

Faculty Welfare Committee/AAUP

Excellence in Education

CONTRACT DISCUSSIONS CONTINUE

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Discussions continue between the Faculty Salary Committee and the administration on our contractual documents. As discussed in our two most recent FWC/AAUP newsletters and at our most recent General Faculty meeting, the administration initiated -- for the very first time on March 20 -- a discussion of their ongoing contractual commitment to the 95th percentile. In this newsletter, we will explain exactly what the commitment to the 95th percentile entails and why it is of vital importance to Fairfield University faculty.

FWC/AAUP AD HOC ACTION COMMITTEE:

At its last meeting on April 4, the FWC/AAUP Executive Committee voted to form an ad hoc Action Committee to respond, as needed, to the contract issues currently under discussion. Any FWC member interested in this committee is invited to an organizational meeting on Wednesday, April 11 at 4:00 PM in DMH 230. If you are interested in the Action Committee but unable to make the organizational meeting, contact any member of the FWC Executive Committee, whose membership is listed on the back page.

ATTORNEY UPDATE / PLEDGE TO THE FWC/AAUP LITIGATION FUND:

Members of the Faculty Salary Committee and members of the Faculty Welfare Committee/AAUP Executive Committee continue to be in contact with our attorney. Funding for these consultations have been authorized by the FWC/AAUP membership. All members of the General Faculty benefit from these consultations which are funded by the dues-paying members of the FWC/AAUP.

In the event that more robust legal action is required, the FWC/AAUP Executive Committee has authorized the creation of an **FWC/AAUP Litigation Fund**. Any member of the faculty may pledge any amount to the Litigation Fund. Do not send money at this time, but email FWC/AAUP President Rick DeWitt at rdewitt@fairfield.edu with your pledge in any amount. We hope that we don't have to collect on these pledges, but the FWC/AAUP Executive Committee thinks it is prudent to be prepared for all possibilities.

*Awarded the Assembly of State Conferences Outstanding
Newsletter Award 2009, 2010 and 2011*

THE 95th PERCENTILE EXPLAINED

Every year at the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), the Committee on the Economic Status of the Profession, in collaboration with the AAUP's Research Department, collects data on faculty salaries and compensation from institutions all over the country (over 2700 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/AAUP, 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 the National AAUP to fund this and other important activities. So each and every member of the FWC, our AAUP chapter, can take partial credit for helping to produce this report.

One table in the report provides percentiles for distribution of average faculty salary and average faculty compensation by rank. **Years ago, our administration and Board of Trustees made a firm 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.** This commitment has been in our contract since 1994.

Suffice it to say that in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Fairfield faculty members worked extremely hard and, after prolonged debate, reached agreement with the administration and Board on this commitment to the 95th percentile -- an external, mutually-agreed upon benchmark that is, arguably, the standard of our profession.

The commitment to the 95th percentile took on much, *much* greater significance in 2009. At that time, faculty agreed to

begin cost-sharing for health benefits. Why did faculty agree to cost-share on health benefits? Especially when health benefits at no cost to the faculty member were guaranteed in the *Faculty Handbook*? Many faculty members argued that we were embarking on a new era of collaboration based on trust with our administration and Board. Despite the threat of unilateral action by the Board to impose these changes, faculty still acted in good faith, expecting promises to be kept, and agreed to remove no-cost health benefits as well as the language on retirement benefits from the *Handbook*. All was premised on the promise of an ongoing contractual commitment to the 95th percentile. We all understood that overall compensation is protected by the commitment to the 95th percentile. Every single argument in favor of these proposals, which moved benefits from the *Handbook* to the Benefits Plan Overview, was followed by a reminder -- usually from the administration -- of their commitment to the 95th percentile and how it would protect faculty compensation going forward. Essentially, faculty agreed to give up something very valuable (no cost health insurance and a guaranteed 10% contribution to retirement) only because our senior administrators assured us over and over again that the commitment to the 95th percentile would be kept.

The administration's current position is concern about the way the 95th percentile is implemented. This commitment leaves them with the potential for an expense they did not budget for in April when the 95th percentile figures are published and we see whether or not they are meeting the commitment for the current year. But this rings somewhat hollow when you consider how often we have fallen below the 95th percentile and by how much. The very first time we went below was 2001-02 when Professors were below by \$26; each Professor received \$26 in the 4/30/2002 paycheck. The administration readily agreed to the following language which appeared for the first time in the next (2002-03) MOU: "If the current

average compensation in any rank is below the corresponding 95th percentile figure, then in addition to the increase described in section B above, each faculty member in that rank will receive the difference between Fairfield's average compensation for that rank and the corresponding 95th percentile figure."

Academic year 2006-07 was the *only* time that meeting the commitment resulted in a large expense in April. Following that year, actions initiated by the administration resulted in a further strengthening of the commitment to also raise the minimum starting salaries for each rank, if the rank went below 95th. An addendum to the 2007-08 MOU, approved in September 2007 had language to implement this strengthened commitment.

In fact, the commitment rarely results in any expense at all in April as we are almost always above the agreed-upon benchmark (see this year's numbers on page 3). Our agreement is not to a benchmark, but our ongoing contractual agreement, over many years, is to *this* benchmark, the AAUP's 95th percentile. This benchmark is of great importance to faculty, not least of all because of the decisions faculty made based on the administration's unwavering promise that this commitment is "steadfast". Unless the administration intends to lower compensation drastically, there is no reason to abandon this commitment.

A final note: our *Handbook* mandates that collegial discussions "with the shared goal of reaching agreement on a Memo of Understanding" begin by October 1 of each year. However the administration and FSC did not begin discussing the new MOU until late February, and the administration brought up changing item F (on the 95th percentile) in the MOU for the very first time on March 20 in a joint meeting. It is unrealistic at best and borders on bad faith bargaining to expect substantive discussions to result in agreed-upon changes to one of our most important contractual provisions when the topic was only first broached during a joint meeting on March 20.

DIG INTO HISTORY:

Interested in the history of the Faculty Welfare Committee/AAUP chapter? Check out this website maintained by Professor of English Emerita and *chapter leader Emerita* of the FWC/AAUP. Public Writing by Mariann Reagan on the formation of our chapter and a faculty finding its voice at http://plotlineonline.com/public_writing_facwelfare.html

DIG INTO DATA:

The AAUP has released its annual faculty salary survey. *A Very Slow Recovery: The Annual Report on the Economic Status of the Profession, 2011-2012* is at <http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/newsroom/2012PRs/salariesurvey.htm>

The Chronicle of Higher Education in its online feature, *Academe Today*, has a special report on the AAUP salary survey, dissecting the AAUP data even further. Interactive tables and much more at <http://chronicle.com/article/Interactive-Table-Average/131433/>

DIG THE FWC/AAUP AND SUPPORT THE FSC:

In response to several requests from members, the FWC/AAUP Executive Committee ordered new chapter buttons and will be sending one to each member. Wear yours proudly to support the members of the Faculty Salary Committee in their work on our behalf.

From the FWC/AAUP

Steering Committee:

The General Faculty and the Faculty Welfare Committee/AAUP understand the economic conditions we face; we understand that the economy has changed. It is for this reason that the AAUP's 95th percentile as a benchmark makes the most sense since it is an external benchmark of a group of nearly 400 other IIA schools all facing the same economic conditions.

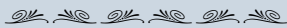
Because the pool of comparison schools is so large, catastrophic economic conditions at one school will not affect the overall averages as much as it would in a small sample. This benchmark represents the standard of our profession.

We stand ready to continue to work together for the good of the institution with the shared goal of promoting our core academic mission which must include attracting and retaining high quality faculty members who are able to live and work in southern Connecticut.

2011-12	AAUP 95th percentile	Fairfield average compensation	Difference
Professor	\$150,600	\$155,900	\$5,300
Associate Professor	\$118,053	\$122,800	\$4,747
Assistant Professor	\$97,011	\$104,900	\$7,889

2010-11	AAUP 95th percentile	Fairfield average compensation	Difference
Professor	\$151,983	\$152,400	\$417
Associate Professor	\$118,495	\$125,700	\$7205
Assistant Professor	\$100,314	\$102,500	\$2186

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



From the Archives:

- Item E. from the current (2011-12) Memo of Understanding:
The Administration and the Board of Trustees are firmly committed to maintaining the average of the compensation of Assistant, Associate and Professor ranks at the 95th percentile for Class IIA institutions in the national AAUP ratings, subject to financial limitations. If the current average compensation in any rank is below the corresponding 95th percentile figure, then in addition to the increase described in section C above, each faculty member in that rank will receive the amount of the difference between Fairfield's average compensation for that rank and the corresponding 95th percentile figure. In addition, that difference plus the standard merit percent of that difference will be added to the next year's minimum starting salary for that rank.
- From the current (2011-12) individual contract letter:
[Fifth:] Salaries for the 2011-12 contract year have been determined according to the budget approved by the Board of Trustees. The terms referred to in the Memo of Understanding, on Faculty Salary and Benefits, 2011-2012, will apply from September 1, 2011 and continue until superseded by a subsequent Memo of Understanding
- [Seventh:] This contract shall be renewed upon the same or better terms and conditions

Faculty Welfare Committee/AAUP Executive Committee: Rick DeWitt (President), Joe Dennin (Vice President), Bill Abbott (Secretary), Rona Preli (Treasurer), At-large members Jocelyn Boryczka, Susan Rakowitz, Deb Strauss, Kate Wheeler. Membership Director: Vacant. Newsletter Editor: Irene Mulvey.

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