

FWC/AAUP NEWSLETTER

Faculty Welfare Committee/American Association of University Professors

February 21, 2005

From the President:

This week's editorial, by Professor Arthur Anderson, speaks for itself. Please come out to the General Faculty meeting on Friday, February 25, and contribute to the ongoing discussion of faculty governance.

Kathryn Nantz
President, FWC

An "Old-timer's" Perspective By Arthur Anderson, Sociology Department

Thirty-three years ago there was strong growing concern among the faculty as to how their wages and benefits were determined and how they were given out. Persistent rumors alleged that the Dean at that time had a shoe box of money in the top drawer of his desk which he drew on to provide "merit pay" to faculty supplicants who dropped by his office. The rumors were supported by faculty who bragged about receiving such "merit increments". The overall system was a top-down – and difficult to understand – process.

Faculty discontent grew until five untenured assistant professors developed a "Faculty Salary Committee" and I was honored to be a member of this risky venture. Data was collected and presented to the administration, noting various inconsistencies, such as the fact that there were assistant professors earning more than some tenured full professors. Such findings increased faculty discontent to the point that the majority supported the "Faculty Salary Committee" becoming a de-facto bargaining group to meet with administration representatives to discuss and jointly agree on faculty salaries and benefits.

Enough of the administration leaders were sufficiently alarmed at the degree of faculty discontent that they agreed to proceed with such an arrangement.

What were the benefits of this new arrangement? Faculty morale and self-respect significantly improved. Faculty respect for the administration also improved, because faculty believed the administration was determining important things such as compensation in an open forum of mutual respect.

As a sociologist I would note that the new arrangement did very positive things for the entire university because it successfully institutionalized a fundamental and critical aspect of the faculty/administration relationship. The new arrangement worked. It got an important job done. It did good things for both faculty and administrators.

And where are we today? We are in the process of reestablishing the typical businesslike, top-down, authoritarian model we replaced 33 years ago. From the point of view of fostering good morale and mutual respect, present proposals and dictates are on the verge of destroying an overall successful relationship between the faculty and administration on the important issue of compensation.

I have loved my thirty-seven years as a member of Fairfield's faculty, and I have appreciated being part of the growing academic excellence of this University. I must add, however, that as I retire this coming June I am saddened that the faculty/administration relationship is rapidly moving backwards – over thirty five years backwards – to a relationship model that I foresee as negatively impacting the goals and objectives of this very fine university.

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!

SAVE THE DATE!

Thursday, April 14, 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Connecticut State Conference - AAUP Annual Meeting

Keynote speaker – Svetlana Mintcheva, Ph.D.

Director, Arts Program, National Coalition Against Censorship, New York City
The Graduate Club, New Haven

Please contact George Lang (x. 2217, lang@cs.fairfield.edu) if you would like to attend. The FWC will pay for a portion of your dinner.

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>