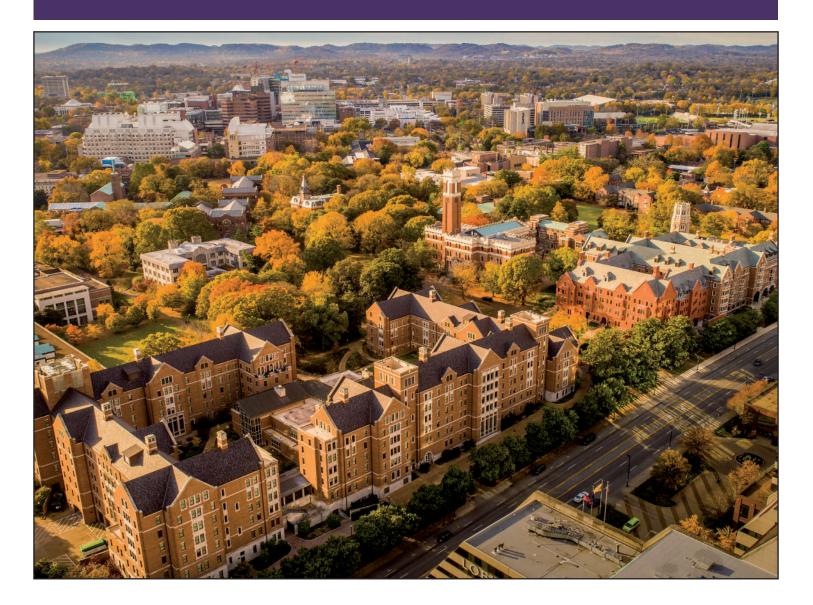
# **REPORT OF THE STAFF WOMEN'S ADVANCEMENT AND EQUITY COUNCIL**



**COUNCIL YEAR: 2019-2020 REPORT SUBMITTED: DECEMBER 14, 2020** 





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# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Vanderbilt University Staff WAVE Council was convened in February 2019 by Vice-Chancellor of Administration Eric Kopstain and Vice-Chancellor of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion André Churchwell. Over the past eighteen months, the Council has focused on a broad range of equity and advancement issues of particular concern to the University's staff women, including recruitment, retention and promotion, leadership commitment to staff diversity, and systems for ensuring that best practices in support of staff diversity are woven throughout the fabric of the University.

This report articulates the following recommendations to strengthen the position of the University in retaining its existing quality workforce while attracting diverse new talent to sustain the institution's preeminence:

- Develop a comprehensive, mandatory training curriculum for managers that addresses fair compensation, staff retention, staff promotion, staff development, work-life initiatives and priorities, and the reporting and responding to incidents and allegations of harassment, discrimination, abuse, or other safety concerns;
- Develop dedicated staff professional development programs and pathways, utilizing both Human Resources and managers as active participants in advancing careers through education and cultivation of workplace skills and in the creation of additional job search resources connecting staff with new opportunities University-wide;
- Promptly address risks raised by claims of discrimination and insufficient attention to workplace safety issues and increase transparency around reporting options, office roles, and procedures used;
- To better generate, monitor, and sustain an inclusive, supportive, and nondiscriminatory work environment, conduct staff climate surveys at least every three years.

The Staff WAVE Council looks forward to its continued work and collaboration with the University Staff Advisory Council, The Provost's WAVE Council, and other diversity, equity, and inclusion related groups within the University as we pursue this critical agenda.

# INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

The VU Staff WAVE Council is pleased to submit this report and recommendations in response to our February 2019 Charge from Vice-Chancellors Eric Kopstain and André Churchwell. (See Appendix A for Charge Letter.) By design, the Council is a standing council reporting directly to the Vice-Chancellors on an annual basis to ensure a sustained platform for achieving a quality staff workforce that is reflective of all the constituents we serve at all levels, and a University workplace where work-life is valued and every employee is provided the opportunity to work and thrive in a supportive environment characterized by equity, fairness, and respect.

With changing community and national demographics and amidst concern about budgets in uncertain pandemic conditions, Vanderbilt University must expand current and develop new strategies regarding staff recruitment, retention, and promotion to remain competitive and serve as an employer of choice for the best talent from all backgrounds. With over 9,000 staff, Vanderbilt University is one of the largest employers in the State of Tennessee. Staff's contributions to the University's mission of teaching, research, student care, faculty support, and public service are enormous and invaluable. To maintain Vanderbilt's reputation as one of the nation's foremost private research universities, and to reflect its commitment to improving opportunities available to its increasingly diverse workforce, we must imple-

ment critical changes and improvements in how we develop and support our staff.

Bearing this challenge in mind, Vice-Chancellors Kopstain and Churchwell appointed the University Staff WAVE Council to advise VU senior leadership and complement the University Staff Advisory Council (USAC) to inform efforts to enhances staff equity throughout the University community. The Council is comprised of members from across a variety of University units and divisions, reflecting the diversity of roles, race and ethnicity, gender identity, and years of service. Each member was nominated and/or selected for their expertise, their commitment to improving morale and work environment, and their access and influence at their site as an important voice for staff women on these matters.

# THE CHARGE To the staff wave council

Initially, the Council was broadly charged to identify aspects of the VU experience that both enable and hinder women from fully thriving in and contributing to the Vanderbilt community. Vice-Chancellors Churchwell and Kopstain encouraged the Council to define the charge further as needed. The Council refined its charge to study and address critical issues facing the broad array of women staff at Vanderbilt University. The Council believes that ensuring that women staff are succeeding and supported is core to the University's shared values of equity, diversity, and inclusion.

In Summer 2019, the Council steering committee identified its initial priorities and formed subcommittees to address the following topics during the 2019-20 academic year:

- compensation
- professional development
- workplace safety (including sexual harassment and bullying)
- value and respect in the workplace
- work-life balance

Each Staff WAVE Council subcommittee en-

gaged in substantial research related to their theme and identified concerns. The Staff WAVE Council members then refined and prioritized the findings of the subcommittees. The report that follows outlines these findings in detail. The ongoing work of the Staff WAVE Council has culminated in the following key recommendations at this time:

- Creation and promotion of clear, accessible career development opportunities provided by the University at no or low cost to participants
- Mandated management training for those who supervise staff in understanding and addressing gender-based discrimination and inequities likely to impact women staff working in the University community setting
- Creation of and reasonable, ongoing financial support for a staff women's mentorship program
- Pay equity and workplace climate (including safety) audits across units and divisions to measure and identify necessary action steps to ensure more equitable treatment of staff women across the University

 Continued allowance for and support of, as well as the adoption of additional flexible and remote work arrangements and opportunities where efficiency and productivity can be maintained

The University itself maintains that it "welcome[s] those who are interested in learning and growing professionally with an employer that strives to create, foster, and sustain opportunities as an employer of choice through:

- Working and growing together as a community of communities... we are One Vanderbilt.
- Providing a work environment where every staff and faculty member can be

their authentic and best self while providing the resources and opportunities to learn and grow.

 Encouraging the development, collaboration, and partnership both internally and externally while fostering the value that every member of the Vanderbilt community can lead and grow regardless of title or position."

In the furtherance of these values, and with a particular focus on women staff's conditions and needs, the Council began connecting with staff across the University and engaged in benchmarking and additional research to evaluate existing staff work conditions and provide informed recommendations to University administration.



# **METHODOLOGY**

The Council hosted a series of listening events for the university community members throughout the 2019-2020 school year. Due to University pandemic-related closures beginning in March 2020, the Council was unable to host all planned events. Due to staff's privacy and/or retaliation concerns around specific topics (e.g., sexual misconduct), virtual sessions were not recommended and were not an appropriate substitute for the remaining planned events.

Each subcommittee, as well as the full steering committee, offered listening sessions and open working groups at a variety of times and locations across campus, in efforts to recruit broad and diverse participation from the University's various staff populations. Committee members received training and guidance from Pam Brown, the former Director of Learning and Organizational Development in Human Resources, prior to conducting these sessions.

The Council also solicited staff feedback through an anonymous online form, as well as through the creation of an email address specifically for the Staff WAVE Council.

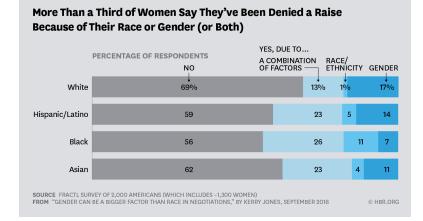
### Limitations of Data Collection regarding Staff Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Measures

The lack of a centralized, integrated and accessible database to explore data related to the Vanderbilt workforce as a whole is among the greatest deficiencies identified and experienced by the Council in its efforts to fulfill its charge. Examination of workforce characteristics and data is cumbersome and, at times, impossible when such data is not readily available to the various leaders and committees charged with examining the work environment for inequities. The lack of such transparency has long been documented as one of the conditions connected to the continued existence of and lingering effects of discrimination and inequalities across various fields and professions. The lack of a coherent personnel information system is a significant barrier for unit and department leaders working to monitoring workforce issues, make progress with diversity, and provide much-needed professional development and career advancement opportunities to staff populations likely to experience discrimination or other hurdles to full participation in the University community and their chosen fields. A significant commitment on the part of University senior management will be required to make progress in this area.

## KEY FINDINGS COMPENSATION & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Staff WAVE Council steering committee members created two subcommittees, Compensation, and Professional Development, to explore their respective areas; however, the overlapping themes led Council co-chairs to consolidate these considerations for this report.

The Staff WAVE Council Compensation Subcommittee was created to study and offer recommendations related to gender-based pay inequity affecting women staff. Negotiating salary remains particularly challenging for women. Studies reflect that they are less likely to ask for more money when offered a job and are more likely to stay at a lower-paid job. Ample research substantiates women's discomfort with and discouragement from negotiating, whether at the time of hire or throughout the career. In addition, women continue, on average, to earn less than their male counterparts. According to PayScale's The State of the Gender Pay Gap 2020, women earn \$0.81 for every \$1.00 a man earns<sup>1</sup>. Women of color, considered collectively, earn approximately \$0.75 for every \$1.00 a white man earns. When considered in distinct racial or ethnic groups, Black women and Hispanic women earn approximately \$.66 and \$58 to the white male dollar, respectively<sup>2</sup>.



1 "The State of the Gender Pay Gap 2020," Payscale, March 31, 2020, available online at https://www.payscale.com/data/gender-pay-gap (last viewed 11/20/2020).

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid

### **STRESSOR ONE:**

There is widespread uncertainty about salary negotiation as an accepted practice when applying to work at Vanderbilt University and when working within the University, which is apparent across employees of varying years of service, units, and roles.

Women staff shared a wide range of their negotiation experiences with co-chairs and various Staff WAVE meetings and listening sessions. A broad range of sometimes contradictory information about the institution's stance on negotiation was reportedly provided by hiring managers supervisors over the past several years.

### **STRESSOR TWO:**

Staff women indicate interest in salary negotiation training but are largely unaware of the few opportunities for such training.

Through involvement in the Staff WAVE Council, some staff learned that the Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center occasionally offers the AAUW Start Smart salary negotiation workshop. However, that training was designed for negotiating a new job, and existing employees are primarily seeking guidance on negotiating a raise, change in title, and/or promotion.

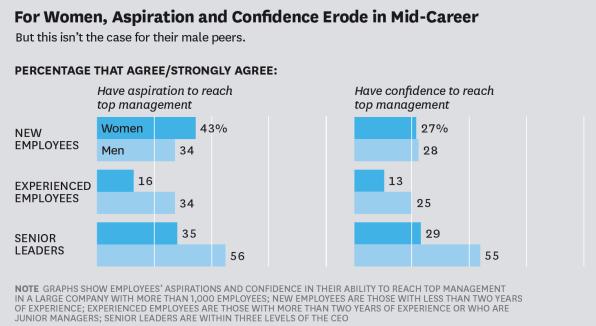
### **STRESSOR THREE:**

Even when women attempt to negotiate, studies indicate that their efforts are more negatively perceived than similar attempts made by male candidates and employees, and women are denied at a higher rate due to sexism and/or unconscious bias<sup>1</sup>.

With only the recent introduction of and encouragement to take the University's unconscious bias training, it is likely that many hiring managers and supervisors could hold such views, whether they are aware of their bias or not. It is unclear if the available unconscious bias training is effective at addressing gender bias and discrimination.

<sup>1 &</sup>quot;Women Ask for Raises as Often as Men, but Are Less Likely to Get Them," Benjamin Artz, Amanda Goodall, and Andrew J. Oswald, March 2018, available at https://hbr.org/2018/06/research-women-ask-for-raises-as-often-as-men-but-are-less-likely-to-get-them (last viewed 11/20/2020).

The Staff WAVE Council Professional Development Subcommittee was created to identify and develop recommendations for Vanderbilt University women staff's personal and professional development. The overarching goal of the Professional Development Subcommittee was to identify ways to promote an inclusive learning culture that supports the strategic goals of the University in which women staff will have continuing opportunities to advance and expand the skills and practices that support Vanderbilt University's commitment to its students, staff, faculty, post-doctoral scholars, and the broader Nashville community. Specifically, this subcommittee sought to identify existing resources and gaps in professional development opportunities at the University; advocate for a culture and development portfolio supportive of professional development within the University; and recommend, review, and update the Professional Development resources available at the University.



SOURCE BAIN & COMPANY

FROM "COMPANIES DRAIN WOMEN'S AMBITIONS AFTER ONLY 2 YEARS," BY ORIT GADIESH AND JULIE COFFMAN, MAY 2015 © HBR.ORG

### THE BENEFIT TO THE UNIVERSITY:

If Vanderbilt University wants to attract and retain talented and experienced employees, it must invest in staff development. Professional development helps with employee recruitment, retention, and engagement and ensures an equitable work environment. The staff offered the opportunity for professional development feel valued by their employer, and that value leads to higher levels of employee engagement. Increased employee engagement leads to increased efficiency, enhanced employee retention, and higher-quality work. By the equitable development of staff, both professionally and personally, the organization benefits from this growth.

To determine the practical steps that Vanderbilt can take to commit to the professional development of women staff, the Professional Development (PD) subcommittee of the Staff WAVE Council undertook a multi-level approach:

- Members of the PD subcommittee attended the Listening Sessions hosted by Vice-Chancellors Churchwell, Kopstain, and Associate Vice Chancellor Nairon in the fall semester of 2019.
- The PD subcommittee of the Staff WAVE Council met with its sister Professional Development subcommittee of the University Staff Advisory Council (USAC). They generously shared a well-researched yet limited in scope report and proposal. Most of their polling and surveying were contained within the USAC proposal.
- The PD subcommittee held consensus workshops in which information and ideas were gathered from a diverse group of full time, mostly women staff, advertised to all staff at VU.
- Both University professional development subcommittees identified common stressors to women staff in their data gathering:

### **STRESSOR FOUR:**

There is a distressing lack of communication around existing professional development resources at Vanderbilt University, which is perceived as an unwillingness on Vanderbilt's part to invest in and develop its women staff.

This becomes increasingly evident when reviewing similar development opportunities at peer institutions. This lack of a centralized, holistic resource is a significant roadblock to the development of professional staff at Vanderbilt, particularly women staff; signaling around this painful lack was cited consistently through all contacts with staff members outlined in the above methodology. The differences in professional development offerings between Vanderbilt, peer institutions, and local employers are stark and disheartening. Additionally, this stressor contributes to and exacerbates the issues found in our other two stressors.

### **STRESSOR FIVE:**

Vanderbilt is insufficiently training and empowering its mid-level and rising managers. Management must be further professionalized and continuously developed, whether managers are responsible for supervising a single or hundreds of employees.

Currently, managers are not trained to help develop and promote staff, contributing to an overall dearth of development and promotion, as a lack of centralized professional development resources makes this aspect of a managerial position particularly opaque and difficult to navigate.

### **STRESSOR SIX:**

The new tuition reimbursement process (EdAssist) is believed to disproportionately negatively impact women staff and, in particular, women staff of color at Vanderbilt University.

In the prior tuition reimbursement model, the employee applied for the benefit, and, if they were attending a class at Vanderbilt, the tuition would be paid at the beginning of the semester. The employee was then responsible for paying the difference (approximately 30-45% of tuition). Under the new model, the employee is required to cover the entire cost of tuition upfront and cannot apply for the benefit until they have a passing grade to submit. However, as registration for the following semester opens during the current semester, this often means an employee is responsible for TWO semesters of tuition before seeing a penny reimbursed. For example, in the MLAS program, students must front over \$6,000 to maintain their standing in the current semester and register for the next. The PD subcommittee feels strongly that the enrollment data following the change to EdAssist should be reviewed to evaluate the unsustainability of this financial burden on staff learners, particularly women staff of color. This stressor is particularly arduous at a higher education institution that routinely requires advanced degrees for promotions above certain levels. Managing this University benefit through EdAssist could make the pursuit of an advanced degree insurmountable for many women staff and staff of color.

## KEY FINDINGS WORKPLACE SAFETY

Vanderbilt University has pledged to create a safe and welcoming environment for the entire community. After multiple campus listening sessions, peer-to-peer conversation, and benchmarking research of our peer institutions, the Workplace Safety Staff WAVE Council subcommittee has determined the need for improved communication and training for staff campus-wide.

Through our listening sessions with University staff, it became apparent that many staff members were unaware of the many resources available to them. Furthermore, staff shared times when they did not feel comfortable reporting due to ambiguity and inconsistency in an investigative office's scope of responsibility and unclear and/or conflicting information relating to the reporting structure and chain of command associated with the broad range of behaviors that could constitute workplace safety concerns and incidents.

### The Spectrum of Sexual Misconduct at Work

Knowing where a behavior falls depends on the situation, history of the relationship, tone of delivery, and nonverbal actions.

	<b>(2</b> )	3	4	(5)	6
Generally not offensive Common remarks on things such as hairstyle and dress	Awkward/ mildly offensive Comments involving or implying gender distinctions unfavorable to women	Offensive Gender- insensitive or superior manner	Highly offensive Intentionally denigrating comments or behaviors	Evident sexual misconduct Behaviors that are crude or physically intrusive	Egregious sexual misconduct Behaviors involving coercion, sexual abuse, or assault

**FROM** "IT'S NOT ALWAYS CLEAR WHAT CONSTITUTES SEXUAL HARASSMENT. USE THIS TOOL TO NAVIGATE THE GRAY AREAS," BY KATHLEEN KELLEY REARDON, JUNE 2018

©HBR ORG

### **STRESSOR SEVEN:**

Staff feels constrained by University and unit-level hierarchy/chain of command, are unaware of outside reporting options, and lack trust that their reported concerns will be handled privately by their supervisors.

Many staff shared that they thought reporting and support resources only existed for students. Staff expressed confusion about what types of behaviors should be reported to different University offices, when, and how.

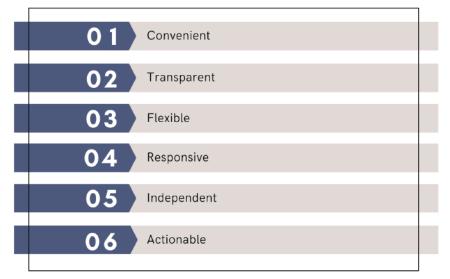
### **STRESSOR SEVEN:**

Many staff shared that they did not trust their supervisor to know how to appropriately route or handle concerns related to various forms of discrimination or guard against retaliation after reporting.

Fears of retaliation for coming forward were shared by staff in various roles, working in a variety of units and departments.

### **BUILDING A CULTURE OF REPORTING**

Leaders who want to take a critical step toward ending discrimination, harassment, microaggressions, and mistreatment in their workplaces need to rethink and redesign the way reporting is done. Reporting options must be:



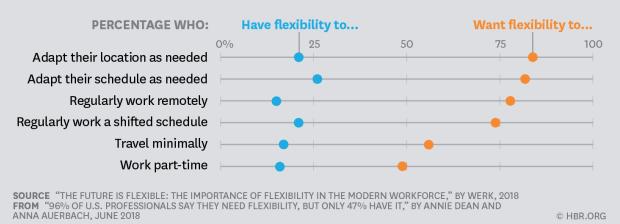
When employers can successfully prevent retaliation, give victims agency and transparency throughout dispute resolution, and give victims resolution and recourse, they will be able to restore their employees' trust in reporting.

Lily Zheng, "Do Your Employees Feel Safe Reporting Abuse and Discrimination?" Harvard Business Review, October 2020

## KEY FINDINGS WORK-LIFE INTEGRATION

The Staff WAVE Council Work-Life Balance Subcommittee was created to identify and develop recommendations to enhance and support work-life balance among Vanderbilt University staff. The Work-Life Balance Subcommittee considered all staff, including those with and without childcare and/or eldercare responsibilities, and those who experience challenging or disruptive life events that may directly or indirectly impact their work performance.

### **6 Workplace Flexibility Gaps**



A survey of 1,583 U.S. white-collar professionals shows that flexibility is popular but not always accessible.

### **STRESSOR NINE:**

Staff believes managers do not prioritize or welcome proposals for employment policies and practices that facilitate work-life balance.

Many staff reported having no discussions about work-life integration or workplace flexibility and adaptation to an employee's personal circumstances.

### **STRESSOR TEN:**

Many staff shared that they feel guilty or discouraged from taking time off or away from work due to their unit lacking sufficient staff and/or resources.

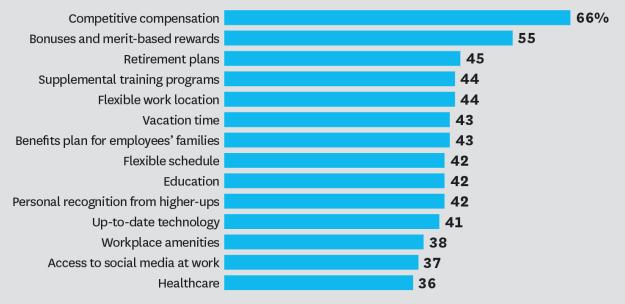
Even among staff who identified strong team bonds, guilt due to the workload contributed to their decision to ask for less time off than they might want or need. There is some perception that Vanderbilt offers less PTO than peer institutions. Many staff shared that the combination of PTO and sick leave has reduced the leave benefit overall.

### **STRESSOR ELEVEN:**

Staff believes their supervisors are unaware of the ways in which remote or flexible work arrangements may increase productivity.

There is a widespread belief that VU has no policies around remote work or that policies differ based on roles, with leadership being given more flexibility. Staff shared multiple stories of fellow employees who have left Vanderbilt within recent years due to the lack of flexibility and acceptance of remote work.

### What Employees Value at Work



SOURCE SAP

FROM "WHAT HIGH PERFORMERS WANT AT WORK," BY KARIE WILLYERD, NOVEMBER 2014

## RECOMMENDATIONS COMPENSATION & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### **STRESSOR ONE: ESSENTIAL SOLUTIONS**

To address the uncertainty around the welcomeness or permissiveness of negotiating salary, a raise, or for other benefits or accommodations, we recommend:

- Vanderbilt University should create, if necessary, and communicate to all hiring managers and supervisors the acceptability of salary negotiation and provide instruction on how managers/supervisors should engage with an employee who initiates such negotiation
- Vanderbilt University should task units with outlining promotion opportunities and processes to all employees on a periodic basis and engage in such practices with greater transparency

### **STRESSOR TWO: ESSENTIAL SOLUTIONS**

To address the widespread interest among staff in learning more about the salary negotiation process, which may help to address lingering gender inequity University-wide, we recommend:

- Vanderbilt University Human Resources should offer online resources and training opportunities to help employees better understand the opportunities and appropriate considerations and tactics for negotiating salary, promotion, or other benefits and accommodations with their supervisor
- Vanderbilt University should task managers and supervisors with educating those in their unit or department about available internal employment opportunities both in and outside of their departments

- » Managers should be provided with readily available training opportunities and should be required to complete such training in a timely manner upon the introduction of such training and/or upon their assumption of supervisory responsibilities
- » Such training should address:
  - · Identifying when and how to request a reclassification or promotion for highachieving staff
  - Identifying when and how to consider fair compensation adjustments and/ or bonuses based on changing workloads and responsibilities among team members in a unit or department
  - Recognizing the value of retaining and rewarding talented employees versus the cost of continuous recruitment and frequent turnover
  - Implementing the University's Feed Forward process (or other periodic evaluation tools) and the importance of engaging staff in their career development
- Vanderbilt University should incorporate an expectation among managers and supervisors to work with individual employees to identify an intended career path, to begin no later than the first service anniversary of a new employee and continue, periodically (at least annually) throughout the employee's years of service

### **STRESSOR THREE: ESSENTIAL SOLUTIONS**

To address gender discrimination and bias in the salary negotiation, retention, and promotion process, we recommend:

- Vanderbilt University should conduct a pay-equity audit to examine trends in current compensation levels by gender and make findings available to the University community
  - » Such analysis should consider the following:
    - Employee demographics—An annual status report that tracks the percentage of total employees who are women and trends in hiring.
    - Representation of women in leadership—Annual status reports that current staff demographics by rank (e.g., vice-chancellors, assistant/associate vicechancellors, directors, managers) to track how frequently women hold leadership positions, as well as trends and changes in representation.

- Recruitment rates by gender—Annual status reports that track the number of new hires who are women. Emphasize this metric within units that lack equal gender representation.
- Vanderbilt University should better highlight and address gender discrimination through its diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts
- Vanderbilt University should publish job families and salary ranges, ensuring information is readily available internally for existing staff to use when assessing potential positions.

### **STRESSOR FOUR: ESSENTIAL SOLUTIONS**

To address the current perceived or actual lack of professional development resources at Vanderbilt University, and the perception that this lack is due, at least in part, to the undervaluing of staff women, we recommend:

- A University-wide announcement of the charge, scope, and membership of two recently formed working groups, LEADER (Leadership Education, Administrator Development, and Engagement Resource committee) and ELEcTRIC (Employee Learning & Engagement and Training Resource Committee)
- A centralized professional development resource for all staff development initiatives, present and future, available both on campus and locally
- Implementation of a comprehensive communications plan designed to promote an inclusive organizational culture that explicitly mentions and values staff, to both acknowledge and educate the campus community of the crucial and essential roles staff play, recognizing that staff are indispensable and worthy of equal visibility, appreciation, and treatment by others within our University community
- Creation of and provision of ongoing support for a Career Path and Development Center within Central HR with resources to include:
  - » Online career development and in-person classes on topics such as creating a cover letter, resume writing and improving technical skills
  - » Individual career counseling available through HR to assist staff in defining their career path and goals
  - » In partnership with HR Recruiting, creation of a mechanism to link staff with skills

and desire for career growth with open positions on campus (a win/win for both the employee and VU by retaining talent and reducing turnover costs, as mentioned above, associated with recruiting and training)

- Creation of a formalized staff mentoring program to pair early and mid-career professionals with University staff in higher-level leadership roles to help promote career growth and build diverse networks across campus
  - » We further recommend women-specific mentoring opportunities to pair women staff with more senior women leaders

### **STRESSOR FIVE: ESSENTIAL SOLUTIONS**

To address identified gaps in employee development by managers, we recommend:

- Vanderbilt University launches a robust training program for managers, with enrollment and/or completion of such training becoming a requirement for staff promoted or hired into management positions
  - » We believe such training should be incorporated into New Leader Orientation, VLE/ VLA programs
  - » This should include the creation or addition of dedicated leadership offerings within Skillsoft/Oracle Learning

### STRESSOR SIX: ESSENTIAL SOLUTIONS

To address challenges associated with the EdAssist tuition benefit tool, we recommend:

- Vanderbilt University create a tuition payment grace period for staff using the benefit in Vanderbilt graduate programs to help staff members avoid incurring late fees on unpaid tuition. This period will also allow the staff member to register for subsequent courses while waiting for the passing grade that triggers the current course's tuition benefit.
- Until the issues raised can be addressed and communicated to impacted staff, Vanderbilt University should provide assistance and the ability to request temporarily managing the tuition benefit outside of the EdAssist system
  - » We further recommend that Vanderbilt should communicate with the vendor to share this feedback and ask for their assistance in identifying a solution to the up-front tuition model impacting women and staff of color

## RECOMMENDATIONS WORKPLACE SAFETY

### **STRESSOR SEVEN: ESSENTIAL SOLUTIONS**

To address distrust and uncertainty among staff when experiencing, witnessing, or learning of safety, harassment, abuse, or discrimination issue, we recommend:

- Vanderbilt create, improve, and/or increase its targeted staff-specific communications about the existing campus resources available, relevant reporting options, protections against retaliation, opportunities for redress, investigative procedures
- Vanderbilt University promotes existing online resources currently available to staff for reporting workplace safety concerns. Those include but are not limited to:
  - » The Gender Harassment portal
  - » Workplace Safety webpage \*including how this office supports staff in their concerns
  - » VandySafe mobile application
- Vanderbilt University create infographic tools to be readily available on the Vanderbilt HR website outlining incident-reporting protocols
  - » For example, if a staff member were to experience an incident of discrimination or misconduct, an infographic demonstrating the steps of the process from initial report to the outcome(s) would be helpful
  - » Such flowcharts, infographics, and other visual tools should be offered in plain language and should follow best practices regarding accessibility concerns
  - » As Vanderbilt's policies grow increasingly complex and legalistic, all VU community members will benefit from user-friendly promotional and educational materials designed to increase transparency and reduce confusion
- Vanderbilt University must consistently define, describe, and offer support to all reporting parties and/or targets/victim/complainants

- » In addition to the preliminary discussion of supportive measures often provided at the time of a report (or initial investigative meeting following a report), we recommend continuing proactive outreach to check in on the staff member in the two weeks following the initial report and periodically, consistently, throughout any investigation or resolution process
- » In some cases, such check-ins should also continue throughout the period of transition or reentry of the involved parties into their work environment

### **STRESSOR EIGHT: ESSENTIAL SOLUTIONS**

To address staff distrust of managers and supervisors inappropriately responding to reports of harassment, discrimination, abuse, and/or sexual misconduct, we recommend:

- Vanderbilt University should ensure that training and another educational programming regarding discrimination, harassment, sexual misconduct, and other abuses and harms be provided annually to staff, and especially and specifically to those transitioning or in new leadership positions
  - » We recommend using and expecting completion of a refresher training course to all University staff members to be completed annually, beginning after their first six months on campus.
    - This training should cover resources, reporting structures and can include specific situation-based programming (unconscious bias, bystander intervention, bully-ing, sexual misconduct, etc.)
    - We recommend this training be offered online and available on-demand, accessible through Oracle Learn or other University platforms in wide use so that that staff may complete it at a time and place convenient to them
- Vanderbilt University should require faculty and staff new to leadership positions to complete training (in addition to that described above) on handling crises
  - » This training must extend to faculty in administrative roles, as they supervise staff across the University
  - » This training should include how to respond to a crisis, and extensive overview and list of resources available, balancing the rights and privacy or confidentiality of those involved, comprehensive knowledge of the appropriate reporting structures, and education on the risks and types of retaliation staff may face

For staff to feel safe, they must feel seen. In response to both identified concerns discussed above, we further recommend that Vanderbilt provide a series of Staff Town Halls focused on staff equity, belonging, and culture. As staff continues to play increasingly specialized, crucial, demanding roles, including much of the front-line response during crises such as the ongoing pandemic, their indispensable value to the University must be acknowledged, and their safety must be ensured. When offering listening sessions, assemblies, town halls, and other events targeted to staff, Vanderbilt administrators must make themselves available outside of standard business hours at times and locations most convenient to staff – many of whom work nontraditional hours and are more likely to utilize public transportation, carpooling, and park far from their worksite. It is important for the University to invite staff input through anonymous and non-anonymous participation, whether offered in-person or online.

### DO YOUR EMPLOYEES FEEL COMFORTABLE REPORTING ABUSE AND DISCRIMINATION?

Lily Zhen

Harvard Business Review October 2020

### **Key Recommendations**

To increase reporting rates at your company — and thereby make your workplace a more equitable, inclusive, and safe place to work — here are four practices that you can adopt to rebuild employee trust in reporting:

### Demonstrate accountability from the top

Make a public statement and develop metrics to measure and hold yourself accountable. Acknowledge and address past harms.

### Invest in neutral resources to support victims of harassment and discrimination

Workplace mental health interventions have been shown to have a high return on investment.

### Create anonymous formal reporting channels that both protect reporters and inform organizational change.

Where these already exist, streamline and promote them widely.

#### Establish an ombuds office

Ombuds can talk candidly to employees about fears and concerns and walk them through the options available to them, including making a formal report. Ombuds demonstrate trust in employees and top-down understanding of power hierarchies in the institution and serve as an alternative to legalistic processes.

## RECOMMENDATIONS WORK-LIFE INTEGRATION

### STRESSOR NINE AND ELEVEN: ESSENTIAL SOLUTIONS

To address the perception that managers are unreceptive to policies and practices that facilitate work-life balance, we recommend:

- Vanderbilt University requires a manager to attend training to learn of and/or better understand Vanderbilt's existing work-life initiatives
  - » This training should clearly articulate how such practices could and should be implemented to help ensure that Vanderbilt's managerial response is informed and consistent across the University
  - » This commitment must include a way to evaluate and hold managers accountable for their failure to embrace these University practices or benefits while recognizing that departments hold diverse roles and many employees' jobs are presence dependent and/or seasonal in nature and/or subject to collective bargaining agreements
- Vanderbilt University should develop and implement a communication plan tailored to staff that share policies and procedures, resources, and VU staff events, including a redesign of the VU HR website to include a prominent, readily available link to Vanderbilt's work-life resources
  - » This communication plan should not assume every employee has access to a computer, so we suggest the promotional campaign include posters to be shared in high-traffic areas, at minimum posted alongside existing required labor and employment notices for relevant staff populations
- Creation of new employee onboarding cohorts to meet at least once every three months during the first year of employment to better educate new hires on Vanderbilt's many benefits and resources

### STRESSOR TEN: ESSENTIAL SOLUTIONS

To address reluctance among staff to utilize their earned PTO, we recommend:

- Vanderbilt University must evaluate its current "lean" staffing practices in consideration of the fact that mental health suffers deleteriously when departments are not adequately staffed to cover the workload
- The Chancellor, Provost, and Vice-Chancellors articulate vocal support for flexible work schedules and/or full-time remote work and provide written guidance and/or policies for implementation at the unit or departmental level
- Vanderbilt University create and promote a voluntary shared PTO Bank to which all employees could donate unused PTO and to which PTO earned above an employee's "cap" would be allocated

In addition to and in support of the stressors and recommendations outlined above, we offer further recommendations, specific to those staff responsible for child, elder, or other families dependent care, which our committee work revealed are in desperate need of additional support. We further recommend:

- Vanderbilt University should conduct an audit of its current staff parental leave policy
  - » The subcommittee recommends benchmarking against peer institutions and considering whether the current policy truly supports working mothers and fathers
- Extend the hours of VU Child and Family Centers to remain open until 6:00 P.M. daily.
- Explore the use of stipends at other Nashville childcare centers to support parents whose schedules do not allow them to take advantage of the current Vanderbilt offerings
- Improve the quality of existing lactation rooms and create additional spaces on campus
- Offer staff parent cohorts (e.g., support and/or affinity groups) for those with children of similar ages to generate additional support and build community
- Work to identify support for staff who care for aging parents, the number of which continues to grow, with strain upon staff in various roles across campus

# CONCLUSION

The Staff WAVE Council believes that these recommendations will help ensure that Vanderbilt University will continue to evolve and improve as it works to cultivate equity, inclusion, and belonging campus-wide. It is the recommendation of the Staff WAVE Council that it remains active in perpetuity to assist the University with implementing and championing these changes. We recommend periodic leadership changes among Council chairs and rotating membership on the steering committee, based on the evolving needs of the Council, and to help keep members active and engaged. As such, it is the recommendation of the current chairs that current Council steering committee members Yasmine Mukahal and Danielle Certa be installed as the new co-chairs of the Staff WAVE Council. The current chairs intend to remain active as council members to ease the transition and to continue the work of the Council, and we recommend encouraged participation of past co-chairs as routine practice.



## APPENDIX A: STEERING COMMITTEE AND SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

### The Steering Committee

- Meagan Artus, College of Arts and Science
- Cara Tuttle Bell, Project Safe Center (co-chair)
- Danielle Certa, Office of the Provost
- Shunta Curry, Office of the Chancellor (co-chair)
- Rory Dicker, Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center
- Jennifer Garcia, Dining Services
- Olivia Hill, Plant Operations
- Michelle Kovash, Law School
- Tiffany Lawrence Givens, School of Medicine
- Jamie Linski, Development and Alumni Relations
- Jeff Loudon, VUIT
- Melissa Mallon, Peabody Library
- Jenny Mandeville, Division of Communications (co-chair)
- Jennifer Masterson, Owen Graduate School of Management
- Dominique Millen, Law School
- Yasmine Mukahal, Human Resources
- Leshuan Oliver, Public Safety
- Traci Ray, Residential Education
- Kathleen Seabolt, Child and Family Center
- Fran Spurrier, VUIT
- Joanne Wang, School of Engineering
- Lis Wyatt, Plant Operations

## APPENDIX A: STEERING COMMITTEE AND SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Subcommittee Members were selected from nominations not placed on the Steering Committee, staff who contact the Steering Committee to demonstrate interest, and recommendations made by Steering Committee members based upon the nature of the inquiry.

Subcommittee Leadership and Membership

### Compensation Subcommittee Chair

Fran Spurrier

### Compensation Subcommittee Membership

- Megan Artus
- Andrea Bordeau
- Tiffany Givens
- Whitney Harris
- Batia Karabel
- Kristen Lemaster
- Jeff Loudon
- Jennie Marchal
- Hilda McMackin
- Teea Moore
- Sarah Nagy
- Emma Pacilli
- Sarah Rigsby
- Carjamin Scott
- Stephanie Sefcik
- Anna Thomas
- Ashley Thompson
- Joanne Wang
- Meredith Williams

### Professional Development Subcommittee Chairs

- Danielle Certa
- Yasmine Mukahal

#### Professional Development Subcommittee Membership

- Kelsey Bahadursingh
- Christina Boncyk
- Robin Carlson
- Krystal Clark
- Julie James
- Heather Mitchell
- Leshuan Oliver
- Dawn Riddle
- Taj Wolff
- Lisbeth Wyatt

### Workplace Safety Subcommittee Chair

Michelle Kovash

#### Workplace Safety Subcommittee Membership

- Jennifer Bennett
- Ronee Francis
- Tiffany Givens
- Debbie Hayes
- Mary Heath
- Pat Helland
- Jamie Linski
- Christelle Luchsinger
- John McCammon
- Liane Moneta-Koehler

## APPENDIX A: STEERING COMMITTEE AND SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

- Megan Naughton
- Traci Ray
- Karen Rufus
- Natalia Smothers
- Ausra Speer
- Wilna Taylor
- Cara Tuttle Bell

#### Values and Respect in the Workplace Subcommittee Chair

Dominique Millen

#### Values and Respect in the Workplace Subcommittee Membership

- Kelsey Anito
- Julie Catellier
- Mary Anne Caton
- Olivia Hill
- Tracey Jackson
- Melissa Mallon
- Christie St. John
- Terry Trip

### Work-Life Integration Subcommittee Chair

Kathleen Seabolt

#### Work-Life Integration Subcommittee Membership

- Sheena Adams-Avery
- Laura Adcock
- Angela Baker
- Stephanie Covington
- Jan Deike
- Lindsey Fox
- Evelyn Galletti
- Erin Hafkenschiel
- Amanda Harding
- Aletha Karls
- Jennifer Masterson
- Simone McCarter
- Elisabeth Shook
- Melissa Skopak
- Molly Thompson
- Amanda Trabue

## APPENDIX B: LISTENING SESSIONS, WORKSHIPS, AND OTHER METHODS OF INPUT SOLICITATION

Steering Committee Outreach

- Meet the Council event, December 4, 2019
- Presentation to VUPS MASS meeting, January 22, 2020
- Presentation to USAC, February 11, 2020

### Professional Development Subcommittee

- February 21, 2020
- February 28, 2020

### Workplace Safety Subcommittee

- February 25, 2020
- March 4, 2020

### Work-Life Integration Subcommittee

- February 4, 2020
- February 6, 2020
- February 12, 2020

Additional information was received via the Staff WAVE online feedback form.

### APPENDIX C: SUPPLEMENTAL CHILDCARE RESEARCH

### Childcare

Access to childcare is critical for university families. Access is defined as both enrollment (determined by availability and accessed through the Wait List) and affordability. The Child and Family Center Advisory Task Force annually benchmarks childcare offerings to inform understanding of community tuition rates and provision for care at peer institutions. Findings incorporates research from the Faculty WAVE Work-Life subcommittee that did its own benchmarking of childcare offerings at peer institutions, comparing Vanderbilt's childcare capacity and cost with those of 20 universities.

Vanderbilt is one of the few institutions that has a childcare program run by the University. Of the 20 universities researched, four provide no campus childcare at all (Case Western Reserve, Emory, Northwestern, and Brown). Most universities have at least one facility (Dartmouth, Rice, University of Rochester, Washington University, Cornell) or two facilities (Carnegie Mellon, Duke, Chicago, Princeton, Notre Dame). In contrast, Vanderbilt has three employer-sponsored campus childcare facilities. Only four universities offer more than three campus childcare centers: Stanford and Harvard have 6 centers; Yale has 7; and Columbia has 12, though Yale's and Columbia's centers are affiliated with, but not run by the University.

### Enrollment

In FY21 VCFC has greatly reduced the Waiting List for The Acorn School. Even with necessary group size adjustments since March 2020 to manage COVID protocols, the Wait List has been reduced to children under the age of 20 months. Current Wait List (as of September 2020) is primarily unborn infants; this means 100% of children currently Wait Listed may be offered care in August 2021. Vanderbilt currently has 330 spots for children at its three centers (down from 360 due to reduction in group size necessitated by COVID). Only four schools have a greater capacity: Harvard (400 spots), Johns Hopkins (414 spots), Michigan (429), and Stanford (908). Information about capacity at Yale and Columbia was not found. The majority of the

## APPENDIX C: SUPPLEMENTAL CHILDCARE RESEARCH

schools examined have fewer than 330 childcare spots: Duke (322), Notre Dame (320), Carnegie Mellon (180), Cornell (170), Washington University (156), Rice (110), and Dartmouth (86).

### Affordability

The Acorn School provision of care remains under comparable quality childcare in Nashville even with a 15% tuition increase levied July 1, 2020 and the program's monthly fees are the lowest compared to all peer institutions, ranging from \$960 for preschoolers to \$1145 for infants. In comparison, Stanford (\$2466) and Harvard (\$3150) charge the highest infant fees. The highest fees for preschoolers are Princeton (\$1973), Harvard (\$1950), and Stanford (\$1862); and Duke, Michigan, Washington University are all around \$1300 per month. Additionally, VCFC implemented an aggressive scholarship program compared to years past; tuition adjustments are tiered to income:

- Tier 1: Family Income at or below \$49,999 = 50% tuition adjustment
- Tier 2: Family Income between \$50,000 \$74,999 = 20% tuition adjustment
- Tier 3: Family Income between \$75,000 \$99,999 = 7% tuition adjustment

### Elder Care

In February 2020, VCFC partnered with The Council on Aging of Middle Tennessee to beta-test their ElderCare Coach program. The outcome is to retain the relationship for VU employees to receive remote coaching to understand resources for their eldercare needs.

VCFC continues to offer ElderCare support through monthly zoom meetings (formerly lunch and learns) and detailed in the E-newsletter https://www.vanderbilt.edu/child-family-center/ resource-quick-links/archived-newsletters.php

## APPENDIX C: SUPPLEMENTAL CHILDCARE RESEARCH

### Additional Supports for VU Working Families

- VUHR has created a Well-Being Manager position; staffed by Stacey Bonner, MSW, this position supports affinity groups and assists employees to understand VU resources.
- Vanderbilt partners with Abenity to offer employee discounts on a wide range of products, food, tickets for family-friendly activities. Information: https://news.vanderbilt. edu/2020/07/31/hr-announces-new-professional-development-tool-employeeperks-program/
- Families that are relocating may find information about the various Nashville school systems, chambers, neighborhoods at https://www.vuyourlife.com/.

## APPENDIX D: SUPPLEMENTAL RESEARCH/ Recommended reading By Subcommittee Concern

### Compensation

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## APPENDIX D: SUPPLEMENTAL RESEARCH/ Recommended reading By Subcommittee Concern

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