

# Faculty Welfare Committee

## Excellence in Education

*Accordingly, while subject in major considerations to review by the President and the Board of Trustees, the area of competence most appropriate to the General Faculty is educational policy. It is the General Faculty's special role to be concerned with excellence in this area which includes admissions, curriculum, courses of study, degrees, permanent educational policies, and other matters pertaining to the academic life of the University.*

*Fairfield University's Faculty Handbook  
Tenth edition (2006)*

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### **A Message from the FWC/AAUP President:**

This edition of the FWC Newsletter addresses as essential topic: the special character of university governance. At its best, this unique governance system relies on the expertise of all University constituencies and maximizes participation. It's not always easy, but this robust governance system has helped American universities and colleges to flourish.

The newsletter staff has provided you with an interesting array of articles designed to provide information as well as stimulate thinking and conversation. I urge you to find some time to think about governance, and to send any ideas you have to the Blue Ribbon Commission for their consideration. This is a busy time of year for all of us, but the appointment of this Commission provides us with a great opportunity to reconsider our responsibilities as members of the General Faculty.

Take a look at page 2 for some special events off-campus this spring and summer.

Kathy Nantz, President, FWC/AAUP



### **What Does Shared Governance Really Mean?**

The President's Blue Ribbon Commission on Governance is in full swing and, along with the President, we thank all the members of the Commission for their willingness to participate in this important project. It's always a good idea to look at something as fundamental as governance and we appreciate this opportunity to take a fresh look at effective shared governance at Fairfield. With this in mind, though, let's begin at the beginning and take a good, hard look at the concept: what does shared governance really mean?

A good place to start is the AAUP Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities. This remarkable statement was jointly formulated by the AAUP, the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB) and the American Council on Education (ACE), and all three organizations have strongly endorsed the statement. The AGB, in particular, recognized the statement "as a significant step forward in the clarification of the respective roles of governing boards, faculties, and administrations" and "commend[ed] it to the governing boards which are members of the Association."

We urge you to read the full statement at <http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/pubsres/policydocs/contents/governancestatement.htm>; here we will summarize the role of faculty in effective shared governance and consider how shared governance at Fairfield can be made more effective.

Of primary importance, according to the statement, all components of the University must be aware of their interdependence and of the importance of meaningful communication among themselves. Joint action, informed by mutual understanding, will increase the University's capability to solve educational problems and to implement our strategic plan.

(Continued on page 5)

# FWC AND AAUP NEWS AND EVENTS IN BRIEF

## UPCOMING FWC, AAUP AND OTHER FACULTY EVENTS:

### Wednesday, April 9 at noon in the FDR:

The FWC is tentatively planning a Brown Bag lunch discussion led by members of the Faculty Salary Committee to discuss the details of this year's collegial discussions. Keep an eye on your email for more information.

### Friday, April 18 immediately following the GF Meeting:

Your FWC/AAUP Officers and Executive Committee meet frequently to conduct business on your behalf, but we are planning a meeting of the FWC for elections and reports on 4/18 immediately following the GF meeting. Watch your email for the agenda and other information.

### Friday, April 18 immediately following the FWC Meeting:



Relax and enjoy another gala reception sponsored by the Faculty Welfare Committee. It's just about time for another faculty social, so join your friends and colleagues from all over the University and catch up.

### Thursday, May 8 from 5:30-9:00 at the Yale Graduate Club:

This year's annual Connecticut State Conference (CSC-AAUP) annual meeting will feature a panel discussion on the effect of the war on terror on the academy. The CSC-AAUP (with Fairfield members Baumgartner and Mulvey)

is looking forward to a lively discussion led by 3 distinguished panelists: Terrence Dwyer in the Division of Justice and Law Administration at Western CT State University; Scott Plous in the Psychology department at Wesleyan; and Fairfield's own Jocelyn Boryczka of the Politics department. Watch your email for information on cost and RSVPing or contact Ruth Anne Baumgartner or Irene Mulvey for details. The FWC will subsidize the cost for members.

### AAUP Summer Institute

**2008:** This year, the AAUP Summer Institute will be held at the University of Rhode Island in Kingston, RI on July 24-27. This is a great opportunity for up-and-coming faculty leaders to connect with other AAUP members in workshops on effective Handbooks, analyzing higher education data, strategic communications, and more. There are funding opportunities available for you. Contact any FWC officer.

### May 15, Thursday of Senior

**Week:** We're still hoping to have a faculty family picnic and softball game. Our aim is to promote faculty welfare, broadly defined, and these events for faculty families and friends do just that. So batter up! Or, just come for the picnic and great company. It takes a lot of



work to put this on. Do you want to pitch in (no pun intended) and help? Just email any FWC officer.

### 94th National AAUP

### Annual Meeting, June 12-15 in Washington, DC:

Read all about it at <http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/about/events/AM/>

## RECENT FWC AND AAUP NEWS AND EVENTS:

**THANKS!** To Betsy Bowen, Rick DeWitt and Kathy Nantz for a wonderful FWC Brown Bag lunch discussion on effective shared governance. We had a remarkably large group of faculty from all different schools and all different stages of career. The articles and especially the handouts prepared by Prof. DeWitt and Prof. Bowen were timely and informative - reprinted here on page 4. Thanks to all the presenters and participants. This thoughtful discussion inspired the article in this issue on the role of faculty in University governance. Check it out beginning on page 1.

**THANKS!** To Shannon Harding, David Crawford, Bob Epstein and Jim Biardi for a lively and heartfelt FWC Brown Bag lunch discussion on the juggling act needed to balance work and family. To all the presenters and participants who managed to find the time to attend, we thank you for your input. We know how busy the presenters are (juggling work and family) and we are very appreciative. Hope to see you at our next FWC Brown Bag - we'll have presenters with advice for faculty members about choosing an appropriate Handbook committee.

Get involved

## Alien Wisdom

Two Fairfield University faculty members, Fred and Wilma, were walking to the Faculty Dining Room one Wednesday when a small, cigar-shaped, bright silver object landed at their feet. As they watched, a small door in the side of the object opened and a shocking pink being (SPB) in a sparkling purple suit stepped out, looked up at them, and said, “What is this place?”

Fred: This is Fairfield University.

SPB (in a high-pitched, electronic, but wondering tone): Ooooo. What is a Fairfield University?

Wilma: We’re an “institution of higher learning”: a place where occupants of this planet—humans—come to expand their knowledge base and increase their understanding of our Earth.

SPB: I see. And, who are you to this Fairfield University?

Wilma: We are members of its faculty.

SPB: What is a faculty?

Fred: The faculty teaches the Fairfield University humans (that is, the students) so the University can fulfill its Mission to develop their “creative intellectual potential,” and to foster in them “ethical values” and a “sense of social responsibility.”

SPB (a short burst of steam squirts out from behind one mechanical “eye”): Whoa!, You must be really important people to the University.

Fred: What makes you say that?

SPB: Well, you teach the human learners! And didn’t you say that “creating intellectual potential” is what the University is all about? I was doing some reading on your World Wide Inter-Web before I got here, and right after checking out Facebook and Zillow my neighbor’s space condo, I remember reading something about Human Capital. My understanding of this concept is that people resources are the most important asset of any organization. In fact, one of your planet’s most successful corporate leaders has said, “Burn down my buildings and give me my people, and we’ll rebuild the company in a year. But leave my buildings and take away my people...and I’ll have a real problem.”

Fred and Wilma: (Look blankly at each other, visibly confused)

SPB (perturbed, with shiny eyebrow-bolts visibly tightening): Don’t you know about the idea of creating a—what is it in your pathetic lexicon?—competitive advantage? I’ve read that people resources—the Human Capital I’m talking about—are CRUCIAL to creating that competitive advantage. So, you must be really important people to Fairfield Human Learning University.

Wilma: This is news to me...

SPB (his telescopic arm shoots out and a tiny spring skims past Fred’s forehead): Think about it, faculty! The mission of the University is to foster intellectual and ethical development, and the faculty members are the primary humans who endeavor to do that task. Since both of these statements are true, logic indicates that you are the “technical core” of the University! You are the factors that cause the primary transformation in your students, from gum-chewing, grammar-crushing, iPod-obsessed beings to critically-thinking, intellectually-interesting, creatively-energized adults! I daresay (good thing I snatched that word from your 18<sup>th</sup> century) it wouldn’t be a University without you. By the way, I have been monitoring your television transmissions - an analogy would be that a University without its faculty would be like a legal firm without any lawyers or a hospital without any doctors or nurses, or “Survivor” without the tribe. Are you getting any of this?

Fred: This does make sense; I just never looked at it that way. But what about everyone else who works here?

SPB: Of course, they’re important as well and a part of that Human Capital I was talking about, but they have a different relationship to the University. Their job is to “buffer” the technical core—the faculty—from uncertainty in the environment. Like this beautiful purple suit I’m wearing, or that ghastly sweater on Fred. The goal is to keep the technical core—the body—safe from changes and dangers in the environment. They help the technical core function effectively. Their job is to make sure you have the resources and support you need to do all your work and to engage with the human learners. Tell me what some of the other people do, and I’ll give you an example of how it’s supposed to work; your cognitive synapses are operating below optimal capacity today.

Wilma: OK, there’s the “Advancement Division.” They’re in charge of raising money.

SPB: Yes, the “green stuff” humans talk about. Is this like raising small humans, or horses?

Wilma: Sort of—these are people who try to get other people to donate money so that the University can stay in operation and support its growth.

SPB: To do what?

Fred: That takes us back to the mission: to create intellectual potential in our students.

SPB: In other words, they’re here to make sure you faculty can keep on teaching the students.

Fred: That’s right.

SPB: What others?

Wilma: There are people in “Admissions”—they recruit the students.

SPB (circuitry comprising his “chin” indicating boredom): They make sure that you have—in corporate-speak—the raw materials to work with.

Wilma: I guess so. What about the Registrar?

SPB: What do they do?

Fred: They organize all the classes and make sure that the students get registered, that there are classrooms available, that students have the credits to graduate, and other related activities.

SPB: Are you starting to see the pattern? Okay, what about this: Is Fairfield University successful?

Wilma: Yes, very.

SPB: Since the faculty does what you described, doesn’t it follow that the faculty are primarily responsible for that success?

Fred: Maybe, but with a lot of help and support. In order for us to be successful we need good students to teach, up-to-date classrooms and labs, sound technology and a whole host of other things that make it possible for us to do our work and to engage with our student learners.

SPB (a noise that might indicate satisfaction seems to emanate from its rear section): Finally, you seem to be getting my main point! Of course, you can’t do it alone, but it is you, the faculty that, with help and support, make the University what it is. As the corporate leader said, if the buildings burned down and you still had the faculty and the students you’d keep on fulfilling your mission! But if the faculty left and you still had the buildings, the University would no longer be a University, even if everyone else stayed. So, as I said, “You must be really important people to this University.”

Wilma and Fred (in unison): I guess we really are!

Apparently satisfied, SPB took a sip of motor oil out of a small plastic tube, opened the small door in the side of his silver spaceship, and hopped inside. “It’s about time you humans appreciated each other,” he said simply, and blasted off.

**FWC Brown Bag Lunch: Shared Governance as Responsible Stewardship  
A Brief Field Guide to Fairfield's Governance Documents**

2/27/2008

Today's Brown Bag lunch is centered primarily around key governance questions and issues, especially those concerning shared governance. Our governance policies and structures are specified by various governance documents. So, as background for today's discussion, it might be helpful - especially for faculty and administrators who are relatively new to Fairfield - to have a brief guide to these governance documents. Below is a list of our key documents, together with answers to a few key questions concerning these documents.

The documents mentioned below are available either at the General Faculty Secretary's website ([www.faculty.fairfield.edu/gfs](http://www.faculty.fairfield.edu/gfs)), or, in the case of the College of Arts and Sciences governance document, at the CAS website ([www.faculty.fairfield.edu/cas](http://www.faculty.fairfield.edu/cas)).

**The Faculty Handbook, 10<sup>th</sup> Edition**

*What is the Faculty Handbook?* The *Faculty Handbook* is the primary policy and governance document for the university, containing university-wide policies on faculty organization (e.g., criteria for membership in the general faculty, the structure and function of the Academic Council, descriptions of standing committees, and the like); faculty policies (e.g., faculty obligations, policies on appointments, rank and tenure, benefits, leaves, and the like), and a few other miscellaneous policies (e.g., services provided to faculty, procedures for due process, and the like).

*How is the Faculty Handbook Amended?* Either the Faculty or the Board of Trustees may propose amendments to the *Handbook*. Proposed amendments then go to the Academic Council for review and recommendation. In all cases, amendments to the *Faculty Handbook* must be accepted by both the General Faculty (by a 2/3rds vote) and by the Board of Trustees.

*What is the Legal Status of Policies in the Faculty Handbook?* The question of the legal status of faculty handbooks has come up in court cases in a variety of states, with some states ruling that such handbooks have the same status as a contract, and other states ruling that handbooks do not have contractual status. The issue has not come up in a Connecticut court, so the legal status of our handbook is unclear.

**The Journal of Record**

*What is the Journal of Record?* The Journal of Record is a collection of policies that have been jointly approved by the faculty (either by the Academic Council or by the General Faculty) and by the administration.

*How is the Journal of Record Amended?* The most common procedure is that a proposed policy, or policy change, comes to the Academic Council (for example, via one of our standing committees). Most commonly, if the Academic Council votes to approve the policy, it is then sent to the administration. If approved by the administration it becomes policy and is added to the Journal of Record. In some cases, the Academic Council will send the proposed policy to the General Faculty with a recommendation to approve or reject, and if approved by the General Faculty, it then goes on for administrative approval, and if approved, into the Journal of Record.

**Governance Documents of the Various Schools**

In addition to the policies contained in the *Faculty Handbook* and the Journal of Record, each school has a governance document (for example, the aptly titled "Governance Document for the College of Arts and Sciences"). These documents generally contain policies particular to the school in question, for example, policies on selection of chairs, duties of chairs and program directors, and the like.

Changes to these governance documents are made by a vote of the faculty of the school (usually requiring a 2/3rds majority). If approved by the faculty, the change is sent to the Board of Trustees, and if approved there, the document is amended to reflect the new policy.

**SHARED GOVERNANCE AS RESPONSIBLE STEWARDSHIP  
Faculty Welfare Committee Brown Bag Lunch, February 27, 2008**

**From the Fairfield University Handbook, 10<sup>th</sup> edition**

"The successful attainment of the educational goals of an institution of education requires the best possible utilization of the varied competencies of all individuals who constitute it" (p. 1).

"Accordingly, while subject in major considerations to the review of the President and the Board of Trustees, the area of competence most appropriate to the General Faculty is educational policy. It is the General Faculty's special role to be concerned with excellence in this area which includes admissions, curriculum, courses of studies, degrees, permanent educational policies, and other matters pertaining to the academic life of the University" (p. 1).

**From the AAUP's "Statement on Government of Colleges & Universities"**

"The variety and complexity of the tasks performed by institutions of higher education produce an inescapable interdependence among governing board, administration, faculty, students, and others" (p. 136, emphasis added).

"The faculty has primary responsibility for such fundamental areas as curriculum, subject matter and methods of instruction, research, faculty status, and those aspects of student life which relate to the educational process" (p. 139).

"The faculty should actively participate in the determination of policies and procedures governing salary increases" (p. 139).

"The chair or head of a department ... should be selected either by departmental election or by appointment following consultation with members of the department and related departments; appointment should normally be in conformity with the department members' judgment" (p.139, emphasis added).

"Ways should be found to permit significant student participation within the limits of attainable efficiency" (p. 140).

## Shared Governance

(continued from page 1)

There's probably not much room for argument here: effective communication between all constituencies is essential and maximizes opportunities for joint planning and implementation.

So, communication is essential - but what about actual decision-making? Well, here the concept of shared governance may mean different things to different people. For example, oftentimes the various components within the University are referred to as "stakeholders" and within the context of governance, each "stakeholder constituency" gets to have a voice in discussions. Basically, everyone is consulted, everyone gets a seat at the table, everyone gets a say, everyone gets the opportunity to provide input. Then, someone "higher up" makes the decision. While this system may match some corporate models, it is completely at odds with the concept of shared governance in the jointly-approved Statement on Government.

The classic concept of shared governance described in detail in the AAUP Statement allows for the appropriate use of the expertise of each constituency. It is decidedly not hierarchical in any traditional sense. While we acknowledge that the President and/or the Board do have the ultimate decision-making authority in many instances, in a well-run institution decision-making is delegated to the constituency with expertise on the matter at hand. The faculty should have primary responsibility for the fundamental areas of curriculum and teaching, how best to implement the educational goals of the University, hiring, promotion and tenure, research, and any aspect of student life that relates to the educational process. In many of these areas, the final decision or power of review does, in fact, reside with the President or Board of Trustees as it must, but the jointly-approved statement on Government makes it abundantly clear that in these

matters, decisions reached by due processes by faculty should be overturned or adversely decided by the President or Board "only in exceptional circumstances, and for reasons communicated to the faculty. It is desirable that the faculty should, following such communication, have opportunity for further consideration and further transmittal of its views to the president or board."

This classic concept of shared governance in academia empowers different constituencies with decision-making authority in their areas of expertise. In that way, it is a sophisticated view of governance and as long as those involved understand the underlying principles, it can make us stronger as an institution.

How do we implement effectively this nuanced and inclusive vision of shared governance? We believe that the current structures, which were set up over a long period of time by truly dedicated Fairfield faculty members and administrators, are an excellent beginning. We have 16 Handbook committees - duly elected from slates of willing volunteers - to take on just about any task or project that falls under faculty purview. Our Academic Council, the executive arm of the General Faculty, has proportional representation and consists of 17 faculty members duly elected by their colleagues, and as ex officio members, the AVP, the 6 academic Deans, and the Secretary of the General Faculty. As the executive arm of the General Faculty, the Academic Council "is empowered to consider, make decisions and make recommendations on any matter of academic concern that falls within the purview of the faculty, except for matters specifically reserved to the General Faculty." (namely, changes to the Handbook, changes to the core curriculum and, by historical precedent, ratification of our Memo of Understanding). The Council is not exclusionary; according to the Faculty Handbook, "any member of the University community may suggest topics for the Council's

consideration." Moreover, nearly all of our Handbook Committees have administrative ex officio members to allow for the free exchange of ideas and opinions in discussion and debate. The structure is a good one.

Unfortunately, the narrative on governance presented to the NEASC re-accreditation team in the Self-Study, which led to the current Blue Ribbon Commission reviewing governance, was solely the view of the administration. The discussions that the NEASC team subsequently had with faculty members during their campus visit led them to point out that there are "contrasting narratives" on governance and that "[b]ringing the contrasting narratives on governance together will provide greater synergy in achieving the strategic vision and the three strategic goals."

We agree. What is needed to make our system work more effectively? What's the real contrast in the contrasting narratives? First, we have to distinguish between "broken governance" and honest disagreements based on different perspectives. And, we need to acknowledge that our committees are set up to allow each constituency the freedom to discuss, debate and decide the matters that fall under their purview. By taking full advantage of appropriate expertise in this way, our governance structures strengthen the resulting decisions. And, most difficult of all, we need to relate to each other with respect and honesty in order to build better relationships based on trust and process.



AAUP's Redbook:  
Policy documents  
and reports.

Order a copy at [www.aaup.org](http://www.aaup.org)

The Faculty Welfare Committee/AAUP at Fairfield University is an ad hoc committee of the General Faculty and an affiliate of the national AAUP. Any member of the General Faculty at Fairfield may join by contacting the membership chair or any officer. Dues are set annually by the membership and can be paid in semi-annual installments or deducted from each paycheck. If you aren't a member, please consider joining. We promote the professional and economic interests, broadly defined, of the Fairfield University Faculty. All our activities are open to all members of the faculty but we are funded entirely by our dues-paying members.



Officers:

President Kathy Nantz  
 Acting VP Joe Dennin  
 Secretary Bill Abbott  
 Treasurer Rick DeWitt  
 Membership Betsy Bowen

Faculty Welfare Committee/AAUP  
 Kathryn Nantz, President  
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## From the Archives:

That there was recognition of the need to bring lay faculty members into policymaking roles and decisions at Jesuit colleges and universities became evident at the convocation of Jesuit university and college presidents in June 1960 at Boston College.

Dean William Van Etten Casey, S.J., of Boston College, addressing the convocation, asserted; "We have delegated to our faculty the responsibility of educating our students...(yet we fail to delegate) to them any of the necessary and corresponding educational authority...We tell our faculty, you are fully responsible for educating these students but you have no authority or power to make any changes that you consider essential for carrying out your responsibility." Continuing, he declared, "this policy tends to make our faculty a flock of sheep, frequently reluctant, sometimes bitter." In time, "their interest wanes" and there is a total lack of "passionate commitment because there is no feeling of deep involvement."

Addressing this major dilemma, he posed two questions: "Are we to continue our present methods, living on in our educational ghetto, segregated from the mainstream of American higher education? Or, by modifying our procedures, are we going to bring our faculty into a deeper involvement and therefore into a more enthusiastic commitment by delegating to them the educational authority that necessarily belongs to their educational responsibility?" For Father Casey, this was "the crucial issue for American Catholic and Jesuit higher education."

by George B. Baehr, Ph.D.  
 in "Chronicles of Fairfield University, 1942-1992  
 Book Two: An Era of Steady Growth and Change"



The Chronicles of Fairfield University were published in conjunction with the observance of the 50th Anniversary of the founding of Fairfield University and Fairfield College Preparatory School.