

Faculty Welfare Committee

Excellence in Education



HAPPY SPRING!

IN THIS ISSUE:

Page 1

- ✓ From the President
- ✓ Recruitment Drive Update
- ✓ Faculty attorney reviewing contract language

Page 2

- ✓ FWC /AAUP News and Events

Page 3

- ✓ Faculty Contracts 101

Page 4

- ✓ Assumption College Panel on Merit Pay

Page 5

- ✓ The 95th percentile explained

✓

Page 6

- ✓ From the Archives



From the President:

If you're like me, you are over-committed, over-scheduled, and can't find another minute to squeeze one more task into your day. In spite of this, I urge you to find the time to read and reflect on the articles in this FWC newsletter that we've put together for you and to prepare for and attend upcoming meetings of the General Faculty. This is an important moment in our institutional history and it is more important than ever that we educate ourselves as faculty members.

Kathryn Nantz, FWC/AAUP President

Update from the Recruitment Drive/Dues Increase Subcommittee:

We are delighted to report that our Recruitment Drive/Dues Increase was an unqualified success! Long story short: in 2008-09 we had 166 members out of 231 eligible (71.8%) and now, even with increased dues for the two higher ranks, we have 157 members out of 231 eligible (67.9%)! For an advocacy chapter of the AAUP, it simply doesn't get any better than this. Fairfield continues as the model of what an advocacy chapter can be.

As you know, the amount of money in our Treasury had been slowly decreasing for a number of years. Not because of the economy, like our retirement savings, but because the amount of dues we collect had not gone up in nearly 20 years and the amount of dues we pay to the National AAUP per faculty member goes up a tiny bit every year. After talking about the need for a dues increase for years (literally), finally last year the amount we paid to National per tenured faculty member was more than we collected per tenured faculty member. At that point, a dues increase was unavoidable.

We'd like to thank all members of the FWC Executive Committee who worked with us on the recruitment drive. And we'd like especially to thank each and every faculty member who decided to continue as a member of the FWC. We plan to carry on with our work, promoting faculty welfare, broadly defined: newsletters, receptions after faculty meetings (still on our shoestring budget), Brown Bag Lunch discussions, etc. We have lots of ideas for the future and would love to have member input as we move into our third decade of the FWC. All of our activities are open to all members of the General Faculty, but our activities are entirely funded by our dues-paying members. Thank you from the FWC Recruitment Drive Subcommittee: Betsy Bowen, Joe Dennin, Rick DeWitt, and Irene Mulvey.

Faculty Attorney reviewing contract language:

The possibility of modifying or adapting contract language has been raised by the administration in their collegial discussions with the Faculty Salary Committee and with the Academic Council Subcommittee on Governance. At the request of these two committees, the Faculty Welfare Committee/AAUP has, once again, contacted our attorney and retained him to review current contract language, to help us understand the protections we have in our current contract structure/language, and to help us maintain or strengthen the protections we will have in any proposed new contract or *Handbook* language. Lawyers are expensive and it is only through our dues-paying FWC members that we are able to afford this crucial legal advice. If you aren't a member and would like to join, contact Membership Director, Betsy Bowen.

FWC AND AAUP UPCOMING EVENTS / NEWS

UPCOMING FWC, AAUP AND OTHER FACULTY EVENTS:

Brown Bag Lunch: CHOOSING A HANDBOOK COMMITTEE

**Wednesday, April 1
12:00-1:30 PM**

Faculty Dining Room

Join us for our second annual BBL on how to choose an appropriate *Handbook* committee. Learn about our *Handbook* committees and our governance structures when faculty leaders share their insights into the various service opportunities. We had wonderful input from those who attended last year's discussion and look forward to more of the same this year. Please join us and bring your questions, your concerns, and your lunch (optional). The FWC will provide snacks and good conversation.



Mind and Body Day at the Center for Academic Excellence

**Friday, April 17
3:30-4:30 PM**

Nyselius Library 107C

Keeping our FWC mission in mind (to promote faculty welfare, broadly defined), we would like to draw your attention to an upcoming CAE workshop, "Re-mem-bering Mind and Body." In this workshop, you'll learn how to nurture your mind-body connection and you can try out mindfulness practices to use in the classroom and throughout your personal and professional life. Sound good? You need to register in advance, so contact the CAE ASAP.

BREAKFAST before the General Faculty Meeting

**Friday, May 1
9:30 - 10:00 AM**

outside SON auditorium

As always, the Faculty Welfare Committee will provide a *gala* breakfast outside the SON auditorium before the GF Meeting for Committee Reports and Elections. Take a few minutes to catch up with colleagues over coffee before we hear from our hard-working HB committees. Show up early for best pastry selection! Also, show up early because the Committee on Committees will shoo you into the meeting at 10:00 AM sharp!



Connecticut State Conference/AAUP Annual Spring Meeting:

MANAGERIAL DISCRETION AND PROFESSIONAL AUTONOMY IN A TIME OF FINANCIAL CRISIS

**Thursday, May 7
5:30-9:00 PM**

Graduate Club, 15 Elm Street, New Haven

The CSC serves as a link between the AAUP chapters in CT and the national office of the AAUP. In addition, the CSC facilitates communication among the chapters in the state, maintains several committees and a chapter service program, provides faculty with

educational opportunities on important issues in higher education, and produces *Vanguard*, our award-winning chapter newspaper. The Annual Spring Meeting, open to all members of all chapters in the state, begins with a social period, followed by dinner. Our presentation this year is on "Managerial Discretion and Professional Autonomy in a Time of Financial Crisis." We're thrilled with our distinguished panelists: Judith Greiman, J.D., President of the Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges, Elsa M. Nuñez, Ph.D., President of Eastern CT State University, and Gary Rhoades, Ph.D., General Secretary of the National AAUP. Watch your email for registration details or visit: <http://people.wcsu.edu/nairv/AAUPCSC.htm>.



FACULTY FAMILY PICNIC AND SOFTBALL GAME

**THURSDAY, MAY 14
WOMEN'S SOFTBALL FIELD
4:30-6:00 PM**

Mark your calendar! This is *great* fun, and the only event for all faculty and faculty friends and families. Watch your email for more details. The softball game is completely optional, picnicking usually not. [Note to self: (1) find softball glove (2) get to batting cages.]



Hank Aaron
hits #715 on
4/8/1975.

Happy
birthday,
Hammerin'
Hank! He
turned 75 last
February 5.

Fairfield University Faculty Contracts 101:

Recent discussions between administrative and faculty representatives raised the possibility that faculty might be asked to consider changes to our current contract structure. Since our existing contract structure is, in some ways, less than entirely transparent, we thought it would be helpful to clarify what documents are involved in our contract, and how those documents are related.

In certain ways, faculty contracts at Fairfield are fairly typical. For example, they specify one's rank, salary, benefits, and the like, as do typical contracts at other universities. But in other ways our contracts are unusual. For example, the information just mentioned is spread across three documents, and those documents are linked in ways that may not be widely understood. So, in attempting to clarify our contract structure, let's begin by clarifying what the three key documents are.

First, it is worth noting the following language from the *Faculty Handbook*, concerning what our contracts are required to contain:

Appointment of a full-time faculty member shall be made by a formal contract signed by the faculty member and the President of the University. The contract and appendages shall state the rank, salary and benefits, duration of the contract and other conditions of appointment.

In keeping with these general requirements, your contract consists of the following three documents:

1. **The Contract Letter.** This is the one-page document you sign each year, usually in late spring, and it contains, among other items, your rank and salary for the upcoming year.
2. **The Memo of Understanding (MOU).** This is the multiple-page document worked out each year by the Faculty Salary Committee and an administrative committee, and subject to approval by the General Faculty, Budget Committee, and ultimately the Board of Trustees. The MOU contains additional terms beyond those found in the contract letter, such as the commitment to the 95th percentile (see article on page 5), salary ranges for each rank, the salary structure for part-time faculty, breakdowns among levels of merit pay, and more.
3. **The Benefit Plans Overview.** This is an overview of some of your benefits, like health benefits, retirement benefits, the disability plan, tuition benefits, and more. You usually receive a copy of this booklet when you first come to Fairfield, and additional copies are available from Human Resources or by contacting any of the officers of the FWC.

As noted above, these three documents are linked, and our next task is to clarify the linkage. To begin, the Contract Letter references the Memo of Understanding. In particular, the Contract Letter specifies that the terms of the current MOU will be in effect from the beginning of the new contract year, and continue to be in effect until those terms are superseded by a new MOU. The specific language from your Contract Letter is as follows:

The terms referred to in the Memo of Understanding on Faculty Salary and Benefits, ___[year]___, will apply from ___[date]___ and continue until superseded by a subsequent Memo of Understanding...

The Memo of Understanding in turn references the Benefit Plans Overview. In particular, the Benefit Plans Overview is included in the MOU as an appendix. The specific language from the MOU is as follows:

Benefit Plans Overview," an outline of existing benefits, is incorporated in this document as Appendix 1.

In short, the Contract Letter references the MOU, in that it specifies that the MOU will be in effect until superseded by a subsequent MOU, and the MOU in turn references the Benefit Plans Overview, in that the latter is included as an appendix to the MOU. If you have further questions, contact any member of our Faculty Salary Committee.

Fairfield's FWC invited to Assumption to participate in a panel on merit pay:

Assumption College Chapter
of
The American Association of University Professors

QUANTIFYING THE LIFE OF THE MIND?
A Panel Discussion and Faculty Conversation on Merit Pay

Thursday, March 19, 4:30-6:00
Kennedy 112



L to R: Irene Mulvey, Kathy Nantz, Katie Conboy

On the recommendation of National AAUP, Fairfield's Faculty Welfare Committee was contacted by a brand new AAUP chapter at Assumption College and invited to be part of a panel discussion on merit pay. Chapter President Kathy Nantz and Irene Mulvey travelled to Worcester, Massachusetts, on Thursday, March 19 to take part in this event. The attendance was great -- something like 30% of their faculty showed up at their first ever AAUP-sponsored event! Irene talked about the importance of connecting with National AAUP for their policy documents, vast resources on higher education, and connecting your chapter with other institutions of higher education, as well as the importance of organizing as professionals around the fundamental AAUP principles of academic freedom and strong shared governance. Kathy focused on the work we did as faculty members with Denise Tanguay, a renowned expert on merit pay compensation systems that was invited to Fairfield at FWC expense way back when merit pay was first being discussed. Kathy had Dr. Tanguay's "Primary Points on Merit Pay Systems" on a handout and she went through them for the group. The third panelist was Dr. Katie Conboy, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at Stonehill College in Easton, Massachusetts, and she had the most interesting comments of all. AVP Conboy inherited a merit pay system at Stonehill and, after due consideration of its, pardon the expression, merits and drawbacks, changed to a system of faculty merit bonuses. Eventually, she did away with merit pay altogether. Some of the comments from her presentation are below:

With merit pay, the motivations seem confused: as an administrator, I do not want to be in a position where I'm offering cash on the barrelhead for work that people are already motivated to do. Rather, I want to create the conditions under which faculty can (and want to) work because they feel supported.

The needs differ from individual to individual: Time? Space? Equipment? Supplies? A lab? A library or archive in another country? Privileges at a local research library? An indexer? A translator? A student researcher? I'd rather offer faculty members what's needed to do work they are passionate about doing than pay by the article or book. Because you just know the next argument when resources are tight: "my article is in a better journal his"/"that's practically a vanity press"/"anyone can publish in that discipline." Why make our common goals divisive? I want to be an enabler, not a back-slapper—and certainly not a referee.

There are certain rhythms to faculty life, and it is unrealistic to think that a faculty member can or should devote 33% of her or his time to teaching, research, and service consistently over a 25, 30, or 40-year career. There will be times of great passion and renewal around pedagogy. There will be times of great dedication to scholarly productivity. And there will be times of grave responsibility for important college committees or curriculum change. (And I'm not even mentioning family, friendship, community service, and the rest of life!) And we need all of this work!

Most of us can do more than one of these things well, but we like to change it up a bit. We come off a big research project and we are happy to throw ourselves into Gen Ed reform. We finish a stint on tenure and promotion and race back to the library to take up new scholarly work. We complete the gathering of data, present at a conference, write the article, and begin to ask new questions about our teaching.

Many of us feel like lone rangers in our work. We teach alone, we research alone, we are highly specialized, and there's a sense that others don't understand what we do. To the extent that we can celebrate and share the fruits of our labors, we will continue to promote the multiple needs of our organizations, and promote the people who fulfill them. Instead of slipping a little something extra in the paycheck, I'd rather be asking: "What are you going to do next and what do you need to get it done?" Then I'd like to provide the resources—and get out of the way until it's time to celebrate.

Fairfield's Commitment to the AAUP's 95th percentile explained:

Every so often, someone will mention Fairfield's commitment to the 95th percentile. It came up at the last General Faculty meeting in connection with proposals on housing assistance. It will surely come up when the Faculty Salary Committee reports to the General Faculty with our Memo of Understanding (contract) sometime this spring. There are a lot of new faculty on campus these days, so an explanation of Fairfield's commitment to the 95th percentile is in order.

Every year at the National American Association of University Professors (AAUP), the Committee on the Economic Status of the Profession, in collaboration with the AAUP's research office, collects data on faculty salaries and compensation from institutions all over the country (over 1300 in 5 categories; 3 categories of four-year institutions). They publish comprehensive compensation data in a report that includes articles analyzing trends, breakdowns by region of the country, and overall economic context, in the March-April issue of *Academe*. Each member of the FWC, as a member of national AAUP, receives this issue (as well as a full subscription to *Academe*). In fact, a portion of your FWC dues goes directly to National and funds this and all their other important activities, so each and every member of the FWC, our AAUP chapter, can take partial credit for helping to produce this report. Last year's report is here: <http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/comm/rep/Z/ecstatreport2007-08/>. One table in the report provides percentiles for distribution of average faculty salary and average faculty compensation by rank. The administration and Board of Trustees have made a commitment to maintain the average of total compensation (salary plus benefits) for Assistant,

Associate, and Professor ranks at the 95th percentile for Class IIA institutions (our category: four-year, Master's-granting institutions) in the National AAUP ratings. When did this happen? How did this come about? Of course, it's a long story. Briefly, in the mid to late 1980s, our Faculty Salary Committee and other faculty leaders did some investigating and turned up two things: Fairfield University was the "bargain" among Jesuit schools – Jesuit quality at bargain basement prices - and Fairfield faculty salaries were *significantly* lower than salaries at comparable institutions. There were meetings, discussions, newsletters (not coincidentally, this was about the same time the Faculty Welfare Committee was founded) and the administration at the time, in the face of a unified faculty and under threat of faculty action, agreed to a two-year contract with salary increases of 12% the first year and 9% the second year. Of course, that 20% salary increase could be eroded by lower than CPI increases in the future, so another part of the agreement was that the administration and Board of Trustees made a commitment to keep Fairfield faculty total compensation at the 95th percentile, by rank, in the AAUP ratings.

Faculty need to know this story, and especially how hard your faculty colleagues worked to get it (especially Kevin Cassidy, Don Greenberg, the late George Lang from MACS, Mariann Regan, retired from English, Dee Lippmann, and Marty Lang, retired from Religious Studies). It's also important for faculty to know and appreciate that, in the years since we reached this agreement, our administration and Board have never wavered on this commitment.

People will tell you it's not perfect, and that's true. For one thing, the commitment is to have the *average* of faculty compensation, by rank, at the 95th percentile. As with any data set in which there are so-called "outliers," the average can be skewed. We understand this, and continually remind the administration of this problem and that while they are *technically* meeting the commitment, they may not be meeting the commitment in a *meaningful* way. But those are arguments for another day. Our point here is to explain what the commitment means and how it came about.

Expect to hear more about this in the coming weeks. With regard to any housing assistance program, faculty are understandably concerned about how any financial assistance will affect average compensation in each rank, since housing assistance to a few raises the average compensation without benefiting all. And, unless you've been living under a rock, you know that health benefits are under serious discussion this year. Any proposal from the administration for faculty to pay a portion of their health benefit premiums has always been followed by a reminder - from the administration - of their commitment to the 95th percentile. The claim is that the commitment to the 95th percentile will protect total compensation when money is shifted from benefits to salary. When benefit costs to the administration are high, they can meet their commitment with small increases to salary. If benefit costs are shifted to the individual faculty member, higher salary increases may be needed to meet the commitment. Here again, how meaningfully the commitment is being met becomes a factor. But ultimately, faculty need to understand what it all means if we are to make informed decisions.

These are difficult and uncertain economic times. Important and complicated issues will be discussed at upcoming meetings of the General Faculty and the Academic Council. The FWC is prepared to work with the administration, the faculty, and Board as we move forward, committed to the institution and our mission.



The Faculty Welfare Committee/AAUP at Fairfield University is an ad hoc committee of the General Faculty and an affiliate of the National AAUP.



The Mission of the AAUP:
to advance academic freedom and shared governance, to define fundamental professional values and standards for higher education, and to ensure higher education's contribution to the common good.



Academic freedom
for a
free society



Faculty Welfare Committee/AAUP
Kathryn Nantz, President
Department of Economics
Fairfield University
1073 North Benson Road
Fairfield, CT 06824-5195

FROM THE ARCHIVES: Snippets unearthed by the Secretary of the General Faculty...

MOTION PASSED BY THE GENERAL FACULTY ON FEB. 20, 2004:

The General Faculty's position is that in any year additional merit cannot be funded unless sustained merit is over CPI. Further that sustained merit should be over CPI not only for an individual year but also over any period of years.

MOTION PASSED BY THE GENERAL FACULTY ON MARCH 3, 2006:

Whereas Fairfield University's Mission Statement places it firmly in the Catholic tradition;
Whereas the principles of Catholic Social Teaching (CST) are clear that it is the right of all working people to a just wage;
Whereas the principles of CST strongly argue for the importance of the common good in the world as a whole, in particular societies and in their constituent institutions;
Whereas CST's principle of the common good requires that economic decisions cannot favor some—even the majority—at the expense of the vulnerable, even if they are a small minority;
Whereas the principles of CST stress that solidarity between members of the community is of paramount importance;
Whereas the principles of CST are clear that incentives of one kind or another, though legitimate in principle, take second place to the need for a just wage that respects the dignity of the worker;
Whereas the principles of CST are held to apply above all and in an "exemplary" fashion to the Church and to those institutions affiliated with it in any way;
Be it moved that any determination of salaries at Fairfield University that creates a pool for merit pay or other incentives by reducing the monies available for the just remuneration of those who, having met their contractual requirements, are deemed to have achieved "sustained merit," is unworthy of a Catholic institution, and should be summarily rejected, not only by those affected by such policies but also by administrators and trustees who represent an institution that claims Catholic and Jesuit identity.