

# Faculty Welfare Committee/AAUP Excellence in Education

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Outstanding Chapter Newsletter Award  
in 2008, 2009, 2010 & 2012



"It's snowing still," said Eeyore gloomily.  
"So it is."  
"And freezing."  
"Is it?"  
"Yes," said Eeyore. "However," he said, brightening up a little, "we haven't had an earthquake lately."

## From the FWC/AAUP President:

Dear Colleagues:

I would like to begin by thanking all of our colleagues working on all of the myriad committees, task forces and other venues in which we carry out the work of the University. Thank you for the many thankless tasks that you all do on a daily basis.

We have devoted space in this issue to an update from our colleagues on the new Health Care Committee and we are grateful that they took time from their other duties to give us their insights into the future of health insurance at Fairfield. The Faculty Salary Committee also offered an update to the faculty in this issue. They had two items from their postponed informational presentation that they thought would be appropriate for these pages.

I am grateful for the support of the phenomenal FWC Executive Committee, and pleased to share with you the exciting things we have under consideration for later this semester. We've arranged for a member of the National AAUP staff to provide us with some on-site Direct Action Training. And, we have plans to work with our members to figure out how to move forward now that the National Labor Relations Board has issued a ruling that may make it easier for faculty at private institutions to unionize. We are forming a "George Brigade" to provide information to members and to get your input. If you'd like to learn more about the "George Brigade", please contact me.

I wish you a pleasant snow-free spring and a successful rest of the semester.

Rona Preli  
FWC/AAUP President

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The FWC Action Committee remains on high alert. To get on the Action Committee email list, contact co-chairs Jocelyn Boryczka and Sonya Huber. Members who would like a chapter button or a chapter t-shirt, contact Membership Director Stephanie Storms.

# Faculty Welfare Committee/AAUP NEWS AND EVENTS

## RECENT FWC/ AAUP EVENTS:

### FWC Wine & Cheese February 5

Thanks to all who were able to attend our second Wine & Cheese event to get to know our adjunct faculty colleagues. The FWC Constitution was recently revised to allow adjunct faculty members to join the FWC, and we have created an FWC Subcommittee on Contingency and the Profession. Get the word out to adjunct faculty members wishing to join the chapter to contact any member of the Executive Committee. Full-time faculty wishing to serve on the new subcommittee should contact FWC President Rona Preli.



### CT State Conference AAUP Centennial February 14

#### Wesleyan University

*Celebrating 100 Years of Activism*  
We had a great cadre of FWC activists at the CT conference's centennial. There were great

presentations and breakout sessions. Our very own Jocelyn Boryczka co-presented a breakout session on *Organizing 101*.



*Happy Birthday, AAUP!*



### FWC Brown Bag Recent NLRB Decision *Pacific Lutheran University* February 20

Our BBL discussion was a great success. Thanks to co-presenters Jocelyn Boryczka and Irene Mulvey, ably assisted by Don Greenberg. Look for more information in an upcoming newsletter.



### National Adjunct Walkout Day #nawd February 25 in BCC

The FWC enthusiastically participated in National Adjunct Walkout Day along with dozens of other AAUP chapters and conferences. Thanks to everyone who personed our table in BCC or otherwise pitched in: Bill Abbott, Betsy Bowen, Dave Crawford, Liz Hohl, Sonya Huber, Anna Lawrence, Irene Mulvey, Kathy Nantz.

## UPCOMING FWC, AAUP AND OTHER FACULTY EVENTS:

### 2015 AAUP Annual Conference on the State of Higher Education Washington, DC June 10-13



### 2015 AAUP Summer Institute University of Denver July 23-26



More information on both events at [aaup.org](http://aaup.org)

## Two Updates from the Faculty Salary Committee

2014-15 FSC: Chris Bernhardt (spring), Bryan Crandall, Joe Dennin (fall), Bob Epstein, Sonya Huber, Irene Mulvey

After last Friday's General Faculty (GF) meeting was cancelled for inclement weather, the FWC/AAUP leadership asked the Faculty Salary Committee (FSC) if we had anything to report to the faculty that would be appropriate to write up for the newsletter. As you know, our scheduled presentation was informational, but there are a couple of stand-alone updates that are appropriate for the newsletter, and we're happy to take them up informally here.



### Denouement on the 2015 health insurance cost-shares.

At the last GF meeting, on November 21, 2014, the FSC reported on the planned imposition of the 2015 health insurance cost-share amounts. As you know, beginning 1/1/14, the faculty agreed to increase our share of health insurance premiums from 10% to 20% in exchange for a carefully-calculated offset into the base of \$1480. The offset was intended to make the cost-share for faculty, on average, increase from 10% to 12%. In Fall 2014, the administration informed us that the 2014 premiums were going to be higher than anticipated. The FSC said higher than expected premiums would require an additional offset into the base. The administration did not insist on faculty paying the higher premiums in 2014, but did point out all year long that faculty "were not at 20%". We always responded that we were paying what we should be paying based on the offset we calculated from their consultant's data, and that higher than anticipated premiums would require an additional offset into the base. As we reported on 11/21/14, beginning 1/1/15, the administration planned to drag us up to the 20%, ignoring the fact that our vote to approve the doubling of cost-shares was in exchange for the carefully-calculated offset.

Now, here's your update:

- Following the 11/21/14 GF meeting, the FSC calculated the amount of the additional offset required to meet the letter and spirit of our agreement made in spring 2013 to more than double our share of premiums to 20%. We were surprised that it turned out to be only \$283/faculty member.
- On 12/12/14, we sent a memo to the administration requesting a one-time payment of \$283/faculty member into the base in the 1/15/15 paycheck. We included our very simple calculations.
- On 1/9/15, the administration responded, acknowledging our efforts in putting together the proposal, but informing us that they would not accept it.



### On the "Faculty Salaries-Historical Data" sent by SVPAA Babington via facultyannounce.

We have been inundated with queries following the 3/17 email from SVPAA Babington on faculty salary data. We intended to briefly address this at our cancelled GF meeting.

On March 4, the FSC sent VP Reed historical data on increase to CPI and increase in salary pool in order to illustrate that a faculty member receiving standard merit has fallen behind CPI by 3.5% since the last time "further merit" was funded in 2008-09. VP Reed appended a column labeled "continuing faculty" and, inexplicably, included years back to 2005-06 and sent the data back to us on March 6. We responded to VP Reed after spring break, on March 17, pointing out that the data he appended is completely irrelevant to the matter of whether or not an individual receiving only standard merit is keeping ahead of the increase in CPI. The chart from SVPAA Babington is the same data that was under discussion in our collegial discussions (now going back to 00-01) except that here the new administration-added column is labeled "Actual Total Salary Increase - This represents all for all faculty ranks the base salary increases, standard merit, additional merit, promotions and all other equity base salary adjustments", and our total "salary pool increase" column is labeled "Merit Pool Increase".

As most faculty who contacted us realized and as we wrote to VP Reed, the data in the administration-added column is not relevant in this context. The administration is taking salary increases for the handful of individuals promoted each year and *averaging* those increases over all faculty. The Journal of Record language on distribution of funds under merit pay refers to the increase in CPI and the increase in salary pool - specifically, further merit is not funded unless the increase in salary pool is over the increase in CPI, and so these are the relevant numbers. Of course, we are always pleased when a colleague gets promoted, but to suggest that the increase an individual receives as a result of promotion has any economic impact at all on a non-promoted colleague is an incorrect conclusion. As we wrote to VP Reed, "Looking at an average when there are outliers conceals the inequity, and here there is vast inequity. It's as if Bill Gates walked into a faculty meeting and so now *on average* we're all millionaires. It's not incorrect, but it's not a meaningful piece of data either." With credit to Prof. Joe Dennin for this analogy, it would have been just as relevant to include the height of our tallest basketball player, and then tell us that - on average - we're all tall.

## Where is Fairfield's Health Insurance Coverage Headed?

By Chris Bernhardt, Walter Hlawitschka, Irene Mulvey and Michael Tucker.

We are the faculty members serving on the Health Care Committee (HCC), a joint faculty-administration body that was created in spring 2014 "to address on an ongoing basis the growth in the total cost of health care, which is of concern to both the faculty and the administration." The HCC's full purpose and charge are in our Journal of Record (policies jointly approved by the faculty and administration that require joint approval to change).

The genesis of the committee was the 2013-14 collegial discussions on faculty salary and benefits between the Faculty Salary Committee (FSC) and the administrative team. The 2013-14 FSC (which included Hlawitschka and Mulvey) spent an enormous amount of time discussing a variety of changes to health insurance proposed by the administration. The FSC's position on changes to health insurance was articulated repeatedly to the administration, and was our rationale for creating the HCC, as reported to the General Faculty (GF) in a 5/23/2014 memo, in advance of the GF meeting at which the HCC was approved by the faculty:

The growth in the total cost of health care is a concern for both the faculty and administration. The FSC has maintained that any changes must be thoughtful and data-driven - "smart" changes that address the growth rate in health care costs, as opposed to simply reducing benefits or shifting costs to the employee. This Health Care Committee creates a collaborative structure in which health care matters can be addressed on an ongoing basis.

While we remain optimistic of this committee's potential to enable us to ensure that any changes made to health insurance are reasonable and appropriate, it has been, in fact, a rocky start. First, we were unable to agree on a chair for the committee. The faculty members suggested that an administrator should chair "since the official data comes through the administration and since, when we set [the HCC] up last year it was in the context of proposals from the administration to slow the growth in health care costs." Eventually, Prof. Mulvey offered to co-chair with an administrator, but we still have no chair. The faculty offered to meet weekly. The administration wrote, "to avoid redundancy, we suggest [the HCC] only operate in those months the FSC is not meeting." Eventually, we agreed that monthly meetings would be appropriate but scheduling has been problematic, perhaps due to the lack of a chair.

There are two substantive matters under discussion and we are grateful to the Faculty Welfare Committee/American Association of University Professors (FWC/AAUP) for providing us with space to provide brief updates to the faculty:

### **(1) Private health care exchanges.**

On January 14, 2015, the administration sent the members of the HCC information related to a Kaiser Family Foundation report, "Examining Private Exchanges in the Employer-Sponsored Insurance Market," in order to initiate a discussion on private exchanges and the private exchange market. The faculty did some preliminary research on this topic and we had a thoughtful discussion with the administration on March 16. It is our understanding that the administration is not proposing and the HCC is certainly not advocating a shift in this direction at this time. (Continued on next page)

## Where is Fairfield's Health Insurance Coverage Headed?

The Kaiser report indicates that, in 2014, only 2% of employers with 200+ employees have adopted a private exchange and, deeply troubling to the faculty, reports that these plans open up employees to greater financial risk. At this point, the faculty on the HCC want you to know that this is a topic we were asked to consider as an agenda item by the administration.

### (2) Administration's proposal to eliminate all but the HSA health insurance options.

On February 25, 2015, the FSC received a compensation proposal from the administration that included eliminating all the PPO options for health insurance (Options I, II & III in the BPO) and keeping only the Health Savings Account (HSA) options (Options IV & V); in essence, forcing all covered employees onto an HSA. The proposal also substantially increased the deductibles on the HSA. The FSC was puzzled, to say the least, that the administration had not initiated discussions with the HCC on a matter that so squarely falls within the parameters of the HCC's charge: "[c]onsider and make recommendations...on ways to make plan participants more economically efficient users of health care; [c]onsider and make recommendations...on ways to reduce the increases to the cost of health care". The FSC forwarded the proposal to us. We have been discussing it among ourselves and we brought it up with the administration in our HCC meeting on March 16.

Our first reaction is that the health plan specified in the *Faculty Handbook* is a PPO and so eliminating the PPO option would be a violation of the *Handbook*. Putting that aside - only for the purposes of discussion - we have a lot of questions and we have asked the administration for data that would allow us to answer them. As a start, we need to compare budgeted amounts and actual costs to the University and the covered employee for all PPO and HSA options. Last year's data indicated that the University was over-charging for the HSA. We need to ascertain if HSAs make covered employees better-informed health care consumers or more economically-burdened consumers. Our preliminary research indicates that the tax-favored nature of an HSA may actually encourage additional spending on health care services. In our 3/16 meeting, the administration said that the HSA is more expensive for the University, but that may include the subsidy the University *currently* gives to employees on the high-deductible HSA. In addition to forcing all covered employees onto the HSA, the administration's 2/25/2015 proposal included a doubling of the (already high) deductible on the HSA (with no increase in the subsidy). The University's subsidy enticed a lot of employees to switch to the HSA. We have no guarantee of the continuation of the subsidy or of its connection to the deductible.

At this point, faculty need to know that elimination of the PPO options is a topic that has been raised by the administration. Perhaps this is a step in the direction of the private exchange model.

It is our understanding from the FSC (faculty membership on the HCC is two members of the FSC and two members of the GF appointed by the FSC) that the administration is "open" to continuing the PPOs. The FSC's position is that the PPOs are in the *Handbook*, and in the current contract which is to be renewed "on the same or better terms" and, moreover, that even if we were convinced there were changes that were in our interest, or changes that were acceptable because they would be in exchange for other types of compensation, the language for such changes would be extremely technical and would require vetting by the attorney paid for by the FWC/AAUP.

Of fundamental importance, the position of the FSC and the HCC is that if our benefits are decreasing in one area, we must be compensated (with the same or better after-tax dollars) in other areas. Discussion on any proposals that will result in a reduction in our health insurance benefit must start here.

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.

**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.

## From the Archives:

Our archivist dug up two related and timely excerpted bits of history.

(1) *An excerpt of a 1996 memo as the work resulting in the current Handbook language on health insurance was reaching its conclusion.*

To: Steve Jakab (HR Director) and Robert Wall (AVP)

From: George Lang

Health coverage deeply effects [sic] us and our families. Inadequate coverage could literally be a matter of life and death. It should not surprise you that our feeling a responsibility to protect that coverage for us and our colleagues runs quite deep. I hope we can arrive at an agreement which will allow us to tell our colleagues that not only is this a good health care plan, but you and future colleagues are assured the continuation of quality health care.

CC to [1996] Health Care Committee: John Orman, Irene Mulvey, Walter Hlawitschka, Michael Tucker, Don Greenberg.

(2) *An excerpt of a 1996 Personnel Brief sent from HR on that same work*

We are very pleased to offer you Fairfield's new Health Care Program. Developed over a two-year period, it allows the University to maximize the value of its health care dollars, while providing you with the following special features:

- coverage for many of the services you have requested in the past;
- benefit levels exceeding those offered by employers within the area;

The Basic Health Care Option includes:

- A consolidated preferred provider organization (PPO), which replaces our existing medical plans.
- prescription drug coverage, and
- Our existing Dental Plan.

The consolidated PPO, known as the Fairfield University Century Preferred Plan, is a managed network plan administered by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Connecticut....Fairfield will pay 100% of the monthly cost for coverage in the Basic Health Care Option, which includes the Century Preferred Plan and our existing Dental Plan, for you and your eligible dependents.

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