

# Faculty Welfare Committee

## Excellence in Education



### **Greetings from the FWC/AAUP President:**

Halloween greetings to all from the Faculty Welfare Committee/AAUP. Check out this edition of the newsletter for news briefs (below) and an article from the FWC Executive Committee on the ongoing review of governance at Fairfield.

As you know, the FWC/AAUP is a unique creation of the Fairfield University faculty - it joins with the national American Association of University Professors, and endorses that organization's objectives and goals, but also establishes its own specific priorities. Our mission is *to promote faculty welfare, broadly defined*, and this includes protecting academic freedom, improving salaries and benefits, and what we highlight in this issue: preserving the faculty's appropriate role in shared governance.

Kathryn Nantz  
President, FWC/AAUP

## **FWC/AAUP News Briefs:**

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Academic Freedom  
for a  
Free Society

### **Brown Bag Lunch: Making the Committees Work for you**

#### **RESCHEDULED to Wednesday, 11/5 in the Faculty Dining Room**

Are you helping to develop a new program and looking for advice on the committee approval process? Have ideas, but are unsure where to go with them? The faculty governance structure is how faculty, working with appropriate administrators, create and implement policy. Come and learn about the system and how it can work for you. As always, the FWC will provide snacks.

### **Report on our FWC Open Meeting 10/17/2008:**

Many thanks to all who attended the FWC meeting and the gala reception afterwards! We appreciated the thoughtful input, lively discussions and the enthusiasm of the participants. In particular, members should be aware of the discussion of our financial obligations and the fact that the dues we must pay to the national AAUP now exceed the dues we collect from each member. As a result, our dues (which have not been increased in close to 20 years) will need to be adjusted. The sense of the membership at the 10/17 meeting was to approve a dues increase and couple this with an education/recruitment drive. A subcommittee is working on a structure for the needed dues increase and we will have more details in an upcoming newsletter.

### **Fairfield's FWC awarded two AAUP grants:**

We are delighted to report approval from the AAUP for two grant proposals we submitted earlier this year. One grant will help fund a recruitment and organizing drive and the other will fund outside faculty members and/or national AAUP staff to visit our campus to help the faculty deal with the current governance issues on campus. See the article inside and watch this space for details on our events.

**Lots more info at our chapter site, [www.faculty.fairfield.edu/fwc](http://www.faculty.fairfield.edu/fwc), and the national site, [www.aaup.org](http://www.aaup.org).**

## From the Executive Committee: The Ongoing Review of Governance at Fairfield

There is something really important going on at Fairfield right now – an extensive review of shared governance. Lots of work has been done, various groups are submitting reports and conversations are taking place all around campus. In this note, we outline the history of the governance review and update the faculty as to where we are right now. It is absolutely essential that the faculty keep up to date on this governance review and we urge you to get informed. Contact any member of the FWC Executive Committee with suggestions or advice and *please* watch your email for upcoming FWC-sponsored events as the process continues.

### **Background.**

An extensive review of shared governance at Fairfield was initiated by President von Arx, S.J., in February 2008, following the report of the NEASC visiting team during our re-accreditation process, with the appointment of his **Blue Ribbon Commission** (BRC) to address issues of governance. The BRC issued a report in May 2008. (All of the documents we discuss here are available on the General Faculty Secretary's website at [www.faculty.fairfield.edu/gfs](http://www.faculty.fairfield.edu/gfs)). The BRC's report offered a number of recommendations, which the President passed on to the relevant bodies for consideration in a memo dated June 12 with a request for a report by Thanksgiving. Recommendations for the faculty were taken up by the Academic Council, the executive arm of the General Faculty, which formed a subcommittee at its first meeting of the year in September. The **Academic Council Subcommittee on Governance** delivered a report to the Academic Council, which will be discussed at the November 3<sup>rd</sup> Academic Council meeting. In addition, the President appointed a group of external advisors to review our *Faculty Handbook*. This group, the **Faculty Handbook Working Group**, reported to the President on September 24 and their report was distributed to the General Faculty by email on October 20.

### **We urge you to read the various reports and get involved.**

We are pleased that so many individuals and groups have given so generously of their time and expertise to participate in the review of governance at Fairfield. The various reports show careful analysis and thoughtful conclusions. As these reports will now move forward for discussion and action, we urge all faculty members to inform themselves fully of the issues under consideration. All the relevant documents are on the General Faculty Secretary's website and you can contact any member of the Academic Council (roster on the GFS website) for further information. We understand that the President has arranged for conversations with various faculty members as well. We hope that the conversations taking place all over campus will enrich the discussions that will take place at the appropriate decision-making faculty bodies, the General Faculty and its executive arm, the Academic Council.

### **Our Faculty Handbook.**

We urge faculty to pay particular attention to any proposed changes to the *Faculty Handbook*. Our *Handbook* is an agreement between the trustees and the faculty, and we believe that its structures provide an excellent model of faculty/administrative shared governance. Nearly all of our *Faculty Handbook* committees have administrative input and many have administrative vote. Subcommittees of faculty, administrators and sometimes students are often formed to draft policy proposals. As a result, many policy decisions that come out of our *Handbook* committees are collaborative from the start. Finally, the section of the *Handbook* that most strongly promotes faculty/administrative collaboration on essential issues, is the section that states that the *Handbook* itself cannot be modified without mutual agreement. (See "From the Archives" on page 4.)

The end of the Faculty Handbook Working Group report, though, says, "While formal, legal authority of the Board can be utilized toward certain unilateral ends, it is the hope of this group that changes can be made in a multilateral way that fosters a shared governance structure in the spirit of shared, collegial governance." Although we do not anticipate unilateral changes to the *Faculty Handbook*, this sentence concerns us. It is hard to imagine anything less collegial and collaborative than unilateral changes to any mutually-approved document, especially our *Faculty Handbook*. Of course,

## From the Executive Committee: The Ongoing Review of Governance at Fairfield

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faculty are always open to discussing specific changes to the *Handbook* as long as the process for mutual agreement is respected. But, any changes to the *Handbook* that do not occur through the agreed-upon multilateral process set forth in the *Handbook* would essentially render the *Handbook* inoperative. If the amendment procedures that govern the entire *Handbook* were violated, then we would no longer have a *Handbook*. There would be no foundation for all of its policies and protections.

### **What's next?**

As noted above, the Academic Council continues with its consideration of the recommendations in the BRC report at the next meeting on 11/3. In addition, because this issue is so important, earlier this fall the FWC applied for a grant from the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) in order to fund activities related to Fairfield's review of governance. In early October, we learned that our grant proposal was approved and we are in the process of inviting outside faculty members and national AAUP staff the AAUP will cover all the expenses of this project and that Fairfield's FWC/AAUP chapter treasury will not be tapped at all.



Please watch your email for details about upcoming FWC-sponsored events related to Fairfield's governance review and make every effort to attend. Read the documents listed below - available on the Faculty Secretary's website. Contact any member of the Academic Council for more information on the report of the AC Subcommittee on Governance. And, as you educate yourself on the issues in your spare time, why not go back to one of the foundational documents, jointly formulated by the AAUP, the American Council of Education and the Association of Governing Boards in 1966, and still one of the most eloquent statements on the ideal of shared governance: the AAUP's Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities. Find it at [www.aaup.org/AAUP/pubsres/policydocs/contents/governancestatement.htm](http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/pubsres/policydocs/contents/governancestatement.htm).

### **See the General Faculty Secretary's website, [www.faculty.fairfield.edu/gfs](http://www.faculty.fairfield.edu/gfs) for:**

- Blue Ribbon Commission Report 5/5/2008
- Letter from President to Faculty and Staff 6/12/2008
- Academic Council Subcommittee on Governance Report (for 11/3/08)
- Faculty Handbook Working Group Report 10/24/08



Need a gift for a faculty member in your life? How about the AAUP Redbook at <http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/pubsres/policydocs/order/> ? And, why not get yourself one, too?

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.



Executive Committee: Kathy Nantz, President; Joe Dennin, Vice-President; Bill Abbott, Secretary; Rick DeWitt, Treasurer; Betsy Bowen, Membership Director; and at-large members: Marcie Patton, Cheryl Tromley, Kate Wheeler, Bob Epstein. Newsletter Staff: All of the above plus Irene Mulvey and Susan Rakowitz.

### **From the Archives:**

From the *Faculty Handbook*, 10 edition (2006), page 3:

The General Faculty or the Board of Trustees may propose amendments to the Faculty Handbook by submitting said amendments to the Academic Council for its review and recommendation. The President or his officially designated representative shall report in writing to the Academic Council either agreement or disagreement with the proposed amendments within thirty days after the Academic Council considers the amendments as an agenda item. All amendments must be accepted by both the Board of Trustees and the General Faculty. General Faculty approval is obtained by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting at a regularly scheduled meeting of the General Faculty.

Duly ratified amendments to, and new editions of, the Faculty Handbook will be published by the President or his designees after their texts have been reviewed for accuracy by the Academic Council or its designees(s).

In the event that a proposed amendment is not accepted by the Board of Trustees, the President or his designated representative shall communicate the Board's reasons in writing to the Faculty Secretary within thirty days. In the event that a proposed amendment is not accepted by the General Faculty, the Faculty Secretary shall communicate the faculty's reasons in writing to the President or his designated representative within thirty days.



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