

Faculty Welfare Committee/AAUP

Excellence in Education

Presidential Leadership and Responsibility

At the General Faculty meeting on April 15, I proposed a motion that the General Faculty ask President von Arx to reconsider his decision not to address the General Faculty at the close of the academic year. According to Profs. Rosivach and Salafia, who are both completing 50 years of service to Fairfield this year, such a dereliction is unprecedented. The President of the University has addressed the General Faculty every year as far as they can collectively remember.

It was reported to us that President von Arx did not find last year's presentation and the Q&A period constructive. Perhaps for him, it was not constructive. For me as a faculty member, I found the session to be very helpful, not just for what was said but for what was *not* said. I remember leaving that meeting feeling so discouraged, discouraged about the continued lack of support from our administrative leadership – not just support in terms of compensation but in terms of appreciation. The research literature on workplace incentives supports the notion that employees value small, regular signs of support and appreciation more than many other pecuniary terms of compensation.

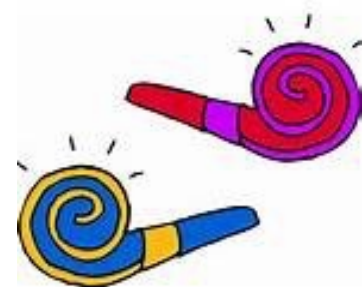
As a tenured faculty member completing my 30th year, I would like to hear some of the following sentiments expressed in an end-of-year address from my President:

- I **solidly support** the prime academic mission of Fairfield University, and I recognize this commitment by ensuring that resources are flowing into the academic division to sustain and enhance the work that faculty and students are doing on our campus.
- I **appreciate** the hard work that faculty did with students this academic year. To honor that work, I commit to restoring health insurance plans to a level that protects lower paid employees and their families from decreases in their compensation.
- I am troubled by the apparent disregard that the administrative salary team has for the work of the Healthcare Subcommittee. I **commit to working** with my team to resolve this problem, and will make certain that this disregard does not continue into the future.
- I want to **celebrate** the work of all faculty this year, everyone who has held extra office hours, conducted a review session, written letters of recommendation, organized events and parties to honor student achievements. I want to **thank all of you** who engaged in research that pushed the boundaries of your fields and brought recognition to Fairfield University as a place that nurtures scholarship, or mentored students in collaborative research projects. I want to **applaud** everyone who served on a committee, worked as a department or program chair, or helped to support an important institutional project. If you attended countless meetings to develop ideas, to follow up on tasks or to network with colleagues interested in similar concerns, I **appreciate** your efforts. **Thank you for all you do to make our institution great.**

OK, maybe that last one is over the top and just something *I* would say if *I* could be President of Fairfield for a day. In my dream world, that last bullet would be followed by raucous clapping and cheering, with party horns, cowbells, and duck calls. We'd leave the meeting arm-in-arm, ready to face the work ahead with good energy and enthusiasm.

I urge President von Arx to address the faculty as is our cultural norm at Fairfield. I welcome the questions and comments that faculty will bring, and am anxious to hear how the leader of my institution responds to those questions and comments. This is an implicit contractual obligation of the President of Fairfield University, and I hope it is honored in this academic year.

- Kathryn Nantz, Professor of Economics

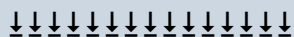


AAUP Mission

Advancing academic freedom and shared governance; defining professional values and standards; promoting the economic security of those who teach and research in higher education; organizing to make our goals a reality; and ensuring higher education's contribution to the common good.

FWC/AAUP

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



**WELCOME TO OUR
THREE NEW MEMBERS!**

President's Annual State of the University Address:

So, I was the person in Friday's GF meeting who brought up the fact that the President had unilaterally decided not to give the annual State of the University address to the GF this year. Prof. Nantz suggested a motion - on the fly - that we "invite him to reconsider" his decision. Having known Kathy for 30 years now, I know that's the way she would make the point that she thinks the President's unilateral decision is taking us in the wrong direction. We got a little side-tracked in discussion of an amendment to Kathy's language but ultimately let that discussion go, and passed a motion with stronger language.

In bringing this matter up I was trying to make an important point, which I will try to clarify here. As we heard on Friday, the President of Fairfield University has addressed the General Faculty at a meeting of the General Faculty for as long as anyone can remember, and that goes back over 50 years. This is not a personal invitation from Susan to Jeff that he can accept or decline. Susan, as our elected General Faculty Secretary, facilitates the President addressing the GF by scheduling the meeting with his office. As our elected GFS, Susan is acting *on behalf of the General Faculty*. The President's unilateral decision not to address the GF is to rebuff the General Faculty as a body. Keep in mind that the General Faculty is a formal body - defined in the Faculty Handbook, and responsible for the "framework of principles" underlying all academic policy and educational considerations in the schools of the University.

The way I see it, the current President decided to sever an important and formal connection to the General Faculty. He cancelled unilaterally the only opportunity that faculty have, within the formal framework of a GF meeting, to ask the President questions and have their questions answered on the record, for posterity. In my view, this sets a very unfortunate and wrong-headed precedent.

I know people on Friday wondered if the strongly worded motion was the right way to convince the President to reconsider, and carry on the tradition of the annual address to the GF, but for me, the motion wasn't about convincing him to come and speak to us, and hear what's on our mind. The motion was about conveying to the President and senior administration our position: Because the General Faculty is the formal body at this institution that has primary responsibility for educational matters and academic policy, the GF deserve to connect with the President at least once a year in a meeting of the General Faculty where he takes questions on the record.

- Irene Mulvey, Professor of Mathematics (GFS 03/04 - 11/12)

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.