Minutes of the Faculty  
College of Arts & Science  
April 19, 2016

Dean Lauren Benton called the meeting to order at 4:10 p.m. in Wilson Hall 103. Approximately 75 faculty members were in attendance.

1. Approval of the Minutes of the Faculty Meeting of March 22, 2016.

There were no comments or questions, and the Minutes were approved.

2. Conversation with the Diversity, Inclusion and Community Committee.

The two co-chairs of the Chancellor’s Diversity, Inclusion and Community Committee (Beverly Moran, Professor of Law, and Keivan Stassun, A&S senior associate dean for graduate education and research and professor of astronomy) presented the Committee’s draft recommendations for feedback. The final recommendations of the Committee, which will be presented to the Chancellor by July 1st, will help to reinforce and implement the diversity and inclusion themes in the Vanderbilt Academic Strategic Plan, especially the ideas of trans-institutionality and meaningful student engagement and experience. Diversity and inclusion are important, Dean Stassun explained, because the academic research literature indicates that diverse organizations outperform others in the marketplace and among educational institutions. In addition to their role in the strategic plan and fostering better outcomes, the Chancellor and the Committee believe that diversity and inclusion are central to any great university’s values and mission.

Dean Stassun explained that the Committee divided its work into three phases: Phase 1 included research and data gathering, including town hall meetings with faculty, staff, and students. In phase 2, the Committee drafted its recommendations. In phase 3, the present phase, the Committee is seeking feedback on its draft recommendations.

The Committee’s draft recommendations cover six areas: Culture and climate; faculty and students; teaching and curriculum; staff; community engagement and research centers; and administration, governance, and accountability. Each area has several high-level recommendations; these high-level recommendations will be supported by more detailed recommendations in the final report. In the area of culture and climate, the Committee emphasizes education for all about the problem of unconscious bias and excellence in regards to inclusion, rather than mere compliance with norms and regulations. Also included in this area are recommendations promoting orientation and mentorship programs for incoming students and resources for international students. In the second area, faculty and students, the Committee drafted four linked recommendations: Vanderbilt should diversify the faculty; be a leading producer of Ph.D. graduates from underrepresented groups; move beyond traditional testing metrics; and
develop a new branded program, Experience Vanderbilt, that would build upon the Opportunity Vanderbilt program in order to engage all students in meaningful experiences. Regarding teaching and the curriculum, the Committee recommends that faculty members be encouraged to develop courses or course content on diversity, difference, and power and be offered professional development for inclusive teaching. The Committee recommends that Vanderbilt create opportunities for staff members to meaningfully contribute to the educational mission and provide them with professional and leadership development. Underrepresented groups should also be more diversified among job titles. Regarding community engagement and research centers, the Committee recommends that Vanderbilt identify programs that are working well at present and ensure that they are fully funded and staffed. Vanderbilt should also consider establishing a program or institute that focuses on civil rights and social justice on a broad scale, modeling it on the Robert Penn Warren Center for the Humanities. The Committee’s recommendations related to administration, governance, and accountability are modeled on the Vanderbilt Medical Center’s accountability structure, except that, where VUMC’s accountability structure is hierarchical, their proposed accountability structure for Vanderbilt University is more egalitarian. Chairs and directors of academic programs should work with their respective deans to establish diversity and inclusion plans and to develop metrics to ascertain their progress. These plans and outcomes should be made public, as Apple does on its website http://www.apple.com/diversity/ The provost should help support the deans in this endeavor and hold them accountable for achieving their diversity and inclusion goals.

In response to questions, Dean Stassun stated that better data collection is needed in order to ascertain the extent to which Vanderbilt is achieving its diversity and inclusion goals. Some broad-picture statistics will be made available, but, for privacy reasons, some detailed information will not, although the overall goal is for more transparency and openness. In order to help resolve discrimination grievances, the Committee is encouraging a more robust relationship between Vanderbilt’s higher administration, Human Resources, and compliance functions. Ideological diversity is not part of the Committee’s charge.

The faculty thanked Dean Stassun and Professor Moran for their information.

3. Review of the Minutes of the Faculty Council meeting of April 5, 2016, pending approval of the Faculty Council.

Professor Tiffiny Tung, Chair of the A&S Faculty Council, asked if there were any comments or questions about the Council Minutes or the Council-approved new and revised course descriptions; there were none.

Professor Tung explained that Faculty Council at its April meeting discussed Professor Larry Zwiebel’s point at the March A&S Faculty Meeting that the College of Arts and Science more thoroughly evaluate the teaching of A&S faculty members. Several faculty members at the Faculty Meeting supported Professor Zwiebel’s position and stated that the existing course evaluation form is not useful or indicative of teaching quality.
Professor Tung further explained that the course evaluation form has been revised by a provostial-level committee, which will be used starting next fall. Council members also agreed to form a subcommittee during the next academic year to study this matter. Part of the committee’s charge would be to collect best practices in this regard.

4. Executive Motion Calendar.

A. From the Committee on Educational Programs: Proposed revision of the Asian Studies major and minors. There were no comments or questions, and the faculty approved the proposed revision.

B. From the A&S Faculty Council: Proposed Special Status for CASA Study Abroad Programs. The proposal would streamline the process whereby CASA (Consortium for Advanced Studies Abroad) study abroad programs are approved so that students may participate in the programs more quickly (Vanderbilt is one of the founding members of CASA). Dean Benton explained that, under this proposal, individual CASA study abroad programs would not be reviewed by the A&S faculty, individual courses offered by a CASA study abroad program would be reviewed for their suitability for A&S credit by A&S departments and programs. CASA study abroad programs are likely to be higher quality than most existing study abroad programs, given the Ivy-League+ membership of the consortium. Dean Campbell further explained, in response to questions, that the CASA Board of Directors reviews the study abroad programs and that Susan Barone, executive director of global learning and education, is Vanderbilt’s representative on the Board. If the A&S faculty approves this proposal, CASA study abroad programs would be approved by FACIE (the Provost’s Faculty Advisory Council on International Education) and their courses would be reviewed by A&S departments and programs (the A&S faculty approved the CASA Cuba study abroad program at the February Faculty Meeting). There were no other comments or questions, and the faculty granted special status to CASA study abroad programs.

C. From the A&S Faculty Council: Second reading of the proposed revision of the Rules and Procedures for Faculty Appointments, Renewals, Promotions and Tenure in the College of Arts and Science, Vanderbilt University. Professor Tung explained that the proposed revision of the A&S Rules and Procedures includes three key changes: First, to enable joint appointments such that faculty members may be appointed to two or more academic programs after their initial appointment to Vanderbilt; second, to replace the second and fourth year reviews of tenure-track faculty members with a third year review; and, third, to change some administrative language in the document.

Each type of change was discussed in turn: In response to questions, Dean Benton and Professor Tung explained that, if the proposed revision is approved, joint appointments may be made between A&S departments and programs, but also may be made between an A&S department or program and another Vanderbilt school (the other Vanderbilt school would follow its own approval procedure for such an appointment). The proposed revision states that “Jointly appointed faculty members may not hold different ranks in different A&S units." The Rules and Procedures document is silent on whether there can
be different ranks if a faculty member is jointly appointed between an A&S department
or program and another Vanderbilt school, and also about procedures for such
appointments, because such arrangements will depend on procedures of other schools.
Joint appointments within A&S must be approved by a majority vote of eligible voters in
each unit, according to its procedures and the standards stipulated by the A&S Rules and
Procedures, by each unit’s chair and/or director, and by the Dean of the College of Arts
and Science.

There were no comments or questions about the second or third types of change to the
A&S Rules and Procedures. The A&S faculty then approved a motion forwarding
the proposed revision of the A&S Rules and Procedures to a full vote of the tenured
and tenure-track A&S faculty by electronic ballot.

5. Original Motion Calendar.

No issues were raised.

6. Good of the College.

No issues were raised.

7. Adjournment.

The meeting adjourned at 5:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert A. Driskill,
A&S Secretary of the Faculty