This subcommittee has been tasked by the Faculty Council to review policies and make recommendations on the question of voting rights for faculty with secondary appointments.

With the recent emphasis on interdisciplinary work at Vanderbilt, it has become increasingly common for faculty to acquire secondary appointments outside of their tenure home. Some of our colleagues have pointed out that while faculty with secondary appointments might undertake considerable teaching/mentoring and service duties in their “second home,” they currently do not have the right to vote on important departmental business.

The subcommittee reviewed current A&S policy, consulted with faculty colleagues, reviewed the policies of other schools within Vanderbilt, and researched the policies of other top universities. At Vanderbilt (and at many other institutions), the right to vote on personnel issues (initial appointment, tenure, and promotion) is consistently linked to the tenure home. This reciprocal principle is deeply embedded within both A&S and University governing documents, and the subcommittee does not call for any change to this rule.

The subcommittee has, however, thought about the question of voting in broader terms beyond the confines of personnel issues. Faculty who are members of a department typically vote on a wide variety of matters, including curriculum changes, requirements for majors and minors, graduate admissions, mission statements and strategy reports, etc. There is nothing within university or College regulations that prohibit the College of Arts & Science from permitting departments or programs from extending such voting opportunities to faculty members with secondary appointments, should the program/department wish to do so. Indeed, it makes sense that faculty with secondary appointments who actively serve on committees, advise graduate students, teach related courses, and share research interests with their secondary unit should be able to vote on these matters of critical importance to the workings of their “second home.”

We have therefore recommended the creation of a new subsection of secondary appointment, the “secondary appointment with limited voting rights.” This designation is meant to help departments/programs recognize the work of individuals who put extraordinary effort into their second home, while still maintaining the basic principle that links “personnel voting rights” to the unit of primary appointment/tenure home.

The subcommittee further recommends that the College of Arts & Science delineate a process whereby departments and programs can make the responsibilities and rights of each individual secondary appointment as clear as possible. Prior to making/renewing a secondary appointment, it is important that all parties—the faculty member, the primary appointment unit, and the secondary appointment unit—should explicitly discuss and agree upon the service and teaching work the faculty member is expected to contribute to each unit, as well as clarify the range of privileges the secondary appointment entails.
Secondary Appointment with Limited Voting Rights:
This designation is intended to recognize the extraordinary, long-term involvement in terms of service, teaching, and advising of a faculty member with a secondary appointment. Because of the individual's engagement in the work of the department/program, the individual is granted limited voting rights.

Faculty with secondary appointments with limited voting rights often:
- Serve as undergraduate major advisor and direct undergraduate honors thesis
- Serve as primary graduate thesis advisor and serve on graduate dissertation committees.
- Attend department/program meetings
- Serve on department/program committees
- Teach courses within the department/program

As a result, the faculty member is granted the right to vote on all department/program business (such as curriculum changes, structure of major/minor, graduate admissions, etc.) with the exception of personnel issues (hiring, tenure, promotion).

The secondary appointment with limited voting rights designation carries:
- No additional financial obligation (salary or other funding) from the University or either department/program
- No tenure implications (department/program of secondary appointment does not vote on faculty’s review/promotion/tenure)

All obligations/activities undertaken in the secondary department/program must be clearly delineated and mutually agreed upon by the individual faculty member, the chair of the department/program of the individual’s primary appointment, and the chair of the department/program of secondary appointment. Upon this agreement and a positive vote of the secondary department’s faculty, the chair of the secondary department/program shall recommend to the dean that the faculty member be granted secondary appointment with limited voting rights.

Like standard secondary appointments, secondary appointments with limited voting rights are officially recognized through a letter of appointment by the Dean of Arts and Science and are also noted in the Vanderbilt Registry. Faculty members with such secondary appointment agree to have their names listed on public department/program descriptions (e.g., web pages, brochures) as “secondary appointment.”

Secondary appointments with limited voting rights are term-limited for up to three years and are renewable.