

Faculty Welfare Committee/AAUP

Excellence in Education



In case you missed it,
reprinted below is
the latest update from the

↓↓↓↓ Faculty Salary Committee ↓↓↓↓

From the FWC/AAUP President:

Dear Colleagues,

Like all of you, I am buried in my end of the academic year work, but forging ahead and looking forward to the different rhythm of summer. We all know what the workload is like at the end of the semester, and so I know you join me in expressing my heartfelt gratitude to our elected colleagues on the Faculty Salary Committee as they continue their selfless work on behalf of Fairfield University and its faculty, and to our newsletter staff, as they work to keep us all informed.

Rona Preli, FWC/AAUP President

To: Members of the General Faculty

From: Chris Bernhardt, Chair, Faculty Salary Committee

Re: Update

The FSC met with the administration yesterday (Tuesday, May 10). Since this was the last meeting at which we could reach agreement on an MOU/BPO in time to get it to the faculty for a vote, and we still had many questions about the administration's "last, best and final offer," the FSC thought it sensible to propose a one-year interim MOU/BPO that we would recommend that the faculty approve, and that we thought everyone could agree on, and then continue our work on a multi-year deal in September.

Our proposal was that everything stays as is, with the exception of salary. We proposed a 1.5% increase. Less than two hours after the meeting ended, I received an email from Tom Pellegrino that said in part:

As a follow up to our discussion this morning, the administration has reviewed the one year counterproposal put forward today by the faculty. The administration is unable to accept this counterproposal. I recommend and encourage the FSC to submit the administration's last best and final multi year offer to the general faculty for a vote.

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A Few Details from the Consultation with the Attorney:

Faculty members from the Faculty Salary Committee, FWC/AAUP Executive Committee, and Health Care Committee consulted with our attorney again this week, and a full report was passed along to the rest of the FSC and the rest of the FWC EC. The representatives at the meeting want to pass along information about two items that we know is of interest to many faculty members.

On our contractual documents:

- The current 2015-16 Memo of Understanding continues until superseded by a subsequent Memo of Understanding, as stated in the plain language of the individual contract letters we all signed last summer.
- The language in the current 2015-16 Memo of Understanding that references the annual budget adopted by the Board of Trustees refers to the budget under consideration when the current MOU was up for approval, not the budget for 2016-17.
- The plain language of the MOU articulates the process – that the FWC and Administration should reach agreement on compensation terms, and these terms are recommended to the General Faculty and the Budget Committee.
- Our contract is strong, and mutually beneficial since it *requires* that both sides work together in good faith to reach agreement.



On the President's message to the General Faculty Secretary:

- The attorney was asked about this excerpt from the President's email to the GFS, that was sent to all members of the General Faculty:

“It is up to the FSC and the administrative team to reach an agreement through the process of collegial discussions. ... If the parties cannot reach agreement in our collegial discussions, the disagreement is referred to the Board, who are supposed serve as neutral arbiters between us (as they have in the past), and for me to defend or advocate for the administration's position in a public forum before they have done so would be to prejudice the case.”

The attorney described the idea that the Board could be neutral arbiters as “absurd,” “preposterous” and suggested that the administration was “treating the faculty as if they just fell off a turnip truck.”



Update from the FSC Chair [Continued from first page]

As we think the administration must know, the FSC still has questions and concerns about the administration's proposal and we are not willing to bring it for a faculty vote until these questions have been answered. We see no reason to rush. We remain willing to continue discussions leading to a mutually agreeable MOU/BPO.

For your information, V.P. Pellegrino previously emailed the faculty with a link to the administration's earlier "last, best and final" offer.

https://www.fairfield.edu/hostedfiles/documents/Administration_Economic_Proposal_FY17.pdf

Their current "last, best and final" offer is a three year proposal with salary increases of 2% each year. Unfortunately, it has exactly the same healthcare changes as the previous "last, best and final offer."

Among the many concerns the FSC has about these changes are ones of fairness. For example, when shifting money from healthcare to salary, it is appropriate to do this, as in the past, as a fixed amount offset. Why should people earning higher salaries get more of this money than people with lower salaries, when we are all subject to the same cuts to health insurance, and the same higher deductibles? What is the rationale for having an 80/20 cost share for employees, but 70/30 for dependents? Faculty with families will see substantial increases in their premiums. Increasing salary, but also increasing premiums means that some faculty will receive an actual decrease in take-home pay next year. Why should anyone receive a pay cut? If certain faculty will have their pay reduced, why should it be faculty with families at the lowest end of the pay scale?

We are not convinced that this is the "best" offer the administration can provide. The FSC is, as always, willing to work collegially to reach agreement, and we are certain that something less regressive and more family friendly is achievable.

What's on Tap:

- ➔ Friday, May 13: Health Care Committee meets. The HCC has been asked by the FSC to "analyze, evaluate and then make recommendations to the FSC on the proposed healthcare changes."
- ➔ Wednesday, May 18: The FSC Chair has been invited to organize a small group of faculty to meet with the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees because they "are deeply concerned about the lack of resolution [on the Memo of Understanding]."
- ➔ Thursday, May 19: a meeting of the General Faculty is tentatively scheduled.
- ➔ Sunday, May 22: Commencement
- ➔ Tuesday, May 31: End of contract period. Happy Summer!

On the Email from Senior VP Pellegrino to Fairfield University Faculty.

On Thursday, May 12, Senior Vice President for Student Affairs Tom Pellegrino sent an email to “Fairfield University Faculty” with the subject line “Important Information on Administration’s Multi-Year Proposal.” I am concerned about this email for a number of reasons. These are my personal opinions, although I am certain that the other members of the Faculty Salary Committee would agree with me. Since these are my personal opinions, I appreciate that the FWC/AAUP has provided me with the opportunity to write them in the newsletter.

The first reason I am concerned about the email is because the FSC is on record that it is not appropriate for the Chair of the Administration’s team to communicate directly with the members of the General Faculty. In my view, this is not how good faith negotiations are carried out. SVP Pellegrino does not agree and my understanding is that he thinks it is appropriate as long as he sends a “courtesy” email informing me of his plans.

The much more serious concern is that I worry that the examples in the information sent by SVP Pellegrino could be misleading. Health insurance is a complicated and very serious matter. It is essential that information be complete, correct and clear.

There are faculty who do not understand our current insurance. I recently talked to a faculty member who said that s/he wasn’t sleeping at night. S/he couldn’t understand how his/her medical bills were so high. S/he asked me whether s/he was being over-billed. I won’t identify this individual, but s/he is not mathematically naive, yet s/he didn’t understand our current insurance. This is not through lack of effort on his/her part, but because the terms of our insurance are far from straightforward. One mistake is to think that the out-of-pocket maximum is, as the name seems to imply, the maximum that one has to pay out of pocket. This is absolutely not the case with out of network expenses.

I have talked to a lot of people about this, including administrators, and with only one or two exceptions nobody understands how out-of-pocket maximums work. I have mentioned this confusion to members of the administration team several times. I have said that we should not make our insurance even more complicated with the addition of co-insurance when so few people understand what we currently have.

I should point out that I have no training in HR. I have absolutely no qualifications in this area, but I know we have employees who are facing substantial costs that are completely unexpected. I urge everyone to read the information at this link:

<https://insurance.illinois.gov/HealthInsurance/OutOfNetworkBenefitsProceedWithCaution.pdf>

Look especially at Example 2, where the person ends up paying \$37,993 even though the out-of-pocket maximums are \$3,500 (in network) and \$6,000 (out of network).

I do not know why SVP Pellegrino sent the administration’s proposal to the faculty. I have no idea what they are planning to do. But I am certain that we should not rush into an agreement that we don’t fully understand.

Do you understand your current policy? Do you understand co-insurance and why the administration seems to think it is needed? Do you understand why the administration wants employees to pay 30% of premiums for spouses and dependents instead of the current 20%? Do you understand why some faculty should have their take-home pay reduced?

Senior Vice President Pellegrino has chosen to bypass your elected colleagues on the Faculty Salary Committee in order to have a conversation with each member of the faculty. If you would like to have a conversation with SVP Pellegrino about the administration’s proposal, or if you would like to inform him that you think the administration’s time would be better spent trying to reach agreement through our process of collegial discussions with the Faculty Salary Committee, you should email him at tpellegrino@fairfield.edu.

-Chris Bernhardt, Mathematics (2015-16 FSC Chair)

The Faculty Welfare Committee/AAUP at Fairfield University is an ad hoc committee of the General Faculty and an affiliate of the national AAUP. 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. To join, contact any member of the Executive Committee

From the Archives:

A copy of the flyer distributed to guests arriving at Fairfield University Commencement, May 2012

Faculty Welfare Committee/AAUP Fairfield University Excellence in Education

On behalf of the Faculty Welfare Committee/AAUP, Fairfield's chapter of the American Association of University Professors, we congratulate our graduates. We acknowledge you, their families and friends, and all that you have done to bring them to this day. Thank you for sharing your students with us for these last four years. It has been our singular pleasure to get to know and work with the members of the Class of 2012. We wish them continued success.

Many faculty members are wearing red buttons on their robes today. These FWC/AAUP buttons are a show of support for our elected faculty colleagues still working with the administration on faculty contracts for next year. Despite our current differences with the administration, we want you to know that the faculty remain committed to our core academic mission and will continue our efforts to safeguard excellence in education at Fairfield. We hope you support our efforts; we may ask our graduates and their families to support the faculty more visibly as talks continue.

If you would like further information on the situation, FWC/AAUP Newsletters from this semester are available at www.faculty.fairfield.edu/fwc/ under Publications.

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.

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