

## University Staff Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

**Date:** March 13, 2007  
**Meet Time:** 8:30a.m. – 10:00a.m.  
**Meeting Location:** Rand Function Room, Sarratt

**Attendees:** Becky Atack, Brad Awalt, John Brassil, Beth Clark, Cathy Crimi, Michael Crowe, Sue Davis, Mary Ann Dean, Michele Dixon, Kay Donigian, Jeffery Duly, Mary Lou Edger, Nancy Hanna, Beth Hanson, Antoinette Hicks, Shirley Hiltz, Sammie Huffmon, Jason Hunt, Tiffany Ingram, Bonnie Kress, Ginger Leger, Willa Dean Martin, Joyce Matthews, Brenda McKee, Ginny McLean-Swartzell, Shelley Meadows, Regina Newsom-Snell, JoAnn Patterson, Kathy Rhodes, Robert Rich, Andy Richter, Karen Seezen, Lori Shepard, Mike Smeltzer, Lyn Smith, Brian Smokler, Susan Starcher, David Strange, Gay Tidwell, Cliff Wilson, Melissa Woche, Diana Wohlfahrt

**Regrets:** Jean Alley, Diane Banks, Ken Carter, Dan Cline, Mary Clissold, Kevin Colon, Kathleen Corbitt, Ashley Crownover, Tracy Cunningham, Faye Dorman, Kenon Ewing, Sandie Frantz, Carol Guth, Sharone Hall, Pam Hoffner, Faye Johnson, Rosalind Johnson, Sue King, Heather Lefkowitz, Joe Lowe, Mary Kay Matthys, Ian McCullough, Jackie McMath, Laurie McPeak, Stephanie Newton, Donald Pickert, Martha Reid, Sheri Reynolds, Chase Smith, Carol Soren, Sharon Stanley, Dan Steward, Corwin Thomas, Malah Tidwell, Carlos Trenary, Kay Tyler, Jim Webb, Mary Clark Webb, Susan Widmer, Sherry Willis, Jeff Youngblood

**Visitors:** Lauren Brisky, Jane Bruce, Nim Chinniah, Janet Hirt

**President Diana Wohlfahrt called meeting to order**

### **Announcements**

Cliff Wilson announced the coming elections for the odd numbered member groups. Cliff asked that you submit your name to him or Andy Richter if your group was up. He also mentioned that we will be having officer elections. If you are interested, or think someone else would be a good officer, please also give your name to Cliff or Andy.

Nim Chinniah gave an update from his presentation last year. Most of the information pertained to parking on the Peabody campus. He provided a flyer and directed the council to the website for additional information. If anyone on the Peabody campus has parking questions, Nim stated that he is available to answer them. For more information visit the Traffic and Parking website, [http://www.vanderbilt.edu/traffic\\_parking/](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/traffic_parking/), and click the announcements link.

Diana Wohlfahrt introduced each of the Council's new committee chairs. First, Shelley Meadows from the Staff Welfare Committee was introduced. Shelley stated that her committee was currently making a list of potential issues that they will compare to the

staff survey results. Andy Richter, Chair of the Membership Committee, was introduced and announced that they have met one additional time since the committees were created. His committee will be assisting with the coming elections. Jason Hunt, Chair of the Events Coordination Committee, announced that his committee has booked the Council's meeting space through next year and they are currently working with catering on next year's meetings. Jason also let the Council know that his committee is now accepting any requests for help with events. Diana then introduced John Brassil, Chair of the Communications Committee. John stated that his committee is currently having strategy sessions to discuss internal and external communication. They will be meeting once per month. The group plans update the webpage information; modify the information in the new hire package and work to get more information out about the Council. Melissa Woche, Chair of the Rules and Administration Committee was also introduced. She did not have a committee update at that time.

Janet Hirt gave a brief update on the Benefits Committee meeting. She said that the committee had discussed the potential of the benefits fair having one central location in a large space at the Student Center, as opposed to multiple locations on campus. Janet stated that Jane Bruce may appreciate any feedback you have on that location.

Melissa sent out an email recently about The Party. Diana will forward the information over to Jason Hunt to distribute to the Council. Graduation and the associated events require a lot of volunteers, and our group is the perfect place to find many of these volunteers.

### **Conversation with the Chancellor**

Speaker: Chancellor Gordon Gee

The Chancellor opened with an apology for being a little late. He had been with the basketball teams congratulating them on their performance.

The Chancellor stated that he was with the Council to talk about where we are and where we are going. He said that he had been recently writing his annual report for the Board and, while flying around the world, had decided to do the "Best of Vanderbilt". This has been Vanderbilt's best year financially. Chancellor Gee pointed out that, while we are not in the business of making money, in the end it is still important for us to perform well financially. The budget this year is 3 billion dollars. We give paychecks to 20,000 people. Currently, Vanderbilt is the second largest private employer in Tennessee. We are behind Federal Express. The Chancellor noted that when driving down West End on a busy day, people on the left or right of you are likely to be going to Vanderbilt.

This past year we have also grown our endowment. We are gaining on Harvard. Harvard has 25 billion and we are at 3 billion. Vanderbilt has exceeded the fundraising goal this year and should reach 2 billion in raised dollars within the next 2-3 years. This year we have 65% of students on scholarship. This is up from 30% of students on scholarship when the Chancellor came to Vanderbilt. If you are admitted to Vanderbilt, we will guarantee that you can afford to come here. This is the first time we have been able to commit to that.

We have crossed the line from being a very selective school to being highly selective. We have seen the largest increase in applications in the top 21 schools. 29% of our students are minority students, and we have kids from 50 states and 55 countries represented. Vanderbilt is one of the most geographically diverse schools.

The Medical Center is #1 in NIH funding growth and we are in the top of the list for growth in National Science Foundation funding. The University has not yet made it into the 100 employers yet, but we are getting close.

The Chancellor also briefly discussed the issue of living wage and the criticism Vanderbilt has taken. He pointed out that Vanderbilt provides well over 2 billion dollars in uncompensated care to patients. This is the largest amount provided in Nashville and among the highest in the country. Chancellor Gee also pointed out that during the recession in the 90s many institutions were letting employees go. Vanderbilt only eliminated 100 positions, and the majority of those employees found positions at the medical center.

Vanderbilt has developed the largest freshmen complex in America, called the Freshmen Commons. It is 150 million dollar commitment to excellence. Now, the question is, we have this great program for the freshmen what about the sophomores, juniors and seniors? So, we have to make sure that we are transitioning into them, and Nim and others are working on that because it is important. We can not just provide a great freshmen experience. We must also provide a great sophomore, junior and senior experience.

The Chancellor noted that we are looking at the infrastructure issues at our libraries. It is one thing to talk about building a new library and another to discuss building a library of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The library of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is very different from a building with books. Vanderbilt is also trying to ask why we are building this for every building we put up.

The challenges for Vanderbilt are all on the upside. If we go wrong, it is our own fault. We control our own destiny. The Chancellor stated that the University can not do well unless we do well. He thanked the Council for all we do. He stated that he knows the employees are serious about what they do, and administration is serious about employees.

**Question: I have been here for 24 years and have lobbied for the day after Thanksgiving as a paid holiday. The MC receives a bonus, why can we not get the day after Thanksgiving?**

The Chancellor first addressed the Medical Center bonus. He stated that they receive that as part of profit sharing. He recognized that we are one University, but the Medical Center works in a different type of business. The Medical Center is expected to meet the bottom line, and if they don't, they have to squeeze. The Chancellor referred to Lauren Brisky to address the question about the day after Thanksgiving.

Lauren explained that from time to time the University looks at our full benefits package to ensure that we are competitive. Vanderbilt offers 2 floating holidays to address the

issue. Lauren stated that she had looked at this issue right around the time that the Chancellor came. At that time adding an additional holiday was, very conservatively, over a one million dollar decision. Now, she expects this would be a much higher amount. Lauren also noted that our benefits are very competitive.

**Question: How many holidays do we receive?**

Seven paid holidays plus 2 floating days. In comparison to other institutions we are competitive.

The point was made that Emory and Duke offered additional holidays. The Chancellor stated that while he did not know the exact number of days they receive, we do know that we are competitive with other institutions.

**Question: I just received the opportunity to see Harry Jacobson's address to the Medical Center. I was wondering if you had considered doing something like that for the University.**

The Chancellor stated that he does that every fall. He has an assembly speech in the fall and spring. You are welcome to come.

**Question: I would like to get back to the holiday issue. When I first started working here 10 years ago, I had 4 children and an ill mother. The Library personnel were wonderful. I was not eligible for FMLA and I was able to keep my job and still manage my obligations to my family. But, I found it incredibly demoralizing when I was scrambling for days off to take a vacation with my family. I could not accumulate enough days. Because I started after February 1, I only received one personal day. While I was grateful for all of the flexibility, I felt it was still demoralizing because I had to constantly make up time. I just don't think it is fair.**

The Chancellor first pointed out that we are constantly examining other institutions to ensure we are competitive. Second, he assured the group that we want to be competitive. Third, the Chancellor noted that we survey our staff frequently and receive among the highest staff satisfaction survey ratings in the country. He also stated that he understands and appreciates the concerns, but we have to be fair to everyone.

**Question: Earlier you talked about having had our best financial year ever. What is your outlook for the future?**

The Chancellor pointed out that there are a number of things that we can not control, but stated that we will always be financially prudent and spend money to make money. He expects us to continue to have a strong financial position.

**Question: We spend a lot of time talking about undergraduate students, but don't focus on the graduate/professional students. They are almost equal in numbers.**

We do spend time focusing on graduate students. We have put a lot of effort in curriculum restructuring for the graduate students. The Chancellor stated that he spends

as much or more of his own time with graduate students. He also discussed that there are 4 corners to a great institution: graduate, undergraduate, teaching and research. Most Universities choose to only be great in either graduate or undergraduate. We have decided to be great in both. The notion to balance graduate and undergraduate is uniquely Vanderbilt.

**Question: When there are student events, they are usually geared towards undergraduates.**

There are many events for graduates. Thursdays the Law School has a BBQ. On Friday nights, they have an event at Owen. The Medical School has many events. The problem is you don't see them. I see them because I attend them, and they are very well attended.

**Question: I am involved on different committees in the Nashville Community and really appreciate the work we did with the Freedom Ride. I have been to several meetings around town and Nashville is really talking about our role in that. I just wanted to thank everyone that was involved in it.**

The Chancellor noted that we were not only a part of the Freedom Ride, but we organized it. He then wanted to go back to the previous comment concerning the graduate involvement. He noted that the University had a campus wide event and invited all students. There were 1000-1200 students and about \_ were undergraduates and \_ were graduates. Also, with the Freedom Ride, about \_ of the participants were undergraduates and \_ were graduates.

**Question: An example of one of the ways we focus on undergraduates is the fact that the Freshmen Commons destroyed the graduate housing. This is a concern for the graduate programs because there is no longer any campus housing for graduate students.**

That graduate housing should have been torn down. They were shameful, and we needed to do something else. We are aware that new housing for graduate students is needed.

**Question: We are a global institution for recruiting. We have the best minds available for technology and transfer of information and ideas. You went to South Africa and London recently for relationship building, as well as to share information and technology from VU. Do we have any initiatives that are home-grown that will have world wide impact?**

We have decided to make deep relationships with 10-12 institutions. We looked at what our great strengths are and what their strengths are and how we can partner with them to utilize both. Cape Town, South Africa, for example, has the largest telescope in the Southern Hemisphere. We don't have a large telescope, but we do have a group of very committed group of astronomers who are among some of the best in the world. So, we are exporting our technology knowledge to them and using their telescope for us.

**Question: A few years ago you made a decision to do away with the Athletics Director and received a lot of local and national criticism for that. I just want to**

**commend you for your vision and commitment to that. As someone who has supported Vanderbilt athletics all my life, I think, across the board, they are the most successful that they ever have been.**

Tonight at 9pm on HBO we are featured on Bob Costas. He called the Chancellor and said, you did away with the Athletic Director, you did away with the Athletic Department, you have the highest graduation rates in the country and you had 7 in the top 25, now that is magic.

**Question: Are other institutions following us?**

Absolutely not. The reason is that there is an industry that is Athletic Directors and Athletic Departments. They view the Chancellor as the most dangerous man in America. A football coach with the University of Arkansas was interviewed on ESPN and he said that the Chancellor at Vanderbilt is the most dangerous man in America. The reason that we are dangerous is because we are proving that an athlete can perform well in academics. The Chancellor is very proud of what we are doing. We have a number one ranked baseball team.

Diana took the opportunity to thank the Chancellor for coming to speak to us. She asked that we remember that he is constantly in demand and we should respect the position that he holds. He took his time to come, and we have to appreciate where he stands.

The statement was made that we usually know ahead of time that the Chancellor is going to attend the meeting. Diana apologized for the delay in distributing the agenda, but pointed out that he was scheduled to attend the April meeting, but was going to be unable to come, so he arranged his schedule to attend this meeting because he felt it was important to meet with us. Diana also pointed out the questions raised were not the issue, it is the manner in which we ask and approach questions that is important.

An additional comment from the Council was made that we are professionals and know how to act when a professional is in front of us. It was his opinion that we have not represented ourselves well to the Chancellor.

### **Vanderbilt Police Department**

Speaker: Marlon Lynch- Chief of Police

Chief Lynch thanked the Council for the opportunity to speak to us. He has 15 years in law enforcement, 5 in municipal and 10 being in campus law enforcement, in both public and private institutions. Most recently, he was at the University of North Carolina, Charlotte. For the past year and a half, he has served as the Assistant Chief here at Vanderbilt. Has had opportunity to work with Chief Guyet for 18 months to learn more about the institution and the politics that go with it. Chief Lynch has both a graduate and undergraduate degree in criminal justice, and also attended the FBI National Academy.

The philosophy of the Vanderbilt Police Department is to provide quality service as well as a safe environment here on the Central campus and on the Medical Center campus. In order to do that, they have gone to the precinct style of policing. This is like what Metro

has. We have a Central Campus and Medical Center and in the future will have the Commons. This will allow them to provide individualized services to those areas based on their personalities and the challenges that they present. As you know, they each have their own personality. The Medical Center itself is non-stop just by the nature of their business. Central campus is interesting because they have athletic events, Greek row and things like that. The Commons will have all freshmen, and will be first time in this setting that it will take place.

In these precincts we have set up our chain of command, our structure, to be decentralized. On the Central campus, the Captain is Craig Nans. Present today is Captain Roger Sterns, who will be responsible for the Commons. They have established an office in the old Bill Wilkerson building. It is not a police substation, but will be a place for the Captain and his staff to be closer to the Commons group. The VUPD is being progressive and trying to establish relationships.

For you being staff, you probably experience the relationship more than the students do. You have probably noticed a lot of the construction on 21<sup>st</sup> Ave. VUPD meets weekly with Metro about this. Traffic accidents have increased by 33% since construction started, and because of the construction, you can't get to them. VUPD is looking at what type of education can be provided to help reduce accidents and raise awareness. They work through community relationships to get the information out.

VUPD has 80+ police officers and functions just like any other police department. They strive to be professional and encourage interaction between staff and students. However, they are not a typical police department and are able to provide a higher level of service than regular departments.

**Question: If you arrest someone where do you take them?**

The Criminal Justice Center downtown. Moving violations are issued on Metro government citations.

**Can staff receive some training on basic safety issues?**

Yes, we offer basic safety training. The VUPD has also discussed the potential of having safety tips in the Register or other campus papers.

**Question: There is a lot of traffic on 25<sup>th</sup> Ave and many motorists do not stop at the stop sign. How do they evaluate streets?**

There are many public streets that run through campus, and are evaluated like public streets. VUPD has that particular area marked as a hot spot because it is a high traffic area; however, they have to keep that in mind when they monitor it. If they targeted that area during high traffic times (morning/afternoon) it would cause some real traffic flow issues.

**Question: I come to work between 5:30 and 6am, and between Starbucks and the bakery there is a man always asking for money or cigarettes. Is that part of**

**Vanderbilt or does he maybe always stand there because it is not Vanderbilt property?**

Vanderbilt has taken a strong stand on panhandlers. We also have a memo of understanding with Metro that allows us to police certain areas. VUPD can watch for this person, but if some people give him what he asks for, he may not go away. Chief Lynch suggested that the next time she sees him, she calls VUPD.

**Question: Under Chief Guyet VUPD had a meet and greet with different groups. Will you still do those? Would you have any interest in doing those with staff?**

Yes

**Question: How might that best be arranged?**

You could certainly go through the Council. We do have representatives on the Council.

**Question: I park in Wesley Place garage, and there was a time when I was nervous if I was there after-hours. There was often evidence of property crimes, etc.**

Nim noted that one of the things that the PD does is look at these kinds of hot spots. They are really aggressive about addressing those. So, it is very important that you let them know if there are issues in a specific area. There has been a lot of work in the Wesley Place garage to make it better.

**Question: I know that on your webpage where you can go to get information about occurrences. Years ago, I know that the Medical Center would receive weekly or daily occurrences. Those bulletins were helpful. Is it possible for us to get these in an email format?**

VUPD does send out alerts for high security issues. This year is the first year that VUPD will be part of Law and School of Medicine orientations. The Hustler also carries the daily crime log. Chief Lynch stated that they would be willing to explore the possibility of more frequent email alerts.

Chief Lynch again thanked the Council for the opportunity to speak to the group.

Diana went back to a Council member that had an earlier question before the Chancellor arrived. The question was whether or not we would be having a blood drive. Diana noted that there had not been a scheduled blood drive at this point. She is not opposed to doing it, but we would need 10-12 volunteers for it to function. If there is an interest, we can work through the events committee to plan that.

**Diana Wohlfahrt called for a reading and approval of the minutes.**

The February meeting minutes were approved.

**Diana Wohlfahrt adjourned the meeting.**

The next USAC meeting will be on April 10, 2007 in the Rand Function room in Sarratt.