FAIRFIELD UNIVERSITY
General Faculty Meeting
May 12, 2010
Minutes of Meeting

Approved by the General Faculty on September 3, 2010
No votes that allowed proxies were taken at this meeting.

Professor Larry Miners, the Chair of the General Faculty, called the meeting to order at 4:35 PM.

1. **Announcements.**

Prof. Miners apologized to faculty for the fact that this meeting time conflicted with some scheduled final exam times since Reading Days were all at the beginning of exam period this year.

Prof. Miners reminded faculty of the Reception for Retiring Faculty to be held in the lobby of the Quick Center at 5:30 PM, following this meeting.

Dean Vagos Hadjimichael gave the following remembrance of our colleague, Professor Rao Dukkipati:

Rao Dukkipati, my friend and colleague, passed away on February 11, 2010. He was 65 years old. He had been an active and productive member of the School of Engineering core team for ten years. For ten years, it felt good and comfortable to have Rao Dukkipati as a co-worker. There was always a quality of calm and quiet about him; he always exuded a sense of optimism, and a sense that all was right with the world. Rao was a sweet and kind man, totally dedicated to his work, family, and friends.

Rao’s life journey started in Andhra Pradesh, at the South-eastern coast of India, one of nine children in his family. He grew up speaking Telugu, one of the 300 Indian dialects. He learned English in school, and earned his Bachelor’s degree and a Master’s degree with distinction from Andhra University in 1966 and 1969 respectively, a second Master’s degree from the University of New Brunswick in Canada, in 1971, and his doctoral degree from Oklahoma State University, in 1973.

Prior to joining the faculty at Fairfield, Rao had close to thirty years of diverse professional experience working as structure analyst at Pratt and Whitney Aircraft in Montreal, as Senior Researcher analyst in the area of vehicle dynamics at the National Research Council of Canada, three years on the faculty of the University of Toledo, Ohio. At Fairfield, Rao found his intellectual home. Before he joined us, he was already a prolific author of technical papers. He authored, or co-authored, 17 books, six of them as a faculty member at Fairfield. For ten years with us, he maintained a rigorous pace of research; he authored and published dozens of articles in refereed journals, all along carrying a substantial teaching schedule. His work was his passion and his hobby. He was elevated to Fellow of the American Society for Mechanical Engineers and of the Canadian Society for Mechanical Engineers, and garnered several honors and awards.

Rao’s dedication to duty cannot be exaggerated. While fighting a debilitating illness for about a year and a half, and while he was deteriorating rapidly, in fall 2009, he insisted in completing his fall courses. He did so, submitted his final grades, and just before Christmas he moved with his wife, to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, to be with his son and his son’s family. And there he died less than two months later.
For all that Rao was able to do for the School of Engineering, for all the wisdom, strength and assistance he provided us in growing the School and its programs, my colleagues and I owe him, a debt of gratitude. At a farewell event in mid-December 2009, at the last engineering faculty meeting of the fall term, we all embraced Rao emotionally, and he embraced us right back.

To honor Rao’s memory, we have just established a Rao Dukkipati Scholarship Fund with money from the core account of the School of Engineering Endowment Fund. Revenue from this fund will provide the means for awarding the Rao Dukkipati memorial scholarship annually to engineering students, for as long as Fairfield University, and its School of Engineering, exists.

In memory of Rao, our friend and colleague, let us please observe a minute of silence.

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2. a. **Approval of Minutes of the Meeting on April 16, 2010**

   MOTION [Caster/Scheraga]: to approve the minutes of the General Faculty meeting of 4/16/2010 as circulated. 
   MOTION PASSED.

   b. **Approval of Minutes of the Meeting on May 7, 2010**

   MOTION [Scheraga/Bowen]: to approve the minutes of the General Faculty meeting of 5/7/2010 as circulated. 
   MOTION PASSED.

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3. a. **Presentation of the Faculty Welfare Committee Service Awards**

   Prof. Joe Dennin, Vice-President of the Faculty Welfare Committee/AAUP presented the FWC/AAUP Service awards.

   The award for Colleague of the Year was presented to Prof. Susan Rakowitz for her hard work on the Faculty Salary Committee and the Academic Council Subcommittee on Governance as well as her work in the College as CAS Secretary. Prof. Rakowitz accepted the award to applause.

   The Lifetime Service Award was awarded to Prof. Don Greenberg. Prof. Dennin mentioned Prof. Greenberg’s “over 30 years” of service, serving on “all the usual committees”, the fearlessness to speak his mind on matter of importance to faculty and to the University, and running the annual NCAA pool. Prof. Greenberg was applauded in absentia.

   b. **Re-presentation of the CT State Conference-AAUP George E. Lang, Jr. Award**

   Prof. Irene Mulvey, President of the CT State Conference-AAUP explained this award. This award is given by and funded by the CT State Conference in honor of our colleague, George Lang, who was very active in the AAUP at the local, state and national level. The CT State Conference recognizes a faculty member at Fairfield who early in his or her career has shown an awareness of and an appreciation for fundamental AAUP principles of academic freedom and faculty governance. The state conference asks the Faculty Welfare Committee/AAUP to select the recipient and the state conference pays the recipient’s AAUP dues for one year. This state conference award recognizes a young faculty member and strengthens our FWC/AAUP chapter.
which is a lovely and fitting tribute to George. The award was officially presented to the recipient at the CT State Conference annual meeting, but we re-present it at a Fairfield faculty meeting as an additional tribute to the recipient and to George.

Prof. Joe Dennin presented the CSC-AAUP George E. Lang, Jr. award to Professor Matt Kubasik. Prof. Dennin mentioned Prof. Kubasik’s hard work on the Faculty Salary Committee bringing the concerns of new faculty members to attention, particularly the ability to start receiving salary before Sept. 1 of the first year and the matter of housing in the Fairfield area. Prof. Kubasik accepted the award to applause as Prof. Dennin described and displayed the various items of AAUP swag.

4. Address by President von Arx, S.J.

Prof. Miners called on President Jeff von Arx, S.J., to deliver his annual address to the faculty which is printed below.

Good afternoon and thank you all for being here today.

I’d like to begin by offering my congratulations and good wishes to those faculty who will be retiring at the end of this semester, as well as those who will be leaving us for other postings and positions. There will of course be more formal and informal opportunities for all of us to express our thanks and admiration to our colleagues, but at this moment I want to offer a formal thanks to you all on behalf of all the students who have benefited from your commitment and hard work.

Second, I’d like to offer my thanks to all of you for your good work as we come to the end of another academic year. Universities are complex institutions with many moving parts, but as we all know, at the heart of what we do is the work of the classroom — it is teaching.

All of you, in myriad ways we strive very hard to acknowledge, have given of yourselves — your knowledge, your patience, your insight — to the students under your charge. It is a noble and significant responsibility that you shoulder as professors at this University, and I thank you for your dedication to our shared mission.

This has been a particularly significant year for the faculty and administration of Fairfield. After collegial and at times challenging discussions in which faculty and administrators considered, and at times debated, important issues, we worked through our different approaches to common ends. The faculty, administration, and the Board approved changes to our governance that I believe will greatly facilitate shared governance and our capacity as a University to grow, and to meet the challenges that we face in the coming years.

A proper and balanced governance relationship between the faculty, the administration, and the Board of Trustees is essential because it allows each “branch” of government in the body of the University to exercise its proper authority, while simultaneously creating structures that are best suited to finding wise solutions to the issues that we face.

We all recognize that shared governance necessitates working together. It involves bringing all parties to the table to express their concerns and interests, and working towards reasonable compromises based on an appreciation of the points-of-view, expertise, and responsibilities of every person at the table.
The faculty has the particular responsibility for educational policy and initiatives proper to the University’s scholarly work and academic excellence. The administration is responsible for providing the framework that allows this work to proceed, and for ensuring that the resources at hand are allocated in the best possible manner to achieve this end. The Board of Trustees possesses the ultimate oversight over the financial wellbeing of the institution, the safeguarding of the mission and identity of the University, and of the proper exercise of the responsibilities of all parties.

I believe that in the compromises that we have reached together in this past year — through dialogue and ongoing engagement — we have accomplished many important goals. Not the least of which is that — through the work of the Faculty Salary Committee and the adjustments we have made to the Faculty Handbook — we have re-affirmed to the Board of Trustees that the issues of faculty compensation and benefits can be worked out in a responsible and collegial manner between the administration and the faculty, acknowledging the trustees’ overall obligation, but without requiring their active intervention.

The inclusion of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs as a voting member of the Academic Council, as well as the Executive Committee of the Academic Council, is an important development, because it allows for a reasonable degree of input from the Academic Vice President on the critical matters that come under discussion. I also believe it breaks down boundaries that we can easily find ourselves trapped by. I believe the modifications we have made have gone a long way toward creating a climate of collaboration.

Most significantly, shared governance leads to greater transparency in the overall operations of the University, and nowhere has that been clearer than in the ongoing work of the Budget Committee. In order to increase involvement, we have added two members of the faculty, as well as three additional students and an additional staff representative to the Budget Committee. The enlarged Committee has met more often and continued to meet late into the semester as the vice presidents presented plans for balancing the budget and received questions and advice from members of the Committee.

As you are aware, economic realities have confronted us with a difficult set of circumstances. The budget process this year does not offer us many easy solutions. At the moment, we continue to look at a $1.4 million shortfall for next year, and the Budget Committee continues to provide input as we finalize ways to close this gap.

Putting together a budget has been particularly challenging over the last couple of years. The economic slump has cut into our endowment and has exacerbated the financial pressures on the resources of our students and their families.

As if the short-term economic realities were not challenging enough, we are also in the midst of a “sea change” in the world of higher education that has much longer-term implications. We are beginning to feel the effects of these changes, and we will have to adapt accordingly — particularly within the financial context that limits our ability to raise tuition and simultaneously increases our students’ financial aid needs.

For the coming year, the budget we have developed and which was approved by the Board of Trustees in March meets our obligations to provide the best possible education to our students, while acknowledging that we also need to trim expenses, and simultaneously meeting the legitimate needs of our staff and faculty for the benefits and compensation that they deserve.
The budget included a substantial increase in our financial aid offerings to our students, from $43.3 million to $46.8 million, while mandating a tuition increase of 4.2 percent for our undergraduates, and an average 5 percent increase in our graduate programs.

At this point in time, and based on the applications that we have received and on the best projections that we can make, it appears as though we will meet our targeted enrollment goals in both our undergraduate and graduate programs. We have deposits from 930, oral commitments from another 50, and offers out to 100 more potential freshmen still on the wait list. We know that our projected total of between 1030 and 1050 total deposits will “melt” over the summer to somewhere between 900 and 925. Retention rates of returning students look promising. Our graduate applications were up 17 percent last year and are up 27 percent above that this year. To put that in perspective, our graduate student population is 30 percent larger than it was two years ago. Still, we won’t know the final numbers until October. While we are cautiously optimistic, as I mentioned earlier, the budget calls for a reduction of $1.4 million for expenses, which will be met through strategic and targeted cost cuts in the divisions.

The willingness of the faculty to work with the administration in making sacrifices to meet our financial challenges has not gone unnoticed. Last month, the General Faculty passed a Memo of Understanding concerning faculty compensation for the coming year. Your agreement to a zero salary increase in this past academic year, and an average of a 1.5 percent increase in the coming year — plus funding for all rank and tenure promotions — is evidence of your continued commitment to the mission of the University.

With the increase in the cost of health care and other benefits, the overall increase in the compensation pool for the coming fiscal year is 3.7 percent. Staff are also receiving raises, except for administrators making over $150,000, who will receive no pay increase again this year.

The sacrifices that you have been asked to make go beyond compensation. The budget cuts we have had to make may have affected your ability at times to travel, to pursue areas of research, and to avail yourself of resources and staff support that would assist you in your work.

I want to assure you that our commitment as a University to enhancing our faculty resources remains in place. I support faculty sharing in the University’s good fortune when the economy rebounds, our endowment grows, and our enrollments meet or exceed expectations. The fact that we have been steadfast in our commitment to keep faculty compensation at or above the 95th percentile of the Carnegie IIA schools is the strongest illustration of our support for the faculty.

And we will continue to work with the Faculty Salary Committee on compensation issues, including support for scholarship, housing, health care, and other benefits.

Moreover, our long-term strategic goals call for an increase in full-time faculty, a continued emphasis on small classes, and maintaining our low student-faculty ratio. Fairfield is first and foremost a University that supports teaching scholars, and we intend to strengthen our faculty as we move into the future. In contrast to many Universities where faculty hiring has been frozen, we have hired – or are currently hiring - two dozen new, tenure track faculty over the last twelve months.

We are proud of the accomplishments of our faculty. This year, 17 faculty were promoted, a reflection of the exemplary work that our faculty do — day in and day out — and of the quality of scholars that Fairfield attracts and retains.
Our faculty continue to make scholarly contributions, earn prestigious fellowships, and engage with the issues of our time, as well as continue their deep investment in our Jesuit mission and identity. To highlight just a few: Joy Gordon and Ron Davidson both received prestigious Fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities, and Ron also received one from the American Council of Learned Societies; Laura Nash was named the 2009 Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching Connecticut Professor of the Year; Kate Wheeler was inducted as a fellow into the American Academy of Nursing, considered the highest honor in the nursing profession; Gregory Koutmos, received an honorary degree from the Hanken School of Economics in Helsinki, Finland.

What we can all be proud of — faculty and administrators alike — is that we have managed to make significant progress over the past year in realizing our strategic goals — to make Fairfield a model of higher education for the 21st century, creating a learning and living environment that is optimal for the formation of global citizens, young men and women with a breadth of knowledge, a sense of civic responsibility, and personal dignity that will prepare them for leadership.

To name a few of the accomplishments of the past year: As you look around the campus you can see work on our plan to enhance our residence facilities to integrate living and learning for our students. The former St. Ignatius Hall is under transformation, and we have begun construction on new residence facilities in the Quad area and in the Village. The beginning of the work on the residence upgrades provided an occasion for an important and free-ranging discussion on our obligation as a Jesuit and Catholic University to maintain earth-friendly practices and protocols. I warmly encourage us to continue this conversation and to more fully integrate the issue of sustainability into all of our planning and operations.

Obviously, what we need to reach is a balanced approach to development and the environment, and that approach will require us all to think about the needs we have as a University to expand and make modifications, with our obligation to be good stewards of the earth. I expect that this ongoing discussion will be a fruitful and lively one.

We also made huge strides this year in the Core Integration project: Our Core Curriculum Committee has identified six learning pathways that will help us to re-imagine and to restructure the liberal arts foundation that we want our students to acquire, so that all are introduced to appropriating wisdom, quantitative reasoning, creative and aesthetic engagement, scientific reasoning, rhetoric and reflection, and global citizenship during their undergraduate formation. A core curriculum is the touchstone of a Jesuit, liberal-arts education. To form the whole person means to lead the mind along a series of paths, each informing the other, so that our students are trained how to think broadly and deeply across disciplines.

I am convinced that having identified these pathways to integration, we have taken a giant step toward a greater clarification of our educational mission.

Among other accomplishments, we have established an office of Academic Engagement to integrate and enhance our academic mentoring for our students; and our sophomore residential communities have expanded. These communities play an important role in building community on our campus and assisting our students in their vocational exploration. Thanks to the success of our Ignatian Residential College and our Service for Justice residential college, we are adding three more residential colleges for the upcoming year — The Creative Life residential college, the Environmental Justice residential college, and the Leadership in the Ignatian Tradition residential college.
Our graduate programs are experiencing a surge of student interest and increased enrollment. This coming year our School of Nursing will be introducing a new doctoral program, and the Marriage and Family Therapy program will move to a new and much improved location. Our School of Engineering, so ably led for so many years by Vagos Hadjmichael, has a new Dean and a fresh opportunity to look at what it does, and our Dolan School of Business continues to be ranked amongst the best business schools in the Northeast.

I could mention many, many more accomplishments of faculty and programs, but please accept the ones I have mentioned as exemplary of the fine work done by all.

In closing, I want to thank you all again for your dedication, and for working collegially with us to achieve our strategic goals and prepare us for the future.

Working together is going to be very critical in the years ahead. As we all know, the world of higher education is changing. Some of the old paradigms and assumptions of what a university should look like and what constitutes a university are under question or are losing their relevance. Also, it is clear to me that our obligation to make Fairfield University accessible to as many worthy students as possible means that we will need to do more to increase our financial aid offerings. We also need to be thinking more deeply about how we open our University to the world beyond our national borders.

A new initiative that promises to be fruitful is the campus-wide, year-long, annual focus, which will be Global Citizenship in the upcoming academic year, viewed in the light of our Jesuit mission. We need to think about what other kinds of changes we would need to make to be an inclusive and engaged University in the global sense, and therefore, we need to be thinking about how our resources and emphases need to shift in response.

In the past couple of years, we have adapted to the economic restrictions by making cuts around the edges of our overall budget. We have certainly approached those cuts strategically, but they have been limited in scope and potential.

In the coming years, we will need to be thinking about more systemic, structural changes that are driven by our ongoing commitment to the University’s strategic plan, and ensure our commitment to academic excellence. This kind of comprehensive, structural change obviously is going to require a lot of soul-searching and many, many conversations. But I feel that as a University, we are now in a position to begin to have those conversations in a frank and open manner. I am confident and indeed, excited, by the prospect of facing the future together — finding new models and new approaches for collaboration and continuing to set high expectations for ourselves and for our students. Thank you.

The floor was opened up for questions and comments.

Prof. Betsy Bowen asked the President to describe the process for the strategic and targeted cuts in spending that he anticipated.

President von Arx answered that the cuts will be based on strategic considerations, specifically what will most advance our strategic plan in spending cuts. He said that last year we did not explain things so well and this year, the administration intends to try and explain the strategic cuts to the community.

Prof. Ed Dew asked about the acquisition of houses near campus which, in the context of layoffs, may be at an enormous cost.

President von Arx said we bought three houses across the street from the main entrance on North Benson Road and that the plan is to have a turning lane in the future. The money for these purchases was taken from the endowment with Board of Trustee permission. The houses will be occupied by students.
Prof. Mike Coyne asked about the investment in new dorms, the new Jesuit residence and refurbishing the old Jesuit residence and asked if refurbishing Alumni Hall is in the strategic plan. President von Arx replied that building in this economy is good in that we get major discounts. There is a new faculty office building and a new fine arts center in our strategic plan and that construction for these new projects will depend on fundraising. He continued that a capital campaign is in the works and that he anticipates beginning the “quiet phase” next year which will fund new buildings. In addition, he would like to move the campus master landscaping plan along and sees it as another good investment.

Prof. Wendy Kohli mentioned the very significant increase in graduate enrollment and asked if there is anything in the strategic plan about graduate student housing. President von Arx said that graduate student housing is something we need to look at; perhaps we could partner with some developer who would build and we could do long term leasing. We are open to those opportunities. Many graduate students are full-time and living locally; many come from far away. There are increases in graduate student services. He’d like a graduate student assembly to promote student governance at the graduate level. Prof. Kohli followed up to say that our graduates are staying at Fairfield for a masters degree and this population is not local.

5. **Adjournment.**

At 5:21 PM, a **MOTION** to adjourn was made, seconded and **PASSED** without objection.

Respectfully submitted,
Irene Mulvey
Secretary of the General Faculty

[Approved by the General Faculty on September 3, 2010.]