Minutes of the Arts and Science Faculty Council

February 5, 2013

The meeting was called to order at 4:10 p.m. by the Secretary, Professor Holly McCammon, in the absence of the Chair, Professor Malcolm Getz. Present at the meeting were Dean Carolyn Dever, Professors Laura Carpenter, Beth Conklin, Jennifer Fay, Richard Haglund, Michael Hodges, John Janusek, Ifeoma Nwankwo, Vesna Pavlovic’, and Carmelo Rizzo. Sending their regrets were Professors Brooke Ackerly and Malcolm Getz. Senior Associate Dean Karen Campbell attended as a guest of Faculty Council, and Jonathan Bremer, from the Arts and Science Dean’s Office staff, attended as the Executive Secretary of the Faculty.

1. Approval of the Minutes of the Faculty Council Meeting of October 2, 2012.

There were no comments or questions, and Council approved the Minutes.

2. Business from the Committee on Educational Programs (CEP).

**Proposed creation of Latino and Latina Studies (LATS) major and minor.** Professor McCammon explained the significance of the CEP approval letter. The LATS proposal includes many recommendations, some of which are beyond the scope of the CEP, and the CEP approval letter of December 3, 2012, clarifies and specifies that the CEP has approved only the LATS major and minor and not the other recommendations in the proposal, such as the proposed LATS graduate certificate program and the request for staff and building space. Professor McCammon therefore emphasized that Council is considering only the proposed undergraduate academic program, namely, the proposed Latino and Latina Studies major and minor. She also noted that a copy of Professor Jade’s email message of April 11, 2012, which Mr. Bremer distributed to Council members this afternoon, should replace the copy of her email message of April 15, 2011, on page 19 of Part I of the proposal.

Deans Dever and Campbell explained that the LATS proposal has been significantly improved since it was originally presented to Council nearly two years ago. Dean Dever lauded the proposal and stated that it was a good time to establish a Latino and Latina Studies program at Vanderbilt, where there are not many heritage-related social or academic options available for Latino and Latina students. Two students with whom she talked earlier in the day were very excited to hear about the proposed program, she said. In regard to one of the significant changes to the proposal, Council members stated that they were satisfied with the two-year staffing plan of the LATS core courses: Professors Lopez and Luis are scheduled to teach the core courses for the next two years, and, in case one of them is not available, Professors Nwankwo and Trigo have agreed to teach LATS 201 and 280 respectively. LATS has only a few of its own courses at this point, but, as Professor Fay pointed out, it will most likely develop more of its own courses as the program grows and matures, as many interdisciplinary programs have done.
Professor Nwankwo, in response to a question, explained that Latino and Latina Studies programs and Latin American Studies programs serve different purposes and needs. Besides the fact that Latino and Latina Studies focuses on persons and groups within the United States and Latin American Studies concentrates on cultures outside of the United States, LATS is a form of ethnic studies, whereas Latin American Studies is a form of area studies. The faculty members at North Carolina and Duke who established Latino and Latina Studies programs at their institutions had important intellectual concerns about approaches used in area studies programs. Moreover, it is significant, she said, that the Director of Vanderbilt’s Latin American Studies program, Professor Edward Fischer, supports an independent Latino and Latina Studies program (see his letter on page 22 of Part II of the LATS proposal). He affirms the proposed LATS program as part of efforts across the country to establish Latino and Latina Studies in colleges and universities as an academic program of ethnic studies and also as part of Vanderbilt’s efforts to diversify its student body, to broaden current students’ understanding of cultural difference, and to address contemporary social and political issues.

Council members expressed several concerns about the proposed major and minor. Deans Dever and Campbell were both concerned that the proposed curriculum was too focused on the Humanities and encouraged the program leaders to include faculty members and courses from all of the academic divisions within the College of Arts and Science. An open door or ‘big tent’ approach would benefit the major and minor. Other Council members agreed and suggested that other courses, especially in Anthropology, Political Science, and Sociology, be added to the list of approved elective courses. Professor Hodges was curious whether Professor José Medina was invited to participate in the program. Council members were also concerned about the minor typographical and formatting errors in the document. Mr. Bremer also noted that “hours” in the Catalog copy should be changed to “credit hours.”

Council then approved the Latino and Latina Studies major and minor contingent upon the following: a. revise the course description for LATS 201 to make it more clearly a foundational course for the program and less of a Humanities course; b. revise the course description for LATS 280 to make it more clearly a capstone course for the program and to revise some of its problematic language; c. consider adding more courses to the list of approved electives, especially from Anthropology, Political Science, and Sociology, and, if possible, from the natural sciences; d. consider including other faculty members in the leadership structure of the program; and e. correct the typographical, formatting, and other mistakes in Part I of the LATS proposal. Council members directed the Chair of Faculty Council to verify that these conditions have been fulfilled before sending the proposed Latino and Latina Studies major and minor to the Arts and Science faculty for its approval.


**New and revised courses.** Council approved the course changes and additions from the Curriculum Committee as corrected (the course descriptions will be attached to the Minutes of the March 2013 Arts and Science Faculty Meeting).
4. **New Business and Concerns.**

No issues were raised.

5. **Good of the Council.**

Council members thanked Professor McCammon for chairing the meeting in place of Professor Getz.

6. **Adjournment.**

Council voted to adjourn at 5:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Holly J. McCammon  
Secretary of the Faculty Council