Minutes for Vanderbilt University Faculty Senate
February 4, 2021 Meeting

Attendees


Ex-officio members absent: Nathan Green, Laura Nairon, and Jennifer Pietenpol.

Guests in attendance: Seth Bordenstein, Jessica Brotherson, Bapsi Chakravarthy, Kate Clouse, Senta Greene, Erika Grundstrom, Karl Hackenbrack, Alissa Hare, Chalene Helmuth, Angelica Hooten, Shane Hutson, Lauren Jackson, Martha Jones, Pam Jones, Olivia Kew-Fickus, Christine Konradi, Benjamin Legg, McRae Linton, Rene Marois, Holly McCammon, Stacey McCarty, Melanie Moran, Dan Morgan, Colleen Niswender, Emanuelle Oliveira-Monte, Vesna Pavlovic, Joe Pennel, Kim Petrie, Alvin Powers, Bethany Rhoten, Betsey Robinson, ML Sandoz, Mavis Schorn, Claudine Taaffe, Frank Tong, Tiffany Tung, Darren Tyson, Kalman Varga, Qing Wei, Christine Whitmore, Brian Widmar, Zixiu Xiang, and Alisa Zingman.

Call to Order

A meeting of the Vanderbilt Faculty Senate was held on February 4, 2021 on Zoom. It began at 4:10pm and was presided over by Chair Catherine McTamaney, with Vice Chair Ben Harris 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 35 voting members of the Faculty Senate.

Approval of Minutes

Chair McTamaney motioned for approval of the minutes as circulated of the January 14, 2021 meeting. Chair McTamaney asked whether there were any corrections to the proposed minutes, no corrections were raised. Vice Chair Harris confirmed that the minutes were approved unanimously (37 ayes, 0 nays).

Chair McTamaney moved to the next item of business.

Report of the Executive Committee

Chair McTamaney provided an overview of the highlights from the written report emailed earlier in the day.
• Senate leadership recruitment process for next year is underway. Next year’s leadership will be voted on in the May meeting. If interested in an executive committee position (Chair-elect, Vice Chair-elect) or as a standing committee chair, interest should be expressed to Chair-elect Magnuson or Vice Chair-elect Middagh.

• There are 3 remaining senate meetings. If committees have actionable items to bring to the floor for discussion in the March Senate meeting, they need to be submitted to the executive committee by February 18 to meet notification rules.

• Commended Vice Chair Harris in that he will be serving on the Provost Search Committee for the next Chief Academic Officer. As noted in the emailed executive report, voting senators can access an online form generated by the chancellor’s office for feedback and input on the process. Alternatively, senators can reach out to Vice Chair Harris or other executive committee members for this form.

• The Executive Committee will be reporting to the Board of Trust next week. If there are special items to highlight from standing committees, they should be emailed directly to Chair McTamaney.

Chair McTamaney moved to the next item of business.

**Chancellor Remarks**

Chair McTamaney turned the floor over to Chancellor Diermeier noting that questions will be taken after.

Chancellor Daniel Diermeier remarked:

• The chancellor reported that things are going well in the start of the spring semester. There have been some changes to the testing procedures and the test results have a quicker turnaround; positivity rates are below 0.8%.

• Chancellor Diermeier expressed gratitude to faculty. Due to extraordinary efforts, Vanderbilt is performing great. The pandemic showed the tremendous importance of the work being done and the continued commitment to the research mission. There has been an enormous amount of gratitude from parents and students.

• The work of school of medicine faculty from the biomedical field have greatly contributed to this country’s response to COVID-19, including the development of therapeutics, conducting clinical trials, vaccine development, etc. This is a great achievement that demonstrates how essential the work of the university is in a critical moment like this.

• Chancellor Diermeier congratulated Provost Susan Wente on her new position as President of Wake Forest University and expressed gratitude for all her work and leadership at Vanderbilt for almost 20 years.

• Vanderbilt is commencing a search process for the new Provost. An intentionally small search committee was appointed (including four faculty members) with the goal of appointing a new Provost by July 1. Vice Chair Harris has agreed to join the search committee on behalf of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee. The search committee also includes Deans Benbow (Peabody) and Johnson (Owen), two vice chancellors, and two members of the Board of Trustees (the chair and the vice chair). The goal is to commence the search immediately; it will be important to have input from the community. The committee will be assisted by Spencer Stuart, a search firm that has deep connections with Vanderbilt and have demonstrated expertise at recruiting senior academic leaders from diverse pools of applicants.
• Chancellor Diermeier welcomed questions from the floor and, hearing none, returned the floor to Chair McTamaney.

Chair McTamaney moved to the next item of business.

**Scheduled Remarks**

Provost Susan Wente: Report on pay equity and retention of TT faculty.

• Provost Wente thanked Chancellor Diermeier for his kind words and turned the floor to Tracey George, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs and Olivia Kew-Fickus, Assistant Provost and Director of the Office for Planning and Institutional Effectiveness, who have worked closely with the WAVE Council to support Vanderbilt’s equity and inclusion efforts. Its subcommittees have done tremendous work addressing women’s issues. The work has been led in partnership with WAVE Council Past Chair Cindy Kam and current Chair Catherine Loss.

• Provost Wente turned the floor over to Vice Provost George and Assistant Provost Kew-Fickus to provide a report on salary equity and tenure progression.

*Studies on Retention of TT Faculty and Pay Analysis.*

Reflecting Provost Wente’s commitments since the beginning of her tenure as Provost, Vice Provost George presented two studies that: 1) examine retention of women and people of color hired on the tenure track in all schools, and 2) analyze equity in full-time VU-employed faculty salaries.

Retention of tenure-track faculty

Vice Provost George shared information about a confidential study focused on how many tenure-track faculty stay at Vanderbilt and earn tenure with the Faculty Senate consistent with their role in shared governance.

Faculty Pay analysis, AY2020-21

Vice Provost George shared information about a confidential and privileged faculty pay study with the Faculty Senate consistent with their role in shared governance.

Vice Provost George stated that any recommendations or suggestions can be expressed directly to her by email or to her medical center colleague, David Raiford.

Chair McTamaney moved to the next item of business.

**Standing Committee Reports**

Chair McTamaney called for reports from the standing committees.

**Academic Policies and Services Committee (APS)**

Leena Choi, Co-Chair, Medicine (2021)  
Noel Enyedy, Co-Chair, Peabody (2022)  
Holly Algood, Medicine [Executive Committee Liaison]  
Adam Anderson, Engineering (2022)  
Elizabeth Catania, A&S (2023)  
Doug Christianson, Ex officio liaison  
Graham Hemingway, Engineering (2022)
Co-chair Leena Choi reported for APS.

APS committee has focused on two charges thus far:

- VERA project: The project is focused on the launch of Vanderbilt’s electronic research administration system payroll. This system will be launched soon, and the committee hopes to communicate with the Office of Vice Provost for Research. For any questions, contact Vice Provost Padma Raghavan or visit the VERA website [https://research.vanderbilt.edu/vera/](https://research.vanderbilt.edu/vera/).

- Library charge: The library has conducted external consultation and the report has been completed. The APS committee communicated with the library staff and will meet with Vice Provost Vanessa Beasley to discuss the results. The APS committee has also communicated with the library staff to learn more about the issues that may impact the library policies and services. Vanderbilt is currently holding a University Library Series called Demystifying Library Resources and Expenditures; the third session is scheduled for February 5, 2021. Faculty can attend the sessions after registering.

**Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)**

Sari Acra, Co-Chair, Medicine (2022)  
William Luis, Co-Chair, A&S (2021)  
Victor Anderson, Divinity (2022)  
Adriana Bialostozky, Medicine  
Lourdes Estrada, Medicine (2021)  
Franklin Ellis Jr., Ex Officio liaison  
Stacey Floyd-Thomas, Divinity  
Ben Harris, Blair [Executive Committee Liaison] (2021)

Susie Leming-Lee, Nursing (2023)  
Christopher Lind, Medicine (2022)  
Rolanda Lister, Medicine  
William Robinson, Ex Officio Liaison  
LeTizia Smith, Nursing  
Jonathan Waters, A&S

Co-Chair William Luis reported DEI.

The committee started the semester by meeting with Vice Chancellor Churchwell and Vice Provost Robinson to understand how diversity is working across the university and how it can best complement the work done by faculty and administration. The committee is in the process of working on the Native American Land Acknowledgment Statement.

**Faculty Life Committee (FLC)**
Co-Chair Lynn Ramey reported for FLC.

FLC was contacted by a DivestVU student group who seek to encourage the University to divest from fossil fuels. FLC is currently talking about different ways that the meeting can be arranged and how FLC can help. FLC will support them in the form of informative discussions to facilitate communication between the faculty, administration and whomever else would like to learn more about this issue. FLC is interested in how it will be involved in residential life at Vanderbilt, despite it not being the best year for the new initiatives. FLC conducted a survey on faculty involvement in benefits decision-making. FLC has a partnership with EDI through Senator Dan Barocas. Finally, FLC is looking into why there are disparities between benefits and opportunities offered to VU and VUMC.

Faculty Manual Committee (FMC)

Brian Fitzpatrick, Co-Chair, Law (2022)  
Vicky Morgan, Co-Chair, Medicine (2021)  
Brian Bachmann, A&S (2023)  
Leon Bellan, Engineering (2023)  
Brett Byram, Engineering (2023)  
Katherine Friedman, A&S (2023)

Co-Chair Brian Fitzpatrick reported for FMC. FMC focused on two charges:

- To ratify or suggest changes to the revisions that were made to the Title IX process last summer (the Department of Education changes to Title IX while the Senate was out of session, in which case, the university administration can make the revisions). FLC worked on finalizing the changes to the process by formally incorporating them into the Faculty Manual. It is a work in progress, but the FLC placed disclaimers on the Faculty Manual that certain areas have been revised and there are links to the documents where the university has laid out the new process.

- Changes to the Grievance Process. FLC played a supportive role to the Grievances Committee.
Chair James Hudnut-Beumler reported for the Grievances Committees.

The Grievances Committee has a role of hearing Type B grievances from faculty members in the VU and VUMC. This year there is a counseling process helping the faculty sort out Type A or B grievances. The committee has reviewed a proposed update in the grievances section to bring them up to date in terms of what University offices are involved in and to add an allowance for Type B grievances whereby the faculty members and University responding parties get to see an interim report on findings of fact before there is a final report to the Chancellor.

Senate Affairs Committee (SAC)

Debra Friedman, Chair, Medicine (2022)  
Karen Bloch, Medicine (2023)  
Leonard Folgarait, A&S (2022)  
Eric Grogan, Medicine (2023)  
Kelsey Hatzell, Engineering  
Catherine McTamaney, Peabody [Executive Committee Liaison] (2021)  
Robert Miller, Medicine (2023)  
Julia Phillippi, Nursing (2021)  
Marcy Singer-Gabella, Peabody (2023)

Chair Debra Friedman reported for SAC.

- The Committee introduced a motion to allow for virtual meetings for the Faculty Senate. Afterwards, the committee ratified the vote on the next Executive Committee that the Senate had voted upon in Spring 2020. A motion was presented and accepted to rescind the motions presented last year at February 2020 meetings. The motion to increase the minimum number of senators per school from 2 to 3 failed. The motion to increase the size of the Faculty Senate from 60 to 66 senators passed.

- Future potential initiatives include an evaluation of the timeline for senators to review motions prior to voting meetings, a formalized practice for all schools to perform their Faculty Senator elections, clarification on when non-anonymous voting may take place, and the formalization of a plan for Senate Committee Chair Leadership training (in collaboration with the Vice Provost Office).

Senator Friedman encouraged anyone who has ideas or suggestions to reach out.

Strategic Planning & Academic Freedom Committee (SPAF)

Celia Applegate, Co-Chair, A&S (2021)  
Saralyn Williams, Co-Chair, Medicine (2022)
Co-Chair Saralyn Williams reported for SPAF.

Charges for this past year include:

- To review academic analytics. It has been decided that it is important to investigate how faculty is being assessed and how the information is being used in their departments.
- To investigate the impact of current politics on academic freedom.
- To investigate the impact of digital teaching. The committee requested time in a Faculty Senate meeting for a brief presentation on the data found.

**Student Life Committee (SLC)**

- Alissa Hare, Co-Chair, A&S
- Abby Parish, Co-Chair, Nursing (2021)
- Mark Bandas, Ex officio liaison
- Vanessa Beasley, Ex officio liaison
- Ben Harris, Blair [Executive Committee Liaison] (2021)
- Tamika Hudson, Nursing
- Joe Rodgers, Peabody (2022)
- Sandra Rosenthal, A&S (2023)
- Stacy Sherrod, A&S
- Rebecca Swan, Medicine (2023)
- Claudine Taaffe, A&S
- Lisa Thompson, Divinity
- Greg Walker, Engineering (2021)

Co-Chair Alissa Hare reported for SLC.

- Student Life Committee worked with various groups on campus to enhance the student experience of Vanderbilt. One project is the development of a video series in partnership with KCPC and CFT about how faculty can best support LGBTQI+ students during COVID times. These videos will be released soon on social media.
- Furthermore, the committee was advocated for more white tents on campus to provide safer in-person meeting spaces around campus.
- Finally, the committee continues working on several areas revolving around student wellness. This includes meeting with individual student organizations to address their specific needs.
Chair McTamaney moved to the next item of business.

**Old Business**
No old business was discussed.
Chair McTamaney moved to the next item of business.

**New Business**
No new business was discussed.
Chair McTamaney moved to the next item of business.

**Good of the Senate**
Chair McTamaney opened the floor to comments.

A question was asked regarding ways offered to students to reach out to the institution if they are concerned about another student’s emotional and/or psychological state? Student Life Chairs Parish and Hare replied that there is a big student care network, and it is available to every student and a form they can use to express their concerns.

Senator Heuser thanked Susan Wente for her work and all the contributions she has made to the development of the faculty body.

Chair McTamaney reminded the audience to follow the Faculty Senate on social media.

Chair McTamaney moved to the next item of business.

**Adjournment**
Chancellor McTamaney moved that the meeting be adjourned. There was a second and the meeting adjourned at 5.30pm.

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Ben Harris, Secretary  
Department of Faculty Senate Vice Chair  

March 4, 2021  
Date of Approval