

Vanderbilt University  
Faculty Senate Meeting  
May 7, 2007, 4:15 p.m.  
Room 140, Frist Hall

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Call to Order

Approval of Minutes of April 12, 2007

Presentation of Certificates of Service to 3<sup>rd</sup> Year Senators

Recognition of Senate officers and committee chairs

Report of the Executive Committee  
Catherine Fuchs, Chair of the Faculty Senate

Report of the Chancellor

Election of Chair-elect

Summary of year-end reports of the Standing Committees

Election of Vice Chair-elect

Report from Interdisciplinary Collaborations task force  
Norman Tolk, chair

Motion from Faculty Life Committee on Roth 403b contribution  
Kane Jennings, chair

Discussion on the Commons  
Frank Wcislo, Dean of the Commons

New Business

Good of the Senate

Motion to Adjourn

Adjournment to reception (in the Atrium between Frist and Godchaux Halls)

Adjournment

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Voting Members present: Ahner, Barnett, Barry, Benbow, Burk, Campbell, Conway-Welch, Dayan, DeHart, Dowdy, Emeson, Fogo, Foster, Fuchs, Gabbe, Hetcher, Hudnut-

Beumler, Jennings, Kirshner, Lachs, Levine, Link, Lybrand, McCarty, McLendon, Moore, Neely, Norden, Pettepher, Retzlaff, Sharpley-Whiting, Shepherd, Shiavi, Shields, Smrekar, Tarpley, Tolk, Wasserstein, and Wood.

Voting Members absent: Bradford, Breyer, Carter, Chen, Cooil (regrets), Galloway, George, Porter, Reisenberg, Rousseau, Rubin, Sandler (regrets), Schmidt, Shyr, Slovis (regrets), Wait, Weller, and Wright (regrets).

Ex Officio Members present: Brisky, Gherman, Heflinger, Kovalcheck, McCarthy, McNamara, and Schoenfeld.

Ex Officio Members absent: Balsler, Barge, Chalkley, Gee (regrets), Gotterer (regrets), Hall, Jacobson, Outlaw, Perfetto, Sandler, Spitz, Williams, and Zeppos.

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The meeting was called to order at 4:15 p.m. by Chair Catherine Fuchs.

**Next Item on the Agenda – Approval of the April 12, 2007 minutes**

Minutes from the 4/12/07 meeting were reviewed and a motion was made to approve them. Motion passed unanimously.

**Next Item on the Agenda – Presentation of Certificates of Service to 3rd Year Senators**

The presentation of certificates to third-year senators was made by Associate Provost Tim McNamara. He thanked all of the senators for their service.

**Next Item on the Agenda – Recognition of Senate officers, committee chairs, and task force chairs**

Senate officers, committee chairs, and task force chairs were also recognized with gifts. Chair Fuchs thanked everyone for their service to the Senate.

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

Chair Fuchs then gave the Report of the Executive Committee (see PowerPoint presentation here: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/facultysenate/files/ECreport5-7-07.ppt>)

**Next Item on the Agenda – Report of the Chancellor**

Chancellor Gee was not present; therefore there was no report under this agenda item.

**Next Item on the Agenda – Election of Officers**

Chair Fuchs then moved to the next agenda item—the election of new officers. She stated that the two nominees for chair-elect put forth by the Senate Nominating Committee were Howard Kirshner and Virginia Shepherd. A vote was taken by paper ballot, and Virginia Shepherd was elected as chair-elect.

Chair Fuchs explained that the nominating committee had put forward the names of Tracy Sharpley-Whiting and Jonathan Retzlaff for the position of vice-chair-elect. A vote was taken by paper ballot, and Jonathan Retzlaff was elected vice chair-elect of the Senate.

#### **Next Item on the Agenda –Senate committee year-end reports**

Chair Fuchs then presented the year-end reports from the five standing Senate committees. She explained that the reports were distributed ahead of time, and have been made available on the Senate website as well. She asked for any questions about the reports. Hearing none, she welcomed Vice Chair Norman Tolk to present the next agenda item.

#### **Next Item on the Agenda – Report from Interdisciplinary Collaborations task force**

Vice Chair Tolk gave an interim report on Interdisciplinary Task Force (see PowerPoint presentation here: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/facultysenate/files/InterDTF5-7-07.ppt> ). He said that the full report of the task force will be given at a later date. Chair Fuchs thanked him for his task force's work, and then turned to the next agenda item.

#### **Next Item on the Agenda – Motion from Faculty Life Committee on Roth 403b contribution**

Faculty Life chair Kane Jennings then presented a motion from his committee concerning the Roth 403b plan. The motion read,

“The Faculty Senate requests that the Administration provide a report during the fall semester of 2007, presenting a plan to enable faculty and staff to designate Roth contributions toward their 403(b) retirement plans. Broadening our benefits options will help the University remain competitive with peer institutions and should help attract and retain faculty.”

Chair Fuchs asked for a voice vote. The motion passed unanimously. Chair Fuchs thanked Senator Jennings and his committee for their work.

#### **Next Item on the Agenda –Discussion on the Commons**

Chair Fuchs then introduced Frank Wcislo, Dean of the Commons, to give an update on the Commons to the Senate.

Dean Wcislo said that the Commons is ahead of schedule and slightly under budget. He said that it will be up and running in the fall 2008. He said that the place is designed to encourage learning. It is a place but also an idea, as it aims to lessen the lines between inside and outside the classroom. It will be a collaborative community. The students will be encouraged to be proactive, intentional learners. He said that they are looking for four outcomes: 1) for the students to encounter knowledge critically, 2) for them to begin learning how to become creators of that knowledge, 3) for them to share diversity, and 4)

for them to consider the ethics, norms, and values necessary to lead in our global community.

Dean Wcislo explained that there will be ten Faculty Heads of House, and that the applications have come from across all of the schools/colleges. They will be appointed during summer 2007, and will serve as the Commons Deans Council in the fall. The council will also include senior Graduate Deans from all undergraduate schools and colleges, and other Student Life professionals.

He related that they have appointed a programmer for the Digital Commons to coordinate the online experience of the Commons. He emphasized that Vanderbilt Visions is the core program for all first year students. The groups meet August – November and also in January/February. There will be 100 groups of 15 students this year rather than 80 groups of 20 students as last year. Faculty members have already been recruited, along with student VUceptors. He said that 59 of 80 faculty members from last year have returned, representing all four undergraduate schools. Assessment of the program has been extensive, since it was the first year of the program last year. He said that one third of the students and facilitators liked the Visions program, one third hated it, and one third like the idea, but not the implementation. He said that they have reoriented the program entirely due to this feedback.

Dean Wcislo said that he has been asked to comment on faculty awareness of mental health issues concerning the Commons. The faculty heads will be offered the MAPS training program, and also all 100 Visions VUceptors will have this training. The Office of the Dean of Students is working to enhance the resources available to students and will integrate them into the Commons. Dean Wcislo said that he was impressed by Paul Barreira's visit to campus, and that they are looking at ways to increase the number of "trained eyes" to help in this area. He then opened the floor for questions.

Past Vice Chair Craig Anne Heflinger: What happens at the end of the students' freshman year?

Dean Wcislo: Everyone is asking this question. In the short term, we are discussing this issue. Our question: how will these students work in a main campus situation? Might this create difficulties in the sophomore year? There are ongoing discussions about how to deal with this (perhaps other living groups on main campus). There are also discussions about the college halls system. We don't quite have the answer to it yet, but we will seriously look at this next year.

Senator Agnes Fogo: Can you outline how you can retain the balance between security and an open collegial environment?

Dean Wcislo: We confront the same dilemma all of us confront in a free environment. For example, card access to elevators, individual floors, and classrooms.

Senator Fogo: Will there be security officers in the Commons?

Dean Wcislo: Yes, there will be a new VUPD precinct house for the Commons/Peabody College. They will be part of the community of the Commons. The project rests on the

autonomy of the students who live in the house. The students have to understand that they have responsibility for themselves and each other, as well.

Dean Camilla Benbow: They have already increased the security presence at Peabody.

Chair-Elect Bruce Barry: To what extent will the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> year undergraduates be involved in the Commons?

Dean Wcislo: This issue is already being discussed, as well. The student VUceptors will be upperclass students, and the RAs will be upperclassmen. We are eager to encourage student programming (with or without faculty members) at the Commons for all students.

Chair Fuchs thanked Dean Wcislo for his presentation.

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

Chair Fuchs then called for any items under New Business or Good of the Senate. Hearing none, she called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. A motion was made and was seconded. She then invited everyone to attend the reception immediately following the meeting outside the room in the Atrium.

Meeting adjourned at 5:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Norman Tolk,  
Vice Chair