of the previous May 7, 2020 meeting was made by Mario Crucini and seconded by Rebecca Swan. The motion passed by electronic polling.

## Report of the Executive Committee

The Report of the Executive Committee was presented by Catherine McTamaney.

- **Return to Campus Planning:**
  - The Senate Executive committee was actively engaged in the Return to Campus Plan. A detailed report of summer work was shared earlier today with Senators and executive members. With the pandemic unfolding, it was a busy summer which included engagement from all six members of the executive committee focusing on two general areas: The Return to Campus Plan and conducting the regular business of the senate.
  - Over the last four months, the members of the Senate executive committee were involved in the **Provost's Continuity Working Group and subcommittees** and are grateful to Provost

Wente for populating those committees and asking one of our executive committee members, John McLean to serve as co-chair.

- A number of our Senators are also represented on those sub-committees including Ben Harris, our Faculty Senate vice chair, who is serving as the co-chair on the Provost's **University Working Group on Schools and Childcare** which looks to help provide resources to families with children who are unexpectedly at home for the beginning of the fall semester.
- **The Faculty Senate facilitated six Town Halls** focused on COVID at the university level having worked with Chancellor Diermeier, Provost Wente and the colleges to roll these out.
- **Ongoing consultation with the chancellor and provost, escalating faculty concerns throughout the summer.** The senate has been in constant communication with Chancellor Diermeier and Provost Wente's offices to learn and understand the return to campus plan acknowledgement and protocols. Chair McTamaney shared that she just earlier received a COVID protocols for faculty packet from Vice-Provost Vanessa Beasley's office today that will be accessible on the Faculty Senate homepage as well as being distributed by your Dean's.
- Engaged with the Office of Research regarding the **Vanderbilt Electronic Research Administration (VERA) System** and its implications for university research. Before COVID, the senate was focusing on other work such as working with the Vice Provost for Research and engaging in the rollout of the new VERA system and making sure that faculty had the appropriate information. This was the 7<sup>th</sup> town hall and was hosted by past vice chair, Holly Algood, and Chair of the APS committee, Noel Enyedy.
- **The Senate welcomed Chancellor Diermeier to the University** and began to develop regular conduits for communication and input. The Senate Executive Committee began monthly meetings with Chancellor Diermeier as part of shared governance and is delighted to be able to work him since his very first day on campus.
- **Recommended membership to Provost standing committees with faculty representing diverse expertise.**
- **Continued active work of the Task Force on Administerial Efficiency (TFAE).** Chair McTamaney indicated that they worked throughout the summer and look forward to seeing those recommendations emerging from that committee, which is co-chaired by past chair, Vicki Greene.
- **Collaborated with Vice Chancellor Candice Lee and Athletics** to provide faculty feedback on new supports in athletics, to be detailed more fully in the next Faculty Engage Newsletter.
- **Collaborated with Vice Provost Tracey George** to distribute guidance regarding Title IX rules that were distributed in the middle of August.
- **Faculty Senate Standing Committee chairs** met last month with the executive committee for a retreat to set large level guidelines for the 2020-21 academic year. Last year this work was done in the spring while this year some level of normality was anticipated to resume earlier than it did, this level of work was able to be done within the last month. Some of the guiding principles that the standing chairs and faculty executive committee have brought together to define the work for this year seem focused on being engaged and active while being flexible, compassionate and kind to the real lived experiences of faculty on campus.

- **Introduction of Standing Committee Chairs** announced with a new change in that there are two names in most committees. This has been done in response to the feedback the Executive Committee received last year and hope for more continuity and overlap in the addition of co-chairs. Each is chaired by faculty who represent either VUMC or Vanderbilt center, often with a combination of faculty who are coming from a tenure line or a creative expression and an addition of a faculty member who are third or, a second-year senator. During the retreat, the Senate was delighted to have some of the past chairs attend which was helpful in referencing work that was done in the spring as we are going into the fall.
  - Academic Policies & Services Committee: Leena Choi and Noel Enyedy, chairs
  - Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Committee: William Luis and Sari Acra, chairs
  - Faculty Manual Committee: Vicki Morgan and Brian Fitzpatrick, chairs
  - Grievances Committee: Jim Hudnut-Beumler, chair
  - Senate Affairs Committee: Deborah Friedman, chair
  - Strategic Planning & Academic Freedom Committee: Saralyn Williams and Celia Applegate, chairs
  - Student Life Committee: Abby Parish and Alissa Hare, chairs
  - Faculty Life Committee: Lynn Ramey and Wonder Drake, chairs
- **Upcoming dates:** a separate e-mail will be distributed next week with dates and information.
  - **Week of September 7-11** you will be in contact with Stacey McCarty (the new Administrative support to the Senate) to start scheduling Standing Committee meetings with new Senator Orientation integrated inside the committees. This will help onboard as a new Senator.
  - **September 17<sup>th</sup> 4:10pm Orientation with Provost Wentz.** The Provost has offered to discuss distinctions between VU and VUMC policies. It has been some time since this has happened in a formal way and can see these reflected in the Charges.
  - **TBD:** Updates from Vice Provost Tracey George and others to clarify implications of new Title IX rules to the faculty manual that was required by the Chancellor over the summer.

## Remarks by the Chancellor

Chair Catherine McTamane turned over the floor to Chancellor Daniel Diermeier.

Chancellor Diermeier expressed thanks for the warm welcome from Catherine, Ben and the executive committee and to Vanderbilt for the special community and the hard work and caring attitude that are prominently featured on this campus. The chancellor shared that this is his fourth University, having been at Stanford, Northwestern and Chicago, and that Vanderbilt has a special community and is a unique place which has made a lot of things easier during the transition.

Looking back, not the transition he had planned and had to throw out one plan to create a new one. Starting in April, the Chancellor started phasing out his involvement in Chicago, allowing him to participate in more decision-making and collaboration with Provost Susan Wentz, which was wonderful. Ironically, remote work made it easy for him to be involved and connected to the culture.

**What the Country, and Vanderbilt, face during this crisis:**

1. Public Health Crisis caused by COVID pandemic
2. Economic consequences of the pandemic to universities
3. Moral and Ethical political crisis related to racial justice and the need to combat racism

Each on their own would have been a monumental challenge and more complex than any challenge in history.

An important principal he adopted early on; the “left pocket” and the “right pocket”. The left pocket; what is urgent? The right pocket; what is best for the University and puts it in a strong position when the University emerges from this?

### **1. Public Health Crisis caused by COVID pandemic**

- Said it to students and parents before; that Vanderbilt has put together the strongest and best plan possible. There is no better re-opening plan in higher education than what Vanderbilt has put together.
- Vanderbilt holds a clear mission and a commitment to its residential education and research, with hundreds of our faculty and staffing working 60-hour shifts for months. In the context of COVID-19 pandemic, it has accommodated for the challenges brought on by the pandemic, to make it safe and possible for people to return to research and, as much as feasible, allowing for students to return to campus while accommodating the students who cannot or may not be able to return to campus but who want a quality education.
- Faculty had to prepare for a two-modality teaching approach, re-configuring how to teach.
- The Chancellor has already attended 12 classes sharing that nobody has ever done this before in the history of mankind and that everyone needs to adapt. A lot of this is dependent on the choices of the students. Our students have stepped up. Given the challenges, we are in a good spot. That is a day to day situation.

### **2. Economic consequences of the pandemic to universities**

- Financially, the university is in a good spot. The chancellor commented that while there was an unprecedented drop in revenues, and, the university had to take measures to avoid drastic cuts as have happened in other Universities, Vanderbilt has suffered less because of the prudent financial stewardship of his predecessor, Chancellor Emeritus Nicolas Zeppos and Interim Chancellor and Provost Susan Wentz. While universities like Duke and Chicago have suspended retirement contributions, we did not have to do that. That does not mean there was no pain. Everybody suffered, Vanderbilt just suffered less. Things have brightened up and can think about the future.

### **3. Moral and Ethical political crisis related to racial justice and the need to combat racism**

- The chancellor shared that on his first day, he issued a commitment about diversity initiatives for a more inclusive Vanderbilt and appointed Vice Provost William Robinson and Vice Chancellor Andre Churchwell to permanent positions. He also formed Ad Hoc committees through the Board of Trust, and, will release a DEI report with various initiatives that are happening right now. There is a lot of hard work being done and still a lot of work to be done.

**The future:**

- The Chancellor has had conversations with faculty, chairs, deans etc. over the last 3 months and is impressed with the conversations he has had. He senses the appetite for what happens next and is very committed to that. The outcome will be in large part due to those conversations that will continue in the next weeks and months.
- Vanderbilt will continue to invest in faculty, to raise the eminence of the university. And, want to make sure that we support and listen to faculty and that this is the place where great faculty and great students can do their best work.
- Vanderbilt has a great foundation of excellence, but more can be done. It will be a collaborative process with the deans and faculty. Exactly what can be done and what can be invested in will be in large part due to COVID shaping up, but the overall sense is that Vanderbilt is poised to take the next step.
- The chancellor couldn't be more excited about assuming the chancellorship, even during a pandemic. He wants to make sure the university isn't only focusing on the crisis but also moving forward and writing the next chapter of its illustrious history.

The Chancellor acknowledged Chair Catherine McTamanev who explained that Senators can submit questions by raising their hand, by opening the participant window, on the bottom left, click the palm, "yes".

#### Questions:

#### 1. What is Vanderbilt's strategy for safety and following rules in returning and remaining on campus in terms of COVID-19 cases?

There is an enormous amount of detail and Provost Wentz is the expert of this and there are several ways to think about this:

- Criteria, is there appropriate testing and contact tracing capability? Yes. Is there enough quarantine and isolation capability? Yes, plenty. Is there hospitalization capability? Yes. Is there the ability to identify hotspots? Yes.
- If cases spike as in other Universities, action will be taken, but have not seen that need. What is changing is learning how to apply the changes. Initially, there were several undergraduate student cases off campus. The students have embraced the outreach campaign; Anchor Down, Step Up that began a few weeks ago.
- There is a serious tone in messaging to alert students to accountability in their behavior and they are motivated to be here. At weeks 5 and 6, might see a change after students get more comfortable. The university is preparing for that and adjusting processes effectively.
- Nobody has done this before and are learning as we go.

#### 2. Question: Conduct behavior follow up; Vanderbilt is in a city with other universities returning to their campus with fewer rules.

- Will have to see if there will be a material impact. Nashville and Davidson County is looking much better than a few weeks ago. Although there are continuing concerns, if there is a negative impact, the university will respond.

#### 3. What will be the frequency of updated information?

- Dashboard is published weekly but every Monday adding more features and data as we go. It is a phase-in approach and, also being treated with caution.

**4. Specific to athletes, one third of athletes in the Big 10 who have had COVID have also been diagnosed with myocarditis. Will Vanderbilt students and athletes be screened for myocarditis?**

- Myocarditis can be triggered by a viral infection. Through a panel that Andre Churchwell helped assemble which included a leading immunologist, infectious disease experts, and cardiologists, to determine if athletes who have COVID are at higher risk of developing myocarditis, there is no evidence.
- The key is to identify myocarditis early as the main risk is continuing to exercise if one has developed it. Every athlete who has been diagnosed with COVID-19, will now follow a cardiac protocol and not practice until their condition has improved.
- It is important to quickly and, effectively diagnose, then stop, their training which mitigates the risk. Fortunate enough to have a partnership with the medical center.

**5. Could you speak about the revenue impact?**

- The actual cost of our return to campus is costing roughly 20-30 million which includes many dimensions.
- There remains a big question mark as to athletics. The SEC is on track to start competitions which have started with cross country and soccer. Football remains the outstanding question which could have a negative impact.
- The chancellor indicated that the university is on track to hit the budget numbers for the year. The additional costs are high. Additional costs remain unknown.
- In looking back at last year, Vanderbilt is in good shape. There will be financial impact, but it should not be catastrophic. A big caveat that things stay the way they are.

**6. What is the COVID-19 impact on admissions?**

- Have not seen a COVID-19 impact on undergraduate admissions which is overall having a banner year with steady applications and students matriculating. Very few students deferred.
- The graduate school has increased applications which can be common during a downturn. Currently, the university is in great shape.
- Other universities have seen significant deferrals because of online education which challenges the ecosystem of admissions. Will see how people will react to this and if the situation changes. There will be a material impact which will be seen next year.

**7. Thinking about the graduate housing neighborhood project, what is the plan moving forward?**

- The university is committed to doing the graduate housing project and there may be some restructuring necessary.

**8. Are there particular infection rates where classes will not be held in person?**

- If cases go up in a part of the university, that area can be cordoned off which was made possible by the flexible living and allowing students to live off campus. This was driven by a goal to be as flexible as possible for the students while inviting them back to campus. The entire way things were done had to be reworked which required a tremendous amount of work.

**9. What is the plan for online education post COVID-19 and what resources will be available to support faculty?**

- The online mode of teaching has now become familiar. Many are doing this mode of teaching and have learned that it can be done and can better at it. A lot of opportunities have been created.
- The impact on undergraduate education will be limited as students have the desire to be in person and will continue with the residential model.
- Professional and continued education allows for more opportunities and think hard about experimenting and investing. Want to make it easier for faculty to develop classes to teach online.
- When such a significant shift, need to spend time thinking about it intentionally.

**10. Regarding racial justices, are there resources available to faculty for day to day themes of Diversity on campus.?**

- The DEI report which will be shared soon will contain more details on this topic.
- Faculty is welcome to get more involved and actively speak to the issues.
- New classes have been developed and currently happening to speak to issues of racial justice.
- Ideas are welcome. Need to think about the right structures for that.

**11. What do you imagine community engagement looks like?**

- The chancellor was heavily engaged in his last role. Will be intentional and coordinate aspects to be involved and have an impact on the community.

Catherine expressed her thanks for all his work and time answering open questions from the group.

## **Standing Committee Reports**

There were no Standing Committee reports.

## **Ad Hoc Committee Reports**

There were no Ad Hoc reports.

## **Old Business**

There was no old business to report.

## **New Business**

- It has been determined that the Faculty Senate Constitution does not currently allow for electronic meetings. An amendment to the Constitution as revised on 4/5/2018 will be necessary to authorize electronic meetings. Because it is a Constitutional change it requires more to address. Messaging will come in the coming weeks through the executive and the senate affairs committees to seek to accomplish two changes:

1. The Faculty Senate will propose amending the constitution to allow for electronic meetings for the faculty senate and the assembly.
  2. A call to the full faculty assembly, with the required 30 days' notice, to adopt the proposed amendment.
- Anticipate that there will be at least one face to face meeting specially called to address the amendment to add the provision for electronic meetings to the constitution. Until then, the work of the senate is provisional.
  - Our Parliamentarian and General Counsel are assisting to help with this process.

## Good of the Senate

## Adjournment

Lynn Ramey moved that the meeting be adjourned, and this was agreed upon at 5:08pm.



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Ben Harris, Secretary  
Vanderbilt University

October 1, 2020

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Date of Approval