

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

Call to Order

Approval of Minutes of February 2, 2006

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

<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/facultysenate/files/20206FS.pdf>

Report of the Executive Committee

John A. McCarthy, Chair of the Faculty Senate

Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics (COIA) Report

Doug Perkins and Virginia Shepherd

“How Can We Best Respond to Changing External Funding Conditions?”

John Childress, Director, Sponsored Research

James Foster, Professor of Economics and Director, Graduate Program in
Economic Development

Dennis Hall, Professor of Physics and Associate Provost for Research and
Graduate Education

Douglas Knight, Professor of Hebrew Bible and Director, Center for the Study of
Religion and Culture

New business

Good of the Senate

Motion to Adjourn

Voting Members present: Ahner, Barnett, Barry, Barz, Campbell, Carter, Casagrande, Conway-Welch, Cummings, Ellingham, Emeson, Foster, Friedman, Fuchs, Gabbe, Galloway, Griffin, Heflinger, Jennings, LeBoeuf, Link, McCarthy, McCarty, Neely, Pettepher, Reisenberg, Shyr, Tarpley, Tolk, Washington, Wasserstein.

Voting Members absent: Adams, Benbow, Bradford, Burk, Dowdy (regrets), Ernst (regrets), Flake (regrets), Fogo, George (regrets), Hearn (regrets), Hetcher, Hodges, Hoffman, Hudnut-Beumler (regrets), Lachs, Levine (regrets), Peebles (regrets), Porter, Rubin, Sandler (regrets), Schmidt, Smith, Smrekar, Steinberg and Wait.

Ex Officio Members present: Balsler, Brisky, Gherman, Gotterer, Hall, McNamara, Schoenfeld, Thompson, and Zeppos.

Ex Officio Members absent: Barge, Chalkley, Gee (regrets), Jacobson (regrets), Kovalcheck, Outlaw, Perfetto, Sandler, Spitz, Summar, and Williams.

.....

The meeting was called to order at 4:10 p.m. by Chair John A. McCarthy. Minutes from the 2/2/06 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 John McCarthy gave the report of the Executive Committee. He announced that at the April Senate meeting, there will be reports from task force chairs. He said that while it seems that the charges to the two task forces appear to duplicate activities elsewhere, he hopes that it has become clear that the Senate now has an official conduit for discussion of these issues.

He asked senators to mark their calendars for the Spring Assembly on April 6 at the Student Life Center. Faculty award presentations will be made for the Branscomb, Heard, and Wyatt awards. Professor Vivien Fryd will give a presentation on the multimedia project that she is working on with Judy Chicago and Donald Woodman, along with Vanderbilt students and community artists.

Next Item on the Agenda – Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics (COIA) Report

Chair McCarthy then turned the floor over to Doug Perkins and Ginny Shepherd who attended the recent COIA conference as Vanderbilt Senate representatives. The national COIA meeting was held on December 2-3, 2005 at Washington State University (website: <http://coia.umd.edu>). The main focus of the meeting was on integration of athletics into the life of the campus and diversity issues. They then asked for questions.

Dean Steven Gabbe: How much focus on timely graduation? How about care provided to injured athlete?

Doug and Ginny responded that the NCAA has focused on graduation rate, and that there is sanctioning for a poor graduation rate. Also, the NCAA has taken scholarships away from schools who do not meet their performance standards (but this was only a small proportion of schools who should have lost scholarships).

Provost Zeppos: I admire what this group is doing—it is right on target. Wearing a professor/lawyer hat, if markets were allowed to operate freely here in college athletics, you would see a minor league system with people dramatically undercompensated. It is scandalous how the profits of commercialization are distributed, and it is not serving kids well.

Dean Gabbe: I am aware of a situation where a community hospital paid an enormous amount of money to a university to be able to advertise that they were the sports team hospital, and it meant the athletes could not go to their university hospital.

Chair McCarthy thanked Doug and Ginny for their presentation.

Next Item on the Agenda – “How Can We Best Respond to Changing External Funding Conditions?”

Chair McCarthy then introduced panel speakers Dennis Hall, John Childress, James Foster, and Douglas Knight who addressed the topic, ““How Can We Best Respond to Changing External Funding Conditions?””

Dennis Hall said that the external funding situation is always changing—publicity is now on NIH—but, for instance, funding for physical sciences has eroded over time. Our faculty has always found the resources that they have needed. Our response is unchanged – we do great work and we compete in whatever the terrain is and we succeed. Changes occur within specialties, but there is always tremendous money out there for research.

We regularly make infrastructure developments to make our faculty better able to complete. External funding on our side of the campus has doubled in the past five years. We have recently added a staff line for increasing amount of contracts so faculty can respond more quickly. In A&S, a grants facilitator has been assigned to work with humanities and others who are less accustomed to the grants world.

Routinely, we invest in seeding our faculty to compete; the Discovery Grants Program is one great example with \$2 million per year invested.

Chair McCarthy asked for questions and mentioned that Jeff Balser is in attendance to give the Medical Center perspective.

Senator Craig Anne Heflinger: I have heard concerns from VUMH colleagues who are on “soft money.” What will happen when NIH money dries up?

Dennis said that Dean Gabbe announced bridge funding program four months ago, whereby we will use these funds when renewals are hard to get to support that investigator for up to two years for competing renewals. Overall, VUMC grants and contacts keep growing – we are recruiting post docs and others. We are still highly successful in securing NIH funding to support our labs. We have a system in place to support faculty and adapt to what is going on around us.

Dean Gabbe said that requests for support through the bridge program have been less than anticipated to date.

The next panel speaker, Senator James Foster, said that he represents the large group of faculty who do not need external funding to do their teaching and research. He said that applying for a grant at one of the transinstitutional centers also carries costs and is influenced by other incentives. External money may be valued by the administration, but is it similarly valued by individual faculty and the individual units? He said that we need

to be able to move across units; the university has supported this with seed money, but will it continue? Tenure and promotion is determined by local units, yet the local unit does not benefit from these transinstitutional incentives.

He said that Vanderbilt needs a more transparent policy within units about incentives for obtaining grants, and called for an alignment of vision and the actual incentives facing faculty.

John Childress, director of sponsored research at Vanderbilt, said that the NIH is Vanderbilt's biggest source of external funding dollars. He gave figures for external funding for FY 2005: Humanities: \$400,000 in FY2005, Social Sciences: \$50,000,000 (big spike in 2005 due to large awards at GPC). There were 11 proposals submitted from the humanities in FY2005, and 250 submitted from social sciences.

He added that the federal science and technology budget as a whole only decreases 1% next year overall, and that these shifts have been seen in the past.

Doug Knight, the next panel speaker, is the director of the Center for Study of Religion and Culture. He said that the center is in its third year of funding from the AVCF. He said that it was a brilliant move for the university to set aside those monies to start up certain groups that would be different than other entities we have at the university. He concluded that it has been a successful experiment. His center has 5 multi-year groups, 80 faculty who are fellows at the center (40 from humanities, 20 from social sciences, 20 from natural sciences and medicine). He added that this has been the most intellectually stimulating enterprise that he has been engaged in for several years.

He said that it is sometimes difficult to figure out the position of centers within the structure of the university. He said that the deans have been extraordinarily supportive, as has the provost's office. But what would happen if one dean left and another came who was not as supportive? Our expenditures are signed off for by a dean, but the center reports to provost. Is there a better way? We don't know, and this is part of the experiment. He added that it may not be a bad idea for these centers, which are a function of the whole university, to report to the Provost's office or to some council of deans, instead of simply to one dean.

He also mentioned the problem of junior faculty and how they interface with the centers. He said that he would welcome faculty members who were based in the center, but that is not the structure we have at this point.

He said that one of the biggest challenges is that centers don't bring in tuition money, so an operational budget has to come from internal or external funding. Our focus is on research and that is our charge, to enhance faculty scholarship and enhance work of the graduate students.

In terms of external funding, there is a miniscule amount available in the humanities. Federal agencies are not our first place to look. Private foundations could be a rich

resource for us, and we have other proposals in process. We had to spend our first three years getting organized and now we are ready to look for funding. But foundations appear not to be funding centers now. Our best possibility may be individual philanthropists.

He concluded by stating that morale among faculty is the highest he has seen, thanks to this interdisciplinary and transinstitutional support.

Associate Provost Tim McNamara responded that the administration does care about the alignment of issues between departments, programs and centers, especially when it comes to promotion and tenure. He said that in A&S, rules and procedures for promotion and tenure are being rewritten for centers to have input in promotion and tenure decisions, and that there will be representation from the centers. Dennis Hall, Jeff Balser and I are working on project for the Chancellor about how to get input from interdisciplinary centers into promotion and tenure decisions. I am almost certain that a recommendation will be made from Chancellor addressing this issue.

Provost Zeppos said that three of these AVCF initiatives are “graduating” onto hard money support, proving their success. He added that we are starting to see philanthropy and school budgets enter into picture.

He mentioned that we need to talk about teaching across boundaries without high tariffs and high transaction costs. He said that this is not about tuition money, but will a department allow a faculty member to do this? The trade barriers and border checks here are too high. We need to innovate in the curriculum.

Senator David Wasserstein mentioned the example of the Jewish Studies program as an example using joint recruitment and funding. He said that every department was cooperative on the committee and we have made an offer today for a new faculty member.

Senator Norman Tolk said that one of the challenges is making sure that Vanderbilt is successful in these innovative initiatives. If people see that these centers are working well here, then these good faculty members will want to join in. If they don't work well, then we are in trouble.

Doug Knight mentioned that we do have a tradition where people have been penalized for stepping outside of their discipline. He asked if it could be changed so that they were rewarded instead.

Dean Gabbe mentioned a teaching award for transinstitutional education—for a faculty member who works with students from different schools. We all need to do a better job to the advances that research has made. He said that we need to develop more publicity on the significant advances that research and their funding has made. We are concerned about the young investigators, emerging from the successful training programs, into an environment where they are much less likely to be funded. We will have to support them

longer and we won't be able to recruit so many young investigators, and that will be a problem in the future.

Dennis Hall mentioned that he has been surprised about how much support there is between department chairs and center directors; he said that his group is not finding much dissension on these issues of tenure and promotion.

Provost Zeppos said that he reads every tenure file cover to cover and he sees more and more interdisciplinary letters in these files (much more in the sciences). He said that he is pleased to see this.

Dennis Hall commented that out in the real world, there aren't disciplines, just work.

Volney Gay mentioned that six years ago, the "tariffs" to work across schools and colleges were gigantic. Things are vastly better.

Senator Karen Campbell said that it is encouraging that at your end of the food chain you are getting these interdisciplinary files. At the bottom of the chain, we don't know what is going on outside of our department, so as we move folks forward, we don't know how to work these things out. We need help figuring out who has input, and how it is weighted.

Senator Ron Emeson said that he would have to disagree about the current state of NIH budget as presented today. While there is only 1% change in science total, it is being diverted to the Department of Defense, etc., so there is a substantial decrease in NIH for the research we do. Average number of NIH grants per investigator is about 1 or maybe 2, so they are going to 1 or none, not that people are going from 6 to 5. He stated that tracking the total amount of NIH revenue does not give the big picture.

John Childress said that he didn't mean to downplay the NIH decrease, and agreed that it is a significant change. But when he looks at the university as a whole and the shifting funds, the university faculty as a whole have a significant ability to compete. He said that where there wasn't money before, like physical sciences, the NSF budget is increasing.

Chair McCarthy asked for more comments or questions as the meeting time was drawing to a close. Hearing none, he moved to the next item on the agenda.

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 5:35pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Craig Anne Heflinger,
Secretary