

Faculty Welfare Committee

Excellence in Education



IN THIS ISSUE

PAGE ONE

- ✓ A Message from the President
- ✓ FWC/AAUP Officers

PAGE TWO

- ✓ FWC/AAUP News and Events

PAGE THREE

- ✓ The Guiding Principles for Faculty Compensation at Fairfield

PAGE FOUR

- ✓ Merit Pay Five Years In: Stories From All Around the Campus - WE'LL HAVE MORE STORIES IN THE NEXT ISSUE



The FWC/AAUP at Fairfield is an ad hoc committee of the General Faculty and an affiliate of the national AAUP. Any member of the General Faculty may join. If you aren't a member, please consider joining. We promote the professional and economic interests, broadly defined, of Fairfield faculty. All our activities are open to all members of the faculty but we are funded entirely by our dues-paying members



President: Kathy Nantz
 Acting VP: Joe Dennin
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A Message from the FWC/AAUP President:

The Fairfield faculty's experience with merit pay began with a memo dated January 4, 2001 from Irene Mulvey, then chair of the Faculty Salary Committee (FSC) to the Academic Council, stating that the administration had "formally raised the issue of merit," meaning that the administration had placed merit on the agenda for "collegial discussions." The Faculty Welfare Committee (FWC) invited a national expert on merit pay, Professor Denise Tanguay, to campus, at FWC expense, to educate all of us on the pros and cons of merit systems. Throughout that spring semester, the General Faculty researched the issue of merit pay and the impact it would have on Fairfield. Faculty leadership were invited to present the faculty position on merit pay to the Board of Trustees. Highlights of the presentation to the Board included research indicating that the compensation structure of an organization helps to define the culture of that organization; attention turns only to tasks that are rewarded and competition increases feelings of dissatisfaction and inequity. Furthermore, merit increases must be at least 7% over CPI to be effective (The slides of this presentation are at www.faculty.fairfield.edu/fwc.) The General Faculty passed a series of motions that reflected the body's opposition to merit pay plans that would provide larger annual salary increases to some faculty and smaller annual salary increases to others. In response to a call from the General Faculty for defined goals of any merit pay plan, the Board of Trustees stated the following: (1) to attract and retain an increasingly excellent faculty, and (2) to link compensation in some manner to performance standards that represent faculty and institutional goals. After months of back and forth, the administration was directed by the Board of Trustees to engage faculty in the design of a merit pay plan.

Time flies. This is our 5th year of merit evaluations for Fairfield faculty. I am quite confident that we have attracted and retained tremendous faculty colleagues over those years, though I sincerely doubt that the merit system has had anything to do with this success. I would argue that, in spite of the imposition of merit pay and the dissatisfaction felt by many faculty over merit pay, tremendous amounts of work on the part of faculty, as well as administrators, staff and students have created an atmosphere at Fairfield that is engaging, welcoming, and productive. I would argue that pre-tenure research leaves, sabbaticals, summer research and course development stipends, clear leadership from the President regarding institutional priorities, and bonuses (like travel to conferences, stipends, course enhancement monies, and student work study support) for faculty who engage in strategic planning initiatives have forged the most important links between faculty priorities and institutional goals. And what about merit pay – were the faculty prescient in our warnings to the Board? Read ahead for a sampling of the ways that merit pay has played out at Fairfield over the last 5 years.

I hope you can take the time to read this edition of the Newsletter at this busy time of the semester!

Kathryn Nantz
 President, FWC/AAUP



FWC AND AAUP NEWS AND EVENTS IN BRIEF

UPCOMING FWC, AAUP AND OTHER FACULTY EVENTS:

Thursday, May 8 from 6:00-9:00 at the Graduate Club in New Haven:

The annual spring meeting of the Connecticut State Conference (CSC-AAUP) will feature a panel discussion addressing, "A Big Chill? - The 'War on Terror' and the University". Our very own **Professor Jocelyn Boryczka** is one of the 3 invited panelists and we look forward to a lively and interesting discussion. Social half-hour at 6:00 with a cash bar and a chance to meet colleagues from other chapters, followed by dinner at 6:30 and then the panel discussion. The CSC will present the **first annual Professor**



George Lang award to a relatively new faculty member at Fairfield who has shown an interest in and an awareness of fundamental AAUP issues like academic freedom and strong shared governance. Watch for a flier with details of the event, including registration information and directions. The FWC will subsidize the cost of this event for our members.

Get involved

94th National AAUP Annual Meeting, June 12-15 in Washington, DC:

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

May 15, Thursday of Senior Week:

Start stretchin' because we're playin' softball (and picnic-ing)! Mark your calendars for a faculty family picnic and softball game on the afternoon of 5/15.

Watch your email for details and batter up! Presidential Medal of



Freedom recipient, Jackie Robinson, (shown here) is not expected to attend.

AAUP Summer Institute 2008 at the University of RI in Kingston July 24-27:

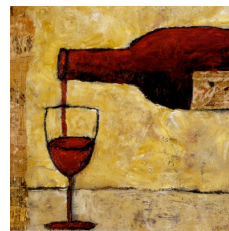
This is a great opportunity to meet colleagues from all around the country in workshops on important topics - contract negotiations, analyzing higher education data, strategic communications and effective shared governance and anyone interested in AAUP issues is encouraged to attend. There are funding opportunities available for you; last year two Fairfield faculty members were awarded scholarships from the Michigan state conference to attend. This year the Summer Institute will be close by at URI in Kingston, RI, July 24-27. This is a great opportunity for up-and-coming faculty leaders. Contact any FWC officer.



You really *should* own a Redbook. Order this book of AAUP Policy Documents Reports at aaup.org

FWC Gala on April 18:

We hope you will attend the next FWC *gala* reception - right after the FWC meeting on 4/18. Red or white?



RECENT FWC AND AAUP NEWS AND EVENTS:

THANKS! To our hard-working Faculty Salary Committee, Professors Boryczka, Kubasik, LeClair, Rakowitz and Scheraga (Chair), for all their work on behalf of the faculty this year and for a thoughtful and thorough discussion of the interrelated salary and compensation issues at the Brown Bag lunch discussion on April 9. **THANKS!** to all who were able to attend this discussion to ask questions and provide feedback. We had record attendance at this event with faculty members from nearly every school. We look forward to continuing the discussion at the General Faculty meeting on April 18.



THANKS! To the faculty members who attended our Brown Bag lunch discussion with advice for choosing an appropriate Handbook committee. The presenters - Professors Kathy Nantz, Irene Mulvey and Susan Rakowitz were happy to talk with you and to share their insights into the various Handbook committees. The positive feedback from the attendees is much appreciated and the FWC looks forward to making this an annual event.



Guiding Principles and Procedural Guidelines for Faculty Compensation at Fairfield

In the rich and compelling saga that is the history of merit pay at Fairfield, there is one part of the story that has some aspects of a successful and collaborative effort between faculty and administration.

In February 2003, at the request of the Faculty Salary Committee (FSC), the Academic Council (AC) created a committee to define guiding principles for faculty compensation: 6 elected faculty members from various schools, 2 academic Deans appointed by the Academic Vice President (AVP), and the AVP. The committee began with a draft text that had been created in consultation with Prof. Denise Tanguay, an expert on merit pay who was invited to campus by the Faculty Welfare Committee (FWC), and whose visit was funded by the FWC. The minutes of the Council meetings at which the Guiding Principles committee was created indicate a willingness on the part of both the faculty and the administration to move beyond the disharmony of the past and make progress. The FSC, in particular, recognized that it would not be possible to move forward without some guiding principles and procedural guidelines for implementing merit pay and that the best place to make progress was with a joint faculty-administration committee.

After a bit of a slow start, the Guiding Principles Committee (GPC) worked incredibly hard, providing interim reports to the AC all year long. The GPC accelerated the pace of their work in spring 2004 hoping to have a final document to bring to the faculty before the end of the year. In fact, AC members continued to raise concerns and the document was sent back to the GPC a couple more times. The AC had two additional meetings on May 19 and June 30, to enable the GPC to address the concerns and complete its work. The AC approved the GP on 6/30/2004 and President von Arx, S.J., took office on 7/1/2004. In fact, in one of his first meetings with the Faculty Secretary in very early July, he had the GP on his desk and said that

AVP Grossman had delivered them to him that morning as an indication that the chaos and disharmony associated with merit pay was dissipating. The Faculty Secretary cautioned him that since the underlying issue was so important, she intended to bring the GP to the General Faculty (GF) for approval. But, there was no need for alarm - the GF approved the GP on 9/17/2004, and then the AVP approved the GP for inclusion in the Journal of Record, a list of jointly-approved policy decisions maintained by the Faculty Secretary. Long story short, the creation of the GP was a very difficult task requiring incredible joint effort and skill and carried out by a conscientious joint faculty-administration committee that refused to give up. On behalf of the GF, we thank them: Professors Dennin, Gill-Lopez (Chair), Greiner, Hlawitschka, Steffen and Wills, CAS Dean Snyder, GSEAP Dean Deignan, and AVP Grossman.

But, lest you think the rich and compelling saga has turned into a fairy tale, read on. Like many a joint document, the GP were reached by the hard work of compromise where both faculty and administration made significant concessions in order to reach a document that was mutually agreeable. Nobody was happy with every individual item, but everyone agreed to the total package. During the approval processes, some faculty members expressed concern that the GP would be "cherry-picked" by the administration and that items on which faculty insisted there could be no compromise would be ignored while items on which the faculty had made significant concessions would be implemented. As it turns out, there is some justification for this concern since, in particular, the GP mandate that "sustained merit should reasonably allow faculty members to retain or increase buying power over the years. In time periods where increases cannot exceed cost of living, serious consideration should be given to

judging only for sustained merit" has been ignored.

The GP call for a fair and appropriate appeals process, but we are years into merit pay with no such process.

The GP call for all plans to be in compliance with the GP for merit reviews in calendar year 2005, and even though the GP call for a committee with faculty representation to review the plans and report to the AVP, and even though the AC convened a Subcommittee on Compliance with the Guiding Principles that reviewed every plan and reported to the AC, there has been no serious attempt on the part of the deans or the AVP to bring plans into compliance with the GP. It's widely agreed by faculty that standards for merit pay should be consistent across schools and departments and aligning plans with the GP is the appropriate place to start.

Since merit pay was imposed with no clear goals from the Board or administration, jointly creating and approving a policy statement that laid out guiding principles was essential to get faculty cooperation on merit pay. A suspicious person might think the administration's participation in the process that resulted in the GP was cynical and they participated only because the faculty were resisting moving forward without some guiding principles.

Five years into merit evaluations, it's important to acknowledge that the GP are an example of genuine collaboration and faculty-administration cooperation that worked and worked well. It is the only document on merit pay that was jointly agreed to and approved for inclusion in the Journal of Record by both the faculty and the administration. Moving forward, this should be a foundational document for all work on merit pay.

Want to read more? Download a copy of the Guiding Principles at www.faculty.fairfield.edu/gfs (item 4).

Merit Pay Five Years In: Stories From All Around the Campus

In my school, different departments have very different requirements. Some departments have very high requirements for extra merit and some much less so. Service is often a very minor component and excess emphasis is placed on research since it is research that can be most easily measured. Transparency is very limited with announced increments usually coming after end of term. Chairs typically (though not in all cases) are the final arbiters of departmental merit "plans" who can deny extra merit to some thereby enhancing the departmental pool for others who do get extra merit, including the chair. There is no evidence of abuse but this potential for abuse is troubling. We have no formal grievance process. In lean years, when not even CPI is offered by the administration, we do not have merit, we have varying degrees of *demerit*. "Raises" that are below CPI, even for "extra merit" recipients are a pay cut. Decreasing real pay contradicts economic sustainability. No one I know of supports the current merit system, no one supports the way it is administered, and the fact that it has not been funded by the administration is irrational. Its implementation has increased faculty cynicism. Faculty voted against merit for exactly the reasons its failed implementation so clearly demonstrate. Merit as currently construed is a failure. Few if any are motivated by it, most are turned off by it. Our votes went unheard and our voices continue to be unheard.



Last year, our department made merit recommendations using our Dean-approved plan. After a conversation with the Chair, who provided, as required, a summary justification for each merit recommendation rather than the merit applications themselves, the Dean unilaterally changed some of the recommendations. He offered no explanation for these changes. The AVP then refused to consider any appeal; he claimed that the Dean and the department were in agreement on the ranking of faculty in the department, but not on the location of the thresholds for different levels of merit. We explained to the AVP that the department had provided no rankings at all, only threshold

assessments. In light of that miscommunication, we suggested that in the future, there should be a real appeals process for merit recommendations. The AVP's response was, "There is no need for an appeals process in the present system. Collaboration and cooperation is the key." When the chief academic officer is so willing to ignore the Guiding Principles' call for a "fair and appropriate process for appeals," and, more importantly, transparency and concrete, observable criteria, it's hard to believe that the administration has any interest in making the merit process fair.



I was vehemently opposed to Merit Pay and refused to participate in the creation of a program. Other faculty in my school were willing to develop a plan and did so. Because of the tension around merit pay, they wisely decided to create a model that would allow *every* faculty member who does their job to qualify for sustained merit and *every* faculty member who puts in the amount of effort typically required by faculty in my school to be eligible for additional merit. Though I was dragged kicking and screaming into merit pay, their model was so good and wise that I got on board with it. The model is premised on the notion that all resources should be shared fairly (as the raises for merit involve such significant amounts of money!). So as long as you do your job conscientiously - you cannot, not get sustained and probably additional merit. With our plan, every faculty member must show that they do everything on our grid for sustained merit in all the areas. For additional merit - faculty members must specifically document that they have done enough appropriate work in 2 of our 4 areas to qualify for additional merit. The Executive Council (department chairs) goes through and ensures that everything is adequately documented. There are clear and appropriate criteria, announced in advance. Raises are not automatic, but faculty know what they need to do and can choose to do it. For the past two years, we have recommended that all faculty in the school get both sustained and additional merit. This has met with

resistance from the administration. They have required that we change our plan to be more "selective" which we have steadfastly refused to do. Some faculty have argued the plan should be more selective. For the most part, as a school, we are happy that we have all shared equally and it has not been a nasty or competitive experience for us.



In my department last year, the merit pay system was arbitrary and totally lacking in transparency. Our department's merit plan was thorough, and, I believe, fair. It set specific thresholds for various merit pay levels, and so department members could know in advance what was required to reach the highest level. However, upon submission of the results last spring, the dean decided that "too many" of our department reached the highest level, and told our chair that several in our department had to be picked for lower compensation. This picking was done in a private conversation between the dean and the chair. I have no notion of why or how I was selected for my increase, or what I might do in future to move myself higher. The dean's arbitrariness puts me in mind of a professor who tells a class at the beginning of the semester "There will be no more than four A's in this course, and no fewer than four D's, regardless of how well you all perform". I have read and edited a number of manuscripts by my colleagues, because I like to help them be better scholars. I have observed a number of my colleagues in the classroom, again because I like to help them be better teachers. I will continue to do this for now, but not all faculty will continue to be so generous with their time, because such assistance reduces one's chances of earning a higher level of merit pay. Even as the abovementioned professor can hardly expect his students to perform effectively in teams or groups, the administration is discouraging cooperation, encouraging selfishness, and promoting an atmosphere of suspicion and resentment between as well as among faculty members.



Look for more stories of merit pay in the next issue...