Minutes of the Arts and Science Faculty Council  
October 1, 2013

The meeting was called to order at 4:10 p.m. by the Chair, Professor Lucius Outlaw, Jr. Present at the meeting were Dean Carolyn Dever, Professors Akram Aldroubi, Laura Carpenter, Katherine Crawford, Marshall Eakin, Jennifer Fay, Doug Hardin, Holly McCammon, Carmelo Rizzo, Ruth Rogaski, Tony Stewart, and Kip Viscusi. 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 September 3, 2013.

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

2. Formation of two ad-hoc faculty subcommittees.

Professor Outlaw stated that the first subcommittee, as explained at the September Council meeting, would consider revisions to the five-year old Arts and Science guidelines for the appropriate use of research funds by faculty members. Dean Dever further explained that the guidelines in the present policy statement are clearly written, but they should be reviewed and updated, especially in regard to tax implications. The guidelines apply to university funds used by faculty members for discretionary purposes, such as for the purchase of research materials and for travel directly related to research. Professors McCammon, Rizzo, and Stewart volunteered to serve on this subcommittee.

The second subcommittee would explore the possibility of establishing a mentoring and career development support service for tenured faculty members. Dean Dever explained that the Dean’s Office receives periodic calls for such support, and she stated that she does not know the extent to which senior faculty members would be interested. Members of this committee should survey the level of interest among faculty members for a development program, outline the issues involved, and bring their ideas back to Council for discussion. Demographic information about faculty members is available by academic division from VIRG. Professors Carpenter and Crawford volunteered to serve on this subcommittee, and Council members agreed that one or two persons outside of Council should be added to this subcommittee.

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

Proposed revision of Medicine, Health, and Society (MHS) major, minor, and Honors program. Mr. Bremer noted that there has been a small change in the proposed Catalog copy. Near the bottom of the first page of the Catalog copy, “Note: No more than 21 credit hours may be in courses designated MHS. No more than 12 credit hours may be in the same subject area . . .” has been clarified to read “Note: No more than 21 credit hours may be in courses designated MHS. Other than MHS, no more than 12
credit hours may be in the same subject area . . .” Professor Carpenter stated that the proposed revisions are a great improvement to the program and wondered if students could take more than one of the core courses (under the proposed revision, students would be required to complete one of the six core courses). Dean Campbell and Mr. Bremer replied that students may take more than one of the core courses, because each of the core courses (except for MHS 100) also count toward one or more of the concentrations (MHS majors would be required to complete four courses in one of the six concentrations). There were no other comments or questions, and Council approved the proposed revisions to the MHS program.

4. Business from the Curriculum Committee and the Committee on Graduate Education (CGE).

New and revised courses. Council approved the course changes and additions from the Curriculum Committee and the Committee on Graduate Education as revised (the course descriptions will be attached to the Minutes of the October 2013 Arts and Science Faculty Meeting).

During the review of these items, Council members directed that all course descriptions shall have gender-neutral language.

5. New Business and Concerns.

Professor Outlaw proposed that Council discuss at an upcoming Council meeting Professor Crawford’s concern, expressed at the September Council meeting, about the inappropriate use of technology by students in the classroom. Perhaps the discussion, he continued, could be framed by the following questions: Does the Faculty Manual provide sufficient resources and guidance to faculty members in this kind of situation or do new guidelines need to be established? Is the faculty member’s authority in the classroom clearly articulated, especially to faculty members new to Vanderbilt and to faculty members concerned about receiving low student evaluations due to challenging students’ inappropriate use of technology? Such an articulation of faculty authority, Professor Crawford suggested, could be included in new faculty orientation materials and presentations.

Dean Campbell explained that she has charged the Student-Faculty Relations Committee with drafting a policy on the use of Google Glass and other recording devices in Arts and Science classrooms. She noted that Arts and Science does not have clear policy in this regard and no longer has a technology committee. The charge was prompted by a discussion in, and a position taken by, the Religious Studies department prohibiting the use of Google Glass in their classrooms. The Committee’s draft policy, she continued, could help to clarify the issue and to guide Council’s discussion. Dean Campbell stated, however, that “classroom climate” is a provostial issue and consequently cannot be resolved by Arts and Science alone. Professor Stewart, Chair of the Religious Studies department, affirmed that the use of Google Glass and similar technologies can be governed by the individual Vanderbilt schools; Provost McCarty mentioned this to him in
a conversation. He also argued that it might not be difficult to gain student understanding and consensus on this issue; students are not pleased to discover that they have been filmed or recorded by other students. This line of reasoning is persuasive. In fact, students in the Owen Graduate School of Management and the Law School initiated discussions about the issue of the inappropriate use of technology in the classroom, Professors Eakin and Outlaw stated. Some of their solutions, however, such as turning WiFi off during classes, are not possible in Arts and Science, Deans Dever and Campbell responded, and, moreover, students would still be able to access the Internet through their cell phones. Yet, cell phone use in the classroom can be useful and helpful, several Council members pointed out, as a resource, for example. It is the surreptitious recording that is problematic.

The inappropriate use of technology in the classroom by students is related to the broader issue of the nature of cultural life of undergraduates at Vanderbilt, many Council members agreed. Students do not often understand the implications of their actions, what it means to invade the privacy of other persons or to infringe intellectual property rights, for example. Professor Fay added that these kinds of transgressions are symptomatic of society at large, yet they are opportunities to teach students. She urged Council to take the lead on this issue.

Professor Outlaw recommended that discussion regarding the use of technology in the classroom continue after Council receives the report from the Student-Faculty Relations Committee. The report is due at the end of the fall semester or early in the spring semester. Council members agreed.

6. **Good of the Council.**

Professor Outlaw restated his offer to host a social gathering for Council members in order for members to become better acquainted with each other. Council members expressed interest in such a gathering.

7. **Adjournment.**

Council voted to adjourn at 5:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer M. Fay
Secretary of the Faculty Council