

# Faculty Welfare Committee/AAUP Excellence in Education

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## From the FWC/AAUP President:

Dear Colleagues:

As we plan for the end of the semester and a much-needed break, I would like to thank all of our FWC members for their attention and response to the troubling issues of governance and compensation that we faced this semester. I am especially grateful to the elected leadership of the FWC who have worked extremely hard this semester in order to understand and consider responses to the complicated discussions taking place with regard to our compensation. We are fortunate to have a strong faculty body and an amazing group of faculty leaders representing us on the Faculty Salary Committee, the Trigger Committee and the Health Care Committee. Their tireless work on our behalf is extraordinary.

Amid the flurry of emails, and letters mailed to our homes last month, there was a memo from President von Arx that was sent by email to all members of the General Faculty. Our Faculty Salary Committee responded to portions of this memo at the GF meeting on November 21, but were concerned that there were additional items that required clarification. They drafted a response but were concerned that sending it to faculty via facultyannounce would appear to be an escalation of an already difficult situation. They asked if we would print their response in a newsletter and we are happy to oblige. If you have any questions, please contact any one of your colleagues on the FSC.

We will hope for productive and transparent discussions in the coming semester and will continue to prepare to respond to and support the efforts of our colleagues on the Faculty Salary Committee. Please get involved with our Action Committee as our strength depends on our solidarity.

Have a happy, healthy holiday season. Rest and enjoy family and friends.

Rona Preli

FWC/AAUP President

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## **FWC/AAUP Action Committee Update**

We have re-activated our FWC/AAUP Action Committee. Jocelyn Boryczka and Sonya Huber will co-chair.

At our emergency FWC meeting on November 21, we collected names of members interested in getting Action Committee updates by email. If you would like to have your name added to the list, contact Jocelyn or Sonya. At this moment, there are no actions planned because the FSC informed us of a somewhat more productive meeting on 11/24, with some explanations and more data. We remain on alert and will keep Action Committee members informed by email.

# Faculty Welfare Committee/AAUP NEWS AND EVENTS

## AAUP Summer Institute Hofstra University July 17-20

The Summer Institute, co-sponsored by the American Association of University Professors and the AAUP Collective Bargaining Congress, is the premier training program for faculty advocates. Irene Mulvey co-presented a workshop on Shared Governance and one on Chapter Development. Prof. Mulvey and FWC President Rona Preli attended workshops on Investigating Institutional Finances, Press Relations and Messaging, Direct Action Training, and more. The full program is at [www.aaup.org/event/2014-summer-institute](http://www.aaup.org/event/2014-summer-institute). Next year, the SI 2015 is being planned for Denver. Funding is available for first-time attendees.



## AAUP CBC Webinar Wednesday, December 3 2:00-3:30 PM

Members of the Faculty Salary Committee are planning to participate in National AAUP's webinar on health care as it relates to contracts and negotiations. Presenters are Rudy Fichtenbaum, AAUP President and Professor of Economics, and Howard Bunsis, AAUP-CBC Chair and Professor of Accounting.



## Tobacco Affidavit DUE to HR before December 5:

Sign the tobacco usage affidavit and send it to HR before December 5 in order to avoid the tobacco user surcharge of \$50/month. Tobacco users can avoid the surcharge by completing Aetna's online Quit Smoking Program by 12/31/14. If you want help finding the online Quit Smoking program, contact HR or the FSC



Members who would like a new chapter button or a chapter t-shirt, contact Membership Director Stephanie Storms.



AAUP President Rudy Fichtenbaum (center) and AAUP-CBC Chair Howard Bunsis (right) worked with Irene Mulvey during a break at the AAUP Council meeting in DC on November 16.



## AAUP Centennial Declaration:

Nearly 100 years ago, the AAUP issued the 1915 *Declaration of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure*, and these AAUP principles helped build the largest and most successful system of higher education in the world. The Centennial Declaration reaffirms our commitment to higher education as a common good, and all are invited to sign on at: [aaupdeclaration.org/](http://aaupdeclaration.org/)

**MEMORANDUM**  
**Faculty Salary Committee**  
**Fairfield University**

**TO:** All members of the General Faculty  
**FROM:** Faculty Salary Committee  
**DATE:** December 1, 2014  
**RE:** The President's memo on Health Insurance Rates for 2015

The Faculty Salary Committee (FSC), along with our newly constituted Trigger Committee and Health Care Committee (HCC), has been working on understanding the proposed health insurance premiums for 2015. The rates were sent electronically to the FSC Chair after 6 PM on Friday, October 17, data and assumptions underlying the rates were sent electronically to the FSC on October 24, and the Open Enrollment period began on November 10.

In order to carry out, as best we could, the charge to the Trigger Committee to report on proposed cost-shares before the rates take effect, the FSC sent a memo to the General Faculty dated November 11, and we reported to the General Faculty at the GF meeting on November 21. Between the time of our memo and our report at the GF meeting, President von Arx, S.J., sent a memo dated November 20 to all Members of the GF which addressed the FSC's memo in advance of the FSC's report at the GF meeting. The President's memo of 11/20 was preceded by two additional memos, one from President von Arx and one from Senior Vice President Mark Reed, which went to all employees both by electronic mail and by US Mail, but it is the third memo, addressed only to members of the General Faculty, to which we respond here. (For full text of this memo, see insert.)

Note that we understand that the President is entitled to address the faculty on any matter at any time, but we consider his memo ill-timed, in that it put the President between the GF and a report from its elected representatives, and ill-advised, in that it bypassed our governance structures. We are in a bind as to how to respond to the points raised by the President. Normally, these discussions would take place in the collegial discussions mandated by our Memo of Understanding, but there are a number of matters addressed by the President that require clarification. Since his memo on these important matters went to all members of the GF, we respond here. It is our hope that all further discussions will take place in the context of our collegial discussions.

In paragraphs 2 and 3, the President lists items in the 2013-14 MOU/BPO (more than doubling of employee cost-share in exchange for a carefully-calculated offset into the base) but we find his description misleading in its incompleteness. A more complete description is in the November 19 FWC/AAUP newsletter in the form of a timeline drafted by members of the FSC.

The President writes, in paragraph 4, that "It was understood that in setting the rates for 2015, there would be two components to the rate increase - the annual cost escalation, and the remaining amount needed to achieve the agreed-upon 80-20% cost-share distribution." The FSC does not agree that this was understood. In fact, it is our unequivocal position that this was *not understood*. Whenever the administration told the FSC that the faculty weren't paying the full 20%, our response was that we were where we should be with regard to the carefully-calculated offset. Rates in 2014 were set by the administration to be consistent with the carefully-calculated offset. If that didn't bring us to 20%, then there should have been an additional offset into the base. Without an additional offset into the base, it is not appropriate to charge faculty with "the remaining amount needed to achieve the agreed-upon 80- 20% cost-share distribution". Later on, the President notes that "had the administration implemented the agreed-upon 80-20% cost-share distribution in 2014, rates for 2015 would only be increasing by the annual cost growth". [Continued on page 3, Memo from the FSC]

**The Faculty Welfare Committee/AAUP at Fairfield University is an *ad hoc* committee of the General Faculty and an affiliate of the national AAUP. About 70% of the full-time faculty at Fairfield are members of the FWC. If you aren't a member, please consider joining. The FWC promotes 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. To join, contact any member of the Executive Committee.**

[Continued from page 3, MEMO from the FSC] But, it is our contention, backed up by meeting notes and other documents, that the cost-shares were not brought to 20% in 2014 precisely because the administration set them to be consistent with the carefully-calculated offset. If the offset didn't bring us to 20%, an additional offset is needed.

In May 2013, the General Faculty *voted* to more than double cost-shares, based on a recommendation from the FSC. The FSC's recommendation was based on data and assumptions provided to the FSC by the administration in spring 2013. Either the data was wrong (!) or the assumptions were flawed, or both, but in either case, the faculty should not be held financially responsible. Citing "the agreed upon 80-20% cost-share distribution" as if it was not contingent on a carefully-calculated offset is revisionist history.

The President writes that "[r]ates for 2015 have been determined through a robust and complex algorithm", but it is precisely this algorithm that we need to understand completely.

The President writes that he is "concerned that the FSC and other faculty groups are conveying the impression that the determination of premium rates is subject to agreement, formally or informally, between the faculty and the administration" and that "the determination of rates ultimately rests with the administration." This is historically inaccurate. We have only had cost-sharing of premiums for 5 years and for 3 of those 5 years, faculty and administration agreed on a cap to the employee costs so that rates were, in effect, mutually approved.

Our final comment is to note that the President's assertion that health benefits cost Fairfield University "considerably more" than is shown by "all benchmark data available for comparable institutions" has not been shared with the FSC this year, and we request the concrete data underlying this assumption.

**FWC/AAUP Executive Committee: Rona Preli, President; Jocelyn Boryczka, Vice-President; Bill Abbott, Secretary; Irene Mulvey, Treasurer; At-large members Betsy Bowen, Sonya Huber, Anna Lawrence, Deb Strauss. Membership Director: Stephanie Storms.**

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