Minutes of the Faculty
College of Arts & Science

November 14, 2006

Dean Richard McCarty called the meeting to order at 4:13 p.m. in Wilson Hall 103.

1. Approval of the Minutes of the Faculty Meeting of October 24, 2006.

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

2. Review of the Minutes of the Faculty Council Meeting of November 7, 2006.

There were no comments or questions.

3. Executive Motion Calendar:

(A) Proposed Revision of A&S Non-Tenure-Track Faculty Parental Leave Policy.

Professor Sloop, Chair of the A&S Faculty Council, explained that some members of the Dean’s Office wished to clarify who is eligible for the new Non-Tenure-Track Faculty Parental Leave Policy. They were concerned that A&S should not grant parental leaves to persons who are paid by research grants or who are not continuing faculty members. Council thus amended the first sentence of the policy to read “Any full-time, non-tenure-track faculty member of rank Senior Lecturer, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, Professor, Chaired or Distinguished Professor (excluding those with the prefix ‘Research’, ‘Adjunct’, ‘Adjoint‘ or ‘Visiting’, or suffix ‘in Residence‘ in their title), currently serving a multi-year contract of three or more years’ duration and who has been successfully reappointed to at least a second, multi-year contract, is eligible for parental leave.” Dean McCarty stated that this revision clearly stipulates which non-tenure-track positions are eligible for parental leave. There were no comments or questions, and the revision to the Non-Tenure-Track Parental Leave Policy was approved.

(B) Revised A&S Rules and Procedures.

Dean McCarty explained that changes were made to the revised A&S Rules and Procedures in light of the discussion at the October A&S Faculty meeting. These changes are marked in blue on the document and were approved by Faculty Council at its November 7 meeting. The proposed Rules and Procedures, Dean McCarty added, would be discussed for a second time today, and, if the faculty members present approve, would be sent to the full faculty for ratification by electronic ballot.

Professor Hess asked about the appointment process for named professorships. Comparing II.A.4 and II.D.6 with II.C.1.e, he questioned why candidates for promotion to Associate Professor or Professor required at least three letters of recommendation while candidates for named professorships did not require any letters of recommendation. He urged that candidates for named professorships go through the same review process as other faculty positions. Dean McCarty replied that there are several reasons for this apparent anomaly. First, the appointment of a named professor is often performed quickly in competition with other institutions. In this
situation, letters of recommendation in the candidate’s personnel file from the last three years are used. Second, the Vanderbilt Faculty Manual governs the appointment of named professors and has precedence over the A&S Rules and Procedures. The latter must be consistent with the former. Third, named professorships are honorific and are not technically promotions from full Professor. They are not new positions. Finally, other evidence of academic excellence, such as the candidate’s publication record and number of citations, besides letters of recommendation, is important. Dean McCarty further explained that, since 2000, named professors are appointed for a term of seven years, and, consequently, they are reviewed in their sixth year of service to determine whether they will be reappointed. Vice Chancellor McNamara concurred with Dean McCarty’s interpretation of this issue. Regardless of all of the above, Dean McCarty emphasized that candidates for named professorships have to be approved by the tenured and tenure-track faculty members of the relevant department or program. Therefore, he does not recommend that we change the Rules and Procedures in this regard. We do not want to create rules, Dean McCarty cautioned, that would prevent us from capitalizing on a special opportunity to appoint an eminent person. On the other hand, he said, nothing in the Rules and Procedures or the Faculty Manual precludes us from forming an ad hoc committee of distinguished professors to review candidates’ case files.

Several faculty members asked about the appointment and promotion process for faculty members. In response to a question from Professor Crooke, Dean McCarty explained that all tenured and tenure-track faculty members in a department or program vote on new appointments in that department or program, including named professorships. If the department or program has fewer than five eligible faculty members, however, the Executive Dean, in consultation with the Chair of the Department or the Director of the Program, would form an ad hoc review committee composed of the eligible members of the department or program, and additional faculty members as needed whose research interests align with the position. A similar process would take place for the promotion of Vanderbilt faculty members, except that the research interests of the additional faculty members of an ad hoc review committee would align with those of the candidate. In the case of an appointment of a named professorship, there would probably be two committees, one of which would have outside faculty members as members. All ad hoc review committees are advisory to the Dean’s Office and, as such, are not technically committees of a department or program. In response to a question from Professor Eakin, Dean McCarty stated that an ad hoc review committee for a position or candidate of a small program would include the Director of the Program as Chair (if he or she is eligible), other eligible faculty members of the program, and additional members as needed to complete a five-person committee. All members of that ad hoc review committee have voting rights. In response to a question from Professor Franck, Dean McCarty replied that in unique disciplines, such as Theatre, expert help from outside Vanderbilt would probably be needed. The composition of an ad hoc review committee, Dean McCarty summarized, is open to negotiation and depends on the particular search or promotion case. The Dean’s Office recognizes the autonomy of programs to appoint, renew, and promote its faculty members. Faculty then unanimously approved a motion forwarding the revised A&S Rules and Procedures to a full vote of the A&S faculty by electronic ballot.
4. Memorial Resolution for Lou Silberman, Professor of Religious Studies and Hillel Professor of Jewish Literature and Thought Emeritus.

Daniel Patte, Professor of Religious Studies, presented a Memorial Resolution honoring Lou Silberman, Professor of Religious Studies and Hillel Professor of Jewish Literature and Thought Emeritus. The faculty paid their respects and signified their assent to the resolution by standing for a moment of silence. The Memorial Resolution is appended to these minutes.

5. Memorial Resolution for Walter Sullivan, Professor of English Emeritus.

Mark Jarman, Professor of English, presented a Memorial Resolution honoring Walter Sullivan, Professor of English Emeritus. The faculty paid their respects and signified their assent to the resolution by standing for a moment of silence. The Memorial Resolution is appended to these minutes.

6. Original Motion Calendar.

No issues were raised.

7. Good of the College.

No issues were raised.

8. Adjournment.

The meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joel Tellinghuisen, Secretary of the Faculty