To: Susan Rakowitz, Executive Secretary of the Academic Council  
From: Rank and Tenure Committee, AY 2010-2011 (Patricia Behre, Don Gibson, Dennis Keenan, Matt Kubasik, Paul Lakeland, Jean Lange, and Tracey Robert)  
Date: November 7, 2011  
Subject: Proposed Motions for the Academic Council

I. Proposed Formation of a Sub-Committee of the Academic Council on Community-Engaged Scholarship

Motion:

That the Executive Committee of the Academic Council form a subcommittee (consisting of an administrator and cross-school representation) to consider the inclusion of language in the Faculty Handbook and/or Guidelines and Timetable for Applications for Tenure and Promotion that recognizes the importance of community-engaged scholarship.

Rationale:

There is growing national attention within higher education on the issue of community-engaged scholarship and its relationship to academic reward systems. Studies of faculty involvement in community engagement show that academic reward systems that do not change to assess and recognize engaged scholarship stand as a barrier to the careers of engaged scholars and campuses truly institutionalizing the work at their core. The Carnegie Classification of Community Engagement, an elective classification that began in 2008, has been a key driving force for change. In 2010, Fairfield University was one of just under 200 institutions of higher education in the U.S. to receive the Carnegie Classification of Community Engagement. Fairfield will need to reapply in 2015 and we will not be able to maintain this honor without showing progress in better aligning faculty rewards with community engaged teaching and scholarship.

To this end, in Fall 2010 Deans Robbin Crabtree and Beth Boquet attended an institute hosted by the Eastern Region Campus Compacts on the topic of the Institutionalization of Community Engagement. In Spring 2011, the Center for Academic Excellence, Office of Service Learning, and Office of Academic Engagement hosted a series of events and workshops on community-engagement as scholarship that raised a campus-wide conversation on the topic. These events highlighted the need to address the issue through policy changes as well as professional development. In Fall 2011, we have the opportunity to send a faculty team to the “Eastern Region Campus Compact Faculty Institute, Making it Count: Strategies for Rewarding Engaged Scholarship in Promotion and Tenure” where we will have the opportunity to work on goals specific to Fairfield while learning from the successes and challenges of other institutions and leaders in the field.
II. Proposed Amendments to the *Faculty Handbook*:

**Motion:**

That the following changes be made to the *Faculty Handbook* (additions in **bold**; deletions in strikethrough):

II.A.3.b.(3)

That **at the time of submitting the dossier**, the candidate for tenure shall have **normally completed** served a probationary period of not less than five years in a **full-time position in** the academic profession, not less than two of which years shall have been served at Fairfield University. *No one can be a candidate for tenure at Fairfield more than once.*

II.A.1.b.(3)

The normal requirements for appointment to the rank of Associate Professor are: […] (b) **five** six years experience in the rank of Assistant Professor. *An extraordinary petition for an early consideration of a tenure petition would require the support of two-thirds of the candidate’s appropriate faculty.*

**Rationale:**

For whatever reason, it has become the practice at Fairfield University to allow an Assistant Professor, if necessary, to be a candidate for tenure two times. There is no basis for this in the *Faculty Handbook*. As such (and because of an ambiguity in the *Faculty Handbook* regarding the normal probationary period of a candidate for tenure), it has become common at Fairfield University for Assistant Professors to apply for tenure in their fifth year. The rationale is that if one is not successful in one’s fifth year, one will have another opportunity to apply the following year.

The Rank and Tenure Committee would like to have faculty members serve the full probationary period allowed by AAUP guidelines and only come up for tenure once because coming up for tenure two years in a row puts the Rank and Tenure Committee in the awkward position of providing negative feedback without giving the candidate sufficient time to remedy the situation.

Also, according to the *Faculty Handbook*, tenure is granted “not merely when a candidate meets minimum qualifications for rank, but only when there is reasonable confidence that the candidate will continue to develop as an outstanding teacher, a practicing scholar or artist, and a contributing member of the campus community” (II.A.3). The whole idea of a consistent record of performance over the probationary period coupled with the promise of continued development seems to belie the likelihood that someone can remedy insufficiencies in a few months.
As it currently reads, the Faculty Handbook is ambiguous:

II.A.3.b.(3)
That the candidate for tenure shall have served a probationary period of not less than five years in the academic profession, not less than two of which years shall have been served at Fairfield University.

Whether one assumes (a) that a “candidate” for tenure is one who applies for tenure, or (b) one remains a “candidate” for tenure until one is actually tenured (i.e., at the time they receive their letter from the President in April), this statement implies that one cannot be appointed to the rank of Associate Professor until the beginning of their seventh year.

II.A.1. b.(3)
The normal requirements for appointment to the rank of Associate Professor are:

[...] (b) five years experience in the rank of Assistant Professor.

This statement implies that one can be appointed to the rank of Associate Professor at the beginning of their sixth year.

The Rank and Tenure Committee would like to clarify this ambiguity by having faculty members serve the maximum probationary period allowed by AAUP guidelines before applying for tenure; that is, faculty members would normally apply for tenure in their sixth year and (if successful) be appointed to the rank of Associate Professor at the beginning of their seventh year.

In extraordinary circumstances, these amendments would not preclude one from being a candidate for tenure having completed a probationary period of less than five years. Nor would they preclude one from being a candidate for tenure having completed a probationary period of less than two years at Fairfield University (this will take into account a more senior scholar coming to Fairfield with a leave from tenure somewhere else, where that tenure can usually only be guaranteed for two years).