

# Faculty Welfare Committee

## Excellence in Education



### **From the FWC/AAUP President:**

Welcome to an October edition of the Faculty Welfare Committee/AAUP newsletter. For this edition, the FWC Executive Committee decided to publish what we hope will be a “primer” on faculty governance - for anyone new to Fairfield and for anyone who might need a little refresher. On page 2, we have basic information on the documents that define and support our governance processes and, on page 3, we have re-run and expanded on the information from one of our popular Brown Bag Lunch presentations: “You and Your Contract”.

As you know, there are significant proposals coming to the faculty from the Academic Council. The Faculty Salary Committee and the Academic Council Subcommittee on Governance have prepared proposals, and the Council is forwarding these on to the General Faculty for their consideration. In some cases, the Council has approved the recommendations of the committees and in other cases not; however, the issues are of such significance that the General Faculty will have the opportunity for debate and vote.

The FWC Executive Committee members continue to work together toward common goals, and to provide resources for faculty members who are trying to better understand proposals and issues. We will be supporting and facilitating an informational meeting hosted by the Faculty Salary Committee (see note below) and hope to see you there. Our role in this process is to help all faculty members to feel like they can cast informed votes on these important matters.

Kathryn Nantz  
Faculty Welfare Committee/AAUP President

### **IN THIS ISSUE:**

Page 1

- ✓ From the President
- ✓ FSC Information Session

Page 2

- ✓ Our Governance Documents

Page 3

- ✓ You and Your Contract

Page 4

- ✓ From the Archives

All faculty are encouraged to attend an **INFORMATIONAL MEETING** hosted by the **FACULTY SALARY COMMITTEE** on their proposals that will be considered at the next faculty meeting: **FSC INFO SESSION, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 16, 3:30 to 5:00 in CNS 1**



The Faculty Welfare Committee will provide a moderator and snacks. Hope to see you there!

## The Documents that Support and Define our Governance Processes

In case you're new, or have been living under a rock, or otherwise missed it, discussions about governance have been taking place at Fairfield. We expect that proposals from our Academic Council subcommittee on governance will be discussed, debated and voted on at a General Faculty meeting this fall. All along, the conversation has centered on "shared governance" and so it is essential that all members of our shared governance community have a clear understanding (1) of good models of shared governance and, especially as we consider amending our governance documents, (2) of exactly what documents constitute our governance documents. For (1) we refer you to the AAUP's Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities at [www.aaup.org/AAUP/pubsres/policydocs/contents/governancestatement.htm](http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/pubsres/policydocs/contents/governancestatement.htm). This statement was jointly formulated by the AAUP, the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, and the American Council on Education and is the authoritative standard for appropriately shared responsibility and cooperative action among the components of an academic institution. For (2), we list and describe here the key governance documents at Fairfield. All the documents mentioned here are available on the General Faculty Secretary's website at [www.faculty.fairfield.edu/gfs](http://www.faculty.fairfield.edu/gfs).

### The Faculty Handbook, (10th edition):

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, structure and function of the Academic Council, descriptions of standing committees, etc.); faculty policies (e.g., faculty obligations, policies on appointments, rank and tenure, benefits, leaves, etc.); and a few other policies (services provided to faculty, procedures for due process, etc.). Either the Faculty or the Board of Trustees may propose amendments to the Handbook. Proposed amendments must be accepted by both the General Faculty (two-thirds vote) and by the Board of Trustees. What's the legal status of our Faculty Handbook as an enforceable contract? That's a good question, since enforceability differs from state to state. The best answer the FWC can provide is to refer you to a manual put out by the AAUP. (The manual, as well as everything else provided by National AAUP, is funded by the portion of your FWC/AAUP dues that we send to National. Thanks!) As luck would have it, the AAUP is no longer charging for the manual and you may download a free copy of "Faculty Handbooks as Enforceable Contracts: A State Guide" at [www.aaup.org/AAUP/newsroom/Highlights/handbook.htm](http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/newsroom/Highlights/handbook.htm)

### The Journal of Record:

The Journal of Record is a collection of policies that have been mutually approved by the faculty (either the Academic Council or the General Faculty) and by the administration and is maintained, according to the Faculty Handbook, by the Secretary of the General Faculty. New items are added to the Journal, or current items are revised, when a proposed policy is considered by the Academic Council (usually the policy is sent to the AC from a standing Handbook committee). If the Academic Council votes to approve the policy, it is sent to the administration.

If approved by the administration, it becomes policy and is entered into the Journal. 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 faculty, it then goes on for administrative approval before being entered 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. These documents contain policies particular to the school, for example, selection of department chairs, duties of chairs, duties of program directors, etc. The process for changing a governance document are included in each governance document and must be mutually approved by a vote of the faculty of a school and the Board of Trustees.



Jackie Robinson and Branch Rickey shake hands after Robinson signed his first major league baseball contract in 1945.

## **You and Your Contract:**

The upcoming proposals from the Faculty Salary Committee (FSC) include suggested amendments to the Fiscal Policies section of the *Faculty Handbook*, and also the Benefit Plans Overview - both are parts of your faculty contract. As we prepare to debate and decide the proposals from the FSC at the next General Faculty meeting, this article is intended to help define and clarify the structure of faculty contracts at Fairfield. **Terms to know:** Contract Letter, Memo of Understanding (MOU), Benefit Plans Overview (BPO), *Faculty Handbook*, and - new this year - Contract Extension Letter.

In some ways, the contract faculty receive at Fairfield is typical. For example, it specifies rank, salary, benefits, etc., just like contracts at other universities. But in other ways our contract is unusual. Our contract information is spread over three contractual documents that are linked in ways that may not be easy to understand. Here we will address common questions about our faculty contracts.

### ***Q. What exactly is my contract?***

A. First, the following language from the *Faculty Handbook* (II.A.5) specifies 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 requirements, your contract consists of the following documents:

- (1) The Contract Letter. This is the one-page document faculty sign each year, usually by June 30. (Last year was an anomaly. Since we did not reach agreement on a new Memo of Understanding, first-year faculty received a contract (which was reviewed by the FSC) and continuing faculty received a Contract Extension Letter.)
- (2) The Memo of Understanding (MOU). This is the multiple-page

document worked out through collegial discussions by the FSC and an Administrative Committee, and subject to approval by the General Faculty, Finance Committee, and ultimately the Board of Trustees.

- (3) The Benefit Plans Overview (BPO). This is a document providing an overview of your benefits. You should receive a copy when you first come to Fairfield.
- (4) The *Faculty Handbook* contains Faculty Duties (II.C) and many other terms and conditions of employment.

### ***Q. How are these documents connected?***

A. The Contract Letter references the *Faculty Handbook*. Also, the Contract Letter is linked to the MOU through the following clause (from the Contract Letter):

**“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 Benefit Plans Overview is an appendix to the MOU. This is defined in the following clause (from the MOU):

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

### ***Q. How are the documents arrived at? How do the documents get changed?***

- (1) The Contract Letter should be reviewed and approved by the FSC each year. This year, the FSC did review the Contract Letter for first-year faculty, and the FWC paid for legal review of the Contract Extension Letter. (Thank you, dues-paying FWC members!)
- (2) The MOU (including the BPO as an appendix) is arrived at through collegial discussions between the FSC and an administrative committee. Then it must be approved by the General Faculty in a majority rule vote. If the FSC and the administration cannot reach agreement then, according to the MOU,

**“the Faculty Salary Committee and the Administration will hold further meetings with the intention of resolving the objections. In the absence of a resolution, the Annual Budget adopted by the Board of Trustees shall be final regarding faculty compensation for the ensuing academic year.”**

- (3) Changes to the *Faculty Handbook* must be mutually approved by the General Faculty, through a vote at a regularly scheduled faculty meeting, and the Board of Trustees.

### ***Q. Where are my contractual obligations defined?***

A. The Contract Letter specifies a few obligations, such as preparation of examination papers, customary conferences with students, and attendance at Faculty and Departmental meetings. Other obligations and terms of employment are listed in the *Faculty Handbook* (II.C) under Faculty Duties, for example the teaching load, criteria for tenure, criteria for promotion, requirements for sabbaticals and pre-tenure leaves, office space, etc.

### ***Q. Does everyone have the same contract?***

Basically, yes. Everyone receives essentially the same Contract Letter, and the same Memo of Understanding and Benefits Plans Overview apply to all faculty. Not everyone's contract letter contains the same salary, of course, and this has gotten a bit more complicated with the advent of performance-based compensation. Also, some faculty members have additional duties, such as chairing a department, for which additional compensation is provided.

### ***Q. Where's this “same or better” language I've heard people talk about?***

A. There is a noteworthy additional clause in the Contract Letter for tenured faculty, which states that “This contract shall be renewed upon the same or better terms and conditions...”

### ***Q. Where can I read actual copies of these documents?***

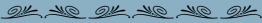
A. Every document referenced here is available on the Faculty Welfare Committee website:  
[www.faculty.fairfield.edu/fwc](http://www.faculty.fairfield.edu/fwc)

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


**An excerpt from the Journal of Record about the Journal of Record. This entry was first approved by the Academic Council on March 18, 1985 and amended on April 25, 1988.**

Journal of Record:

Committees shall report recommendations to the Secretary of the General Faculty, the appropriate administrator, and the Academic Council. The Council Executive may decide to invite the Chair of the reporting committee to attend the first reading of the proposal. If the Chair is not invited to the first reading of the proposal, the Council itself may decide to invite the Chair to the second reading, at which second reading the Council shall discuss and vote upon the issue. The Academic Council will then forward the recommendation, if approved and/or revised, to the appropriate administrator, who shall respond within fifteen (15) calendar days to the Academic Council with his approval or objection to the recommendation. The disposition of the matter shall be reported to the General Faculty through the minutes of the Academic Council. The General Faculty, as in all matters, may address the recommendation in the General Faculty Meeting which immediately follows the Academic Council decision, and may overrule the Council. Once approved the recommendation will be entered in a Journal of Record by the Secretary of the Faculty.

  
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. Newsletter Editor: Irene Mulvey. Membership Director: Betsy Bowen.

**Faculty Welfare Committee/AAUP**

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