

Vanderbilt University
Faculty Senate Meeting
March 12, 2009, 4:10 p.m.
140 Frist Hall

Call to Order

Approval of Minutes of December 4, 2008

Report of the Executive Committee
Chair Virginia Shepherd

Remarks by Chancellor Zeppos

The Commons, Tobacco, and the Upperclass Experience
Mark Bandas, Dean of Student Life

Motion from Academic Policies and Services Committee
Michael Stone, Committee Chair

Motion from Executive Committee
Cynthia Paschal, Chair-elect

New business

Good of the Senate

Voting Members present: Balsler, Blair, Bodenheimer, Braxton, Calico, Christie, Christman, Dever, Eisenberg, Getz, Heibert, Hudnut-Beumler, Kirshner, LeBlanc, Lukeheart, McLendon, Nanny, Newbern, Oliver, Oppenheimer, Paschal, Piston, Reschly, Roberts, Rogers, Saff, Sasson, Schorn, Shepherd, Shields, Stone, Walker, Weller, Wood, Yarbrough.

Voting Members absent: Armour (regrets), Bell (regrets), Benbow, Berk-Seligson (regrets), Bernard, Blackett, Bradford, Collins, Conway-Welch, Galloway, Moore, Norden, Peek, Price (regrets), Porter, Retzlaff (regrets), Rubin, Sharpley-Whiting, Slovis (regrets), Smrekar, Wait, Wcislo, and Weil.

Ex Officio Members present: Bandas, Barry, Christianson, Damon, Dowell, Fortune, McCarty, McNamara, Zeppos.

Ex Officio Members absent: Barge, Chalkley, Emeson (regrets), Fife (regrets), Hall (regrets), Jacobson (regrets), Outlaw, Price, Sandler, Stalcup, Williams, and Wright.

.....

The meeting was called to order at 4:10 p.m. by Chair Virginia Shepherd.

Next Item on the Agenda – Approval of the December 2008 minutes

Chair Shepherd asked for a show of hands to approve the December minutes. Minutes were approved unanimously.

Next Item on the Agenda – Report of the Executive Committee

Chair Shepherd announced upcoming senate meetings and the Spring Faculty Assembly on April 9 (**note: this has now been changed to April 17). She also introduced new administrative members of the Senate.

Chair Shepherd then gave an update from the Executive Committee. She said that strategic planning is continuing for the university library system with the distribution of a web survey by the Provost this week. She asked that all senators complete the survey and ask their colleagues to do likewise.

Following up from the presentation by Chris McKinney in the fall, Chair Shepherd said that the technology transfer office has posted their annual report, and she urged members to take a look at this. The Senate Committees are continuing their work and will begin presentation of reports and recommendations at the April meeting.

Chair Shepherd also mentioned the changes in the deadlines for the IDEAS grant program. Senator Dave Piston added that all who have NIH Stimulus challenge grants are competing with this program so that is why they are pushing back the deadline.

Next Item on the Agenda – Chancellor’s Report

Chair Shepherd turned the floor over to Chancellor Zeppos. Chancellor Zeppos said that these are challenging financial times for our universities. And these economic times have challenged our country in an unprecedented way. He said that he is tracking the hiring freezes daily and also other issues at other universities. He said that he doesn’t think there is another university that is better positioned financially to weather these economic times. We are still hiring and we are still able to prioritize in the ways that will help us to weather the storm. We clearly have cut back—all construction projects have been cut except for three mid-stream construction projects in the Medical Center (100 Oaks, Critical Care tower, and the parking garage across from Blair). Also, renovations at

Cohen are still going forward on the Peabody campus. We have cut back on entertainment and parties. And we have decided not to give raises this year (except for promotions). Chancellor Zeppos said that it is not something he wants to do, but given the environment, he thinks it is prudent. He said that when he spoke in the fall, he said that faculty are the most important part of the university. But, he said that faculty are also the most fortunate, and we need to make sure that we support those most in need. So, faculty members have told me that they don't want raises if it means laying off staff members.

Chancellor Zeppos shared good news: there have been over 19,000 applications for Vanderbilt undergraduate spots. He said that he also went to Capitol Hill and asked for more support for education, research and discovery. He said that in light of what other universities are going through, Vanderbilt is doing extremely well. Our endowment was second in the country in performance of the financials. People are still giving gifts to Vanderbilt.

Chancellor Zeppos then asked for any questions.

Senator Malcolm Getz: What should we do about tuition during this economic time?
Chancellor Zeppos: Here's how I look at tuition: my philosophy is multi-pronged. No matter what your background or wealth, we all got where we are through education. I have a moral bias for education because of this. Then, I look at my competitors. I look for Princeton out of the gate since they are the richest university in America. So, then we look at others (Emory, Stanford, Wash U, etc.). We will look at the market. Also, the question of tuition in a need-blind system is irrelevant. When you pay tuition, you are only paying about 60% the cost of educating a child (the rest comes from endowment, etc.). We will set the tuition the day of the budget meeting. It is a work in progress.

Senator Bruce Oppenheimer: Do we have assets that are overvalued in the endowment?
Chancellor Zeppos: 30% of the endowment is in private partnerships—there is usually a ninety-day lag, so they are trickling in. We are discussing how to value these private holdings. What worries me is not this year, but next year and the next (since we budget on a three-year cycle). We are trying to build in a little bit of bad news in the budgets to prepare for the next few years.

Senator Bobby Bodenheimer: What about Packard fellowships?

Chancellor Zeppos: We are not on their list. We are asking them about this and tried to communicate this. We are still trying, and it is source of frustration for us.

Hearing no other questions, he thanked the senate for the opportunity to speak.

Next Item on the Agenda – The Commons, Tobacco, and the Upperclass Experience

Chair Shepherd then introduced Mark Bandas, Dean of Student Life. Dean Bandas said that Chair Shepherd had asked him to talk about the Commons and also the students' view of tobacco use.

He said that during the summer, VIRG (Vanderbilt Institutional Research Group) will do a survey about the Commons that will be more in-depth. That data will be available in the fall. The data he presents today is trend data.

Dean Bandas said that there is a comfort level that is excellent between students and faculty in the Commons. He said that all students feel very safe in the Commons. He said that while date rape is less of a problem this year, it is still just the tip of the iceberg. And it is fueled by student consumption of alcohol. He showed data on the percentage of first-year students who drink every weekend or more (the current data is 30% of the class). Data shows that while on-campus drinking is down, off-campus drinking is up. He also presented data concerning suicidal thoughts among freshman (it is 5% this year). He talked about education programs related to sexual violence and/or alcohol issues. He mentioned the MAPS program (Mental Health Awareness and Prevention of Suicide). There is an online module as well.

Dean Bandas said that while he doesn't have any data on whether or not students would support a smoking ban. A student asked the VSG to consider a smoking ban, but they rejected it due to many reasons (too paternalistic, might cause other issues). He wants us to start with freshman and educate them about no-smoking. He shared information from the CORE survey showing that 29% of students smoke at Vanderbilt.

He mentioned the work of the Upperclass Experience Committee (John Braxton, chair). They are working on plans for students once they leave the Commons. He also mentioned Continuing Living/Learning Programs, VIP (Vanderbilt Interest Programs), and the Creative Campus Community (providing an arts community for upperclass experience).

He then asked for any questions.

Senator Bridget Rogers: What about graduate students?

Dean Bandas: We provide some services to graduate students, but schools and colleges run their own programs. We assist and partner with them.

Chair-elect Cynthia Paschal: Do the students express concerns about drinking patterns?

Dean Bandas: We have a slightly higher segment of non-drinkers than the national average. We need to give them assertiveness-training or bystander training to be more assertive.

Senator Dave Piston: What about interest in upperclass living/learning programs?

Dean Bandas: We had about 385 apply for these living/learning communities, but we will not be able to accommodate all of them. 25% of the freshmen class has applied.

Senator Brian Christman: Is there a suicide hotline for students?

Dean Bandas: Yes there is, and it staffed 24 hours.

Chair Shepherd: What are the next steps to include graduate students in the survey that has gone out to undergraduates?

Dean Bandas: I would be happy to work with someone to help develop that survey.

Provost Richard McCarty: In regards to Senator Rogers' question about graduate students, the head of the graduate student group is working on graduate student life.

Senator Bridget Rogers: We have zero graduate housing, for example. This is a big issue.

Chair Shepherd: Are applications up and, if there is a big jump, do you think it is related to the Commons?

Dean Doug Christianson: We had a 31% jump last year and added 16% this year, so we believe that marketing the Commons is a big part of this.

Chair Shepherd thanked Dean Bandas for his presentation.

Next Item on the Agenda – Motion from Academic Policies and Services Committee

Chair Shepherd introduced Senator Michael Stone, chair of the Academic Policies and Services committee. He presented the motion: "The Faculty Senate recommends approval of the Ph.D. program in Epidemiology at Vanderbilt University."

Chair Shepherd then asked for any discussion.

Chair-elect Paschal: Was this program externally vetted?

Senator Stone: Yes, it was.

Senator Bridget Rogers: How many students will be in this program?

Dr. Katherine Hartmann: There will be 24 students total. This will be an extensively hands-on program, and we are hoping to have students who have workforce experience. There will be 6-8 students per class, and we expect 12-14 students per course.

Dean Jeff Balsler: I want to show my support for this program. It is in line with the central focus of the Medical Center and the university.

Chair Shepherd called for a vote via show of hands. The motion passed unanimously.

Next Item on the Agenda – Motion from Executive Committee

Chair Shepherd then turned the floor over to Chair-elect Cynthia Paschal who presented the motion, "The Faculty Senate endorses the Environmental Commitment Statement."

Chair-elect Paschal gave an overview of the background on the history of this statement, and the Senate's involvement. The staff council and student government are also voting on this statement, and if all goes well, we will roll this out on Earth Day in April. She opened the floor for any discussion.

Senator David Wood: This is exciting and I am pleased. One question: are we planning to make public the results of the monitoring and evaluation on a yearly basis?

Chair-elect Paschal: Yes.

Senator Wood: Can we put that into the statement itself?

Chair-elect Paschal: We must vote on the statement as it reads for now. But that is implied in the spirit of the statement.

Senator Larry LeBlanc: Was the issue of costs addressed in preparing this statement?

Judsen Newbern: We will be balancing all of these concerns. There is no mandate to do this.

Senator LeBlanc: I am uncomfortable with this, then.

Past Chair Bruce Barry: Is there an imagined future for this university without a big smokestack in the middle of it?

Judsen Newbern: It's not a short-term goal, but we might hope that technology will change and it will be a matter of responding to the current climate.

Provost Richard McCarty: The low-hanging fruit is not the smokestack, but it is the individual behaviors of the faculty, staff, and students.

Senator Bridget Rogers: What is the point of all of this?

Chair-elect Paschal: This is in response to the Dec. 06 senate motion asking for an environmental mission statement.

Judsen Newbern: One of the reasons that we didn't jump on the bandwagon with the President's Climate Commitment was to make sure we were NOT simply "tree-hugging." Instead, we decided to take a quantifiable way through this.

Chair Shepherd called for a vote via show of hands. After a show of hands, the motion passed.

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

Chair Shepherd asked for any new business. Hearing none, she turned to good of the senate.

Chair Shepherd asked for any business under good of the senate. Hearing none, she called for a motion to adjourn, which was seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 5:35pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan Retzlaff,
Vice Chair