These minutes were approved by the General Faculty on September 18, 2015.

Proxies were held by: Dennis Keenan, Marcie Patton, Marcie Patton
for: Paul Lakeland, Lucrecia Garcia-Iommi, Kevin Cassidy

Prof. Terry-Ann Jones, Chair of the General Faculty, called the meeting to order at 3:33 pm.

Announcements

GFS Susan Rakowitz made several announcements. 1) She reminded the faculty of the reception for retiring faculty taking place at the Quick Center at 5:30. 2) She said that the Salary Committee, as would be explained more fully later in the agenda, had asked for a General Faculty meeting on May 27. Faculty should save the date and keep an eye out for an email with further details. 3) She said that Prof. Jones was going to be away on the 27th, so this would be her last meeting as chair. Prof. Rakowitz thanked Prof. Jones for her service this year and the faculty joined in an appreciative round of applause. 4) Finally Prof. Rakowitz said she had received some questions about her reordering of the agenda in response to President von Arx’s request. She explained that her objection had been purely procedural; had the President contacted her prior to the publication of the agenda with his request to speak early, she would have acceded in deference to the presidency. Her objection was to changing the agenda after it had been distributed, but she ultimately made the judgment that it was most important for the faculty to have an opportunity to listen to and question the President. She hoped that the faculty would move forward, rather than getting caught up in a Talmudic debate over this procedural issue.

Motion[Patton/Boryczka]: to return to the agenda as originally published.

Prof. John Thiel spoke against the motion. He said he supported the Faculty Secretary’s judgment. Prof. Irene Mulvey urged the body not to discuss the motion but rather to move quickly to a vote. Prof. David McFadden said he supported Profs. Thiel and Rakowitz. He said that the President deserves this courtesy and we need to ask him questions. Prof. Marcie Patton spoke in favor of the motion, noting that the President would still have the opportunity to speak if we returned to the original agenda.

The motion failed.

Address by President Jeffrey von Arx, S.J.

Prof. Jones introduced President von Arx, who offered the following remarks:

Good afternoon and thank you all for being here today.

I’d like to start this afternoon by offering my thanks and congratulations to those faculty who will be retiring at the end of the semester — Professors Peter Spoerri, Donald Greenberg, John McCarthy, Jim Long and Wendy Kohli.

On behalf of the entire Fairfield University community I want to offer our thanks for your contribution to the success of this institution, and for all of the students that you have inspired by your work and example. We thank you for your contribution to your disciplines, and for your membership in our community. Please join me in honoring our colleagues.

As we come to the end of another academic year I’d like to offer my thanks to all of our Faculty members for your excellent work.
We pride ourselves on being an institution that seeks and retains highly skilled scholars who love to teach. The result is that we continue to excel as an institution where our faculty make significant contributions to their disciplines, while promoting an environment that supports transformative relationships between our students and their teachers.

You know better than I how influential you are in the lives of your students — not only through your teaching, but also through your example. Our graduates are confident men and women who feel prepared for the future — largely thanks to the formation they have received from all of you while they have been with us.

As much as we all know that college rankings are a mixed blessing we also know that they are a reality and that they have an influence on our students, families and peers. So we can be grateful that Fairfield continues to be highly ranked and well regarded.

Once again this year that we are highly ranked — third — in the list of master’s degree granting colleges in the Northeast by *U.S. News and World Report*, and we were particularly singled out for our commitment to undergraduate teaching and for our high freshmen retention rate.

The graduate programs of Fairfield University’s School of Nursing was also ranked among the best in the nation by *U.S. News & World Report*, while Meredith Wallace Kazer, dean of the School of Nursing, was recently named her one of the most influential deans of nursing in the United States by Mometrix, a testing agency.

Fairfield University's Charles F. Dolan School of Business was recognized as among the best undergraduate business schools in the United States, according to *Bloomberg Businessweek*, and LinkedIn in named The Dolan School of Business one of the country’s best schools for accounting professionals — these among a number of other high national rankings for Dolan.

Fairfield University student-athletes achieved one of the highest graduation rates in the nation this year. We achieved a 96 percent graduation rate among student-athletes who began their freshman year in 2007 according to the NCCA. Fairfield was one of 24 Division I schools to score that high — which is a great tribute to the commitment of our faculty and the integrity of our University as a whole.

We also continue to excel as a center for research and scholarship — and in the myriad ways that we contribute to the quality of life, and the promotion of justice, in the broader community as well as within our University community.

Faculty and students in the School of Engineering have opened up a new chapter of Engineers Without Borders, which will offer students in any area of engineering to put their shoulder to the wheel in areas that need fresh water and other vital improvements to their communities, and it is the start of a significant new chapter in the growth and orientation of our engineering programs.

Fairfield University was selected by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching for its prestigious 2015 Community Engagement Classification, recognizing exemplary institutions for exceeding in student volunteerism, academic service-learning, and faculty community engaged research. Fairfield is one of 157 colleges and universities nationwide reclassified for the honor after being originally awarded it seven years ago.

Due to the growing interest among writers of all ages to present the nature of health and healing through writing, the MFA in Creative Writing program introduced a new focus within its program this year, “Literary Health and Healing.”

While the College of Arts and Sciences added new 5-year master’s programs — English major to MFA, Communication and Mathematics leading to an MA, with a major in politics and economics leading to a Master’s in Public Administration.
Our faculty also continue to contribute at a significant level to scholarship and to the service of our community through their work — I’m sure you appreciate that I can only take note of a few of these accomplishments.

Dr. John Thiel won the Alpha Sigma Nu Book Award for his latest work, *Icons of Hope: The ‘Last Things’ in Catholic Imagination*, a thoughtful and probing look at the Christian belief in resurrected life.

Jen Klug was selected by CT Campus Compact to receive its 2014 Faculty Engaged Scholarship Award for her community-engaged research with Friends of the Lake. For nearly a decade, Dr. Klug has overseen a water-quality monitoring program on Lake Lillinonah.

Our Graduate School of Education and Allied Professions has taken a leadership position in the debate over standardized testing in the public schools, holding a panel discussion featuring our faculty here on March 31, while our Connecticut Writing Project received $350,000 in state, federal and corporate funding to promote literacy in our local schools.

Carol Ann Davis was named a finalist for the 2015 National Magazine Award in the Essays and Criticism category for “The One I get and Other Artifacts,” an intimate meditation on the Sandy Hook Elementary School massacre. Michael White won the 2014 Tuscany Prize for Catholic Fiction for his book *Resting Places*.

Sheila Grossman was named one of the top 25 Nurse Practitioner Program Professors by Nurse Practitioner Schools.

Dina Franceschi, professor of economics, and about a dozen students in her 2013 “Environmental Economics” course did a comprehensive study of the value of parkland for the City of Bridgeport. The report will help the city to continue to expand and enhance its parkland and open spaces.

Shelley Phelan is an honoree for the 2015 Women of Innovation award in the category of Academic Innovation and Leadership. This award is part of a unique program that honors Connecticut’s outstanding women innovators, role models and leaders in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM).

These are just a few representative examples of the kind of work that we are doing as a University — advancing scholarship, engaging with our neighbors to improve their world, guiding our students through a significant period of their maturation. This is our mission and we continue to do it well.

As I know you are all aware, the quality of the education that we provide requires extensive resources — and we are at a time in higher education when those resources are harder to come by than they have ever been. Families and students are under financial pressure. State and federal governments are continuing to constrict their contributions to higher education — and at the same time, the rapid evolution of technology means that if we are to remain relevant we have to continually update our infrastructure.

We continue to do what we can to ensure — as always — that we have a balanced budget; that we are operating efficiently, while remaining as affordable as possible for our students.

I believe we are in a good position to meet and exceed our budgeted enrollment of 975 undergraduates this fall, down from the 1,056 freshmen that enrolled last fall. Currently, the quality of the class as measured by standardized test scores and class rank is higher than last year, and the admit rate is 5% lower than last year and the discount rate is 4% lower. Minority enrollment has increased. We have more Magis scholars than last year, which was already a bumper crop, and we have seen significant increases in the number of confirmed engineering students.

And based on our numbers to date, it looks like we will make our target number for our graduate programs as well.
But our undergraduate tuition and fees, which represent 85% of revenue in our operating budget, will only rise by 2.5%, and this places significant financial limitations on our ability to let any other element of our cost structure increase beyond that number.

As of March 31st, our endowment market value was $316 million, which is also providing an increasing contribution to our operating budget, although, of course, most of the endowment is restricted and cannot be used to support the general operating budget.

At the same time, we will continue to try and keep our costs and discount rate down.

I often say that an institution like ours is one bad enrollment cycle away from financial crisis, but I think Fairfield is showing that it can successfully recruit students in an increasingly competitive market, and that it has the financial discipline to balance its budget and set something aside for deferred maintenance and for our plant fund. But many of our competitors are doing the same, and, indeed, at a higher rate of investment than Fairfield. We will need to continue, and, indeed, increase our financial discipline and our ability to invest in our future in order to retain the agency ratings that will enable us to reenter the bond market while interest rates are as low as they are.

We are still 45 days away from the end of the current fiscal year, and the books are not yet closed. However if projections hold, we expect to end the year slightly favorable to plan (1/10 of 1%).

However we will still have a considerable disconnect between our deferred maintenance backlog of over $65 million and our liquidity reserve, which is used to fund such expenses.

This year, as part of capital projects, we plan on paving roads damaged by the harsh winter, updating another group of classrooms, improving internet bandwidth on the campus, replacing dated or broken furniture in classrooms, dorms and offices, and performing necessary maintenance on major utilities.

As you know, since January of last year when I kicked off our Fairfield 2020 strategic planning process, over 200 members of faculty, staff, students and alumni have been working hard on our future.

This process was one of the most open and participative processes I have been part of, with 11 task forces opening their meetings and presenting their findings to the entire Fairfield community. We created a dedicated web site where task force progress could be tracked. We videotaped and posted committee reports and brought to campus a wide array of thought leaders to stimulate dialogue and debate.

I am grateful to those of you who dedicated so much time and energy to this process. The report is now in the hands of a team of editors lead by Dr. Christine Siegel and Alistair Highet; I expect that a draft will be shared with the steering team next week and a final report will be shared with the entire community shortly.

I can’t emphasize enough how essential this plan is to the future viability of our University. The forces that are compelling us to make changes are converging — declining demographics in our recruitment areas, rising costs, alternative educational models, a decline in real income for our families, increased competition from our peers, and so on.

As I’ve said on many occasions — the business model on which institutions like ours have operated in the past is no longer viable, and so we have to act.

There are also great opportunities before us that we have to embrace — the need for higher education is greater than ever; the need for ongoing qualification and credentials for those already in the workplace is going to increase; we know that the healthcare industry is going to be a major driver of the economy of the future, and we are well positioned to take a leadership in this area — bringing business, engineering, education and the sciences into greater synergy with the health sciences will be an area of growth for us.
So the new Strategic Plan will show us the way forward. It is a time of change — change is never easy — but as Fr. Adolfo Nicolas, the Superior of the Society of Jesus, said to all of us in Jesuit higher education in 2010, we mustn’t be afraid to “recreate” the institutions so that they engage with our world as it evolves.

That has always been part of the DNA of Jesuit education from the beginning, and that is why it has remained a vital and renewable pedagogical approach for as long as it has.

Also critical to our future and now underway is our comprehensive campaign, which is coming to the end of its “quiet” phase, and will be publicly launched in the fall. I am happy to be able to report that we have raised over $97 million since we began, and we have an excellent chance of reaching $100 million by the end of the fiscal year.

For strategic reasons, the first phase of the campaign has focused on Rafferty Stadium and the renovation of the RecPlex — these are important facilities, and the support we have received for those projects have generated energy among our donors and alumni and met critical student needs. Both these projects are substantially funded through donations.

From now own, the focus the campaign will be shifting toward increasing our endowment so that we can provide more financial aid to students, increasing our endowed professorships and other programmatic support, and gathering financial support for our Integrated Nursing and Health Sciences Initiative — which includes both money to renovate and expand our Nursing School and provide additional state of the art classrooms and collaboration spaces, and also money to build and enhance our programs in these areas.

Our Advancement team has been meeting with the Deans to develop the best strategies for raising support for specific school-related priorities — and they will continue to be working more closely with faculty so that our fundraising is more acutely targeted at our research and pedagogical priorities.

The Advancement team — including major gifts, planned gifts, foundation and corporate relations, and annual giving, will all be presenting opportunities to our donors to support the academic priorities of our University — including opportunities to endow deanships, professorships, and to give money to support specific academic programs and academic centers.

I’d like to conclude then by saying thank you to all of you for your dedication and commitment. We do have a very special University here at Fairfield. We are in a time of dramatic change. We all want what is best for our students — that they have the best education possible, that they are guided and assisted as they mature, and that they succeed in the future. We also all want what is best for Fairfield University — that it grow and thrive, that its reputation for excellence continues, that we continue to expand our name recognition in the public sphere as a first class University.

We all want to see new life, and fresh energy and enthusiasm. I am confident that our new Strategic Plan is the first step toward a future that is infused with new life and fresh energy — and I want to thank all of you for your participation in the formation of the Strategic Plan and for your willingness to work together in Collaboration to build our future together.

This year, as you know, we ushered in a bumper-crop of fourteen new tenure-track faculty and 8 non-tenure track faculty for a total of 265 full-time faculty (the highest number ever). I had the pleasure of meeting with them over a series of dinners at which they each spoke about their research interests – from nutrition to the restoration of democracy in Argentina to film noir to the bond market. Their intellectual energy, and their focus on effective teaching, demonstrate that you, the faculty, are serious about securing the future of Fairfield. It’s an extraordinary group, you have hired well.

I particularly appreciate this because I am charged, by the Board, to be a good custodian of Fairfield’s future. But one thing that is a problem for us, going forward as a community, is the breakdown in civility that characterizes some of our conversations. This is a problem that is particularly true of interactions between faculty and administrators. Faculty seem to feel perfectly entitled to be rude and
condescending to administrators – and, indeed, to administrative staff -- often directly to their faces. Administrators are painted by faculty as faceless and mindless bureaucrats, and never are seen as the seasoned professionals they are. Members of this administration are not always right but they, like the faculty we so value here, deserve to be treated with the same respect that you, the faculty, treat one another. Nothing less.

Civility is not a given, it must be something we practice, together. We can have strong disagreements without a loss of civility, we can question one another closely without losing sight of the strengths we have together, we can argue about programs and curriculum and the details of the academic calendar without in any way denying the grace we find in the work we do and the delight we take in our students, particularly at this time of year, when all they have accomplished comes to fruition.

I will insist, going forward, that our conversations are marked by civility and respect for one another. I will ask this of myself and my administration and I will ask it of you as well. Without that mutual respect, we have no basis for dialogue and none for community.

Thank you

At this point, the floor was opened for questions.

Prof. Dennis Keenan said that the number of new tenure track faculty entering the College has been fairly steady over the last few years. But in 2015-2016 that number is going down while the number of new non-tenure track (NTT) faculty is rising. He asked whether this shift is indicative of a strategy to reduce tenure track lines in the College. President von Arx suggested that SVPAA Babington might be able to comment as well, but said that no, there’s no such strategy. Lines are allocated according to the student population, so there’s some movement of lines from one school to another. They’re interested in getting the right mix between term appointments and adjunct faculty. They would like to reduce the dependence on adjunct faculty by increasing the number of term appointments. That means more full time faculty and better employment opportunities for people currently serving as adjunct faculty. We need to consider the best mix of tenure track lines, term appointments, and adjunct positions, especially as we revise the core curriculum. SVPAA Babington added that we continue to increase the number of faculty overall, though she didn’t have the information broken down by school. This year we have the biggest increase in Fairfield’s history with 14 new tenure track and 8 NTT faculty. Next year we’re bringing in 17 new faculty. The searches for the following year aren’t yet finalized. She would be happy to provide information broken down by schools.

Prof. Beth Boquet returned to the President’s point regarding civility. She noted that as someone who studies rhetoric, she is interested in moments when we perceive civil discourse to be breaking down. It’s almost always people in power calling for civil discourse; there’s an opportunity to ask why we see these calls. Perhaps the reason for the perceived incivility is that the mechanisms of persuasion by logic and argumentation are failing. President von Arx said that he was as interested in reasoned discourse as civil discourse and that often both are lacking.

Prof. Paula Gill Lopez said that as a member of the Advancement Committee, she was concerned about the potential negative impact on the capital campaign of not reaching agreement on a new MOU. She wondered whether the President had told the administrative team to consider this impact. President von Arx said that we’re all aware of how difficult this is. There are difficult issues to deal with. The university income is severely constrained by our commitment to maintain tuition at a relatively low rate. No one would love to have a three-year contract more than I would. We probably could agree with regard to salary, but the issue of benefits, especially healthcare, is neuralgic. We have to reduce spending every single year. Without a comprehensive plan to reduce healthcare spending, we will struggle every year. Fairfield has a full and rich health care plan. Our consultants tell us we’ll be facing the Obamacare excise tax of 1.5 to 1.8 million in 3-4 years if we don’t bring our costs down. That annual expense will fall on all of us. We have a fiduciary responsibility to get under the excise limit; we owe that to the institution. If we can’t bring down the costs of health care on a regular and gradual basis, we will need to make draconian cuts. We cannot kick the can down the road.
Prof. Mulvey said that she had two questions. She didn’t want to give the Faculty Salary Committee (FSC) report now, but they are well aware of the excise tax and the President’s description doesn’t match what has been discussed. It’s unknown what the tax will amount to or even whether it will be put in place. She was pleased to hear that we will need to work together to address the high cost of healthcare. She couldn’t agree more. Last May the faculty and administration worked together to set up a committee to do exactly that, yet the administration hasn’t used that committee at all. She doesn’t understand today’s rhetoric in light of the administration’s actions this year. The President noted that the healthcare committee has significant faculty representation. The administration presented a proposal to the FSC and the FSC has always had the opportunity to present alternate proposals, but that hasn’t happened. He added that if the administration has failed in adequate consultation, we’ll take part of the blame, but the faculty have to share in the blame for not coming up with alternative proposals. Prof. Mulvey said that the FSC would be happy to come up with alternate proposals if you would fund a healthcare consultant for us. The President said that we have a healthcare consultant for the university.

Prof. Mulvey said that her second question was a hypothetical. If the Fairfield faculty chose to unionize, would the administration voluntarily recognize the union, or would we have to go to the National Labor Relations Board? President von Arx said that he hadn’t thought about this question, but he would have to ask about the implications of unionization for the longstanding agreements between the faculty and administration in the Journal of Record and the Handbook. Many of these longstanding agreements are dear to faculty. His understanding is that with collective bargaining, everything is on the table. Faculty might want to ask the recently unionized workers on campus whether they think their deal was worth their union dues. As an old school Catholic, he believes in unions, but they might not be in the best interest of faculty given the great deals you have with the administration over so many issues.

Prof. Walter Hlawitschka, a member of the Health Care Review Committee (HCRC) disputed the President’s claim that the faculty bears part of the responsibility for the administration’s proposal not going to the HCRC. He said that the faculty on the HCRC have asked to meet and gotten no response; they’ve asked for weekly meetings and been offered monthly meetings. We’re ready to discuss, but the administration hasn’t brought us their proposals. He asked whether the President would direct the administrative team to meet with us weekly going forward. The President responded that he would ask his team about the status of the discussions. Prof. Hlawitschka then asked whether the President would affirm his commitment to compensation at the 95th percentile. President von Arx said that we have met the 95th percentile this year and he was pleased that that was the case. When prodded about the commitment going forward, he said that we would maintain it in so far as we can given financial constraints. Prof. Hlawitschka continued by noting that in various walks of life, if people are overcharged, they are then repaid. He asked, if we are overcharged for healthcare, will we get the excess back? The President responded by asking, if you are undercharged, will you make it up the next year? Prof. Mulvey jumped in to say that we would be willing to consider such a system, but we aren’t meeting.

Prof. Dawn Massey said that she has never been part of our health insurance because her husband’s is far superior, but his W-2 shows a cost well below the “Cadillac tax” threshold. She also noted that there is currently legislation pending to repeal the Cadillac tax, and asked whether the administration was aware of that. President von Arx said that they are, but they have to plan for the laws currently on the books. Prof. Massey said she was not sure that our numbers would meet the threshold for the tax. The President said that our figures are from our consultants and it would be irresponsible to ignore them.

Prof. Don Greenberg asked whether the President was seriously making an equivalency between what the university does to faculty when we overpay and what happens when the institution comes up short. The President said that he thought the issue was over versus under, and his question had been rhetorical.

Prof. Bob Epstein asked, if we budget more than we spend, where does the excess go? President von Arx said that sometimes we spend more or less than we’ve collected; it all evens out. Prof. Epstein noted that the excess stays in the operating budget. The President responded by asking about years when we’re short.

Prof. Cecelia Bucki began by thanking the President for his contributions to and support of the History department this year. She then expressed concern about the administration’s healthcare proposals. Last year’s
changes left her with some providers out of network, now there’s a proposal for a bigger deductible. What about the staff; it doesn’t seem fair that lower paid staff members would have to pay so much up front in deductibles. President von Arx said that he doesn’t know enough about the plan to comment. He knows there are different positions on the relative benefits of different plans. He added that this year there was a modest increase in salary for staff earning less than $50,000.

Prof. Shawn Rafalski asked about the recently announced reorganization. SVPAA Babington now has Provost in her title and there are some other title changes. Does the term “Provost” reflect the primacy of the academic sector? The President said that it does and that her new responsibilities make the position “Academic Vice President plus”. He said that he was very happy with her functioning this year and was happy to offer her the new title.

Returning to healthcare, Prof. Sonya Huber noted that HSAs are confusing and can have different impacts on different families. Given that different health plans affect different families differently, wouldn’t it make sense to preserve choice? President von Arx said that the administration has heard that concern and has requested a meeting with the FSC next week to discuss some new ideas. The issue is less about choice than cost; we still need to find a way to begin to reduce the cost of healthcare.

Prof. Steve Bayne said that in the President’s address, he had mentioned the possibility of endowed deanships- are any particular deanships under consideration? The President responded that any deanships someone would be willing to give money to could be under consideration. It would get the dean’s salary off the operating budget and into endowment.

Prof. Michael Coyne said that he understood the pressure not to raise tuition. He wondered whether there was anything in the 2020 report that could be a paradigm shift to raise revenues or reduce costs not through cutting benefits. President von Arx said that relative to our peers we’re still in reasonably good shape. We’ve got a balanced budget and we’ve set some money aside for deferred maintenance. We’ve had three solid years of enrollments. But with 85% of our revenue coming from undergraduate tuition and fees, we need to look for new revenue streams. He mentioned online courses, non-traditional learners, continuing education, use of facilities for conferences, but said there was no silver bullet.

Prof. Epstein said that there has been much talk about healthcare costs, but the term has been used in a number of ways. There’s how much healthcare costs and how much the administration is spending on healthcare. When you say we have to address healthcare costs every year, it sounds like the university is going to spend less on healthcare every year. But does that just mean shifting the burden to employees? The administration’s proposal this year was presented late and never presented to the HCRC. If it just shifts the burden, we shouldn’t accept it. The President said that healthcare costs affect us all. We’re in this together; it is in both of our interests to find a way to reduce healthcare costs. Prof. Epstein said that we should be looking for ways to reduce spending, not just shift costs.

Prof. Kathy Nantz said that she has heard frustration from a lot of people here in the last half hour. One of the reasons she came to Fairfield and stayed for 30 years is that she has treasured the collegiality here and she sees that drifting away. Ten years ago, the NEASC accreditation report also expressed concern about faculty/administrative relationships. It’s not at all clear that we have a story of improved relationships since 2008. President von Arx said that was an excellent question that he pondered a lot. He likes to think he has good relations with many faculty here, he tries to be effective in helping different programs and departments, he treasures relationships with faculty and our culture of devotion to students. But, he continued, there’s a dimension of campus culture that I find myself participating in that’s almost an alternative universe, a perduring alternate universe of faculty/administration relationships that precedes me and just seems to continue. I’ve tried to address it on a personal dimension but sometimes it just seems that we’re down the rabbit hole. I’m not blaming anyone in particular, it seems to be part of Fairfield. There are many lights, but also some shadows, and it’s hard to understand.

As we still had some remaining agenda items, Prof. Jones called on Prof. Joe Dennin for a final question. Prof. Dennin said that one of his concerns about the healthcare proposal was that the administrative team may not understand what they’re suggesting. The initial proposal called for moving everyone to the HSA; the administrative team did not know that that was not legal. So the proposers don’t understand basic facts about
their proposal. HSAs are very tricky. He’s concerned that the administration hasn’t done their homework completely or hasn’t shared what they know with the faculty. Now they’re offering an HRA for those ineligible for an HSA. That’s probably also very complicated- do they really know what they’re offering? The President said that the administrative team has spent a lot of time trying to understand and answer questions from the FSC. The administration is listening and he would like to think that his team knows what they’re advocating for and why they think it’s best for most people at Fairfield.

Approval of minutes

Motion [Castor/Miecznikowski]: to approve the minutes of 4/17/15 as circulated.

The motion passed unanimously.

Pre-presentation of the CT State Conference-AAUP George E. Lang, Jr. Award

Prof. Mulvey explained that this award is given by the Connecticut State Conference but the recipient is chosen by our chapter. George Lang was on the faculty from 1970 until his death after a brief illness in 2007. He was a Professor of Mathematics and was very active at the local, state and national AAUP level. The award is for a member of the Fairfield faculty who, early in her or her career, has shown support for AAUP principles. This award recognizes younger faculty and strengthens our chapter. The award will be given officially at the State Conference meeting next week, but it’s announced here for recognition by the recipient’s colleagues. Previous recipients are: Jocelyn Boryczka, Dave Crawford, Bob Epstein, Sonya Huber, Matt Kubasik, John Miecznikowski, and Deb Strauss.

FWC President Rona Preli then introduced the recipient:

The recipient of the George Lang award is Anna Lawrence. In the past few years she has assumed an active role in the FWC advocating for faculty and shared governance. She designed and created the FWC Banner during our “We are one Fairfield” campaign three years ago. She is a dedicated member of the FWC and a key supporter and organizer the past two years for the May Day rallies. Her commitment to faculty governance, a key principle of the AAUP, is also laudable, including her recent willingness to serve on the Core Advisory Steering Committee.

Presentation of FWC Service Awards

Prof. Preli then offered the following citations for Lifetime Achievement and Colleague of the Year:

The recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award is Michael Tucker, who has been at Fairfield since 1988, and has been a vital source of information and encouragement to the FWC since its founding. His knowledge, based upon his expertise in the field of Finance, was of particular value during the struggles over merit pay in 2001-2003, when he was one of the FWC’s most active and tireless speakers. He has served on numerous health care review committees over the course of 2 decades. He worked on reviewing retirement savings when Fidelity was added to TIAA/CREF as an option. He served as a consultant to the FSC and was helpful in the development of the “buyout package” for retiring faculty. He has become the go to expert on health insurance matters and has served on the Health Care Review Committee. He has organized book discussions and built community among faculty. We are grateful for his years of service and contribution and we honor him with this award.

The recipient of the “Colleague of the Year” award has demonstrated extraordinary leadership at Fairfield University in advancing shared governance, protecting academic freedom, negotiating with the Administration for faculty salary and compensation, and working tirelessly to represent Fairfield at the Connecticut state and national levels of the AAUP. For the past three years, Irene Mulvey has served on the FSC and has chaired it for the past two. This position puts her in the firing line of the Administration and under intense scrutiny by the faculty. Her extraordinary ability to navigate complex matters of health care insurance, the university budget in a way that always presents the best case for the faculty is unparalleled. Irene has served as the Secretary of the General Faculty, our highest position of leadership for nine years, which ex officio has made her a leader in our Academic Council. She currently serves as the Secretary of that body. These leadership roles have been pivotal in charting shared faculty
governance and have established her as a paramount figure of faculty leadership at our university. Irene began our FWC newsletter in Fall 2007 and it has been an award winning AAUP publication in 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2012.

And most notably, Irene has been selected as the recipient of the Marilyn Sternberg Award – this prestigious award is given annually to the one person nationally who best demonstrates concern for human rights, courage, persistence, political foresight, imagination, and collective bargaining skills.

**Update from the Faculty Salary Committee**

In the wake of the standing ovation she received, Prof. Mulvey, FSC Chair, took the podium. She acknowledged the other members of the FSC: Profs. Chris Bernhardt, Bryan Crandall, Bob Epstein and Sonya Huber, as well as the administrative team: VP Mark Reed, Ms. Mary Magri, VP Tom Pellegrino, and Dean Jim Simon.

She then began with some of the background provided in the attached presentation. She presented the FSC’s purpose and duties, including a start date of October 1, from the Faculty Handbook. Then she explained our contractual documents. The Faculty Handbook has a section of policies related to employment. The Memo of Understanding (MOU) provides specific terms each year, as does the Benefits Plan Overview (BPO), which is an appendix to the MOU. Finally, individual contract letters reference the MOU/BPO and present the appropriate salary data for each individual.

The MOU says, “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....” Since the Board approves the budget in March, we should be voting on an MOU in February. The administration refers to our urgency regarding an MOU as a faculty timetable, but the timetable language in the MOU has been jointly agreed to by the faculty and administration.

Prof. Mulvey then reviewed the administration’s proposal of 4/16: a salary increase of 1.5%, all distributed as standard merit in exchange for working toward agreement on a “post-tenure review system;” an additional 1% increase because of the 1% cut in compensation we agreed to take previously that has since been made up for with other employees; elimination of PPO plans; increase in the HSA deductible with no increase in the university’s subsidy.

The FSC sent a counterproposal to the administration on 4/29, in advance of a 4/30 meeting which the administrators ultimately couldn’t make. The proposal was for a salary increase of 1.5%, all distributed as standard merit, an additional 1% increase in salary, and no changes to health insurance. The FSC would agree to work with the administration beginning immediately to study the advisability of eliminating PPO plans and continuing only with HSA options.

Prof. Mulvey explained the FSC’s problems with the administration’s proposal. First, we don’t know enough about it, and what we do know, we have serious problems with. The President and the administrative team say, “we’ve answered all of your questions,” but those are only the questions we’ve thought of. We need a document on the proposal that we can take to an attorney. As Prof. Dennin pointed out, when the proposal first arose, we asked about people ineligible for the HSA and the administrators didn’t know what we were talking about. The next week they came back with an HRA for those ineligible for the HSA, but no documents. We don’t know who is ineligible for an HSA and how imposing the HSA will affect people. If everyone had the same expenses as this year and moved to the HSA, how would they be affected? From our survey, it’s clear that many people are confused about the HSA. Some people might do better on it. It’s worth discussing, but it’s definitely not for everyone. We’re not prepared to present the administration’s proposal for consideration because we don’t know enough about it.

Regarding the excise tax, as Prof. Massey pointed out, it’s an unknown. Monitoring developments with that tax is a specific charge of the HCRC that the administration hasn’t engaged this year. We set up that committee to make smart, data-driven changes, but they’re not using it. Bypassing the HCRC is subverting governance, but the administration doesn’t see it that way.
Prof. Mulvey concluded by saying that yesterday the chair of the administrative team asked if we wanted to meet next week. We found an hour to do so. We really want to reach agreement and bring an MOU to the General Faculty. In 2012, when we did not have an MOU going into the summer, the GFS sent a memo to the President with the text shown on the last two slides. We’ve asked to have a General Faculty meeting on May 27. At that time we hope to have an MOU. If not, we hope to pass a motion comparable to what we did in 2012.

At this point, the floor was opened for question.

Prof. Kathy Nantz said that she appreciated the FSC wanting to spare us some details because this is very complicated. Some people have serious health issues, and HSAs are complicated even for a healthy family of four. She begged for a simple system that we don’t have to work so hard to use. She said that she tried the HSA but neither she nor her husband could figure it out. She wants a system we can all use without it turning into a part time job. Prof. Mulvey said that with regard to details, they would be happy to have conversations with faculty members, but it would be easier one on one.

Prof. Crandall, a member of the FSC, said that he was thrilled that the President had acknowledged the Connecticut Writing Project in his remarks because I’ve brought in more money through that than in my salary. Returning to the issue of civility, he said that he had “lost it” at the last meeting with the administrative team because negotiation requires reciprocation. Irene is on top of everything, while the administration’s responses take a while or come at meetings rather than in advance. The lack of transparency makes me question my future here; I’m not seeing actual talk between administrators and faculty. Prof. Mulvey clarified that Prof. Crandall didn’t “lose it;” he had been calm but angry.

Prof. Boquet, picking up on Prof. Nantz’s comments, said that the HSA is a modern day literacy test. We have a room full of PhDs who can’t figure out the details and need access to expensive layers of bureaucracy. Information is controlled by different people and we can’t figure out what questions to ask- that’s a literacy test. She went on to ask about incentives. There are employer incentives to provide certain benefits. Healthcare and retirement are governmentally incentivized; what are the conversations around incentives? Prof. Mulvey said that the administration’s conversation is all about cutting costs. Prof. Epstein, a member of the FSC, elaborated. He said that there’s a lot we don’t know about HSAs, but there are some things we do know. We know that not everyone is eligible and not everyone wants it for a variety of reasons. Many people find it onerous. Some would pay more under an HSA; he didn’t switch to an HSA because Human Resources told him, after looking at his expenses, that he would pay more. What the administration is proposing is to eliminate options and make the remaining option less attractive, with no explanation for why. The President said that they don’t want to shift the burden to employees, but that’s what this proposal does.

Prof. Bernhardt, a member of the FSC, said that we’re told we’ll save money by moving everyone from a PPO to an HSA. He then asked Prof. Hlawitschka, of the HCRC, whether the HSA is indeed a cheaper option. Prof. Hlawitschka said that last year and this year they cost exactly the same amount. Over a four-year period the HSA has been the plan with the fastest cost increase. When we asked for the economic reason for pushing the HSA, they said they didn’t know. They asked their consultant, who provided a report with some interesting information, but not a full answer to our question.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn [Dennin/Bucki] was uncontested at 5:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Prof. Susan Rakowitz
Secretary of the General Faculty
Know your Contractual Documents:

- Memo of Understanding
- Benefits Plan Overview (part of MOU)
- Individual Contract Letter
- Faculty Handbook

Faculty Salary Committee

Presentation to the General Faculty
May 6, 2015

Faculty Salary Committee
(from Faculty Handbook)

General Purpose
To engage annually in collegial discussions regarding faculty salary and benefits with an administrative team appointed by the President.

Specific Duties
i. To start collegial discussions with the administrative team by October 1 of each year with the shared goal of reaching agreement on a Memo of Understanding to present to the General Faculty for approval.

ii. To review the Benefits Plan Overview for Full-Time Faculty, recommending changes to the General Faculty as appropriate.

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

Know your Contractual Documents:

- Memo of Understanding
- Individual Contract Letter
- Faculty Handbook

From the 2014-15 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 inclusions in the budget that they submit to the President and the Board of Trustees the following compensation package...

Administration’s proposal 4/16/2015:

- 1.5% salary pool - all as standard merit in exchange for the faculty agreeing to create an appropriate faculty/administration committee to determine if there is a mutually agreeable post-tenure review system to replace the current merit pay system, with the goal of having a new system (if agreement can be reached) in place for 2016-17.
- An additional salary increase of 1% (before standard merit is awarded) across-the-board as a percent of salary (not the mean).
- Maintain University’s contribution to retirement at 9%
- No change to chair stipend
- Health insurance changes (on next slide):
**Administration’s proposal 4/16/2015:**

Health insurance changes (same as on 2/25):
- Eliminate all PPO plans
- Continue only the HSA plans
- Increase the deductible on the HSA plans by $500/$1,000 to $2,000/$4,000
- No increase in subsidy for HSA provided by the University (remains $1,000/$2,000)

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**FSC’s proposal 4/29/2015:**

- Salary increase of 1.5%, distributed all as standard merit;
- Additional salary increase of 1% as described in (administration’s) memo of April 16, 2015;
- Health Insurance: no changes in health insurance for calendar year 2016 in exchange for an agreement to work with the administration beginning immediately (through the Health Care Committee and the Faculty Salary Committee) to study the advisability of eliminating PPO plans and continuing only the HSA plans.

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**Health Care Review Committee**

**Membership**
Two members of the Faculty Salary Committee (FSC) and two members of the faculty appointed by the FSC and up to three administrators appointed by the President.

**Purpose**
The purpose of this committee is to address on an ongoing basis the growth in the total cost of health care, which is of concern to both the faculty and the administration. Using all relevant and reasonably available data, including data on projected as well as actual health care costs in the aggregate, changing demographics, employee usage patterns and changes in stop-loss insurance cost, and with the help of the University’s consultant and other consultants as mutually agreed to and needed, the Committee is charged to:

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**Health Care Review Committee**

**We have been here before:**

**Memo GFS to President von Arx 6/1/2012:**

As you know, a meeting of the General Faculty was held on Thursday, May 31, from 3:30-5:30 in Gonzaga Auditorium. As you also know, current faculty contracts run through June 1, 2012 and, traditionally, new faculty contracts, based on a new Memo of Understanding (MOU) are sent to faculty in June. Given that the parties have not yet reached agreement on a successor MOU, and based on the advice of our attorney, the General Faculty passed the following motion at the meeting on 5/31:

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**We have been here before:**

**Memo GFS to President von Arx 6/1/2012:**

**MOTION.** Given that we have not reached agreement on a successor MOU, the General Faculty’s position is that current faculty contracts continue in force until superseded by a new mutually approved MOU and new faculty contracts for the 2012-13 academic year based on that MOU. The faculty will continue to perform their job duties under the terms of their 2011-2012 faculty contracts.

The motion passed unanimously 173 in favor, none opposed, and one abstaining.