

# FWC NEWSLETTER



October 2006

## From the President

Kathryn Nantz, Department of Economics

I spent Friday and Saturday of the Columbus Day weekend at the national headquarters of the AAUP in training sessions for chapter leaders. I learned a lot, particularly about larger issues facing higher education in the United States. From Academic Bill of Rights (ABOR) legislation being developed in a variety of states to the report of the Spellings Commission, it struck me that higher education is at a really critical point in its history.

I'd like to initiate a series of discussions, some as brown bag lunches, some as conversations over wine and cheese, designed to engage faculty in talking about how these larger issues affect us at Fairfield University. What is the impact of "no child left behind" legislation on our incoming students? How might an "Academic Bill of Rights" affect our relationships with students? Does the Patriot Act change the way we think about academic freedom? Keep your eye on the newsletter for announcements of these get-togethers, and join us in this community conversation.

A few quotes from speakers:

"The AAUP is the only group doing this work in the higher ed community. We are building principle, rather than narrow self-interest, into policy changes... We need vigilance from our national organization, working in partnership with local chapters, to sustain the principles of the professoriate." *Cary Nelson, President of AAUP*

"The AAUP is about professors going beyond their disciplines to preserve the academic enterprise as we want it to be." *Ariel Anderson, Western Michigan University and Chair of the Collective Bargaining Congress*

"There is a theme in popular culture that somehow academic institutions are opaque, that we are hiding things, that we are not transparent. This cuts across a range of issues. It is simply not true... In fact, there is no institution in the United States that has more data about itself. We have processes and procedures for everything." *Jerry Terkel, University of Delaware.*

A few years ago, my mother-in-law made a comment about something gone wrong in the public schools, and then looked at me and said, "You educators!" in a way that indicated that she is not happy with those educators at all. I looked around for a minute before I realized she was talking to me. It was the moment in my professional life that I realized I am an educator, that I spend most of my time each day educating students, and that I am responsible in some small way for the system of education in the U.S.

Being at the AAUP national headquarters on K Street in Washington, D.C. was a great opportunity to think about the role of this organization in our lives as professors. I go to lots of meetings, conferences, and workshops, some on economics and some on learning theory and faculty development. However, this weekend provided me with the opportunity to talk about what it means to be a college professor. I spent 5 years in grad school learning how to be an economist, but what I do every day is about teaching and learning, about doing meaningful research, and about serving the educational community. The issues that make this an easier or harder job are my issues and I need to be aware of how educators and education are understood within our broader culture.

The workshop provided important insights into how to build campus community, how to mentor leadership, how to work with campus administrators, and how to think about bigger issues that academia is facing at all levels. The AAUP has a variety of research papers as well as position papers that help to situate higher education in the broader social and political culture in which Fairfield University must operate. We need to take better advantage of what the AAUP has to offer so that we can make the most informed decisions for our own campus community.

## **Coming Soon! The “Early Learning Center”**

Dina Franceschi, Department of Economics

As mentioned by Father von Arx at the faculty address in May, Fairfield’s Early Learning Center has been approved and is in the planning phase, with a hopeful opening in concert with the beginning of the academic year 2007-2008. Building meetings should begin in earnest in the fall to design the renovations to Southwell Hall, near the southwest entrance to campus, with an eye for meeting State childcare center regulations. The Department of Human Resources is in the process of selecting a consultant to staff and operate the facility. The Childcare planning committee hopes to have parent orientation meetings with the consultant sometime this coming winter. Registration for spaces will begin shortly thereafter. Initial allocation of spaces will likely be by lottery, if demand exceeds the number of slots available in each age group. The ELC will accommodate approximately 36 children, ages 6 weeks to 4 years old. Thanks once again to all those who came out in support of this initiative! More to come....

## **Report from the Educational Technologies Committee**

Richard Regan, Department of English

The primary purpose of the Educational Technologies Committee is "to study and make recommendations concerning computer and media facilities and service for academic activity and research" (Fairfield University Faculty Handbook, Tenth Edition, 19). This committee's scope has broadened considerably over the years and its responsibilities extend across numerous departments and divisions.

The committee has identified the following primary agenda items for the 2006-2007 academic year:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Software Purchasing
- \_\_\_\_\_ Faculty IT Support and Training
- \_\_\_\_\_ Course management and related software options
- \_\_\_\_\_ Security, integrity, access and data ownership on electronic data management systems on campus
- \_\_\_\_\_ Admissions and educational technology as a selling point.
- \_\_\_\_\_ University Laptop Policy
- \_\_\_\_\_ IT Activity and Rank and Tenure
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ongoing work with Information Systems and the CAE on the brown bag seminars
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ongoing work with the Institutional Web Advisory Council
- \_\_\_\_\_ Complete informational materials for authoring content on the University’s website
- \_\_\_\_\_ Continue working with the Registrar to improve the tech room request system courses
- \_\_\_\_\_ Online Courses, Jesuitnet and Streaming Video

Any faculty members who have questions or concerns related to the above agenda items, or who have additional agenda items for the committee to consider, should contact the committee chair, Richard Regan, at [rjregan@mail.fairfield.edu](mailto:rjregan@mail.fairfield.edu).

# Update from the Academic Council Health Care Subcommittee

Carl Scheraga, Department of Management

One of the focal points for discussion by the General Faculty this year will obviously be the mandated revisions to our health plan. This mandate follows from a resolution passed by the Board of Trustees and acknowledged by the President. Beth Boquet has asked me to provide some insight into what has transpired to date on this issue. Though I am serving as a member of both the Budget Committee and the Faculty Salary Committee, at this point in time I can only comment in my role as a member of the Budget Committee. The Salary Committee has not yet met with the administration and so specific details and associated numbers of any proposed plan are not yet available.

However, I would like to provide a philosophical context for what I have observed to this point. Both Bill Lucas and Orin Grossman were very gracious with their time over the summer and engaged me, as a member of the Budget Committee, in some thoughtful conversations on more than a few occasions.

Bill Lucas has candidly shared his operating philosophy in the proposal he is in the process of designing. His foremost desire has been to maintain the nature of our Anthem Blue Cross plan. While this has made the design process a more complicated endeavor for him than simply pulling something off the shelf, as per the consultants, he has been sensitive to the desires of both faculty and staff not to lose the essential nature of what is, by any standard, an excellent health plan. My discussion with Orin on this and other matters has reinforced in my mind the level of Bill's sincere commitment. There will certainly be discussion of cost-sharing. However, as a member of the Salary Committee, I, and my fellow faculty members, will adamantly see that this is a "malleable" discussion when it comes to the numbers. Both

Bill and Orin have agreed that engaged and collegial discussion is critical and I have no reason, at this point, to doubt their sincerity.

Some faculty members have asked me as to the possibility of the faculty simply refusing to negotiate any change from our present arrangement. At the same time, they have asked me as to whether the Board would attempt to go ahead and break the faculty handbook. I honestly don't believe the Board would seek to override the faculty handbook. That would involve a level of micromanagement well beyond anything they would ever desire and it would reflect a complete rupture of any meaningful working relationship between faculty and administration. I don't want to speculate what avenues of cost restructuring the Board might pursue. I do think proactive discussion by the faculty is the course of action that will yield the most satisfactory results.

Bill, Orin, and our new Senior Vice President, Billy Weitzer, will be meeting, on October 23<sup>rd</sup>, with the Healthcare Subcommittee of the Academic Council, of which I am a member. I would urge individual faculty, as details of the health plan proposal emerge, to engage members of the Salary Committee and Healthcare Subcommittee in a discussion of their thoughts, questions, and concerns.

## Check This Out!

<http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/issued/>

for more information on many of the issues raised in the FWC President's corner of the newsletter.

<https://www.academicimpressions.com/news.php> to sign up for a brief email news summary of items of interest to Higher Education and links to full articles in various publications.

Anyone interested in the heart and core (!) of Jesuit education can check out the 1599 Ratio Studiorum at [http://www.bc.edu/bc\\_org/avp/ulib/digi/ratio/ratiohome.html](http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/ulib/digi/ratio/ratiohome.html). Yes, in an English translation.

## **Editors' Note**

Beth Boquet and Bob Epstein,  
Department of English

In this issue, readers will notice a few new features that we hope will become regular occurrences here in the FWC Newsletter.

First, we plan to provide brief handbook committee updates in each issue. If you are chairing one of these committees, you can expect a call from one of us this year. If you would prefer to be proactive about it, please contact us about upcoming deadlines for newsletters.

Next, our thanks to Paul Lakeland for suggesting the "From the Archives" feature and to Irene Mulvey for sportingly agreeing to find humorous, timely, and thought-provoking snippets from minutes of past General Faculty meetings. The Secretary of the General Faculty is always looking for files and information related to any aspect of the General Faculty, Academic Council, Handbook committees, ad hoc committees, etc. to add to the archives. If you have files you no longer want to keep, contact the Faculty Secretary at [Mulvey@mail.fairfield.edu](mailto:Mulvey@mail.fairfield.edu).

Finally, we love to troll the web for hidden gems, but we need help for our "Check It Out" corner. If you have a favorite site that you would like to share with other faculty, please send the link to us with a one or two sentence description of what you find interesting or useful about the site. The same goes for any announcements that you would like listed in upcoming issues of the newsletter.

## **From the Archives**

General Faculty Meeting  
May 28, 1968  
An excerpt of the minutes

The meeting was called to order at 1:45 PM by the Rev. James H. Coughlin, S.J.

Fr. Coughlin reported on the discussions with the student on the tripartite committee with regard to dress regulations. Mr. Paul Davis, a member of the committee added that blue denims and T-shirts were still out, and that the students are still expected to be neat and clean when coming to class.

Dr. James Vail moved that the committee's report on informal dress be accepted. The motion carried by a vote of 39 to 22.

Respectfully submitted,  
Frank J. Rice, Secretary