Dean Richard McCarty called the meeting to order at 3:11 p.m. in The Commons Center 237. Approximately 120 faculty members were in attendance.

1. Welcome to The Commons.

Professor Frank Wcislo, Dean of The Commons, welcomed A&S faculty members to The Commons Center. There are many ways, he explained, for faculty members to become engaged with The Commons, and he said that a detailed description of opportunities will be sent by e-mail to all faculty members. Two of the ways in which faculty members can become engaged at The Commons—being a Head of House and a Vanderbilt Visions co-facilitator—are fully committed for the next academic year. There are many other kinds of opportunities, he continued: Faculty members can teach a Commons Seminar; become a Faculty Associate with one of the Houses; create an event or activity at The Commons; or participate in the life of The Commons. The success to date of The Commons rests on the faculty, Professor Wcislo emphasized, and the key to its success over the next ten years will be faculty participation. He urged faculty members to take advantage of the many opportunities for engagement at The Commons.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Faculty Meeting of April 15, 2008.

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


There were no comments or questions.

4. Approval of the Candidates for Degrees at the end of the spring semester, May 1, 2008.

Associate Dean Fräncille Bergquist presented corrections to the list of degree candidates that had been posted with the agenda material. She then moved (1) that the faculty of the College of Arts and Science recommend to the Board of Trust that this list of candidates, as amended, be awarded Bachelor of Arts degrees and Bachelor of Science degrees, as appropriate, on Friday, May 9, 2008; and (2) that a copy of the final official Commencement Program, as approved by the Director of Student Records and the Dean of the College of Arts and Science, be appended to these minutes as a record of the actions of this faculty in recommending candidates for degrees and in awarding honors, prizes, and medals. Faculty approved the two motions.
5. Executive Motion Calendar.

From the Committee on Academic Standards and Procedures (CASP):
A. Proposed revision of the Temporary Grades policy.

Professor Weintraub opposed the proposed revision on the grounds that a student should not receive an “F” grade for a course just because he or she did not take a makeup final exam in a course in which he or she received an “M” grade. He argued that it is not fair or reasonable for a student to receive an “F” in this situation, nor is it fair to impose on faculty members that they must give an “F” to students in this situation, because a student might have earned a passing grade for the course even if he or she did not take the final exam. A student might have earned a “B” in the course, for example, even without taking the final exam. Dean Bergquist replied that the relevant clause of the proposed policy is the same as current policy and that the other Vanderbilt undergraduate schools have agreed to it, as part of a new university-wide policy on temporary grades. Professor Gaca, Chair of CASP, explained that it was her understanding, and Dean Bergquist confirmed this, that students specifically request an “M” grade for a course in order to take a missed final exam and that the form students use to request such a grade clearly states the consequences for not taking the makeup exam. Professor Weintraub responded that a better policy would be to request that faculty members provide a default grade, as in courses in which students receive an “Incomplete” grade, and if the student does not take the missed final exam (or complete the missed coursework) then the student would receive the default grade. Further, even if this clause in the proposed policy is the same as current policy, it would be a good time to correct the problem while we are revising the policy.

Professor Ellingham stated that he has given some thought to this issue as a member of CASP, and he explained that if the faculty were to follow Professor Weintraub’s suggestion, then there would be no distinction between an “M” grade and an “Incomplete” grade. The current and proposed policy, he continued, preserves an important distinction between missing the final exam for a course and missing other kinds of coursework. Professor McCarthy suggested that the faculty might consider whether this distinction is important. If, as a college, he continued, faculty considers final exams as more significant than other coursework, then faculty can establish policy to this effect. Professor Kovalcheck responded that the A&S faculty has established policy on this issue; namely, that faculty members do not have to give a final exam in a course, but if a faculty member does give a final exam, then all of the students have to take the exam. A faculty member cannot give a final exam to some students and not to others in the class.

Professor Dow argued that when a student asks for an “M” grade in a course, the student’s petition could be interpreted as a kind of contract between the student and the faculty. If the student does not take the exam, then the student has defaulted on the “contract” and, as long as the student understands the consequences of defaulting on the “contract,” then it should not be problematic that the student receives an “F” for the course. Associate Dean Sloop pointed out that a student could always take the exam and leave immediately thereafter without completing the exam. This would satisfy the condition of the “M” grade “contract,” and the student would receive the “default grade” for the course as Professor Weintraub has described it.

Professor Nelson stated that it was her understanding that a faculty member has the discretion to give a student an “Incomplete” grade, an “M” grade, or a “zero” grade for missed work (which
would then be averaged with the student’s other coursework to calculate the final grade). Professor Weintraub responded that a faculty member does not have such discretion once a student has been granted an “M” grade for a course. If a student does not take the missed final exam within a specified time period, then the student will receive an “F” for the course. This is exactly what is at issue, he continued, and he reiterated his point that the proposed policy is unfair. Dean Bergquist replied that a student can ask for an extension if he or she cannot take the final exam within the specified time period.

Professor Harrington then called the question. His motion was seconded and approved. Faculty then approved the revised temporary grades policy as proposed by CASP, with three faculty members dissenting and two members abstaining.

B. Proposed revision of the Repeat Credit policy.

There were no comments or questions, and faculty approved the proposed revision of the repeat credit policy.

6. Update from the Center for Teaching.

Dean McCarty presented Allison Pingree, the Director of the Center for Teaching, a special Dean’s Award for Service. He praised her work as Director and stated that nearly every faculty member has benefited greatly from the services of the Center for Teaching (CFT). Faculty members heartily applauded Professor Pingree.

Professor Pingree accepted the award and thanked faculty members for their support and the Provost’s Office for financial support. She reported that the CFT is moving to new quarters this summer, from Calhoun Hall into the building that is now the Bill Wilkerson Center, which is located at Edgehill Avenue and 19th Avenue South. The renovated building will house the ROTC in the first floor and the CFT in the second floor. The CFT space will be divided into three zones, she continued. The first zone will be an open, flexible space for meetings and events; the second zone will be a library and research area; and the third zone will be a staff area. She invited everyone to visit the new space in September.

Professor Singleton asked whether classes could be held in the new CFT space. Professor Pingree responded that the open, flexible space has been designed so that classes can be held there and videotaped for instructional purposes. It is possible, she said, for classes to meet there all semester, but it is unlikely due to scheduling issues.

7. Update on the Shape the Future Campaign.

Dean McCarty announced that A&S has met its goal of raising $125 million in Shape the Future campaign contributions two months ahead of the June 30th target date. As of April 30, 2008, A&S has raised $125.2 million. The campaign goal was attained, he said, thanks to the great work of Jonathan Petty and his staff.

Dean McCarty then introduced Mr. Petty, who is the A&S Associate Dean for Development and Alumni Relations. Mr. Petty thanked Dean McCarty for his support and introduced his staff
members, who are Ashley McLellan, Sara Shaut, Anna Shell, Warner Ballard, Malah Tidwell, and two new members, Elizabeth Weatherly and Kimberly Middleton.

8. Update on the new *Arts and Science* magazine and its editor, Nancy Wise.

Mr. Petty then introduced Nancy Wise, the new editor of the A&S magazine, which will be called *Arts and Science*. *Arts and Science* will replace the *Cornerstone* magazine. He stated that the first issue will be distributed in a few weeks. The first issue of *Arts and Science*, Dean McCarty added, will be published in record time, thanks to the efforts of Ms. Wise.


Dean McCarty congratulated the three faculty members who have been appointed Professors Emeriti and thanked them for their dedicated service to Vanderbilt. The three Professors Emeriti have nearly a combined 100 years of service at Vanderbilt, he said. The Professors Emeriti are: Matthew Gould, Professor Emeritus of Mathematics; Michael Plummer, Professor Emeritus of Mathematics; and Patricia Ward, Professor Emerita of French and Comparative Literature. Faculty members applauded the three Professors Emeriti.

Dean McCarty thanked Professor Holly McCammon for her service as Associate Dean of graduate education, and he presented her with a special gift. Associate Dean McCammon then delivered good news about graduate education in Arts and Science (a printout of her PowerPoint file is attached to these Minutes): In comparison to last year, all of the following have increased: Applications for admission (up 5%), acceptances (up 25%), acceptances by students of color (up 58%), and average verbal and quantitative GRE scores. Also increasing is the number of Ph.D. degrees granted (up 8%). Future progress in graduate education next year, she continued, includes a new series of professional development workshops for graduate students; a new graduate student coordinator to help plan the workshops; new graduate mentoring workshops for faculty members; new dissertation fellowships in the social sciences; and in effect will be the new parental leave policy for graduate students. Faculty applauded Professor McCammon.

Dean McCarty thanked Professor Michael Bess for serving as Chair and Professor Senta Victoria Greene for serving as Secretary of the A&S Faculty Council for the 2007-08 academic year. He then announced that, in a special meeting of the Faculty Council on May 1, Professor Kassian Kovalcheck and Professor Brooke Ackerly were elected as Chair and Secretary, respectively, of the 2008-09 Faculty Council. Faculty congratulated all four officers.

Executive Dean Carolyn Dever thanked two colleagues, who, she said, have served the College of Arts and Science remarkably well in their different capacities. First, she congratulated Mona Frederick, who has for twenty years been the Executive Director of the Robert Penn Warren Center for the Humanities. The Humanities Center, she continued, is well recognized as a valuable resource for those in the humanities and qualitative social sciences. Two recent and notable accomplishments of the Humanities Center include the Graduate Fellows Program, in which graduate students are funded for a full year for dissertation writing, and the “We Speak for Ourselves” Conference last April, in which civil rights activists, some of whom were interviewed by Robert Penn Warren for his book *Who Speaks for the Negro?*, gathered to discuss civil rights progress. Faculty applauded Ms. Frederick.
Second, Dean Dever congratulated Professor Dana Nelson, from the Department of English, for creating and directing the Program in Career Development (PCD) for tenure-track faculty members. Vanderbilt is unique in the country among major research universities, she stated, in the full range of mentoring and career development support that A&S provides to tenure-track faculty. She praised Professor Nelson for establishing such a healthy and thriving program. Dean Dever then announced that Professor Vanessa Beasley, from the Department of Communication Studies, will be the new director of the PCD, starting next fall.

Professor Nelson stated that she could not have successfully started and directed the PCD without the rich variety of support that she received from junior faculty members, Dean McCarty, and the PCD Board of Advisors, which includes Professors Cornfield, Furbish, Greene, Landers, Medina, Mode, and Tucker. She also thanked Professor Beasley for her willingness to be the new Director. Faculty applauded Professor Nelson.

10. Original Motion Calendar.

No issues were raised.

11. Good of the College.

[It was announced earlier in the day that Dean McCarty was chosen by Chancellor Zeppos to be the next Provost of Vanderbilt University.] Associate Dean Dever thanked and honored Dean McCarty for his work as Dean of the College of Arts and Science. Dean McCarty stated that he was a very lucky person for all of the help and support that he received from faculty members. When he first arrived at Vanderbilt, he continued, he learned what it meant to be a Vanderbilt faculty member from Associate Dean Bergquist and he learned how to guide and manage A&S with Professors Landers and Tsinakis when they were members of the Dean’s Office. Dean McCarty remarked that he often receives credit for accomplishments that others have achieved, because it is difficult to thank every faculty member involved; but he would like to thank every faculty member. Faculty applauded Dean McCarty.


The meeting adjourned at 4:12 p.m. to a delicious South American-themed reception honoring the Professors Emeriti and celebrating the end of the semester.

Respectfully submitted,

Marshall C. Eakin,
Secretary of the Faculty