

December 11, 2001

Meeting Location: 189 Sarratt

Meeting Time: 8:30 – 10:00

Attendees

Phil McGovern, F. Clark Williams, Paula McGown, Bill Randles, Charlotte Norris, Cathy Smith, Pat Rice, Bridgette Willette, Anita Brame, John Brassil, Mary Marler, Terrie Spetalnick, Sheri Reynolds, Teri Creech, Kristi Elkins, Sheri DiGiovanna, Kathy McGugin, Lola Fitzpatrick, Judy Thompson, Arliene Dearing, Dawna Wagoner, Bill Corbin, Karen Cunningham, Amy Smith, Janet Hirt, Brenda McKee, Linda Faye Johnson, Sharon Stanley, Kathaleen Jantz, Susan Han, Sue Davis, Richard Murray, Alyce Dobyns-Ladd, Gwendolyn Simpkins, Donna Smith, Jennifer Mayer, Marva Dale Greenwood, Sue King, Suzanne Pendergrass, Sandy Winters, Beth Clark, Debbie Whelan, Nancy Jackson, Burt Augst, Kevin Davis, Marcia Dillard, Kay Donigan, Mary Lou Edgar, Patsy Sanders, Anna Parish

Regrets

Willa Dean Martin, Laura Watts, Tammy Boclair

Visitors

Betsy Carroll, Lauren Brisky, Darlene Lewis, Nim Chinniah, Patricia Marett, Cindy Dorminy, Keith Cribbs (Group 1), Rita Majors (Group 1)

The meeting was called to order at 8:30. Minutes from the last meeting were presented and a motion was made to approve the minutes as amended. The motion was seconded, voted on, and accepted by the USAC.

Announcements

- 1) Donna Smith announced a Campus Recreation Youth Holiday Camp, which involves three days at Vanderbilt University's Student Recreation Center. The camp will be held December 19-21, 2001. Vanderbilt and Nashville community children ages 6-12 are welcome. The cost is \$70 per child due at the time of registration. Call the Office of Campus Recreation at 3-6627 for more information.
- 2) Cindy Dorminy of HEALTH Plus announced the arrival of two new online offerings. An online Personal Wellness Profile may be accessed from the HEALTH Plus homepage at www.vanderbilt.edu/HRS/wellness/healthplus.htm. This is designed to help faculty and staff members evaluate their current lifestyles, identify health risks, and decide where and how to make improvements. All results are confidential. An online Wellness Library may also be accessed from the HEALTH Plus homepage. This library provides a vast amount of information about a variety of wellness-related topics. Call Lisa Connor at 3-8943 for more information.
- 3) Phil asked for representatives for the Communications Committee, an ad hoc committee of the Council. This committee is to improve the campus's knowledge about the USAC and its work.

4) At next month's Council meeting, Veronica Burns will discuss training opportunities at Vanderbilt. The Vanderbilt University Land Use and Development Plan will be presented at a future USAC meeting.

Committee Reports

1) Ad Hoc Committees of the Council

A) Executive Committee meeting day and location is changing. The committee will meet on January 2, 11:30-12:30 in Information Technology Services at the Hill Center and then will meet at the same time and location on the first Tuesday of the month February-June. F. Clark Williams reported that he and the committee met to discuss the Council's Recommendation on Traffic and Parking.

B) Hardship Fund Committee meets Mondays at 12:30 in the Employee Assistance Program office, Room 010 Medical Arts Building. Eleven Vanderbilt departments volunteered to assist nine deserving Vanderbilt families during the holiday season.

C) Special Events Committee: The Holiday Party will be Tuesday, December 11, from 3:00-5:00 at the Student Recreation Center.

D) The Ad Hoc Committee that was formed to follow up on previous Council recommendations met and began discussion about how to address issues such as the status of staff training and career development, classification and compensation, and other previous recommendations. The next meeting will be January 7, 2002 at 2:00pm in Room 519 Wilson Hall

2) University Committees: USAC members serve on several university committees that deal with issues pertaining to staff members. These committees include Benefits, Special Events, Campus Security, Equal Access, Status on Women and Minorities, and Traffic & Parking.

A) Benefits Committee: No report in addition to the staff tuition benefit and short term disability benefit addressed by the Chancellor.

B) The Traffic and Parking Committee reported that focus groups to address the registration process had been held. One major area of concern identified is the transmission of social security numbers during the registration process. Traffic and Parking is seeking input for potential identifiers to be used in the authentication process. Potential identifiers should be convenient, unique, and ubiquitous. Suggestions to date include VUNet ID and password, Employee ID number, last five digits of the social security number plus MM/DD birthday, telephone number, and license plate number.

Old Business

Staff Survey Follow-Up

Phil asked for a show of hands of staff members who have received feedback from the staff survey within their work groups. Of the 50 USAC members present, approximately 50% raised their hands. Several other Council members stated that meetings to discuss the survey results had been scheduled. Lauren Brisky stated that University Administration is committed to department leaders sharing survey results with staff members and developing action plans based on the results. The action plans can be tracked online and thus far, Administration is disappointed that the goal of departments having action plans developed by the end of December. There will be another meeting scheduled with the Deans to discuss expectation surrounding the staff survey results. Lauren asked that USAC members who are not yet scheduled to hear the survey results or have not already received feedback regarding the survey results e-mail her or Jerry Fife with this information. Phil will send an e-mail to all USAC members with this request.

New Business

Chancellor Gee

Chancellor Gee addressed the USAC. He opened with a reaffirmation of his commitment to attend one USAC meeting per semester and then made a statement that he is proud of the University and how its faculty, staff, and students pulled together and reached out to one another in the aftermath of the September 11 events. Chancellor Gee believes that Vanderbilt University is financially healthy and well-positioned to move forward aggressively with appropriate prudence in this post-September 11 economy. He commented that Vanderbilt is a relatively small institution and needs to work toward reducing internal bureaucracy to become more agile and better able to reposition itself quickly in response to external circumstances. One of Chancellor Gee's goals is to "break the back of bureaucracy."

The Chancellor first discussed topics submitted to him in advance by Council members. These areas included:

o Staff education benefits: A taskforce, chaired by Darlene Lewis, recommended that educational benefits for staff be very similar to the educational benefits currently afforded dependent children. Chancellor Gee reviewed the taskforce recommendation and asked the fringe benefit committee to review it as well. Effective 7/1/02, the following changes will be made to the educational assistance policy:

- Vanderbilt will reimburse staff up to 70% of tuition for one course per semester
- The course does NOT have to be job related
- The course may be in pursuit of a Bachelors, Graduate, or Professional degree, but does not necessarily have to be degree seeking
- There is no lifetime limit on the number of courses or degrees, other than the per semester limit

- The current education benefits for dependents and spouses are unchanged

The taskforce originally proposed that staff be reimbursed for two courses per semester, but this was changed to one course by the Fringe Benefits committee, at least for one year. After the university has some experience with the cost of this increased benefit, the policy may be changed to two courses.

- o Faculty/Staff Hardship Fund: The Fringe Benefits committee also approved MATCHING funds donated to the Hardship Fund of up to \$25,000 per year beginning July 1, 2002, allowing more Vanderbilt faculty and staff members in crisis situations to receive assistance and support from the University.
- o Short-term disability: Knowing the concern of both the staff councils about short-term disability, University Administration again reviewed the feasibility of putting in place a policy for next year. Unfortunately, the Fringe Benefits committee felt the cost was prohibitive (\$3M) especially in a year when the University has to absorb an additional \$12M in health care costs. The Chancellor understands that the Benefits Committee (not to be confused with the Fringe Benefits committee), chaired by Bill Damon, has raised again the possibility of instituting a sick bank as a replacement for short-term disability. He anticipates they will review this option and report back on its feasibility.
- o Compensation and career development: Some progress has been made in these areas. The Chancellor understands that the classification/reclassification process has been streamlined. Departments can now file a one-page form instead of a booklet previously required to change a position – this was a STOP project. Also, he understands that recruitment is giving priority to internal candidates. A request has been made for a budget exception in FY2003 to improve training at Vanderbilt, which would directly impact career planning and development. However, the budget exception request is one of many valid, needed requests and all cannot be funded. The Chancellor has tasked the IFP council with the job of prioritizing the many requests.
- o Parking: What parking problem? ;-) The issue of parking is being examined in the Land Use and Development Plan. The consultants have recommended that Vanderbilt become a “walking campus,” with parking located more at the periphery and shuttles into campus.

The Chancellor then opened the floor for questions and comments from USAC members.

Q: There is a rumor that the University Club will be relocated. What are the plans for this?

A: The Land Use and Development Plan addresses plans for the University Club’s present site. This site is the current center of campus. As the campus is reoriented over the next several years, this site will be used for purposes other than the University Club; therefore the University Club will have to relocate.

Q: In some University departments, there are issues surrounding the pay scale. Some staff members believe that new hires from outside Vanderbilt are being paid more than people who stay within the Vanderbilt system for several years. How can this be addressed?

A: Chancellor Gee stated that the process of transferring internally is being examined. People should be paid for the work they do. This leads to increased retention. There is a University-wide effort to deal with pay equity and appropriate job classification.

Q: Departments currently must come up with their own resources to fund things such as pay raises. This can lead to a “rich man, poor man” system where the “richer” departments can attract a better pool of applicants. Is there anything being done to make the funding for departments more equal?

A: A uniform/unified approach to budgeting is being developed to address the current inequities within the system. Chancellor Gee would like to see the university organization more flattened out.

Q: A meeting was recently held by a new Dean. Some staff members left the meeting disheartened that no funds seem to be available to make requested changes and that although staff members received new job classifications to more appropriately reflect their job duties, increased compensation did not follow.

A: Chancellor Gee believes that a healthy College of Arts and Sciences is needed to have a healthy University. The new Dean has been charged with changing the attitude and culture of the College of Arts and Sciences and with decreasing the existing bureaucracy. Chancellor Gee felt that the Dean was attempting to paint a realistic picture of the current situation within the College and would be concerned to know that staff members left the meeting feeling disheartened. He has a meeting with the Dean this afternoon and will discuss this with him.

Q: Is there any hope that short-term disability will ever be implemented?

A: Chancellor Gee reiterated that short-term disability was delayed by the Fringe Benefit Committee because of competing priorities in the upcoming fiscal year. Because of the \$12 million bump in the health benefits cost, the \$3 million needed to fund short-term disability was not available for this fiscal year. However, the issue is still being considered and will be revisited in future years.

Q: Will the University consider increasing the amount it matches in retirement contributions?

A: Because of competing priorities, this has been side-barred at present. The issue may be revisited in future years.

Q: Some staff members have not received the results from the staff survey. Is there a timeline in place for this and what is being done to track this?

A: Vice Chancellor Lauren Brisky addressed this question. University Administration is committed to department leaders sharing survey results with staff members and developing action plans based on the results. The action plans can be tracked online and thus far, Administration is disappointed that the goal of departments having action plans developed by the end of December. There will be another meeting scheduled with the Deans to discuss expectation surrounding the staff survey results. Lauren

asked that USAC members who are not yet scheduled to hear the survey results or have not already received feedback regarding the survey results e-mail her or Jerry Fife with this information.

Q: Is building a conference center in the future plans for the University?

A: Yes, this is addressed in the Land Use and Development Plan. One possible location is the old IHOP site.

Q: Is anything being done to address improving management skills for persons in supervisory roles within the University?

A: Chancellor Gee recognizes that all people are not born with management and leadership skills. Management and leadership training is a high priority that will be addressed by the new Provost.

Recommendation on Traffic and Parking

On the staff survey, concerns about parking were a high priority item in the open-ended questions at the conclusion of the survey. A Council Recommendation on Traffic and Parking was drafted in response to this. This recommendation has been disseminated twice to Council members via e-mail. Minor revisions such as correcting typographical errors were made from suggestions of Council members, and Mary Lou Edgar revised the style of the Recommendation, removing “whereas.” A motion was made that the Council Recommendation on Traffic and Parking be approved as amended. The motion was seconded, voted on, and accepted by the USAC. The Recommendation can be accessed at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/usac/parking0112.htm>

Meeting adjourned at 10:00. The next meeting will be January 8 in Room 189 Sarratt.