Report to General Faculty  
Committee on Rank and Tenure  
May 1, 2009

The members of the Committee on Rank and Tenure for the 2008-2009 year were David McFadden, chair; Linda Henkel, Jack Beal, Sheila Grossman, Paula Gill-Lopez, Don Gibson, and Dennis Keenan.

The Committee met eight times during the year: October 5, November 14, January 5, January 7, January 9, January 19, February 11 and March 25. All members were present for all meetings.

Old Business. The Committee considered a number of suggestions from Fr. Von Arx and from previous committees to strengthen guidelines and procedures for the work of the Committee. Several of these items resulted in suggested changes to the Faculty Handbook and the Guidelines which the committee approved and recommended to the Academic Council and General Faculty. These will be considered during the 2009-2010 year and are attached to this report.

New Business.

1. The Committee reviewed 14 dossiers and made 21 recommendations for tenure and promotion.

2. The committee reviewed the dossier of one candidate for administrative position for tenure and rank.

3. The committee reviewed and made recommendations for four decisions for emeritus status.

Attached: Recommendations to Academic Council on procedure, guidelines, and membership on Rank and Tenure (including suggested rewording of the Faculty handbook).

The Chair would like to thank all members of the committee and the Academic Vice President for their hard work and professionalism this year.

Respectfully Submitted,

David W. McFadden, Chair
Committee on Rank and Tenure Recommendations to Academic Council

At our meetings this year, the Committee on Rank and Tenure has discussed several changes to the Handbook and guidelines for Rank and Tenure which would clarify certain issues and make our work more efficient. The final language of all of what follows was adopted unanimously or with one dissenting vote by the Committee at our final meeting of the year, March 25, 2009.

(1) Proposed language change in the handbook regarding length of service requirement for tenure and promotion to associate professor, as follows:

**HANDBOOK: IIA 1 B (3):** “the normal requirements for appointment to the rank of Associate professor are. . . . (b) SIX years experience in the rank of Associate Professor.”

This change will bring our practice in line with AAUP and the vast majority of our comparator schools. AAUP guidelines clearly call for the “normal probationary period shall not exceed seven years,” allowing for a decision during the sixth year and a terminal year contract if necessary. The Committee felt that this shifts the burden of mentoring and review from the rank and tenure committee to departments and deans (where it is properly situated). If one assumes that the current possibility of going up for tenure in BOTH the fifth and sixth year of service is to give the applicant another opportunity to right any wrongs perceived by the rank and tenure committee, then this (in effect) shifts the burden of mentoring and review from departments and deans to the rank and tenure committee. It also puts the rank and tenure committee in a (perhaps legally) awkward situation if an applicant receives a second negative evaluation during their sixth year of service. The applicant might argue they he or she (in his or her mind) satisfied the shortcomings identified by the rank and tenure committee in the course of the first negative evaluation (i.e., during the fifth year of service).

(2) Service at Fairfield before applying for tenure or promotion. Current language (IIA3.b.(3) is as follows: “The candidate for tenure shall have serve a probationary period of not less than five (now recommended six) years in the academic profession, not less than two of which years shall have been served at Fairfield University.” There has been confusion as to whether these years must be served before APPLYING for tenure or promotion or before RECEIVING it. The committee recommends adding
the following language for clarification: *(HANDBOOK)*: “Normally the two years service at Fairfield must have been completed before submitting the application.” It is extremely helpful to the committee to have two full years of experience, student evaluations, and peer review data in the application under review.

(3) Membership on the Rank and Tenure Committee. Currently the four members elected from the College of Arts and Sciences are elected at large. The committee feels that it is extremely useful, in fact crucial, to have at least one member from the Humanities Social and Behavioral Sciences and natural Sciences on the Committee at all times. We therefore recommend the following amendment to the *HANDBOOK*(ICb2): “four members elected from the College of Arts and Sciences, at least one each from the humanities, social and behavioral sciences, and natural sciences.” The Committee realizes that this still leaves Engineering unrepresented. We considered changing natural sciences to including engineering but decided against such a recommendation, as the committee felt that Natural sciences needed its own representation.

(4) **GUIDELINES** language concerning outside letters. The Committee felt that a more consultative process for deciding on outside letters, particularly including a strong role for the head of the curricular area, would ensure greater objectivity in assessment of the candidates’ cases, and we recommend the following language be added: “the candidate, in consultation with the head of the curricular area and the Dean, shall propose five names, three of which shall be selected by the head of the curricular area, who will contact and get agreement of the persons to write letters. This does not preclude candidates from soliciting additional letters.”