

FWC/AAUP NEWSLETTER

Faculty Welfare Committee/American Association of University Professors

February 14, 2005

From the President:

In this week's issue, we consider the definition of "collegial discussions". We are often admonished for using the term "negotiations" when we refer to the conversations between administrators and the Faculty Salary Committee; the administration seems to fear the notion of negotiating with faculty over the terms of our employment. They seem to fear the idea that we are acting like a "union" in a formal legal sense. We have been told very clearly over the years that we are not, and never shall be, a "real" union.

OK, but that does not mean that the administration does not have *any* obligation to treat the Faculty Salary Committee with respect as partners in the process, sharing responsibility for determining the terms of our compensations agreements. The article below describes a process that has served the faculty (and the administration, we believe) well for more than 30 years. It is worth our time and effort to maintain it.

Kathryn Nantz
President, FWC

Collegial Discussions: Neither Collegial, Nor Discussions

Webster's New World College Dictionary defines *collegial* as an adjective meaning "with authority or power shared equally among colleagues." According to the Memo of Understanding, the administrative salary team and the faculty salary committee are obligated to enter into "collegial discussions" each year. The Memo states,

"The Faculty Salary Committee and the Administration agree to begin collegial discussions...In the spirit of collegiality, the Administration agrees to work with the Faculty Salary Committee to discuss salaries as well as any and all benefits; to provide all pertinent information; to receive recommendations concerning benefits and any substantive changes to benefits; to discuss salary and benefit changes; to be receptive to faculty participation in a cooperative process with the intent of arriving at a mutually agreed upon Memo of Understanding for [next year]."

Contrary to recent administrative opinion, the appropriate role of the Faculty Salary Committee is not solely determined by the language of the *Faculty Handbook*. The language of the Memo of Understanding and the language contained in the Journal of Record must be included with the *Handbook* language to accurately reflect the appropriate relationships between faculty and administrative members involved in salary discussions.

The stipulation (cited above) pertaining to collegial discussions was important enough in the early 1990s to lead the faculty to grieve on this very point. The imposition of a merit system has made compensation decisions more complicated and involved. Therefore it would seem that collegial discussions would be even more important in making the transition smooth. But instead, the administration has chosen to minimize the role of the FSC and collegial discussions.

The language of the MOU is designed to ensure that salary committee members (faculty members and administrative members) enter into discussion *with* each other. To be truly collegial, participants need to be equally empowered. Recent years have seen the erosion of such empowerment, as decisions are increasingly presented *to* faculty salary committee members rather than arrived at *through* the process.

Failure to engage in this process in good faith led to much of the confusion surrounding the issuing of the 2004-2005 faculty contracts. We hope that the events of late spring-early summer 2004 need not be repeated this year. True collegial discussions would allow us to avoid such problems.

We urge the administrative salary committee members to recognize the central role these discussions play in maintaining the integrity of the process of jointly determining the structure of salary and compensation, and of reaching mutually-agreeable contracts this year and in the future.

More next week. . .

ANNOUNCEMENTS

GENERAL FACULTY MEETING

Friday, February 25

The meeting originally scheduled for March 4 has been moved forward a week to February 25. Irene Mulvey, General Faculty Secretary, assures us a full agenda. Plan now to stick around for the FWC reception and social following the meeting! We have had good crowds in recent weeks and look forward to this time to catch up with friends and colleagues.

BROWN BAG LUNCH – FDR Wednesday, March 16, 11:00 – 1:00

“Designing Appeals Processes for Merit Pay Decisions”

Come discuss this important issue with faculty colleagues. The FWC will provide delicious desserts!

UPCOMING AAUP EVENTS

Annual Meeting -- June 9 - 12, 2005 -- Washington, DC
Summer Institute – July 21 – 25, 2005 – University of New Hampshire

If you are interested in the activities of the state or national AAUP, please contact George Lang. (lang@cs.fairfield.edu, x. 2517, Math Dept.) The FWC will defray expenses for faculty who are willing to attend workshops and meetings and then return to campus and share their experiences with others. For further information on any of these opportunities, see the AAUP website at <http://www.aaup.org>.



Check us out at <http://www.faculty.fairfield.edu/fwc>