

Minutes for Vanderbilt University Faculty Senate

October 12, 2023, Meeting

Attendees

Voting members in attendance: Alissa Hare, Allison Walker, Amanda Satterthwaite, André Christie-Mizell, Andrea Capizzi, Camilla Benbow, Celina Callahan-Kapoor, Chris Guthrie, Dan Levin, Dawn Iacobucci, Elise Boos, Elliot McCarter, Florence Sanchez, Frank Candelaria, James Booth, Ji Hye Jung, Joerg Rieger, John Ayers, John Koch, John Kuriyan, Jonathan Sprinkle, Jonathan Waters, Julie Vernon, Julio Ayala, Kevin Schey, Krishnendu Roy, Lisa Fazio, Marcy Singer-Gabella, Mariano Sana, ML Sandoz, Nicole Cobb, Pamela Jeffries, Pengfei Li, Peter Kolkay, Piran Kidambi, Rebecca Ihrie, Susan Andrews, Tamarya Hoyt, Tim Hanusa, Timothy McNamara, Tyler Barrett, Yolanda Pierce, and Zhongyue (John) Yang.

Voting members absent: Aimi Hamraie, Alexandra Shingina, Amanda Rose, Amanda Shakal, Anna Richmond, Brian Heuser, Bruce Morrill, Buddy Creech, Catherine McTamane, Christian Ketel, Christos Constandtinidis, Cindy Reinhart-King, Claudine Taaffe, David Hyde, Debra Friedman, Emanuelle Oliveira-Monte, Ingrid Meszoely, Jeff Balsler, Joe Fishman, Joyce Johnson, Kate Clouse, Katherine Carroll, Kelly Goldsmith, Kelly Sopko, Kristen Scarpato, Lealani Acosta, Louis Garrard, Queen Henry Okafor, Ralf Habermann, Ritu Banerjee, Ryan Belcher, Sara Horst, Sara Martin, and Thomas Steenburgh.

Ex-officio members in attendance: Alan Wiseman, Alex Sevilla, Cleo Rucker, Cybele Raver, Daniel Diermeier, Donald Brady, Eric Kopstain, Elizabeth Cantania, GL Black, John Lutz, Jon Shaw, Padma Raghavan, Rebecca Swan, and Tracey George.

Ex-officio members absent: Anders Hall, Brett Sweet, Candice Storey Lee, Doug Christiansen, Jennier Pietenpol, Nathan Green, Ruby Shellaway, Steve Ertel, and Tracey Sharpley-Whiting.

Guests in attendance: Alex Valnoski, Alexandra Capps, Daniel Morgan, Emily Morgan, Eric Cummings, Heidi Bludan, Heraldo Falcom, Hilary Travers, Katherine Brick, Kiersten Kinder, Lily Claiborne, Lin Meng, Marcy Pedzwater, Mehar Bhasin, Panveet Aulakh, Ron Martinez, Sheba Karim, Stephen Camarata Talia Kolikant, and Victoria Morgan.

Call to Order

A meeting of Vanderbilt Faculty Senate was held on October 12th 2023, in the large conference room at the Faculty Senate. It began at 4:11pm and was presided over by Chair Andrea Capizzi with Vice Chair Tammy Hoyt as secretary.

Quorum as specified in the Faculty Senate Constitution (revised 4/5/2019) Article II.B.1. was met with the recorded attendance of {43} voting members of the Faculty Senate.

Approval of Minutes

Chair Capizzi asked whether there were any corrections to the proposed minutes. No corrections were proffered.

Chair Capizzi motioned for approval of the minutes as circulated of the September 7th, 2023, meeting. A motion was made and seconded. Secretary Hoyt confirmed that the minutes were approved by a vote of 43 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstentions.

Chair Capizzi proceeded to the next item of business.

Report of the Executive Committee

Chair Capizzi:

- Vanderbilt University Sesquicentennial Fun Fact
 - On this 150-year anniversary of VU, Edward Emerson Barnard became the recipient of the only honorary degree granted by Vanderbilt, a Master in Science, in recognition of his contributions to the field of astronomy.
- Advocacy Workshop Update
 - A presentation was delivered on VU advocacy efforts, ideas, and updates on a workshop led by Vice Chancellor Nathan Green (Government & Community Relations) and Vice Chancellor Steve Ertel (Communications & Marketing).
 - Future Senate workshops to be expected, thanks to Chancellor Diermeier's efforts with Dialogue Vanderbilt.
- Faculty Morale & Experience Survey Update
 - The survey will be delivered via email before November 1.
 - Senator Dan Levin (Professor of Psychology and Human Development) agreed to analyze the results, keeping all survey work within the Faculty Senate.
- Faculty Senate Portal
 - Anonymous emails cannot be responded to via the portal. If a user would like a response, they must submit an email address.

Chair Capizzi proceeded to the next item of business.

Chair Capizzi turned the floor over to Chancellor Diermeier.

Chancellor Remarks

Chancellor Diermeier welcomed the Faculty Senate and addressed two topics:

- Israel/Hamas Conflict
 - VU sent out a statement via email to the VU community addressing the violence in Israel occurring over the weekend, intending to demonstrate support to VU community members while expressing nuance.
 - The statement was also posted on social media as many students do not regularly monitor VU email. The statement was poorly received via social media, with negative feedback mostly from parents of students and alumni. The statement prompted some Jewish parents to question the safety of Jewish students at VU.
 - The Chancellor acknowledged this mistake and affirmed VU as a safe and accepting environment for the Jewish community, citing personal discussions and a previously conducted survey assessing belonging within VU.
 - A follow-up statement, without the nuance, was internally disseminated on Wednesday, October 11, 2023.

- The Chancellor acknowledged that the faculty and students have been phenomenal under these difficult circumstances, and he feels that the VU community is in a good place.
- Vanderbilt Rankings
 - The Chancellor is appalled by these rankings which do not accurately reflect VU, but nevertheless are relied upon by parents and prospective students.
 - Rankings related to affordability wrongly present VU negatively, posing high barriers-to-entry for low-income students.
 - Our financial program was successfully designed for our students to graduate with no debt. 85% of our students graduate with zero debt.
 - Absurdly, to retain good rankings we are incentivized to encourage low-income students with no debt, because of VU aid, to take on debt.

Chancellor Diermeier opened the floor for Questions.

- *Question:* Chair Andrea Capizzi asked what we are doing for students in response to current events?
 - *Answer:* GL Black – Vice Provost for Student Affairs answered in honor of the Chancellor explaining the work that Student Affairs is doing in regard to the ongoing crisis.
 - A response team has gathered a list of students with dual citizenship or ties to the impacted areas to send targeted messages offering support. Faculty and staff have been checking in with students and funneling information to Students Affairs.
 - Offering resources and in-person events (both University and student-led): Urgent care counseling, Chabad/Hillel hosted a vigil, reflective walks, and a community prayer event.
- *Question:* A Senate member asked if campus security is on high alert for tomorrow due to calls for violence towards the Jewish community?
 - *Answer:* Public Safety is working with local law enforcement and national agencies to stay alert to any potential threats.
- *Question:* The same Senate member asked a ranking-related question wanting to verify if Vanderbilt gives large financial aid packages to rich families?
 - *Answer:* Students receive financial aid inversely relative to family income.

Chair Capizzi proceeded to the next item of business.

Standing Committee Reports

Chair Capizzi called for reports from the standing committees.

No reports were made.

Ad-Hoc Committee Reports

Co-chairs of the Vanderbilt University/Vanderbilt University Medical Center (VU/VUMC) Ad Hoc committee, Vicky Morgan and Stephen Camarata, presented the quantitative findings from their survey regarding VU/VUMC separation.

- Anonymous survey – 4819 emails were sent, and 690 responses were received.

- Overall, VUMC staff reported being more unsatisfied and negatively affected in meeting the educational, research, and administrative missions/needs of VU/VUMC than VU members.
- The committee's next steps are to summarize the qualitative comments and develop recommendations to be inserted into the coming final report.

Chair Capizzi opened the floor for questions:

No questions were asked.

Chair Capizzi proceeded to the next item of business.

Old Business

There was no old business

Chair Capizzi proceeded to the next item of business.

New Business

There was no new business.

Chair Capizzi proceeded to the next item of business.

Chair Capizzi introduced Provost C. Cybele Raver for her scheduled remarks.

Scheduled Remarks

- Provost Raver expressed gratitude to Vicky Morgan and Stephen Camarata for their presentation.
- Provost Cybele Raver turned the floor over to the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs and Professional Education, Tracey George.

Vice Provost George delivered the Faculty Salary Structure presentation.

- Challenges of the Faculty Salary Structure
 - Pay equity
 - Yearly Salary Structure & Pay Equity Analysis is available at IPEDS (Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System).
 - Salaries were comparable across sex and race
 - Salary compression
 - Results of the first pay compression study indicates *slight* evidence of compression for new faculty and faculty who've been at VU for 20+ years.
- Opportunities for improvement
 - Increase frequency of evaluations to 3 years.
 - Work with the Office of the General Counsel to bring in new consultants with differing perspectives
 - Work with faculty and leaders to improve salary structures
 - Comments from Dean Benbow and Dean Roy highlighted efforts from both Peabody and the School of Engineering, respectively, towards reviewing and developing enhanced salary structures.

Vice Provost George opened the floor for Questions.

- *Portal Question for Donald Brady:* Request to explain and address the VUMC salary structure.
 - *Answer:* The pay structure is different at VUMC. Cadence of review tied to productivity and national benchmarks and market corrections.
- *Question:* A faculty member asked Vice Provost Tracey George if external salary data will be presented in the next meeting?
 - *Answer:* The data is highly confidential and cannot be disseminated. If the data were redacted of identifying information, it would have no probative value. We will be looking at the economy, not comparing our salary structure to other universities and their salaries.
 - *Follow up question:* The committee submitted some specific questions that they wanted the external firm to look at and answer, did we get any answers or data back on that?
 - *Answer:* There is no way to capture at data. We are trying to find a connection between compensation and workload. We will launch out Esploro, a new platform, that will allow us to collect data on workload starting next year.
- *Question:* Senator Kidambi asked how do we factor in cost of living in Nashville? In regard to faculty experience, how do we rationalize that with the mandate free provision to ask folks to take the covid extension year?
 - *Answer:* Regarding cost of the extension, it is best to talk to your dean to waive the extension that you were originally given. Regarding cost of living, Nashville is becoming more expensive for everybody. This is something Faculty Life has approached us to do in hopes that there is a way to measure this.
- *Question:* Ex Officio member Catania asked if the Faculty Senate will be receiving the data that informed this presentation and if evidence of inversion would be addressed as a major issue?
 - *Answer:* The data will not be shared out, due to confidentiality. Regarding salary compression, most of campus did not have significant compression issues and there was no evidence of inversion.

Chair Capizzi proceeded to the next item of business.

Good of the Senate

Chair Capizzi opened the floor to comments.

- *Question to Chancellor:* Explain your statement that we have incentive to put low-income students in debt.
 - *Answer:* These rankings deviate from our values, that in good conscious, we cannot acquiesce to. It's absurd to put more students in debt to improve our affordability ranking.

Chair Capizzi proceeded to the next item of business.

Adjournment

It was moved that the meeting should be adjourned. There was a second and the meeting adjourned at 5:30pm.

Tamarya L. Hoyt

Tamarya Hoyt, Secretary
Faculty Senate Vice Chair

11/02/2023

Date of Approval