Minutes of the Faculty
College of Arts & Science

April 17, 2007

Dean Richard McCarty called the meeting to order at 4:12 p.m. in Wilson Hall 103.

1. Approval of the Minutes of the Faculty Meeting of March 20, 2007.

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


Noting that most of the actionable business from the April Faculty Council meeting was to be considered later in the meeting, Professor Sloop proceeded to summarize the Council’s discussion of the online course evaluation system. At the previous Faculty Council meeting (March), several members had expressed concern that they were receiving fewer constructive suggestions and more flaming comments with the online course evaluation method than the in-class method. At the April Council meeting, William Longwell, the Director of the A&S Microcomputer Labs, presented data that show that the in-class and online course evaluation methods produce nearly the same results for questions 4, 5, and 9 of the course evaluation form. Further, his report revealed that neither the in-class nor the online course evaluation method result in more discerning or flaming comments—the percentage rates were approximately the same—while the percentage rate of superlative comments is about twice as high for the online method than the in-class method. For details of this discussion, Professor Sloop urged faculty members to read the Minutes of the April Faculty Council meeting. Faculty members had no comments or questions about the online course evaluation system or the Council minutes.

Dean McCarty added that flaming comments on course evaluations are rare, including flaming comments directed at female instructors. He cautioned that instructors should not view his or her own experience as representative of A&S faculty as a whole by comparing his or her online course evaluation results with previous in-class evaluation results. A broader view is necessary to compare the two methods, and the broader view shows that the two course evaluation methods are very well matched. Copies of Mr. Longwell’s report are available on the Faculty Council web site: http://sitemason.vanderbilt.edu/cas/facultycouncil/fcagendaapril07


Dean McCarty asked faculty members to observe a moment of silence for the victims of the recent massacre at Virginia Tech. Faculty so observed.

Dean McCarty stated that he talked to Michael Schoenfeld, Vanderbilt’s Vice Chancellor for Public Affairs, about methods of notifying all students, staff, and faculty in an emergency, and they agreed that text messages are the best way to reach everyone in such situations. Mr. Schoenfeld is considering requiring all students to submit their cell phone numbers to Vanderbilt. A third option would be to post news items and emergency notices on campus video screens. Further discussions will take place this summer.
4. **SACS Re-accreditation update.**

Dean McCarty stated that it was impossible to thank everybody enough for their work on the SACS re-accreditation project. Vanderbilt completed an astounding amount of work in such a short time, including a complete system of academic program assessments in two months. The SACS site visit team was impressed with Vanderbilt and our progress toward their compliance requirements, he continued, and the team liked our Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), which centered on Vanderbilt Visions. Vanderbilt will not receive written notification of the vote by the SACS Executive Committee on our re-accreditation until January, 2008, although we will be in a continuous dialogue with them regarding the shape of the final report. We are already aware that Vanderbilt will be marked as deficient to a certain extent because we have not had two complete academic years of program assessment.

Professor Sloop asked who departments and programs should consult in order to revise their assessment rubrics. Dean McCarty responded that a committee will be formed that will lead the task of coordinating assessments for all academic majors and of sharing best practices.

Professor Marcus asked about progress on an online portfolio program. Dean McCarty replied that discussion about adapting Peabody’s software program is ongoing in the Provost’s Office.

5. **Executive Motion Calendar.**

From the Committee on Educational Programs (CEP): **Proposed revisions to the Political Science major.** Associate Dean Bergquist noted that when the courses required for the major are added up individually in the proposal, the number of credits (36) is greater than the stated total number of credits (30). Professor Tate replied that the number of required electives should be 12 credits, instead of 18, thus correcting the problem. There were no other comments or questions, and the Faculty approved the revisions to the Political Science major.

**Proposed revisions to the Mathematics major and minor.** There were no comments or questions, and the Faculty approved the revisions to the Mathematics major and minor.

6. **Original Motion Calendar.**

No issues were raised.

7. **Good of the College.**

No issues were raised.

8. **Adjournment.**

The meeting adjourned at 4:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joel Tellinghuisen, Secretary of the Faculty