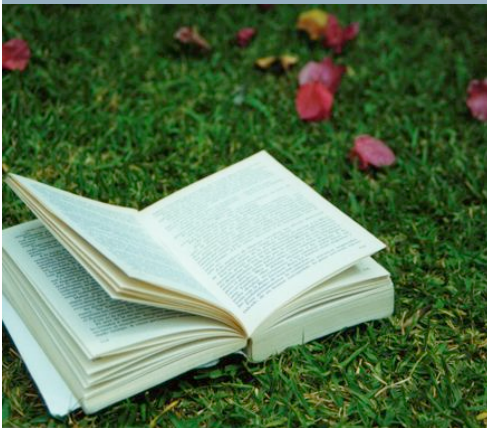


Faculty Welfare Committee

Excellence in Education



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FWC Litigation Fund

The FWC continues to accept pledges from faculty members to our FWC Litigation Fund, which will be used only if legal action is required with regard to the current governance situation.

Pledges to donate any amount can be emailed to FWC Treasurer, Rick DeWitt. Many thanks to the many faculty members who have pledged to donate, if needed. We are overwhelmed by the remarkably generous and immediate response from so many of you. Thank you very much.

From the FWC President:

Summer greetings from the Faculty Welfare Committee! This special edition of our newsletter responds to concerns that members of the university community may have with regard to current faculty positions. We hope you will share this edition with non-faculty employees. Copies can be downloaded from www.faculty.fairfield.edu/fwc -- scroll down under Miscellaneous Publications.

We anticipate providing faculty with updates on the current state of conversations between the Salary Committee and the administration following the Board's vote in June. At this time, there is no agreement on a new Memo of Understanding and faculty have not been issued contracts for 2009-10.

The FWC Executive Committee together with the Faculty Salary Committee met with our attorney. The FSC is working very hard to reach an acceptable resolution. Please watch for additional newsletters this summer as events unfold. In the meantime, enjoy a restful and productive summer!

Questions and Answers on Faculty Positions

In the current financial situation, we thought it would be helpful to clarify some faculty positions.

Q. Recently, all staff members were required to begin cost sharing for health care premiums. Are the faculty refusing to do likewise? Are the faculty refusing to cost share on their health care premiums?

A. No, not at all. The faculty voted overwhelmingly to begin cost sharing on health care premiums.

Q. So, will the faculty begin cost sharing this year?

A. The administration rejected the faculty's agreement to cost share, so at this point, it appears that the faculty will not be cost sharing this year. But to be clear, this is because of the administration's rejection of the faculty's proposal to cost share, not because of the faculty's refusal to do so. Faculty voted overwhelmingly to cost share on health care premiums.

[Continued on next page]

FACULTY WELFARE COMMITTEE

AAUP

Questions and Answers on Faculty Positions

Q. Why would the administration reject the faculty's agreement to cost share?

A. The "official" reason communicated to the Faculty Secretary is because the faculty put conditions on the agreement to cost share and would not accept other changes, not related to health care, that the administration wanted.

Q. Is the problem that the administration thinks the conditions the faculty put on the agreement to cost share are unreasonable?

A. No. Interestingly, the administration has indicated that they find all the conditions reasonable. For example, one condition simply reflects a basic principle of Jesuit and Catholic social teaching concerning fair distribution of salary monies. Our two most senior administrators have both stated clearly that they find this condition entirely reasonable.

Q. If the administration wants the faculty to cost share, and thinks the conditions faculty put on cost sharing are reasonable, then the question comes up again -- why did the administration reject the faculty's offer to cost share?

A. Probably as a heavy-handed bargaining tactic to get the faculty to accept the other changes not related to health care. The administration maintains that the Board of Trustees will not accept the conditions without more concessions. At this point, faculty have not yet received contracts for the 2009-2010 academic year. The administration will likely try to use the threat of having no contracts to put pressure on faculty to accept other changes the administration or trustees want.

Q. Did the faculty insist on receiving a salary increase that matched the cost of living increase this year?

A. Absolutely not. Faculty are getting no raise this year. Faculty understand the financial situation. At meetings of the General Faculty, no one ever raised any objections to having no raise this year. The continuing concern of faculty is over our ability to attract and retain strong faculty colleagues into the future.

Q. It's been a difficult year with layoffs and budget cuts. Who knows what else will happen in the fall? Shouldn't the faculty just accept whatever the administration wants?

A. It has been an extremely difficult year. What the faculty would like to see happen is for our university community to work together in these very difficult times. The FWC has encouraged the President to be more transparent in how difficult decisions are made and to allow for much broader representation in discussions and decision making. (See page 3 of this newsletter.)

Q. The faculty seem to have more protection than the staff with regard to safeguarding existing benefits. Is there a way for the staff to have similar protections?

A. Organizing as a collective bargaining unit (a union) would be something that the staff might want to explore. For legal reasons having to do with Fairfield's status as a private university, the faculty do not currently have the option to unionize unless the administration agrees to bargain collectively with faculty employees (though depending on what develops in the coming months, that may change). But there is nothing impeding the staff from organizing, and doing so would assure the staff would receive clear contracts, and could help to protect the staff from some of what has happened recently, such as the laying off of employees with no transparency to the process, unilaterally changing benefits, and so on.

MEMORANDUM
Faculty Welfare Committee
Fairfield University

**ACADEMIC
FREEDOM
FOR A
FREE SOCIETY**

TO: President Jeffrey von Arx, S.J., and
Executive Vice President William Weitzer

FROM: Faculty Welfare Committee Steering Committee*

DATE: July 15, 2009

RE: FWC response to recent layoffs

In its mandate to promote faculty welfare, broadly defined, the Faculty Welfare Committee must consider the broad university community of which we are a part. We are concerned about the recent layoffs of a number of our hardworking, and in some cases, long-serving coworkers. Although the layoffs may have been necessary and appropriate, that is not the perception left by the lack of transparency in the way they were handled. We write now both to express our concern about these layoffs and to suggest an approach to discussions of future cuts.

Obviously the employment terms and records of particular individuals are confidential. But, presumably, overarching principles determined the ways that different divisions were targeted for cuts and the criteria used to identify personnel to be cut in the targeted areas. Because those principles have not been shared, members of the university community are left to wonder about the rationale. They can see only that, while some cuts were clearly based on seniority, others clearly were not. That leaves the situation rife for speculation about whether some staff members who were laid off were unfairly targeted for personal reasons. That sort of speculation, even if it's baseless, undermines a healthy campus community. Greater transparency regarding the principles or criteria used to make the decisions would protect the privacy of individuals, while enabling those who are still employed to understand why these particular positions were cut.

Whether the cuts were necessary is another issue. Informational presentations and emails can and did make the scope of the problem clear, but they did not provide enough information to persuade the campus community that all options other than layoffs had been exhausted. There was no call for voluntary reduction of hours, retirements or job restructurings. There was no announced incentive plan to encourage retirements. All of these are fairly common practices used by other institutions facing similar dilemmas, introduced to allow employees to make meaningful contributions to solving institutional problems.

Because further cuts and/or layoffs may be needed, we urge the administration to increase the transparency of the process by which these decisions are made. One way to do this, inspired by the actions of Elsa Nuñez, President of Eastern Connecticut State University (<http://www.easternct.edu/budgetcommittee/>) would be to set up an ad hoc university-wide committee with representatives not just from all divisions, but from all levels of employees. Without usurping the role of the Budget Committee, this committee could focus on ways of cutting costs across campus. Then if draconian cuts become necessary, employees can more fully participate in decisions about what kinds of sacrifices our community needs to make. In this way, suspicion is replaced with a sense of shared responsibility, and the variety of perspectives may lead to more creative cost-saving ideas. There has been much rhetoric in the past year about shared governance; because cost-saving decisions affect all employees, they should be made in the context of the broadest model of shared governance.

We would be happy to discuss these ideas with you further and to participate with the rest of the university community in considering how best to continue to fulfill our educational mission in the current financial climate.

* Bill Abbott (History), Sara Brill (Philosophy), Dave Crawford (Anthropology), Joe Dennin (Mathematics), Rick DeWitt (Philosophy), Bob Epstein (English), Kathy Nantz (Economics), Marcie Patton (Politics), Susan Rakowitz (Psychology), Cheryl Tromley (Management), Kate Wheeler (Nursing)

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.*



Faculty Welfare Committee/
AAUP Executive Committee:
Kathy Nantz (President),
Joe Dennin (Vice-President),
Bill Abbott (Secretary),
Rick DeWitt (Treasurer),
at-large members Bob Epstein,
Marcie Patton, Cheryl Tromley,
Kate Wheeler. Membership
Director, Betsy Bowen

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

**[Unions] are indeed *a mouthpiece*
*for the struggle for social justice***

Pope John Paul II in Laborem Exercens

Faculty Welfare Committee
Kathryn Nantz, President
Department of Economics
Fairfield University
1073 North Benson Road
Fairfield, CT 06430