Draft Minutes for Vanderbilt University Faculty Senate
Dec. 3, 2020 Meeting

Call to Order
A meeting of Vanderbilt Faculty Senate was held on Thursday, December 3, 2020 on zoom. It began at 4.10pm and was presided over by Chair Catherine McTamaney, with Vice Chair Ben Harris as secretary.

Attendees


Ex-officio members not in attendance: Nathan Green, Anders Hall, and David Raiford.


Chair McTamaney called for a zoom poll of elected senators and deans to establish quorum. Secretary Ben Harris confirmed a quorum was met. Quorum as specified in the Faculty Senate Constitution (revised 4/5/2019) Article II.B.1. was met with the recorded attendance of 63 voting members of the Faculty Senate. During the first attendance poll, however, only 50 voting members were present. The difference in numbers can be explained by people joining Zoom later than when the poll was launched.

Approval of Minutes
Chair McTamaney called for a motion to approve the corrected minutes of the October 1st Faculty Senate Meeting. A motion was made. Chair McTamaney asked voting senators and deans to use the raise hand feature. Minutes were passed and stood corrected. Chair McTamaney motioned to approve the minutes of the October 8th Specially Called Faculty Senate Meeting asking if there were any corrections to be made. The Chair then Instructed elected senators and deans to consent using the virtual hand to use the raise hand feature. Minutes stood approved as distributed. Chair McTamaney next called to approve the corrected
minutes of the October 29th Specially Called Faculty Assembly meeting and explained that corrected minutes were emailed earlier in the day whereby a clarification was made that the amendment was to the constitution and not to the Rules of Order. Chair McTamaney asked if there were any further corrections and there were none. Then asked all elected senators and 11 deans to indicate consent by raising their virtual hand to say yay. The minutes for all three meetings stood approved as corrected.

Report of the Executive Committee
Chair McTamaney gave a report covering the following:

- Collaboration of the Executive Committee with the Provost and Chancellors’ Offices along with the Faculty Athletics Representative and through the Student Life Committee with the Vanderbilt Office for LGBTQI+ Life.
- Details of this work and on the report of the Senate Executive Committee were discussed at the recent Board of Trust meeting.
- Additional Executive Committee updates were shared in an email earlier in the day.

Chair McTamaney turned the floor over to Chancellor Diermeier and ask for a pre pardon if interjection is necessary to keep the agenda on track.

Chancellor Remarks
- General overview on the state of the University was presented by Daniel Diermeier.
- Overall, the University is in a great shape and heroic actions by staff, faculty and administration were observed, which allowed to maintain high-quality in-person and online education.
- 50% of undergraduate students live in the residence halls, 35% live off-campus but in close proximity, and 15% study remotely (and many of the 15% were international students, who has visa issues).
- The chancellor believes it could not have gone any better. Operational team did a spectacular job, their effort and commitment were off the charts and it is a special moment in the history of the University.
- Weekly testing was efficient in contact tracing. It promoted a sense of the community. There was no disruption and the university is on track for the spring semester.
- Faculty played a major role in the fight against COVID-19: research on molecules antibodies, clinical trials; now Vanderbilt is nationally recognized for that.
- Seeing a wave of students who want to start studying in-person next semester.
- Innovation and unique teaching methods were seen during these times which shows how great the faculty are. Daniel attended 15 different classes and was impressed by the quality. Classroom innovation has included high profile guest speakers by way of zoom including Nancy Pelosi.
- Athletics had quite a week which began with the women’s soccer team winning the SEC championship followed by Sarah Fuller (first SEC female football kicker) making history which generated almost 900,000 tweets, including ones from Hilary Clinton and Lebron James as well as a football coach change with Derrick
- It is very important to keep the aspirations and ambitions high. Need to be positioned well for future and will continue to invest in faculty and students.
• Want to continue to attract great students and faculty both. Vanderbilt has opportunity to lean in and make investments while peer institutions are cutting back.

Chair McTamaney thanked the Chancellor for his remarks and turned the floor over to Vice Chancellor Candice Lee.

**Vice Chancellor Remarks**

The Chair introduced Candice Lee, Vice Chancellor for Athletics. Candice shared semester updates in Athletics including how COVID has affected Athletics and what the protocols have been.

**Candice Lee, Vice Chancellor for Athletics**

• Commended student athletes and coaches for efforts during the pandemic.

• Guiding principal was to stay in tandem with all student related policies.

• In the summer, the return of students was in small groups. At first, tested student athletes only if they were symptomatic and used a third-party vendor, which was used for high-risk profiles. Made sure there was available support even for low-risk profile students.

• Created a University task force after NCAA had created a task force. Gave student athletes an opt out for any reason while still maintaining the scholarship, from athletics if anyone chose to stay in school. Started with 13 to a few additional during the season that opted out. Football had only one contest interruption due to COVID protocols, but there might be more. Consistent testing. Tested football players 3 times a week and basketball players 3 times a week. Have not yet played a women’s basketball game. Only team in the SEC due to injuries and contact tracing.

• Number of competitions have changed as has season calendar, in the past we had 12 regular season contests for football, now we have only 10. And instead of starting at the end of August as usual, we started at the end of September. Football could go as late as December 19th.

• Restricted fan attendance. Did not allow fan attendance with the exception of a very small number of students to a football game and some parents to attend the Florida game. If we have another home contest, we might do it again.

Chair McTamaney thanked Candice Lee for the athletics update and turned the floor over to Vice Chancellor Brett Sweet.

**Brett Sweet, Vice Chancellor for Finance**

• Economic trends showed consistent deficits.

• Going into this year Vanderbilt has catalogued top private school, can compare the tough decisions schools had to make. Only Vanderbilt and Princeton have experienced the least amount of first response.

• Vanderbilt spent money on housing, testing, classroom updates. Estimated cost was 43 million and ended up being closer to $69M. Currently spending about 900,000 per week. Spending about 35 million per year on travel and entertainment typically, and now spending nothing on that. Across all of Vanderbilt, zero travel reservations which helps offset some of the costs. $16.6 million spent/committed for COVID expenses to date.
Chair McTamaney thanked Vice Chancellor Brett Sweet and turned the floor over to Provost Wente and Vice Chancellor Eric Kopstain.

**Susan Wente, Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Eric Kopstain, Vice Chancellor for Administration.**

- Adherence to the safety regulations was high despite having some minor violations.
- Following CDC guidance regarding international travelling and quarantine requirements.
- Will do arrival testing in Spring. We are now finalizing our vendors and exact timing. Will announce our detailed plans around testing by December 15.
- Guiding principles for the spring semester testing vendors. Main ones - high quality and rapid turnaround.
- Spring undergraduate calendar with no spring break but just announced In-class reading days Feb 23-24 and April 7-8 to mitigate risk associated with having less activities on given days and health and wellness. Class will still be scheduled due to regulations where faculty will have latitude to give flexibility.
- Professional schools have adapted their own schedule and approach to build in wellness/reading/breathing days.
- Spring semester will have greater percentage of in-person/hybrid options.
- Over 400 students who want to start studying in-person.
- Undergraduate applications for Fall 2021 are up 18%.
- Vanderbilt Strong Grand Program to support in-person teaching and remote enrollees. We invested more in the Senate for Teaching and will continue investing. Susan just authorized a hiring of an additional BrightSpace support person. We formed Employee COVID-19 Emergency Relief Fund and expanded Childcare Options and Resources
- New outdoor tent plan based on lessons learned increasing to five smaller tents replacing 3 large tents.
- Indoor dining pilot. With winter approaching started experimenting in November. Our pilots were successful. Indoor dining will be an option starting from the Spring semester.
- Gatherings are limited to 8 or fewer (as of Nov. 23) and must be physically distanced and masked.
- Vaccine distribution- keeping a close eye on TN department of Health on allocation and distribution. Specifics to come.
- Continued commitment: all efforts are maximized in keeping the mission in mind.

Chair McTamaney opened the floor for questions indicating that senators could ask questions by way of private chat to the Chair or by using the raise hand feature.

Brian Fitzpatrick suggested to Provost Wente that he would like to see that faculty should be able to get the same testing that students are getting. Not necessarily enforcing but making it available.

The Provost shared that evidence-based research is being done and considering types of testing for faculty
Private dashboard has not been updated since Nov. 11 winter break.

Dashboard launched with mandatory testing, so it went down with students departing. Only mandatory testing is currently happening within athletics and due to privacy, not reporting. Dashboard will re-start no sooner than January 10th.

Senator Brian Bachman discussed statement of safety in athletes returning to sports.

1. Why has Vanderbilt chosen to accept these risks?
   - The Chancellor said that the work done was the best compared to peers and colleagues. Was there an increased risk for athletes? Those were carefully looked at with our cardiologist experts regarding myocarditis. The answer was no. The increased risk for myocarditis (infection of the heart muscle triggered by any virus). It has been decided that any athlete who is infected would receive an immediate cardiac MRI.
   - Wanted to give our student athletes the chance to compete if it felt safe and only did it because we felt it was safe. Did extensive testing and feel it was handled very well.
   - Committed to the residential college experience where ivy leagues are different and some not having students return. Vanderbilt has also kept research labs open which is critical to its mission.

2. Candice Lee reminded the senate that student athletes had the option to opt out. They were not under pressure to participate and can refrain from participating with no consequences. Vanderbilt was also conservative in its ramp up compared to its peers: did not start football and basketball when everyone else did, and we didn’t maximize the number of contests. Health and safety continue to be a high priority.

The chair closed the floor for questions and thanked the guests for their remarks.
Chair McTamaney proceeded to the next item of business.

**Standing Committee Reports**
No standing committee reports.
Chair McTamaney proceeded to the next item of business.

**Old Business**
Chair McTamaney reminded faculty and senators that the Senate recently adopted rules to permit the senate to take action through electronic meetings and in the interim, the senate conducted a vote to elect this year’s senate executive committee when in the spring the Chair elect Mark Magnuson and Vice Chair elect Ryan Middagh were elected. There is a motion to ratify the vote which was distributed to faculty last week and read:

**Motion to Ratify Previous Actions of Senate.**
Catherine McTamaney read the motion. The motion states:

Whereas the Faculty Senate continued to meet under the extraordinary circumstances of the COVID-19 outbreak and
Whereas the Constitution of the Faculty Senate did not, at that time, anticipate the need for remote meetings and did not, then, have authority to enact official business and
Whereas the Constitution has not been amended to allow for official business to occur through electronic meetings
Be it resolved, That the Faculty Senate vote to ratify the results of the elections conducted on May 4, 2020, that resulted in the election of Mark Magnuson for chair-elect and Ryan Middagh for Vice Chair-Elect of the Vanderbilt University Faculty Senate for AY 20/21.

Chair McTamaney asked if there were any issues on the motions. No issues were raised. Because this vote is both anonymous and electronic, voting senators were distributed to the breakout rooms in which they were given a link to an electronic vote. Voting senators (comprised of 60 elected senators representing each of the 11 schools and colleges and 11 deans representing each of those) were distributed into 2 breakout rooms with Ben and Catherine in each room. An anonymous vote was conducted with the use of SurveyMonkey, an online survey platform. Breakout rooms were enabled.

The motion carried with 40 yays in favor and no nays.

Chair McTamaney moved onto new business.

New Business

The floor was turned over to Abby Parrish from Nursing (Student Life Committee co-chair) and shared that they have been working with various student groups across campus as well as Mark Bandas and Vanessa Beasley, VSG and various student councils. Students feedback are that students are fatigued but resilient. Executive Committee approached the committee to acknowledge the women’s soccer team

Resolution honoring the Vanderbilt Women’s soccer team

Abby Parish read the resolution. The resolution states:

Whereas the students-athletes of Vanderbilt University, supported by their coaches and members of the Athletic Department, recorded outstanding performance under unprecedented demands on and off the field and
Whereas the Vanderbilt Women’s Soccer Team in particular demonstrated exceptional resilience and determination throughout the season and
Whereas those efforts were rewarded in a come-from-behind win in the final game of the 2020 SEC Tournament against overall first seed Arkansas and
Whereas the team additionally scored fourteen goals in four tournament games, setting a new SEC Tournament record and
Whereas the team demonstrated both impressive teamwork and individual skill in historically challenging conditions and
Whereas the Women’s Soccer Team is an important part of Vanderbilt’s student athletic experience

Be it resolved that the Faculty Senate congratulated the student-athletes, their coaches and staff, and the other members of the Athletic Department, on their commitment, athleticism, and accomplishments this year.

Chair McTamaney asked if there was any discussion on the motion. There was none.

Chair McTamaney asked if there was a motion to adopt the resolution. A motion was made. And a second.

All voting senators (60 elected senators and 11 deans) raised their virtual hand to indicate consent to vote yay, no hands were raised to indicate decent to vote nay.

Chair McTamaney shared that the motion passed and thanked the Student Life Committee for their hard work and asked Vice Chancellor Lee to please share with the Women’s Soccer Team.
Chair McTamaney proceeded to the next item of business.

**Good of the Senate**

- January 14, 2021 senate meeting: anticipate 3 motions from the Senate Affairs committee. There were logistical issues that were related to how faculty assembly received notice and how those quorums were taken. The Senate Affairs committee under the leadership of Debra Friedman and Dawn Iacobucci, have been revisiting those motions since the beginning of the semester.
- The notice of the language of the motions is critically important as is the timing of the notice of the motions.
- The Faculty Assembly must receive notice of the exact language of the motion one month before this motion is considered in the Senate. To vote on the motions in January, we need to provide the language of the motion by December 13th.
- Two motions from last year are anticipated to be presented again:
  1) Motion to Increase the minimum number of senators from any one College or School from its current 2 to 3.
  2) Motion to Increase the total number of elected senators to the senate from 60 to 66.
- Both votes were very tight last year. If we make any changes to these motions, we have to re-notice the Faculty Assembly by Dec. 13, and because of our spring schedule, we wouldn’t be able to vote for them again until March. With that timeline, wanted to provide space and given tight window, for any senators present, to raise issues as the language is currently being drafted.

Chair McTamaney turned the floor to Debra Friedman. Committee Chair Friedman shared that the history of the motions are available in past meeting minutes. The language is similar and can be found on the faculty senate website. Language will be similar with more clarity in the current version.

A discussion was opened about the language of the motions. No comments were made.

Chair McTamaney encouraged that the forthcoming communications are read over carefully. They will be received in two ways: through the Faculty Assembly and through the Senate. Three motions are anticipated to be brought in the Spring. The first one will be to formally rescind the votes from last Spring. The second will be to raise the minimum number of senators from 2 to 3. And the third will be to raise the total number of senators.

If any changes are made, the vote would be moved to March.

**Adjournment**

Catherine McTamaney moved that the meeting be adjourned, and this was agreed upon at 5.45pm.

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**Ben Harris**

Ben Harris, Secretary

Vanderbilt University

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January 14, 2021

Date of Approval