

University Staff Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

Date: June 12, 2007
Meet Time: 8:30a.m. °© 10:00a.m.
Meeting Location: Rand Function Room, Sarratt

Attendees: Brad Awalt, Beth Clark, Mary Clissold, Ashley Crownover, Sue Davis, Mary Ann Dean, Michele Dixon, Kay Donigian, Jeffery Duly, Sharone Hall, Nancy Hanna, Beth Hanson, Antoinette Hicks, Jason Hunt, Tiffany Ingram, Faye Johnson, Bonnie Kress, Ginger Leger, Joyce Matthews, Brenda McKee, Ginny McLean-Swartzell, Shelley Meadows, Regina Newsom-Snell, Donald Pickert, Kathy Rhodes, Robert Rich, Andy Richter, Karen Seezen, Mike Smeltzer, Brian Smokler, Carol Soren, Sharon Stanley, Susan Starcher, Dan Steward, Malah Tidwell, Carlos Trenary, Kay Tyler, Melissa Woche, Diana Wohlfahrt, Jeff Youngblood

Regrets: Jean Alley, Becky Atack, Diane Banks, John Brassil, Ken Carter, Dan Cline, Kevin Colon, Kathleen Corbitt, Cathy Crimi, Michael Crowe, Tracy Cunningham, Faye Dorman, Mary Lou Edgar, Kenon Ewing, Sandie Frantz, Carol Guth, Shirley Hiltz, Pam Hoffner, Sammie Huffmon, Rosalind Johnson, Sue King, Heather Lefkowitz, Joe Lowe, Willa Dean Martin, Mary Kay Matthys, Ian McCullough, Jackie, McMath, Laurie McPeak, Stephanie Newton, JoAnn Patterson, Martha Reid, Sheri Reynolds, Lori Shepard, Chase Smith, Lynn Smith, Davis Strange, Corwin Thomas, Gay Tidwell, Jim Webb, Mary Clark Webb, Susan Widmer, Sherry Willis, Cliff Wilson

Visitors: Jane Bruce, Nim Chinniah, Marcia Dillard, Daniel Dubois, Courtney Evans, Sara Fincher, Kristin Kovan, Julie Martin, Cheryl McClure, Kelli McQuiston, Kevin Myatt, Craig Nancer, Roger Stearns

President Diana Wohlfahrt called meeting to order.

The meeting opened with new member recognition and standing committee introductions. Diana introduced Shelley Meadows from Staff Welfare, Faye Johnson from Event Coordination, Ginny McLean-Swartzell from Communications and Andy Richter from Membership. More information about each committee can be found on the USAC website at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/usac/committees.html>.

°∞Vanderbilt Website Update°±

Melanie Moran, Asst Director for Web Communications

The Vanderbilt homepage and second level pages are getting updates. Web Communications did a survey on how employees receive information and news. They received 3,774 responses with 239 on paper. From the responses, 1,391 were from the University and 2,470 were from the Medical Center. 152 did not identify University or Medical Center. The purpose of the survey was to find out where everyone is getting their news. Most responded that they receive news via email, but there were a few that receive

their news from the *Register* or *Reporter*. About 80% of those responding said they visited the Vanderbilt homepage everyday and 66% feel they get all of the information they wanted. They also learned that staff would like to receive more information about other staff. Staff wants to receive more stories like "The Last Word". Staff also responded that they think we do a good job of getting news out to the public, but not as good at getting it out to our internal community. The survey also revealed that staff would like to receive information in one central location.

This fall we will have iUniversity through iTunes. Using this faculty will have the ability to place coursework on iTunes that only students can access. There will also be public Vanderbilt information available.

In finishing the redesign the goals are to maintain consistent navigation and get people where they need to go while taking advantage of new technology like video.

Web communications set up a blog about the redesign and used it to do focus groups. This took less time and they received great feedback. Currently they are working on the second level pages.

Question: Is this in Adobe?

Yes.

Question: Will you send emails to drive people to the site for information?

With the new site, there will be a weekly companion email.

Question: Will VUToday go away?

No.

Questions: Will a login be required for the staff website?

No.

Question: Will we have to pay for the Vanderbilt iTunes stuff?

No, it will be free to us.

Question: Will Vanderbilt emails effect Medical Center emails?

No.

Question: There are Medical Center staff emails that are useful. Is there a way for us to get this information?

They are going to try to get some of that information out on the new site, and are willing to look into the emails.

If you have any other questions, Melanie invited us to email her.

"The Commons"

Frank Wcislo, Dean of the Commons & Assoc Professor of History

The grand vision for The Commons is not just a place, it is an idea. It is not a dormitory. In its grandest scale, it is transinstitutional. First, is a place, a new campus in the southeast corner of campus. There will be 5 new houses. Two are already open and 2 more will open in August. The last building will open next academic year. It will be open to Freshmen in August 2008.

In addition to the 5 houses, there will be a new Dining Center. It will open in July and lays to rest the steam stable and calories approach. It is truly an impressive facility. It is also a public square. It is designed to encourage interaction.

The Dean's house has the family residence upstairs and downstairs is public space. There is dining and areas to entertain students.

The Commons is a collaborative community of faculty, students and educational professionals to entertain, enhance and enrich. This is a place where Vanderbilt students in their first year can learn to seek intentional and proactive learning. The transition they are encountering is gargantuan. This is a place about knowledge and is based on some Peabody research.

There will be 10 faculty that represent each of the 4 undergraduate schools. They will live and serve as faculty heads of house for 2 to 3 years. They will be leaders in terms of efforts to determine the life of the house where the lines between home and classroom, learning and recreation are blurred. The lines will not go away and there is structure in place.

A new first year orientation program called Vanderbilt Visions has been created. It establishes 80 small groups who are jointly mentored by faculty and upper class students. The groups are diverse in school and geographic background.

In year two, we will see these students place new demands on the University. We will have created new, intentional learners.

Question: Since the sophomores are living there now, will you go ahead and start some of these programs?

Yes, since 9 out of the 10 houses are open, we are testing and modeling this year.

Question: I had a chance to tour The Commons. Materials are all natural and recyclable. Can you talk more about that?

The complex is LEED certified. This is nationally established for architects. There are reflective roofs and new technology is used in the kitchen among other things. They also worked with the student group SPEAR. The goal is to bring students in and empower them.

Question: When will Freshmen be allowed to have cars?

They will not.

Question: How did you select the faculty live-ins and can you give us a snapshot of how staff will fall into this idea?

The faculty volunteered and we had 34 apply for this opportunity. Selection involved a detailed interview process. They are still working on ways in which to affiliate and involve staff. They don't currently have a ready answer. USAC was encouraged to discuss in our units what we have to offer. Please email any ideas to frank.wcislo@vanderbilt.edu.

Question: You alluded to greater demands from years 2-4. What do you think the future will bring?

The University will likely continue to build the resident campus. In 20 years the face of this campus will change. It will not happen tomorrow, but discussion is already happening.

Response to Staff Welfare Committee

Kevin Myatt, Assoc. Vice-Chancellor & Chief Human Resource Officer

Kevin Myatt spoke to the Council to address the ideas and issues presented by the Staff Welfare Committee. The top two issues were retiree healthcare and a rewards and recognition program. Kevin explained that a retiree benefit is a "defined benefit" and these kinds of plans are going away for many reasons. They are costly, but the University is looking at other options. Currently, however, we do not have post retirement coverage. Kevin stated that they had been talking with TIAA-CREF about how to address retirement coverage. If we pool our retirement group, they are older and cost more. It would be unfair to take that rate and lay it on top of the rate for our overall group and raise the cost for everyone. We are working with TIAA-CREF to partner with others on this risk, but there are state to state coverage challenges that must be addressed. The President of TIAA-CREF came to Vanderbilt to talk with the Senior Executive team to discuss these issues and concerns. Vanderbilt is looking for a solution, but has not found one yet.

Question: Is there anyone dedicated to looking at other options?

That would be Jane Bruce. Jane is looking at a number of Medicare supplements, but the problem is the pre-65 retirees. Most of these are not available before 65.

Question: Is there a timeline on this, or is it simply ongoing?

Four years ago we said we were investigating and looking into this issue. At that time he might have said we could have an answer in two to three years. Today, he can not say that. There are too many variable to address. Kevin says that they are addressing this topic as aggressively as possible, but he can not place a timeline on when the answer might come.

Question: Do you have any idea what we can do individually to help address this?

The greatest level of assistance you can give is with legislation. Solicit input and write to state and local levels.

Question: Does the Medical Center have any kind of retirement benefit?

There is no difference in University and Medical Center benefits.

Question: Has there ever been a defined benefit for retirees?

No.

Kevin stated that he needed a little clarification on the Council's desire in relation to a rewards and recognition program. The Medical Center is in its third year of Elevate. Their rewards through the rewards and recognition program range \$25 - \$500. Kevin said that the School of Engineering is looking at ways to implement this type of program. He also said that he could sit with Deans to explore how the different Schools could use the program. Kevin also pointed out that in reality, the schools are going to want to control the programs.

Question: What about those areas that don't go through a school?

Kevin corrected by saying School or Provost.

Question: Have you thought about looking at Employee Appreciation month and providing some kind of gift?

We evaluate Employee Celebration month often. The intent is to create a community. It is not just about a gift. We are trying to create a community much like the Commons. We are all busy and tend to stay in our groups. Kevin thinks that where we need to put our energy is how to spread that out and increase the level of participation. If you have ideas about how to increase participation email Suzy Lyons or Vickie Rogers.

Question: September is a hard month for some. Have you considered a month between November and March/April?

When you look at the campus, no one month works perfectly for everyone. Employee Celebration was spread from two weeks to a month to help catch as many people as possible.

Question: The issue is not only about rewards. It is also about evaluation, regular feedback and goals.

Kevin noted that this was an excellent point and one that we must continually work on. The power of a thank you note is incredible.

Question: We know there is a great disconnect between the Chair of a department and what is really happening. It is frustrating when everyone receives the same increase.

Changing this is moving slowly, but it is moving through the University.

Question: It would be neat if there were staff awards by school. It would be a nice way to recognize people. Who would be the best person to give that suggestion?

You could contact Susan Mezger or your Dean.

Nim Chinniah was recognized because this is his last USAC meeting before leaving Vanderbilt. He was thanked for coming to our meetings and supporting the Council. Nim told the Council that it has really been a pleasure. It is a big step for him to leave, and he challenges us to keep getting better.

Diana Wohlfahrt asked for approval of the May minutes. The minutes were approved.

Passing of the Gavel

Diana thanked the group for the opportunity to serve as President of the Council. She then passed the gavel to Cliff Wilson. Cliff thanked Diana for her work on the Council.

Cliff adjourned the meeting.