September 14, 2015

To: Chancellor Nick Zeppos  
From: Richard Willis, Chair of the Faculty Senate

On September 10, 2015, the Senate unanimously approved the attached revisions to the Vanderbilt University Faculty Manual. This memorandum forwards those proposed revisions to you for your review and, we hope, approval. The revisions pertain to Part I, “The University and its Governance,” Chapter 5, “Amendments to Faculty Manual.” I attach two documents:

Track changes copy

This document contains the proposed revisions to the current version of the Faculty Manual made by two teams. The proposed revisions in blue are from Vice Provost for Faculty and International Affairs Tim McNamara and Associate Vice Chancellor for Health Affairs David Raiford. These revisions merge some of the 2014-2015 version of this part of the Manual with some of the changes approved by the Senate in February 2015. The subsequent proposed revisions in red are from the Senate’s Faculty Manual committee and incorporate more of the revisions approved by the Senate in February.

Clean copy

This document presents the proposed revisions to the Faculty Manual without track changes.

The Faculty Senate hopes that you will approve the proposed revisions. As required by the Faculty Manual change process I am providing an identical copy of these materials to the Provost for her review and, we hope, approval. Certainly, I stand ready to address any questions or concerns you have and, as always, thank you.

Richard H. Willis, PhD  
Chair, Faculty Senate (2015-2016)  
Anne Marie and Thomas B. Walker, Jr.  
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Motion: Whereas the Vanderbilt Faculty Manual requires revision and updating, as part of this process,

We, the Faculty Manual Committee, move that the following document be accepted as Part I, Chapter 5 of the Faculty Manual and replace the corresponding part of the current version of the Faculty Manual.

Chapter 5: Amendments to Faculty Manual

Revisions to the Faculty Manual are a collaborative process involving the Chancellor, the Provost, and the Faculty Senate. All amendments or proposed amendments to the Faculty Manual are required to pass through Steps 1 to 4 below.

Step 1. Proposal for Changes

A proposal for a change in the Faculty Manual must be made by the Chancellor, the Provost, or the Chair of the Faculty Senate on behalf of the Senate. The proposal becomes a formal proposal when the official initiating the proposal sends the proposal in writing to the other two officials in the change process. The Chair of the Faculty Senate shall inform the members of the Faculty Senate of any changes to the Faculty Manual that have been proposed since the most recent meeting of the Senate. The Provost may confer with the Deans of the Colleges and Schools about any proposed changes.

Step 2. Deliberations.

After a formal proposal for change is made, the Faculty Senate and the Provost (who may consult with the Deans of the Colleges and Schools), shall have a minimum of thirty days to issue recommendations on the proposed change to the Chancellor. It is likely that many changes that are purely informational will not require discussion. Others will merit extended discussion, including referral to committees of the Faculty Senate or to the Office of the General Counsel. All efforts should be made to conclude deliberations within a reasonable period of time.

Step 3. Approval.

The ultimate decision on any change lies with the Chancellor, who shall inform the Provost and the Chair of the Faculty Senate of the decision within a reasonable period of time.


The Chair of the Faculty Senate shall inform the members of the Faculty Senate of the final disposition of each proposal. Deans of each College or School shall bring any changes in the Manual to the attention of the faculty members of their college or school. A copy of any changes shall be provided to the Office of the Faculty Senate and to the Provost, who will archive any such changes.

Interim Change
There may be instances in which some almost immediate change is needed due to changes in laws or regulations or funding agency requirements. A change in government regulations might well include a specific compliance date, for instance, and an interim change may be required. If that change involves matters that the Faculty Senate (for instance) wishes to study in more detail or if the Faculty Senate is not in session, an interim change may be required. In such cases, the Chancellor either may make the change or designate another officer to do so, with an indication on the Faculty Manual website that the matter is under review. The procedure shall then follow as set forth above, beginning with a proposal for change.

Archive of Changes

The Provost’s Office of Faculty Affairs is the office of record and the record custodian of the Faculty Manual.

In August of each year, a “snapshot” of the Faculty Manual shall be taken and frozen for that year. This document is shall be retained for seven years by the Provost’s Office of Faculty Affairs and by the Faculty Senate Office and then sent to the University Archives by the Provost’s Office. The final record of changes made each year, prior to the snapshot being taken, shall be retained permanently in the Office of Faculty Affairs and the Faculty Senate Office. Records leading up to final changes are retained for seven years and then destroyed.

Each year a hard copy of the August snapshot shall be preserved as an archived document in the Jean and Alexander Heard Library’s Office of Special Collections and University Archives. These copies shall be maintained in such a way that both the archived hard copy and the online snapshot for any given year are conveniently available to faculty members. As changes are made to the Faculty Manual, they shall be documented on the Faculty Senate website and the accumulated changes made during the year shall also be archived along with the snapshot.