

# Faculty Welfare Committee/AAUP

## Excellence in Education



### IN THIS ISSUE:

- ✓ Page 1: From the FWC President
- ✓ Page 2: On Our Contractual Documents
- ✓ Page 4: Information from the FWC/AAUP Survey

### From the FWC/AAUP President:

Dear Colleagues,

As you read in the May 13 newsletter, faculty representatives from the Faculty Salary Committee, FWC/AAUP Executive Committee, and Health Care Committee met with the attorney that we work with on contractual and other matters. The group that met with the attorney asked for space in a newsletter to provide more information about faculty contractual documents. These are extremely important matters, especially as the end of our contract period is approaching, and the FWC is glad to do what we can to make sure all faculty members are well-informed. I am so grateful to this group for their clear explanation of our contractual documents. If you have any questions, please contact any member of the FSC, or any member of the FWC Executive Committee.

Thank you to everyone who responded so quickly to the FWC survey. The members of the FWC Executive Committee working on collecting and analyzing the results share a bit of information on page 4.

Although my term as FWC President is winding down, somehow I don't think this is my last newsletter, so I'll save my final thoughts for another time.

Let's hope the weather cooperates for another memorable Commencement.

Rona Preli,  
FWC/AAUP President

### Membership is Growing

Welcome New Members! Five faculty members have joined the FWC in the last month - four at the rank of Professor and one at the rank of Assistant Professor.

These new members represent three different schools. Welcome to the Faculty Welfare Committee!

## **On Our Contractual Documents.**

At this critical moment, it is extremely important that we all understand our contractual documents (especially the Memo of Understanding), and how all of our contractual documents work. A Fairfield University faculty member's contract consists of three documents:

- The current (2015-16) Memo of Understanding which includes the Benefits Plan Overview;
- An individual contract letter signed by the individual and President von Arx,
- The current Faculty Handbook

### **The Approval of a new Memo of Understanding: Executive Summary**

The approval of a new Memo of Understanding (MOU) requires several steps. The first step is that the Faculty Salary Committee and the administrative team reach agreement on a compensation package and draft a new MOU. The next steps are approval of the document by the appropriate bodies.

Contractual language describes what happens if the process of approving a new MOU breaks down at any of the steps. If the process breaks down at the first step (i.e., the FSC and administrative team do not reach agreement on a compensation package), then the current MOU remains in place. If the process breaks down at subsequent steps (i.e., the agreed-upon compensation package is not approved by the General Faculty (GF) or the Budget Committee), the process calls for the FSC and Administrative team to hold further meetings and, if no resolution is reached, brings the Board of Trustees into the process.

This year, at this time, we have failed to complete the first step. The FSC and the administrative team have not reached agreement on a compensation package to recommend to the GF and Budget Committee. There is absolutely no ambiguity about what happens when the process breaks down at this step. The old MOU remains in place.

### **The Approval of a new Memo of Understanding.**

In this section, we provide actual contractual language, and explain what the language means.

#### **From the 2015-16 (current) MOU:**

After collegial discussions, the Faculty Salary Committee and the Administration have agreed to recommend to the General Faculty for ratification and to the Budget Committee for inclusion in the budget that they submit to the President and the Board of Trustees the following compensation package.

It is understood that if accepted by the General Faculty and the Budget Committee and subject to final approval of the Board of Trustees, through its adoption of the annual budget, all faculty appointments and compensation shall be in accordance with the provisions set forth herein (including the Benefits Plan Overview for Full-Time Faculty) and in the Faculty Handbook as currently

amended. All individual, annual letters of appointment will be in accordance with the compensation provision of this document and with the Faculty Handbook (11th edition, 2013, and subsequent amendments).

In the event that either the General Faculty of the Budget Committee raise objections to the recommended compensation changes, 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.

*All of this language appears in the 2015-16 MOU, and refers to the terms of compensation for 2015-16. The 2014-15 FSC and the 2014-15 Administrative team did reach agreement on a compensation package for 2015-16, wrote it into the 2015-16 MOU, and recommended that package to the General Faculty for ratification, and to the Budget Committee. The General Faculty approved the 2015-16 MOU on September 2, 2015. Individual letters of appointment, in accordance with the approved 2015-16 MOU, were signed by President von Arx, S.J., on September 3, 2015 and sent to faculty members to sign and return. None of this language in the 2015-16 MOU is applicable to where we are right now.*

*At this time, the 2015-16 Faculty Salary Committee and the 2015-16 Administrative team have yet to agree on a compensation package for 2016-17 to recommend to the General Faculty for ratification and to the Budget Committee. In other words, we are nearing the end of the contract period (June 1, 2016) without agreement on a new MOU. Without a new MOU, the current MOU remains in effect as stated in the individual contract letter.*

**From a 2015-16 individual contract letter:**

The terms referred to in the Memo of Understanding, on Faculty Salary and Benefits, 2015-2016, will apply from September 1, 2015 and continue until superseded by a subsequent Memo of Understanding...

*The plain language of the contract letter, which was signed by President von Arx, S.J., on September 3, 2015, is that the current (2015-16) MOU/BPO continues until superseded by a subsequent MOU.*

*One additional point is that contract letters must be reviewed by the FSC before they are sent to the faculty as stated in the charge to the FSC in the Faculty Handbook (page 17):*

- iii. to review the text of the annual contract letter before it is sent to the faculty.

The faculty representatives who met with the attorney think we speak for the majority of General Faculty members when we thank our colleagues on the FSC for their on-going work on our behalf all year long, and as we expect the administrative team to work in good faith through our process of collegial discussions to reach agreement with the FSC on a compensation package that can be recommended to the appropriate bodies for approval.

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.

### **Information from the FWC/AAUP Survey.**

As of this writing, we have just over 100 responses to the FWC survey. This is a fantastic response rate, and responses are still coming in.

- An incredible 99% of respondents STRONGLY AGREE with the statement, “I am in support of the work being done by my colleagues on the Faculty Salary Committee.”
- A large majority, 84% of respondents, DISAGREE with the statement, “I am confident that the administration is leading the University in the right direction.”
- A similar number, 83%, AGREE that “Without faculty action, the administration will not act favorably toward faculty in the collegial discussions.”
- Many, many respondents are willing to take part in the various actions suggested. There were many suggestions given for the open-ended question on non-contractual items from which individuals were willing to publicly resign.
- Further, 87% of respondents are willing to take action at Commencement that is “slightly visible,” and 68% are willing to take action at Commencement that is “visible only to those in the platform party.” We are assessing when targeted action will be most appropriate and keep the faculty updated with action plans.

We will continue to monitor the situation with our colleagues on the FSC. As noted elsewhere in this newsletter, the MOU continues until superseded by a subsequent MOU. In addition, our current health insurance continues until at least January 1.

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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