

Vanderbilt University  
Faculty Senate Meeting  
February 2, 2006, 4:10 p.m.  
140 Frist Hall

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Special Topic: "Academic Investment at Vanderbilt: Structural Changes,  
Funding Priorities, External Challenges."

Call to Order

Approval of Minutes of December 1, 2005

Note: Minutes can be found on the Senate website at:

<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/facultysenate/files/120105FS.pdf>

Report of the Executive Committee

John A. McCarthy, Chair of the Faculty Senate

Remarks by Chancellor Gee

Remarks by Provost Zeppos

Remarks by Mike Schoenfeld, Vice Chancellor for Public Affairs, and Jeff Vincent,  
Assistant Vice Chancellor, Federal Relations

New business

Good of the Senate

Motion to Adjourn

Voting Members present: Ahner, Barnett, Barz, Burk, Campbell, Casagrande, Conway-Welch, Dowdy, Ellingham, Emeson, Ernst, Foster, Friedman, Fuchs, Gabbe, Galloway, Griffin, Hearn, Heflinger, Hodges, Jennings, Lachs, LeBoeuf, Link, McCarthy, McCarty, Neely, Pettepher, Shyr, Smrekar, Steinberg, Tolk, and Washington.

Voting Members absent: Adams (regrets), Barry (regrets), Benbow (regrets), Bradford, Carter, Cummings (regrets), Flake (regrets), Fogo (regrets), George, Hetcher, Hoffman, Hudnut-Beumler (regrets), Levine (regrets), Peebles (regrets), Porter (regrets), Reisenberg (regrets), Rubin, Sandler (regrets), Schmidt, Smith, Tarpley, Wait and Wasserstein (regrets).

Ex Officio Members present: Balsler, Brisky, Gee, Gherman, Hall, Kovalcheck, Perfetto, Sandler, Schoenfeld, Thompson, and Zeppos.

Ex Officio Members absent: Barge, Chalkley (regrets), Gotterer (regrets), Jacobson (regrets), McNamara, Outlaw, Spitz, Summar, and Williams.

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The meeting was called to order at 4:10 p.m. by Chair John A. McCarthy. Minutes from the 12/1/05 meeting were reviewed and a motion was made to approve them. Motion passed unanimously.

### **Next Item on the Agenda – Report of the Executive Committee**

Chair McCarthy gave the report for the Executive Committee. He first reminded the senators that the call for nominations for Faculty Awards has gone out, and he encouraged them to submit nominations.

He then turned to today's meeting and explained that the focus on the topic "Academic Investment at Vanderbilt: Structural Changes, Funding Priorities, External Challenges" is a continuation of the Senate's reflections in connection with Vice Chancellor Harry Jacobsen's presentation at the December meeting of the Faculty Senate on "Current Status and Future Prospects for Academic and Professional Momentum at Vanderbilt: A Medical Center Perspective" that led to animated discussion. He added that the topic of investment, academic and professional programs, and funding opportunities is important as Vanderbilt considers how to get to where we want to be as an institution—undergraduate, graduate, and professional—in the foreseeable future. Noting a full schedule, he then turned the floor over to Chancellor Gee for his report.

### **Next Item on the Agenda – Chancellor's Report**

Chancellor Gee thanked Chair McCarthy. He began by talking about the work of the Campus Security Task Force and said that their recommendations have been implemented. He explained that they identified a problem that goes much deeper than the initial problem—it goes to the heart of campus culture. He added that a handful of working groups have been formed and an email has been sent out about these groups. In preparation for the 2008 rollout of the Freshman Commons, he explained that these groups will be working on how we relate to each other. These groups are required to submit a report by the end of the semester to the Provost, and their recommendations will be implemented immediately.

Chancellor Gee mentioned that many of the ideas that were generated at the retreat back in Jan. 2005 are being further explored by Provost Zeppos and VCHA Jacobson. He said that he is working with David Osborne to set up two seminars in the spring about these issues. He said that he will be working with the Senate to identify faculty members to participate.

Chancellor Gee also said that SACS reaccreditation is ongoing and that Tim McNamara will spearhead this.

Finally, he brought up the elimination of men's soccer, and said that it was not an easy proposition. He said that he wanted to explain the decision. First, he said that he was

committed to not letting Vanderbilt's athletic budget grow. Moreover, since Vanderbilt is in the SEC conference, we have to give scholarships to our student-athletes. He also said that this was a Title IX issue, in that we needed to add a women's sport. Adding women's swimming didn't add any costs since the pool in Centennial Sportsplex could be used. Also, SEC does not support men's soccer.

He mentioned that when he was asked why there wasn't public discussion on this issue, he admitted that he has made a few decisions in which he didn't consult with the faculty. He added that some decisions need to be made that way.

He invited questions or comments. Hearing none, he thanked the Senate for the opportunity to speak and turned the floor over to Chair McCarthy. Chair McCarthy then welcomed Provost Nick Zeppos to make his presentation to the Senate.

### **Next Item on the Agenda – Remarks by Provost Zeppos**

Provost Zeppos thanked Chair McCarthy. He began his talk by stating that faculty are the ones who are the lifeblood of the university. (link to presentation: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/facultysenate/files/Zeppospres.ppt>)

He said that Vanderbilt's goals are to: increase diversity, create distinctive programs, and achieve excellence. He said that universities tend not to be well-managed. He said that we have to be strategic in our hiring of faculty.

The heart and soul of the university is undergraduate education, Provost Zeppos said. It is very central to what people think about Vanderbilt. Undergraduate applications have increased over the past seven years, and the selectivity rate is down to 35%. Our yield is going up as our application rate is going up.

He mentioned faculty retention as a key issue. He said that this administration has tried to retain the best faculty. He stated that he is gratified to see faculty members working with deans and colleagues to keep the good faculty members and recruit new ones. He also mentioned diversity of faculty members as another key issue for Vanderbilt.

Concluding his presentation, he then opened the floor for questions and comments. Senator Ronnie Steinberg asked about retention over time by socioeconomic groups and the programs that we might develop for incoming students who don't have the preparation and skills that typical private school students have.

Provost Zeppos said that 60-70% of our students come from public schools. He thinks that what's happening is the skill difference will begin to disappear (i.e., less space between top students and bottom students). We have to change our notion of the Writing Studio and other resources as a place to go "if you can't make it." We want it to be a place where everyone goes in order to improve regardless of starting level.

Hearing no other questions, he turned the floor over to Chair McCarthy. Chair McCarthy then introduced Michael Schoenfeld and Jeff Vincent.

### **Next Item on the Agenda – Remarks by Michael Schoenfeld and Jeff Vincent**

Mike Schoenfeld thanked Chair McCarthy for the opportunity to speak to the Senate. He began by acknowledging the challenges at the federal, state, and local level in terms of external funding. He added that virtually everything that happens on this campus every day is affected by federal, state, and local governments. He mentioned healthcare specifically. He stated that Betty Nixon and David Mills lead Vanderbilt's state legislation delegation. He mentioned the two largest challenges at the state level: TennCare and science and research attitudes (re: stem cells, etc.). He said that we are probably spending more time analyzing and reviewing that issue (science and research attitudes) because of dollars and their affect on Vanderbilt. He said that we were successful in getting those initiatives on science and research issues off the table or defeated those bills. We have now put together a coalition to lead an effort to educate our legislators about the value of scientific research. A number of faculty members have been involved in these initiatives.

Mike then introduced Jeff Vincent to talk about the federal scene. He added that Jeff formerly worked at NASA, and has been at Vanderbilt for almost 8 years.

Jeff said that he will laser in on federal research funding. He said that there is bad news and good news. University based research is in a very narrow wedge that is always subject to budget pressures. First, the bad news: federal research was up in fiscal year 2006, but 90% was for weapons development and Mars exploration. All federal research money was down for the first time in 9 years. Funding for the National Institutes for Health was down for the first time in 35 years. The National Science Foundation got a small increase, but it is less in real terms for them. Funding for the Department of Energy is down. Funding for the Department of Defense's basic research is down by almost 3%. NASA basic research is down by 8%. Funding for the National Endowment for the Humanities was up 2.1%. This is the bad news, and we don't foresee any change in the future.

Jeff said that the good news is in the recent State of the Union address, many new initiatives were embraced regarding innovation in research. We won't know details until the White House submits its budget, however. We have heard that the Department of Energy may receive a 14% increase and NSF may receive an increase of 8%. Yesterday, the President's science advisor said that this is not a commitment to all areas of science. We have heard that NIH may take a significant cut.

He opened the floor for questions.

Senator Ron Emeson asked if there is a feeling that the biomedical community is being punished for stem cell research. Jeff replied that he did not think so. He thought, instead

that the NIH had its heyday in the late 90s, and now the pendulum has swung the other way.

Senator Norman Tolk? asked a question about increased accountability, and wondered if that was something that Jeff had heard about. Jeff responded that this is something that he has heard from Congress. There are a few Congresspeople who are not enamored of university research, but these initiatives for more accountability don't usually gather steam.

Chair McCarthy stated that he gets the sense that the financial "pie" will not get any bigger. He asked what Jeff thought would happen in terms of the pressures on the budget to fund the initiatives already on the table. Jeff replied that he doesn't see the environmental factors in DC changing for at least a few more years. He said that he thinks that we will be under a constrained budget for some time.

Hearing no other questions, Mike and Jeff thanked the Senate for their time, and turned the floor back to Chair McCarthy.

#### **Next Item on the Agenda – New Business and Good of the Senate**

Chair McCarthy then called for any new business or business under Good of the Senate. Hearing none, he called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 5:27pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Craig Anne Heflinger,  
Secretary