Dean Richard McCarty called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m. in Wilson Hall 103. Approximately 140 faculty members were in attendance.

1. Approval of the Minutes of the Faculty Meeting of February 21, 2006.

There were no comments or questions, and the minutes were approved.

2. Review of the Minutes of the Faculty Council meetings of February 6, February 28, and April 4, 2006.

There were no comments or questions.

3. Information Session about the new Vanderbilt Visions Freshman Orientation program. Report by Associate Vice Chancellor Mark Bandas and President of the VUcept Executive Board Sydney Larson.

Dean McCarty introduced Associate Vice Chancellor Mark Bandas and President of the VUcept Executive Board Sydney Larson. All three are members of the Orientation to Vanderbilt Norms and Values Committee and all helped to present an information session about the new Vanderbilt Visions Freshman Orientation program (a copy of the presentation is attached to these minutes). Associate Vice Chancellor Bandas stated that Chancellor Gee created four committees last February on the recommendation of the Safety Task Force. Each committee is related to campus culture: Orientation to Vanderbilt Norms and Values; Conduct, Honor, and Integrity; Student Wellness and Health; and Events, Activities, and Campus Culture. The Orientation Committee has been investigating ways to extend the student orientation program beyond the first week of classes. The Committee has developed a new orientation program that involves the cooperation and leadership of Vanderbilt faculty members, VUceptors, and first-year students. Ms. Larson explained that VUceptors are student volunteers who welcome and help orient new students to Vanderbilt, and with this new program the role of VUceptors would be expanded and transformed. Instead of being a “peppy leader” for new students, VUceptors would mentor new students into the life and ethos of Vanderbilt throughout the entire first year. Eighty new VUceptors for next year have already been selected after a rigorous process. Dean McCarty, continuing the presentation, stated that the 1600 new students who will be expected to matriculate next year would be divided into groups of 20, and each group would meet on move-in day and continue to meet roughly once a week until late February. All of the small groups would follow the same framework of discussions and be provided with the same resources, but each group would work independently on a set of topics and themes. Discussion within the small groups would
be co-facilitated by faculty members and VUceptors and would be based on the seven values of the Vanderbilt Community Creed, which are scholarship, honesty, civility, accountability, caring, discovery, and celebration. During the spring semester, the program will take advantage of the visit by the Reverend Mr. James Lawson. Students would not receive academic credit for participating in or attending the Vanderbilt Visions Freshman Orientation program. Attendance issues would be handled by the student conduct office. The fifty-minute long sessions would most likely be scheduled in the late afternoon or early evening, and the University and college registrars would resolve scheduling problems and assign students to their small groups. Eighty faculty members (up to 50 from the College of Arts and Science) would be needed to help co-facilitate these small learning groups. Further, co-facilitators would be subdivided into groups of ten in order for them to monitor and discuss amongst themselves progress of the program. Dean McCarty emphasized that this new orientation program is a four-school effort, involving faculty members, VUceptors, and first-year students from all four Vanderbilt undergraduate colleges. The Vanderbilt Visions Freshman Orientation program, he said, would prepare us for the introduction of the Freshman Commons in fall 2008. It would also establish the groundwork for closer collaboration between the four Vanderbilt undergraduate colleges.

Dean McCarty further explained that A&S faculty co-facilitators would also be pre-major advisors to the A&S students in their small learning groups. There would be a second set of A&S faculty pre-major advisors for those A&S students who are in small learning groups that are led by Peabody, Blair, and Engineering faculty members. Compensation for Vanderbilt Visions faculty co-facilitators would be $5000 per academic year, and compensation for duties related to pre-major advising would remain the same as it has been. VUceptors would receive $500 in bookstore credit for each semester of their participation. Funding for the Vanderbilt Visions program has been generously provided by the Provost.

Dean McCarty urged faculty members to volunteer as Vanderbilt Visions co-facilitators or pre-major advisors and to promote the program to freshmen next year.

In response to questions from faculty members, Dean McCarty stated: The Vanderbilt Visions Freshman Orientation program would be different from SAOP (Summer Academic Orientation Program). The latter program involves academic issues and takes place during the summer, while the former program would involve non-academic, transition issues and would take place during the academic year (in response to Professor Rasico’s question). The small learning groups would be created before move-in day and their first meeting would be on move-in day (Professor Eakin’s question). There are two distinct faculty roles: Vanderbilt Visions co-facilitators, who would guide discussion in their small learning groups and who would be pre-major advisors to the A&S students in their groups, and pre-major advisors, who would not be involved with Vanderbilt Visions and who would advise approximately 13 A&S students (Professor Rasico’s question). Faculty members who would like to volunteer to be pre-major advisors should contact Dean Bergquist (Professor Kustanovich’s question). Senior Lecturers are eligible to become faculty co-facilitators (Professor Campbell’s question). Some of the Vanderbilt
Visions sessions might be scheduled on Thursday evenings (Professor Ray’s question). There is substantial cooperation from the sports team coaches and Greek life with the scheduling issues of the Vanderbilt Visions small learning groups (Professor Weintraub’s question).

Several faculty members inquired about possible attendance problems: Professor Siegfried asked whether attendance at the sessions would be mandatory for students. Dean McCarty replied that attendance will be required, but absenteeism would be considered a code of conduct issue, not an academic issue. Associate Vice Chancellor Bandas added that faculty and VUcept co-facilitators would follow up on those students who have not attended a session or actively participated in the discussion (Professor McCarthy’s question).

Professor Scott suggested that the proposed meeting times of the groups—late afternoons and early evenings—are not family-friendly. Dean McCarty responded that those times are the periods in which students are most available for the sessions, but he acknowledged the problem. Professor Campbell recommended that Vanderbilt provide activities or some kind of daycare service for children whose parents are involved with the Vanderbilt Visions program. Dean McCarty stated that he would investigate the possibilities for such a service, including any liability issues.

Professor Weislo asked whether Vanderbilt or A&S has established a program committee to oversee the Vanderbilt Visions Freshman Orientation program. Dean McCarty replied that the Orientation Committee has not addressed that point yet, but it is on their agenda and they will do it.

4. Executive Motion Calendar.

Professor Damon, Chair of the A&S Faculty Council, presented several items for action. The first of these, from the Committee on Academic Standards and Procedures (CASP), was a proposal to delay the implementation of AXLE’s Vanderbilt Visions course. Professor Damon explained that the proposal being considered does not eliminate the original Vanderbilt Visions course from the AXLE curriculum. The proposal delays the implementation of the AXLE Vanderbilt Visions course and its accompanying two-credit degree requirement. The AXLE Vanderbilt Visions course is a different program from the Vanderbilt Visions Freshman Orientation program that was discussed previously in this meeting. The latter program adopted the title “Vanderbilt Visions” from the former. Professor Damon further explained that the Vanderbilt Visions Committee recommended that the AXLE Vanderbilt Visions course be eliminated, but the AXLE Implementation Committee and the Committee on Academic Standards and Procedures (CASP) recommended instead that the implementation of the course be delayed. CASP added a clause to the recommendation from the AXLE Implementation Committee that stipulated that the AXLE Implementation Committee consider the implementation of the AXLE Vanderbilt Visions course before it disbands in 2009. This would give A&S time to determine if the Dean of Commons is interested in adopting such an academic program for all four Vanderbilt undergraduate colleges. If the Dean of Commons were not
interested in establishing this program, then A&S could resuscitate it on its own. The A&S Faculty Council approved the CASP recommendation. Associate Dean Kate Daniels concurred with this interpretation of the proposal. There were no questions, and the motion to delay the implementation of AXLE’s Vanderbilt Vision course was approved.

(B) From the Committee on Educational Programs (CEP), proposed name change of American and Southern Studies (AMST). There were no questions or discussion, and the motion to approve the name change passed.

5. Original Motion Calendar.
No issues were raised.

6. Good of the College.
No issues were raised.

7. Adjournment.
The meeting adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Joel Tellinghuisen, Secretary of the Faculty