



Minutes for Tuesday, October 13, 2009

The Commons, Room 237

ATTENDANCE:

Present

Alley, Jean
Amos, Stan
Armstrong, Terri
Attack, Becky
Bailey, Bill
Banks, Diane
Barnett, Lora
Boglin, Harriett
Bransford, Chris
Brassil, John
Chapman, Angela
Cribbs, Chris
Dean, Mary Ann
DiGiovanna, Sheri
Dixon, Michele
Dubois, Daniel
Fisher, Kristy
Fisher, Joe
Formont, Jamie
Gambill, Jodie
Hiltz, Shirley
Holcroft, Nancy
Houseman, Andrea

King, Sue
Koval, Kristin
Krueger, Anna K
Lang, Melanie
Latham, Vickie
Martin, Ashley
McKee, Brenda
McLeod, Laura
Moore, Kenny
Owens, Ann Marie
Palmer, Dave
Patterson, JoAnn
Pepper, Ronnie
Pruitt, Don
Reed, Dylan
Reynolds-Barnes, Deborah
Rhodes, Katherine
Richter, Andy
Seezen, Karen
Showman, Hillary
Smith, Donna
Smith, Susanne
Soxayachanh, Olivia

Stanard, Ray
Steward, Dan
Street, JJ
Stuart, Kate
Suttles, Todd
Trenary, Carlos
Villager, Nyla
Waddell, Rochelle
Walker, Bryon
Wall, Andrea
Watson-Wienzetzl, Myrna
Whaley, Elizabeth
Whatley, Luci
White, Lolita
Williams, Tara
Wilson, Cliff

Absent, sent regrets

Fagan, Shawn
Frierson, Sterling
McGrath, Jason
Norfleet, Lydia
Pickert, Don
Sheldon, Brenda

Soren, Carol
Thompson, Molly
Wenzell, Alison
Whitlow, Cathy
Wyatt, Michelle

Absent

Cage, Vickie
Collins, Greg
Franklin, Keith
Heath, Eric
Jackson, Nancy
Johnson, Faye
Johnson, Stacy
Kendrick, Stacy
McClure, Cheryl
McCurry, Barry
Pryor, Jessica
Smeltzer, Mike
Steine, Cindy
Tucker, Phillip
Watts, Katie
Webb, Mary

Guests: Melissa Wochoer, Jane Bruce, Cliff Joyner

8:30 a.m. Diane Banks, President, welcomed the members and called the meeting to order.

MINUTES: The minutes of the August meeting were unanimously approved.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Events: Andrea Wall updated the committee on the Red Cross Blood Drive to take place Nov 30th at both Sarratt Student Center 216/220 and Peabody MRL 241 from 11 AM – 3 PM. The committee needs 12 volunteers, 3 for each hour from 10 AM – 4 PM; Two of the volunteers to handle the registration and one to run the canteen. Online registration will be available to sign up for donations. A Fact Sheet will go out by email to all faculty, staff and students.

The committee also reported on three possible fund raising options for the USAC.

- **Movie Night at Sarratt Cinema:** the rental and license cost for a movie would be \$800 - \$1200. The 302 seat Sarratt Cinema can be donated (Approved by Jack Davis). Hors d'oeuvres, & wine are possible things to sell/offer with viewing or regular popcorn & cokes. Movie ideas are welcomed by the committee
- **Breakfast with Santa:** Jack Davis has agreed to donate the SLC Ballrooms. Bill Bailey has agreed to play Santa & Kristin has volunteered to be an elf. If anyone else would like to be an elf, please let them know. Children can have a photo made with Santa and receive a candy cane after telling Santa their wish list.

- 5K Vanderbilt Fall Fun Run for the spring funding the Vanderbilt Hardship Fund: VPD has a 5k run mapped out on campus. Rachelle is speaking to her co-workers to see if they would volunteer their time. The entry fee would be \$25 per person, \$30 at the door. One would register before event online. The committee would speak with local vendors to host for food, drinks, etc. and could sell t-shirts for \$5 or \$10 each.

A call has been made to Camp Howard in Dining Services to see if they are willing to help sponsor a Breakfast with Santa and/or a 5K Vanderbilt Fall Fun Run by providing food & drinks.

Membership: Andy Richter introduced two new members Dave Palmer, group 5, and Elizabeth Whaley, group 22. He also reported that there are two new vacancies we hope to fill next month.

Communication: The Communication Committee has completed the autopopulating of lists for each group generated from Human Resources. Carlos Trenary and Kristin Koval showed the group representatives how to manage their lists online. They also handed out an instruction sheet for the list managers. One list manager is required for and has been assigned to each group (with the exception of groups 25 and 26) and should have already been contacted by the Communication Committee. Volunteers were confirmed for groups 26 and 25.

List managers were shown how to maintain their lists. With a few exceptions such as the library, Group 14, 18 and 19, each list will be auto-populated monthly.

Rules and Administration: Bill Bailey reported that this committee will look at the part of our by-laws that deal with filing vacancies. They are currently exploring information and will schedule a meeting for that committee soon.

Staff Life: The staff life committee chair, Kathy Rhodes reported that their committee was given 5 topics to look at this year:

1. No-smoking enforcement on campus. The issue was resolved by the planned enforcement of the existing policy beginning with the fall semester 2010.
2. Health insurance for retirees. VU is not prepared to pay the double digit millions >\$34 MM it would cost today to cover this. However, efforts are being made to have Blue Cross available via the credit union and if so, it will be added to the employee "perks" list. This issue is being looked at by others on campus as well. The committee assures us that this issue has not been forgotten. VU values its employees current and retired.
3. Variation in RTA Costs - VUMC vs. University Central. Melanie Lang, Vice Chair, conducted research after the Staff Life Committee received an inquiry related to the variation in price for Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) passes purchased by VUMC or University Central employees. Currently, the cost is \$60 for 20 RTA rides for University Central employees and \$37 for 20 RTA rides for Med Center employees.

Based on the information gathered, the difference in price is specifically related to the subsidies allocated to the Vanderbilt RTA program by the University or Med Center. Taking into consideration all the different variables that would go into a business decision relating to subsidizing transportation costs for employees, it is impossible to look at the price differences for RTA passes on "price alone." It would be like "comparing apples to oranges." We encourage employees to purchase RTA passes ethically and appropriately.

4. Community Service opportunities: Brenda McKee looked into active citizenship and talked about volunteer opportunities with Shaiya Baer's group. Although they normally work with students, Shaiya's group has drawn up a VU staff community service proposal that is in the process of being formalized. One issue to explore is the ability to volunteer during work hours. Shaiya's group also held a community service fair that was not well announced. The committee reports that we have numerous opportunities that the students are involved in that we could participate in as well. The committee is trying to partner with a student representative.

5. The formation of a Safety Committee. This was discussed briefly at the executive staff meeting. The consensus was that the need for this was on the Medical Center side, not the university side.

UNIVERSITY STANDING COMMITTEES

There was no new business to report.

New Business

Harriott Boglin reported on The Faculty and Staff Hardship Fund Committee & Work/Life Connections – EAP invite for our participation in the Partnering with Parents. The goal is to assist 25 families. Contact Harriett.I.boglin@vanderbilt.edu or Jim Kendall at 936-1327 if you would like to participate. VU employees can contribute gift cards from Target, Wal-Mart, Kroger, etc. The Partnering with Parents flyer requesting VU elves which was sent out previously by USAC President Diane was already generating a good response so she thanked the group for that.

Terri Armstrong reminded members that open enrollment for 2010 Benefits ends Thursday, Oct 15. They will have staff available at 2525 and Oxford house from 8:30 – noon on Oct 15th.

GUEST SPEAKER

9:00 a.m. **John Seigenthaler, Founder of the First Amendment Center**

Diane Banks introduced John Seigenthaler:

John Seigenthaler founded the First Amendment Center in 1991 with the mission of creating national discussion, dialogue and debate about First Amendment rights and values. A former president of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, Seigenthaler worked for 43 years as an award-winning journalist for *The Tennessean*, serving as editor, publisher, and CEO.

Mr. Seigenthaler left journalism briefly in the early 1960s to serve in the U.S. Justice Department as administrative assistant to Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy. His work in the field of civil rights led to his service as chief negotiator with the governor of Alabama during the Freedom Rides. During that crisis, while attempting to aid Freedom Riders in Montgomery, Ala., he was attacked by a mob of Klansmen and hospitalized.

Mr. Seigenthaler has received many honors and awards, too numerous to mention, he is the author of a biography on President James K. Polk, and hosts a long running weekly book-review program on television called "A Word On Words."

John Seigenthaler, whose life has been dedicated to liberty, justice and human rights, spoke eloquently to the group about the founding and current work of the First Amendment Center.

[USAC Secretary inserts for clarity that the first Amendment reads as follows:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.
— *The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution*]

Some highlights of Mr. Seigenthaler's presentation include the following:

Mr. Seigenthaler, 82, has been a journalist for 60 years. Early in his career, he noted the disenchantment in print and broadcast journalism arising from journalists' sense of arrogance, irresponsibility, and over reliance on confidential sources (which can give the impression of dishonesty or self-interest). This may

affect the wellbeing of the First Amendment in the context of the free press clause, which has a powerful effect on our democracy.

In its early history, the Center made an impact by bringing in scholars annually to work on providing insights between news media and the institutions they covered. The goal was to get journalists to interact with leaders of the institutions they covered to bring about better understanding of such areas as Media and Religion; Media and Business; Media and Law; Media and Politics. These pairings resulted in reports which were widely distributed and well received (not just by print and broadcast media but military, medical, religious institutions as well), generating great discussions inside those institutions and recognition for the First Amendment Center. Copies of these reports are still housed at the Center and reports are available on their website.

The Center works to raise public understanding and awareness of all five of these rights to touch the lives of people with some sense of what we might lose if we lost these rights. The following are some of the highlights of the work of the First Amendment Center:

- Tackles controversial free speech topics such as religion in schools, religion in the press, protests, both visual and performing arts, controversial paintings, rap music, protests on civil rights, abortion/choice, war, right of peaceful protest and petition.
- Interviews book authors (fiction and non-fiction) that touch on any First Amendment issue.
- Helps fill positions in professional communications in TV, print, and online via its Diversity Institute. Runs a program to identify minority journalists in school. Over last decade, the number of trained minority journalist had gone down for first time. The program has placed over 1000 in spite of down turn in economy.
- Trains journalists and their teachers in new online journalism.
- Addresses the Communications Decency Act – effort by congress to protect children from exposure to indecent, damaging content online. Also, new laws dealing with attacks on the credibility of people online.
- Created “Freedom Sings” in an effort to raise understanding and awareness of the First Amendment. Six music row songwriters and entertainers have a wonderful program in which the musicians perform songs that have been banned, effectively making the point. The group has made appearances at college campuses across country coast to coast. They have DVDs available and appear on public access TV across country.
- Works with federal judiciary and participates in round tables across the country on justice and journalism; annually, in cooperation with the Law School, holds moot court with 36 law school teams at VU.

The First Amendment Center is affiliated with the Freedom Forum in Washington, which operates the Newseum, a \$460M museum of news with magnetizing exhibits such as the largest collection of debris from the Berlin Wall (two original police towers are there and the stories that go with it); a 911 exhibit including video film and the antenna from the top of the tower that fell that day; Fed bureau of investigation of its achievements and problems with media over the years; Real copies of original newspapers from early history and memorabilia from British press. The museum is seven stories high on Pennsylvania Avenue, halfway between the capital and the White House. Upon the building is a plaque with the 45 words of the First Amendment. “Congress shall make no law...” as noted above.

The Center is looking for ways every day to reach out to people who are concerned about, interested in freedom of expression. Mr. Seigenthaler invited us to visit The First Amendment Center. There is a visual display on protest on the second floor noting controversies in history. For more information about the First Amendment Center, see <http://www.firstamendmentcenter.org/>. Check the bulletin board that changes during the day as events effect the news on the First Amendment.

Mr. Seigenthaler opened the floor to questions.

Question: Do you offer programs for local HS and grade schools who want to pursue careers in journalism?

Answer: We have made efforts to reach out to them but we currently don't have a formal program that is ongoing to reach out to students. Student newspapers often have problems they try to mediate. Hopeful we can expand our commitment to HS students as it starts there with credibility and responsibility. John noted that it is Important for young people to understand how media is changing: that we have the world at our fingertips online but we need to make it better and better.

Mr. Seigenthaler thanked the group for our interest and the opportunity to speak with us today.

10:00 a.m. The meeting was adjourned

The next USAC meeting will be on November 10th in Rm. 237 of The Commons.
Chancellor Nicholas Zeppos will be our speaker.

**Reminder: All meeting times and locations are posted on the Staff Council website
<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/usac/next.html>*