

Vanderbilt University
Faculty Senate Meeting
December 7, 2006, 4:15 p.m.
140 Frist Hall, School of Nursing

Call to Order

Approval of Minutes of November 2, 2006

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

Report of the Chancellor

Old business

Motion to communicate to the University Board of Trust support for Chancellor
Gee (Senator John Lachs)

Committee reports

Motion from Senate Affairs Committee on Environmental Issues
(Senator Ray Burk)

Interim report from the Interdisciplinary Collaborations Task Force
(Senator and Vice Chair Norman Tolk)

Report from Faculty Life Committee on Mental Health Resources
(Senator Kane Jennings)

New business

Good of the Senate

Adjournment

Voting Members present: Ahner, Barnett, Barry, Benbow, Burk, DeHart, Dowdy, Emeson, Fuchs, Gabbe, Galloway, Jennings, Kirshner, Lachs, Levine, Link, Lybrand, Norden, Pettepher, Reisenberg, Retzlaff, Rousseau, Shepherd, Shiavi, Shields, Shyr, Smrekar, Slovis, Tolk, Weller, Wright.

Voting Members absent: Bradford, Breyer, Campbell (regrets), Carter, Chen (regrets), Conway-Welch (regrets), Cooil, Dickerson, Fogo (regrets), George (regrets), Hetcher, Hudnut-Beumler, McCarty (regrets), McLendon, Medina, Moore, Neely, Porter, Rubin,

Sandler, Schmidt, Sharpley-Whiting (regrets), Tarpley, Wait (regrets), Wasserstein, Wood (regrets).

Ex Officio Members present: Gee, Gherman, Hall, Kovalcheck, McCarthy, McNamara, Outlaw, and Schoenfeld.

Ex Officio Members absent: Balsler, Barge, Brisky, Chalkley, Gotterer (regrets), Heflinger (regrets), Perfetto, Sandler, Williams, and Zeppos (regrets).

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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 September 14, 2006 minutes

Minutes from the 11/2/06 meeting were reviewed and a motion was made to approve them. The motion passed unanimously.

Next Item on the Agenda – Report of Executive Committee

Chair Fuchs gave her report and said that the Student Life committee has been continuing to work on mental health issues. Dr. Paul Barreira from Harvard will speak at a Senate-sponsored luncheon on February 22; more information will be forthcoming. She mentioned that the March meeting will be focused on the topic of graduate education, and that questions will be solicited in advance from senators. She relayed that Ginny Shepherd represented the Vanderbilt Faculty Senate at the national level at the Intercollegiate Athletics meeting in New York, NY recently. She added that PEAFF has been working on how new faculty are oriented for tenure and promotion. She asked for questions. Hearing none, she turned the floor over to Chancellor Gee.

Next Item on the Agenda – Report of Chancellor

Chancellor Gee stated that this past year was the best in the history of Vanderbilt in that retention rates were the highest in the history of Vanderbilt both with students and faculty. He said that it was Vanderbilt's best financial year, also. He mentioned that he and David Williams spent about six to eight weeks on the road interviewing each and every Board of Trust member this past year. He said that issues of governance are at the forefront right now, and that he wants to establish a level of quality of Vanderbilt's governance structure. He said they will probably move from two to three annual board meetings to give board members more time to get to know what is happening at Vanderbilt. He added that since there are now term limits on board members, they will be recruiting heavily for new members soon.

He mentioned another issue concerning the Freshman Commons. He said that there are discussions now about how to address programming for sophomores, juniors and seniors after the Commons opens in 2008. He then opened for floor for questions.

Past Chair John McCarthy asked about the timing for the Commons and the next step. Chancellor Gee replied that Vanderbilt made a commitment to building the best freshman program in the country. He said that he will be evaluating what has happened this year with Vanderbilt Visions, so, the timeline is ongoing. He also mentioned the goal of having all undergraduates live on campus.

Hearing no further questions, he turned the floor back over to Chair Fuchs. She added an announcement to remind senators about the faculty award deadline of January 15, 2007.

Next Item on the Agenda – Old business

Chair Fuchs then turned to old business and the motion on the floor presented by Senator John Lachs at the last meeting. Senator Lachs withdrew his motion. Chair Fuchs asked for any objections. Hearing none, Chair Fuchs moved to the next agenda item.

Next Item on the Agenda – Presentation and Motion from Senate Affairs Committee on Environmental Issues

Chair Fuchs then introduced guests Jenny Magill, Beth Conklin, Mike Vandenberg, Judson Newbern, Bob Wheaton, and Andrea George. She said that all were invited to attend the meeting especially to be present for the motion from the Senate Affairs Committee on Environmental Issues. She then turned over the floor to Senator Ray Burk, chair of the Senate Affairs committee. Senator Burk mentioned that Senator David Wood has had a lot to do with promoting environmental sustainability at Vanderbilt. He then introduced Jenny Magill, a student from the SPEAR group, to give her presentation (see presentation at: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/facultysenate/files/SPEARpres.ppt>).

Senator Burk thanked Jenny for her presentation. He then presented the motion from the Senate Affairs committee:

“Motion from Senate Affairs Committee (Ray Burk, Chair)

The Faculty Senate congratulates the Administration for its recent appointment of a sustainability coordinator and its intention to reinforce recycling efforts on campus. These steps will help Vanderbilt University participate in the achievement of important resource conservation goals. Moreover, they reflect a broader recognition that environmental stewardship is necessary for maintaining living standards and economies around the world.

To further Vanderbilt’s commitment to sustainability and environmental stewardship, the Faculty Senate proposes that, as a matter of urgency, the University develop and promote a Vanderbilt University Environmental Mission Statement. With such a statement, Vanderbilt could commit itself to:

1. incorporate environmental concerns in University policy and decision making at every level
2. conserve natural resources and, where necessary, restore environmental quality

3. promote environmental literacy in students, faculty, and staff through formal courses and appropriate initiatives
4. encourage the pursuit of external funding for collaborative research initiatives in the environmental area
5. foster a participatory process in developing sound environmental policies in our region and the world”

He mentioned that he looked at Emory University’s environmental mission statement and used that as the basis for the Senate Affairs motion. The motion was seconded. Senator Burk called for discussion of the motion.

Senator Peter Wright: I am not sure if there are faculty members in place to lead the efforts in environmental majors.

Dean Ken Galloway: We are all in favor of a sound environmental policy. In the School of Engineering, there are departments that address environmental engineering and substantial external funding. I am not sure what is meant by points 3 and 4 of the motion.

Senator Burk: The intention is not to say that we don’t have focused groups that are studying the environment currently, but to encourage the knowledge in these groups be spread out to the entire university. These initiatives listed might not be courses, but we might make efforts to make connections with other areas on campus.

Senator Robert Weller: Would the students be willing to give up automobiles as part of this initiative?

Senator Burk: I am not sure if that’s feasible at this point.

Senator Weller: The bottom line is that it is really distressing to hear that there was no contact or input from areas where there is already significant research (i.e. Engineering).

Senator Burk: The motion was directed at the administration to have them bring in people with expertise to teach us all.

Jenny Magill: I think that the purpose of the motion is to open up these areas to all other parts of the university and not to just have them in Engineering. I would like to see elective classes available to average students who are not pursuing this field of study.

Chair-elect Bruce Barry: I think the power of the motion is that it asks the administration to form an environmental mission statement. It will compel the Chancellor to address this issue. The details in the five points are just possibilities (the word “could” is operative).

Senator Richard Shiavi: The key is to make recycling convenient. If it is convenient, people will do it.

Senator Stan Link: I am particularly interested in point 5 and the potential for linking what happens here to a more global sense. For example, if we save X amount of money at Vanderbilt, we could contribute that amount of money to a global fund that helps with drinking water usage in a developing country. This would be a way for Vanderbilt to be connected in a very tangible way.

Past Chair John McCarthy: If funds were earmarked from the savings and they were channeled to a partner university in areas that are struggling with these issues in a critical way, then that would be fantastic action that would go beyond a simple gesture.

Chair Fuchs called for a vote on the motion. The motion passed with one abstention.

Next Item on the Agenda – Interim report from the Interdisciplinary Collaborations Task Force

Chair Fuchs turned the floor over to Vice Chair Norman Tolk for a brief interim report from the Interdisciplinary Collaborations task force (see presentation at: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/facultysenate/files/DecInterDreport.ppt>). He asked for any questions or comments. Hearing none, he turned the floor back over to Cathy. She reminded senators that the full report will be given at the February meeting.

Next Item on the Agenda – Report from Faculty Life committee

Chair Fuchs then turned the floor over to Senator Kane Jennings, chair of Faculty Life, for a presentation on faculty mental health (see presentation at: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/facultysenate/files/FLmentalhealth.ppt>).

He stated that the Faculty Life committee decided to revise their charge based on current information (see last slide). He asked for any questions. Hearing none, Chair Fuchs thanked him for his work.

Next Item on the Agenda – New business & Good of the Senate

Chair Fuchs then called for any new business. Hearing none, she asked if there were any items under Good of the Senate. Hearing none, she called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Norman Tolk,
Vice Chair