Call to Order

Approval of Minutes of February 6, 2020

Report of the Executive Committee

Remarks by the Chancellor

Standing Committee Reports

Ad Hoc Committee Reports

Old Business

New Business

Scheduled Speaker

Good of the Senate

Adjournment

Voting Members Present: Ackerly; Acra; Algood; Anderson, A.; Applegate; Audet; Benbow; Bisch; Bollen; Camarata; Choi; Da Silva; de Caestecker; Drake; Enyedy; Estrada; Fauchet; Filosa; Fitzpatrick; Friedman, D.; Friedman, K.; Geer; Harris; Hemingway; Heuser; Hudnut-Beumler; Hutson; Iacobucci; Johnson; Lacy; Laibinis; Lewis; Lind; Magnuson; Marnett, Martin; McLean; McTamaney; Middagh; Morgan; Norman; Parish; Phillippi; Pitt; Pitts; Ramey; Rodgers; Sanchez; Sharpley-Whiting; Simonett; Townes; Valentine; Walker; Wallace; Williams; and Yadav

Voting Members Absent: Anderson, V.; Attia; Balser; Chambless; Cole; Creech; Guthrie; Jessee; Luis; Modena; Ochonu; Pitt; Pollack; Song; Terhune; Wait;

Ex Officio Members Present: Bandas; Beasley; Brady; Churchwell; Ertel; George; Greene; Hall; Kopstain; Lutz; Nairon; Raghavan; Raiford; Robinson; Shellaway; Stalcup; Sweet; and Wente

Ex Officio Members Absent: Pietenpol; Willis; and Wilson
Call to Order

John McLean, Chair of the Faculty Senate, called the meeting to order at 4:11 pm.

Approval of the minutes of February 6, 2020

Chair McLean asked for approval of the minutes. A motion was made. The motion was seconded. The motion carried by voice vote.

Chair McLean proceeded to the next item of business.

Report of the Executive Committee (EC)

Chair McLean began his report by acknowledging Kenny Moore, the I Am Vanderbilt – Faculty Senate recipient for April. Mr. Moore is the director of the David Williams, II Recreation and Wellness Center. He thanked all of those who are on the frontline – who are making us well, who are making us safe, who are making us nimble, and who are leading us in this fight.

- **Virtual Spring Faculty Assembly**
  The website has been launched. Interim Chancellor and Provost Susan R. Wente reflects on the university’s continued momentum. She also highlights faculty achievements. The Faculty Senate partnered with the Office of the Chancellor and the Division of Communications to launch the [website](#).

- **Engaged Newsroom**
  The Faculty Senate’s Engaged Newsroom has articles and resources that faculty have found to be helpful. Recent articles include:
  - Community Outreach
  - Resources to Keep up with Ongoing Business of the University
  - Resources for Ongoing Research and Scholarship
  - Resources for Teaching
  - Resources for Resilience

Progress Senate Standing Committees

Academic Policies and Services (APS)

- Ongoing communication with the Office of Research related to COEUS/PEER replacement (ERA)
• Updated documentation for approval of new academic and professional degree programs processes

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

• Developed a Land Acknowledgement motion with student and staff governance bodies. The motion will come to the Faculty Senate this fall.

**Faculty Life (FLC)**

• Will continue to consider programing for the Faculty Commons.

**Faculty Manual Committee (FMC)**

• Continues to work on revisions brought forward by the Faculty Senate.
• Partnering with VU Administration to address changes that have come out of the FMC.

**Grievances (GC)**

• Continues to consider ongoing grievances while working remotely.

**Senate Affairs Committee (SAC)**

• The SAC worked on reapportionment this year. The motions will be revisited this fall.
• The SAC will consider changes to our constitution for inclusive eligibility of Senators.

**Student Life Committee (SLC)**

• The SLC met with graduate leadership organizations in each of the schools and colleges to discuss their experiences working with faculty and how faculty can better support them.

**Strategic Planning and Academic Freedom (SPAF)**

• SPAF developed a plan to release an informational video about the Faculty Senate and its role and impact on the Vanderbilt Community.

**Charges to the Task Force on Administerial Effectiveness (TFAE)**

• The Task Force will work to develop immediately applicable strategies to address both chronic and acute administrative burdens on faculty and staff related to procurement, travel, grants management, computing, and similar essential tasks that support research, scholarship, creative expression, and teaching across the university.
• The Task Force will examine the administrative culture at Vanderbilt, seeking to understand the causes of reported breakdowns in both systems and approval
processes and prepare a report detailing the results of this examination along with recommendations for solutions.

Members

Faculty membership:
- Vicki Greene (A&S)
- Owen McGuiness (SOM)
- Doug Fuchs (Peabody)
- Adam Anderson (Engineering)
- Seva Gurevich (SOM)
- Lynn Ramey (A&S)
- Steve Wernke (A&S)

Staff membership:
- Ben Frazee (Business Systems and Process Support)
- Patrick Retton (Chief Business Officer, A&S)
- Roger Herndon (Director, Procurement and Payment)
- Kim Mallory (Executive Director, IT)
- Rich Germano (Associate VC, IT)
- Michelle Vazin (OCGA Director)
- Audrey Jones (Director, Business Services)

Unconscious Bias Training Workshops

Thanks were given to the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, the Office for Inclusive Excellence to all faculty participants.

Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE)

Thanks were given to all faculty who participated in the COACHE Survey. Everyone was encouraged to participate by close on April 12.

Opportunities for Senator Participation

- Recommendations are needed for faculty members to serve on University Standing Committees.

- Consultative Committee members were asked to reply to the March 25 email.

- Other Senate members are welcome to submit recommendations to the Faculty Senate at facultysenate@vanderbilt.edu or through the Faculty Portal Feedback Form.

Nominations for the Thomas Jefferson Award

- The Thomas Jefferson Award recognizes distinguished service to Vanderbilt through extraordinary contributions as a member of the faculty in the councils and government of the university. Nominations are due by May 15. The Consultative Committee will review all nominations in late May and make their recommendations.

Executive Committee (EC) Elections on May 4

- The May 4 meeting will be a voting meeting for the 2020-2021 Chair-elect and Vice Chair-elect positions. Service in those offices will begin on July 1. Service as the Chair and Vice Chair will begin July 1, 2021.
• Candidates must be nominated from this year’s first-year Senators. All first-year Senators were encouraged to run for either position. Interested Senators should contact current Chair-elect Catherine McTamaney or Vice Chair-elect Ben Harris. They are coordinating efforts for the EC and Committee Chair positions. Statements of interest for EC positions are due in writing by April 26 (or April 23 for feedback).

Chair McLean proceeded to the next item of business.

Remarks by the Interim Chancellor

• Interim Chancellor Wente thanked the body for all it does to help Vanderbilt be successful. She explained that Vanderbilt has done the right thing to protect our community. Communications have been rapid-fire and the University is dealing with a lot of unknowns concerning COVID-19 in terms of how to protect our community and those who are most vulnerable. Not having all of the information makes it more important to be aware of decisions that can be made.

• Vanderbilt's strategies were effective in making sure all undergraduate students left the campus as swiftly as possible. Heavy lifting was involved. Research labs were ramped down. Then a work-from-home strategy was instituted for two weeks. That strategy has been extended.

• Vanderbilt will continue to work together with the very best health information and guidance from public health officials, the CDC, the mayor, and the governor. We are fortunate to have leadership and experts at the Medical Center. One important message is that our #1 priority over the past weeks and everything Vanderbilt is doing is meant to take care of our people based upon the best information we have at the time.

Fundamental Information about COVID-19 to Help Understand the Steps that are Being Taken

• The Interim Chancellor thanked Steve Ertel and Communications for keeping us on the front end of different strategies and getting the messages out. The body was encouraged to go to the website to see what decisions have been made. The website has a summary of all policies that are in place. It also paints a picture of what is being done to support our people and our community as many things are continuously changing.

What decisions need to be made? How are those decisions made? When are those decisions needed?

• It is important to share how decisions are being made. With the urgency of the situation, we had to act quickly, but we did not act blindly. There were many proactive planning and deliberative approaches. Planning for actions in case of a potential recession began in summer and fall 2019. Retreats were organized by Brett Sweet. The Department of Finance collaborated with the deans and administrative officers to be prepared. Vanderbilt
was prepared with a recession playbook to utilize should a recession happen. The playbook was updated in spring 2020.

In Terms of the Pandemic

- In early January, there was the establishment of a Vanderbilt University Coronavirus Commission. The Commission has 37 members across the University and they meet every Friday. The Commission detailed plans for every operational unit in the University and how each unit would respond in a pandemic. The biggest challenge was tailoring it to COVID-19 because of the uncertainty in the early periods. That pandemic matrix was informative and facilitated Vanderbilt being able to act quickly. The Coronavirus Commission continues to meet.

- The BOT established an ad hoc committee. The ad hoc committee meets every Friday. The University reports to the BOT and they advise on the overall COVID-19 response. To react, the BOT uses proactive planning.

Next Phase

- The next phase is a continuation of proactive scenario responses and planning. A Scenario Response Organization (SRO) or Program Management Organization (PMO) has been set up. The SRO is responsible for assessing and implementing all of the functions we are doing.

- A key aspect of the SRO is the mission team. Vanessa Beasley is leading the mission team with the deans and associate deans. The mission team is comprised of a key education group, a research group, and a group focused on Athletics, with buckets under education.

- A group is looking at undergraduate scenarios for the fall curriculum and building out the calendar. Another group is looking at education in professional schools. Tracey George is leading that group with the professional school deans and associate deans. Their process will be different than the undergraduate process.

- Ph.D. graduate students are being looked at by Mark Wallace and Padma Raghavan working with the deans for scenarios specific to Ph.D. graduate students.

- There is a people team looking at the workforce. The people team is directly supported by an operations group, a business group, and a community group. Faculty, staff, and student input is important and will be included.

- A Public Health Advisory Task Force has been launched. The task force is chaired by Linda Norman in the School of Nursing. Many faculty members have joined the task force. Their focus is on criteria that will be used to identify when to restart on-campus operations.

- The University Continuity Working Group is co-chaired by John McLean and Laura Nairon. It will comprise of the chairs of the three subcommittees and other faculty, staff, and students. The working committee will convene at the end of April or in May. The
subcommittees will convene when they are handed responsibilities from the working group.

When will we reopen? How severe is the economic downturn and how will we handle that?

- Per Interim Chancellor Wente, we are still delivering educational resources. Research, scholarship, and creative expression are being done remotely. The approach will be to divide and conquer. Each operation, each school, and college will have different parameters and opportunities.

- Some of the mandates will be dictated by state and local guidelines. The guidance will be evaluated to do what is safe and best for the Vanderbilt community. There is focus on later summer and fall start dates to determine what that might look like. Faculty staff and students will be given as much time to plan as possible. When a few significant options have been narrowed down, a decision will be made and the community will be informed. There will be no surprises. We will resume on-campus activities in a measured and appropriate manner.

How severe is the economic downturn and how will we handle that?

- Current predictions indicate that as a country, the economic situation is as significant as the great recession of 2008-2009. For many reasons, the University and the Medical Center are both much stronger than at that time. The point was made in an Inside Higher Education article by Chancellor Emeritus Nicholas Zeppos. Vanderbilt implemented investment and fiscal policies intended to make us less vulnerable in recession situations such as this. Those policies have not changed but there are some unavoidable realities. We have multiple discretionary options for support to help mitigate some of the unavoidable realities. The bottom line is that Vanderbilt is strongly positioned.

- A significant portion of the University’s revenue comes from endowments. That investment portfolio is being negatively impacted by the economic downturn, but Anders Hall is outperforming benchmarks. Vanderbilt’s sound fiscal policy softens spikes and a single bad calendar year. Expenses will be adjusted accordingly in anticipation of decreased revenue.

- The University has been committed to providing student education without loans. Therefore, Vanderbilt is predicting greater financial aid need for students. That will become more important in moving forward. The Interim Chancellor thanked everyone who has contributed to the student hardship fund. Faculty, staff, alumni, and board members have all donated to the fund. The body was asked to refer students under duress to the hardship fund as it is there to help them. Fundraising for the hardship fund is going well. It will be used in its entirety to help the students. Overall, fundraising is challenging in a recession.
• If research activities are not established, there will be fewer grants, contracts, and indirect cost revenue. The situation will create opportunities for new grants and new research opportunities. We are perfectly poised to capitalize on those opportunities.

• There are many speculations and worries. However, Vanderbilt is positioned to be less vulnerable and will be thoughtful in its analysis and options to continue placing priorities on the mission of Vanderbilt. Vanderbilt can be confident in its teamwork. Everyone is in this together. We can trust the processes and decision-making strategies. Planning to date is thoughtfully and carefully.

What We’re Not Doing Under Current Conditions

1. We’re not withdrawing faculty offers. Offers are being honored. Ongoing searches are continuing.
2. We’re not making salary cuts.
3. We’re not implementing across-the-board layoffs.
4. We’re not decreasing the commitment to Opportunity Vanderbilt.

What We’re Doing Under Current Conditions

1. Prior approval will be needed for any staff hiring using university funding. Vanderbilt needs to take care of the people here and position management will be implemented to effectively deploy everyone without bringing in new people.
2. We are evaluating every capital project and whether it should pause to sustain us over the next year or two.
3. We’re asking for limits on all discretionary spending.
4. We’re actively building the new fiscal year 2021 budget models that will position us for further success.

As Provost, she will figure out where there are the greatest needs and bridge those needs throughout this economic downturn.

How will Vanderbilt move forward?

• We will remain optimistic by reflecting on our progress. We have made projects progress by ensuring that the community remains safe. The mission of Vanderbilt must be protected. In conversations with incoming Chancellor Daniel Diermeier, he fully endorses all of the plans being put forth. He fully endorses the thoughtful approach and agrees that Vanderbilt is in an extremely solid position.

• A new Dean has been signed for Blair School of Music. Lorenzo Candelaria “Frank” will be welcomed on July 1. Interim Chancellor Wente thanked Emily Townes for chairing the search committee. She thanked all faculty and students who served on the committee.
Thanks were further given to Mark Wait for his 27 years of leadership. His April 30 celebration will be rescheduled. Commencement has been rescheduled.

- On April 8, the BOT Executive Committee approved moving five programs and centers in the School of Arts and Sciences to departmentalization status. It shows the commitment of the University continues to grow. The five programs were: Asian Studies, Cinema and Media Arts, Gender and Sexuality, Jewish Studies, and Medicine Health & Society. Congratulations to those programs for transitioning to departments.

- Any questions should be submitted to John McLean who will forward them to the Interim Chancellor. She will send a letter to the University community towards the end of the week of April 13. She will address the financial implications of COVID-19 and any other questions faculty might have.

**In Conclusion**

- The Spring Faculty Assembly webpage shows all University progress over the past year. It serves as a boost and reminder of all that has been accomplished this year. This time has presented an opportunity to reflect on the silver lining within the situation.

- The Interim Chancellor has never been prouder to be part of the Vanderbilt community then she has been in the last month. Everyone has stepped up. There is no group of vice chancellors, vice provosts, deans, faculty, staff, or students she would rather be working with.

- Interim Chancellor Wente thanked everyone for teaching, leadership, research, scholarship, partnership, and everything we are doing. She will be working hard to get us reopened and assuring that we are in a position stronger than ever as we come out of this COVID-19 situation. We will continue stronger together.

Chair McLean proceeded to the next item of business.

**Old Business**

There was no old business from the Executive Committee.

Chair McLean proceeded to the next item of business.

**New Business**

There was no new business from the Executive Committee.

Chair McLean proceeded to the next item of business.

**Scheduled Speaker**

Vice Provost Tracey George
Vice Provost George thanked the Faculty Senate for the opportunity to discuss our collective work as a faculty at large. She addressed questions that had been submitted. The questions she received were integrated into that discussion. She solicited recommendations for moving forward. Emily Dickinson’s observation “March is the month of expectation”, was especially true this year.

Vice Provost George discussed the three pillars of faculty life – education, service, and research/scholarship/creative expression.

**Alternative Instruction Methods: Successes and Challenges**

- Vanderbilt suspended in-person classes on the evening of March 9 and began alternative instruction a week later. Vanderbilt is a world leader in providing on-campus, in-person education. Yet, we came together to boldly go where we have not gone before in order to ensure that our students would continue to learn, grow, and engage with us, with each other, with ideas, with the mission of our university. We embraced new methods to fulfill our obligation to educate. Alternative instruction has had its highs and its lows. Our faculty contributed to those highs through what is simply amazing and inspiring work. We also recognize the lows as a reminder that we want to be on-campus, we want to be in the classroom and the lab, we want to engage directly and viscerally with our students.

**How does she know we have done well when she can no longer walk across campus and see students burst from lectures still discussing what they heard or sitting together on the lawn or in the student center dissecting a project?** She was able to peer in through digital platforms that we have been using. Things she found were:

**How did we do it?**

1. Trainings and Support: In-person, live streaming, asynchronous video viewing, web-based guides
   - Between March 9 and March 16, the Center for Teaching with the support of VUIT and the office of faculty affairs trained more than 450 faculty in alternative and online instruction.
   - On demand resources at the Center for Teaching, including 70 unique sources, were visited more than 100k times – twice as many as our usual busiest time of the year (August)
   - BrightSpace staff had 1426 unique tickets from faculty, students, and staff in March compared to 311 in March 2019.

2. Pedagogical Methods:
   - Synchronous video
   - Recorded video
   - Conference calls
   - Emails
   - GoReact
f. Discussion Rooms: In March, there was a five-fold increase in discussions on BrightSpace to nearly 400,000.

g. Chats

h. Online quizzes – including at a rate 3x what we saw earlier in the term.

i. And more

3. Qualitative from emails and conversations:

a. Highs

i. Creativity in solutions

1. Nursing pivoted to a virtual clinical experience.
2. Chemistry and Engineering set up virtual labs.

ii. Participation by students in new ways

1. Virtual dissertation defense
2. Virtual coffee hours and dance offs (shout out to MHS)

iii. Humor, humility and humanity

1. Stories of child interruptions
2. Care for students who were struggling

b. Lows

i. Technological challenges

1. Internet connectivity challenges for us and our students (the student hardship fund can help)
2. Device limitations

ii. Negative external forces

1. Zoombombing – but VUIT and CFT has been nimble and effective in their response
2. Hacking example and explanation of moved-up rollout of MFA (DUO) for BrightSpace, YES, and Interfolio on April 13.

iii. Sadness at not being able to do what we love to do and are so good at.

c. She empathizes. All colleagues empathize. And, we have been supporting each other, and we need to continue to support each other.

Institutional Work

Even as we devote many more hours than usual to teaching, we have still found the time to invest in the institution.

1. Faculty Appointments, Reappointments, Review, Promotion, Tenure
a. The work of identifying, recruiting, developing, reviewing, and promoting our faculty continued even as we moved to intense remote instructions and sought to secure and protect our research as we left campus. Moving Interfolio to MFA on April 13.

2. Collaboration and collective decisionmaking
   a. Video and audio conference meetings for departmental and committee meetings and the faculty senate!
   b. Graphics on use of Zoom, Skype, and conference call services from VUIT (comparing YOY)

3. COACHE Faculty Survey of VU-employed faculty
   a. The survey opened in February and closed on March 12.
   b. 3 out of 5 VU faculty have responded – far outpacing the average for all other universities. More than ¾ of respondents completed the survey before we suspended classes but that also means ¼ have responded since. We will work with COACHE to ensure we can analyze the possible effects of the exogenous shock of the COVID pandemic.

4. Shared governance is especially vital during times of crisis whether inside the university or the country.

Scholarship and Research

As Interim Chancellor Wente emphasized, our ideas, our curiosity, our desire to figure things out are a defining character of academics. Those don’t disappear in crisis, but it can be challenging to protect the time and mental capacity to engage with them.

1. The loss of in-person interactions -- workshops, archival study, lab-based work, and simple by chance conversations about an idea -- is a true dark side to our absence from campus.

2. She was struck by our collective and individual creativity in seeking to continue to engage our minds, including paths reshaped by our COVID19-world experiences.

3. We also are doing things to protect those who are most vulnerable in these processes: our junior colleagues and colleagues-to-be. We are working with graduate students and postdocs to protect their progress and their place in your programs. The deans of all schools/colleges and the provost agreed to extend by one year the probationary period for all tenure-track faculty – granting them the ability to have the space they deserve to recover from this disruption.

To summarize, she is astonished daily by what we are doing. She recognizes and appreciates the remarkable work of staff, colleagues, and the resilience of our students. She misses everyone and looks forward to seeing everyone on campus again.
Chair McLean proceeded to the next item of business.

**Good of the Senate**

- Chair McLean will reach out to those who would like to chat, reflect, or ask questions. Emails may be sent to the [Faculty Senate](#). Questions will be collated and given to Interim Chancellor Wente and Vice Provost George.

- The May 4 meeting will be a voting meeting for Chair-elect and Vice Chair-elect positions.

John McLean thanked everyone for participating in the meeting.

**Adjournment**

A motion was made to adjourn. The motion was seconded. The meeting adjourned at 5:27 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Holly Algood
Vice Chair