MEMORANDUM
Fairfield University

TO: Academic Council
FROM: AC Subcommittee on consideration of a Handbook Committee for Non-Tenure Track Faculty
DATE: April 25, 2014
RE: Subcommittee Report

At its meeting on September 9, 2013, the Council passed the following motion:

**MOTION.** That the AC empower the AC Executive Committee to appoint a subcommittee composed of administrators, tenure-track faculty, non-tenure track faculty, and staff to consider developing a general purpose for a Faculty Handbook committee on Non-Tenure Track Faculty employment, roles, and conditions. The subcommittee shall also provide a membership requirement and specific duties for such a Handbook committee. The subcommittee will report back to the Academic Council at the March 2014 meeting.

Following a call for volunteers, the Executive Committee appointed the following individuals who were all willing to serve: Paul Fitzgerald, Elizabeth Hohl, Sonya Huber, Christina McGowan, Irene Mulvey, Cliff Price and Margo Ramlal-Nankoe. At the first meeting, the Subcommittee elected Irene Mulvey as Chair. The Subcommittee met in person a number of times and completed some of its work by email.

Discussions within the Subcommittee were engaging and extremely productive. In particular, the three non-tenure track faculty members were able to articulate the concerns and problems faced by non-tenure track faculty at Fairfield as well as to communicate very clearly the enormous value our non-tenure track faculty colleagues bring to our community.

The Subcommittee is unanimous in its strong recommendation that a Faculty Handbook Committee on Non-Tenure Track Faculty be established. In the rest of this report, we present the rationale for our recommendation and we propose draft text for such a Handbook committee.

**Rationale for the Subcommittee’s Recommendation.**
Thirty years ago, non-tenure track faculty members were hired because of their expertise in a particular area or because of the need to cover classes due to sabbaticals and temporary enrollment surges. This is simply no longer the case – now non-tenure track faculty are hired routinely and in abundance; they are an essential part of our higher educational system. In particular, they are an essential component of the instructional faculty at Fairfield and will be for the foreseeable future. The Subcommittee’s position is that it is well past time for the University to establish a Handbook committee on Non-Tenure Track Faculty.

Currently, hiring and evaluation of non-tenure track faculty members are accomplished on an ad hoc
basis depending on the department or program. Hiring and evaluation of instructional faculty are of the utmost importance to our educational mission, and a Handbook Committee will draft policies to provide structure and clarity.

Hiring and evaluation are pressing concerns, but the Subcommittee’s position is that there is a policy vacuum when it comes to non-tenure track faculty. Unilaterally drafted contract letters (also known as letters of agreement), limited library privileges and truncated email access were discussed as examples where policy initiatives are needed. Without clearly stated policy, the working conditions of non-tenure track faculty become a concern. The Subcommittee is certain that this list is not exhaustive. Our strong recommendation is that a Handbook Committee is needed in order to draft, vet and approve policies on a variety of matters affecting non-tenure track faculty and, ultimately, our core educational mission.

To our specific charge, the Subcommittee strongly recommends the establishment of a Handbook Committee on Non-Tenure Track Faculty because such a committee will support our core academic mission by making visible and more protected our non-tenure track faculty colleagues and this will, ultimately, benefit non-tenure track faculty, full-time faculty, the University, our educational mission and our students.

**Draft language for a Faculty Handbook Committee on Non-Tenure Track Faculty.**

**MOTION** to amend the Faculty Handbook (Eleventh edition 2013) by inserting on page 12 before the Committee on Student Life (and renumbering accordingly here and in the Table of Contents) the following text:

5. **Committee on Non-Tenure Track Faculty.**

**Membership**
Three members of the General Faculty, at least one with tenure, elected for three-year overlapping terms in the usual manner, and three non-tenure track faculty members elected for three-year overlapping terms by the non-tenure track faculty in an election overseen by the Secretary of the General Faculty each spring. The election of the three non-tenure track members will take place before the election of members from the General Faculty, and committee membership shall include at most three members from the College of Arts and Sciences. Non-tenure track faculty members serve for three years as long as they are employed at Fairfield. Members with part-time faculty status receive a stipend equal to 1/8 of their stipend for one course for each semester they serve on this committee.

**General Purpose**
To study and make recommendations on the employment and the employment conditions of non-tenure track faculty, and to represent non-tenure track faculty.

**Specific Duties**
1. To draft or review policies on any matter pertaining to non-tenure track faculty;
2. To receive concerns and suggestions from any source on matters pertaining to non-tenure track faculty;
3. To facilitate interaction between tenure track and non-tenure track faculty;
4. To promote the professional development of part-time faculty;
5. To receive from the Office of Human Resources each semester a list of non-tenure track faculty with contact information.

Other Matters.
Items came up during our discussion that went beyond our charge but that we would like to bring to the attention of the Academic Council.

Generally, non-tenure track faculty members have limited venues for resolution of professional concerns. Our discussions led us to consider whether or not this Handbook Committee should play a role in such matters for our contingent faculty colleagues. If the Handbook Committee is established, we recommend that the committee take up the matter of establishing a well-defined, independent position of ombudsperson for non-tenure track faculty.

We also recommend that the Handbook Committee, if approved, consider taking up the matter of non-tenure track faculty participation in faculty governance. We include as an appendix an AAUP Report, “The Inclusion in Governance of Faculty Members Holding Contingent Appointments” approved by the AAUP in November 2012. The recommendations in the report go well beyond our charge, but we include the report here since the report does support our recommendation and could be the basis for further progress.

Note that our Handbook language includes a stipend for non-tenure track faculty serving on the Handbook Committee. We think it is absolutely essential to compensate non-tenure track faculty who volunteer and are elected to take on this task.