1. **Chair**: Shannon Harding

2. **Committee Membership**: Marsha Alibrandi, Georgia Day, Carol Fackler, Sue Fitzgerald, Shannon Harding, Angela Harkins, Marice Rose, Vishnu Vinekar, Brian Walker. (Regular guests: Bill Abbott (former Chair), Lawrence Miners (CAE), Roben Torosyan (CAE))

3. **Number of meetings attended by each committee member**: Alibrandi 7, Day 0, Fackler 6 (appointed in October), Fitzgerald 0, Harding 7, Harkins 7, Rose 5 (maternity leave: January and February), Vinekar 7, Walker 4 (pretenure leave Fall).

4. **Dates of meetings**: September 18, October 16, November 6, December 4, February 12, March 19, April 20.

5. **Principal Topics Considered by the Committee**:

   a) **Student Evaluation of Teaching forms**

   The FDEC continued to investigate replacing our current student evaluation form with a professionally produced form from the IDEA Center (http://theideacenter.org), a project that began with discussions in March of 2006. The IDEA center form was selected after FDEC’s review of several professionally-produced forms during Summer 2007 because of its ability to provide more substantive information about teaching effectiveness, and because research that suggests that it is both a valid and reliable instrument. This particular form also allows for comparisons with faculty members in other institutions who are teaching in similar departments and takes into consideration things over which an instructor has no control, such as student interest in taking the course. Furthermore, it allows for separation of both formative (decision-making) and summative (improvement) measures.

   After two successful pilot projects with the form last year (with 30-35 participants each time), FDEC launched a large-scale pilot in the Fall of 2008. Shannon Harding (Chair), Bill Abbott (former Chair) and Angela Harkins met with AVP Grossman to secure support for the project, and to identify staff to oversee the online administration of the form (Kaveh Ahmadian) and mailing / return of paper forms to ensure confidentiality (Linda Lavine). FDEC then solicited volunteers via faculty announcements and during a general faculty presentation in October 2008. We were able to solicit 90 volunteers to administer the form (together with the old form) to about 120 classes. FDEC members worked together to organize materials for the pilot and to deliver them across campus. We would like to thank AVP Grossman for his support of this project, and the support staff for helping in the implementation.

   In February 2009, 3 members of FDEC (Angela Harkins, Vishnu Vinekar, and Shannon Harding) and one guest (Bill Abbott) attended the IDEA Center’s “Train the
Trainer” meeting in Orlando, FL to learn how to educate faculty and administrators about the form. Immediately after attending this event, CAE and FDEC conducted three workshops (Feb 24; Feb 26; Mar 9) with pilot participants to help them interpret their results.

After three successful pilots (two small-scale; one large-scale), FDEC produced two motions to present to the Academic Council:

**Motion 1.** That the Academic Council set up an ad-hoc committee to consider all issues pertinent to switching to the IDEA teaching evaluation form and system, including: ongoing funding for the project; consideration of who is responsible for the work involved in distributing and collecting the forms as well as distribution of results; issues related to online implementation; consideration of who will be responsible for workshops and faculty information sessions for educating faculty about the form and the results; consideration of whether or not to allow continued use of the “yellow sheet” qualitative evaluations; consideration of the accessibility of the data beyond the faculty member.

**Motion 2.** That the Academic Council agrees in principle with switching from the current evaluation of teaching forms to the IDEA form and system, produced by the IDEA Center at Kansas State University, as soon as practical and contingent upon receipt of the subcommittee report and acknowledgement that all implementation details have been satisfactorily worked out.

The motions and a proposal by FDEC were given to Academic Council in March, and after a brief presentation by FDEC, the motions were passed. FDEC discussed the results of the Academic Council meeting at our final meeting on April 19th, and selected the Chair and Marsha Alibrandi to represent the committee as members of the ad-hoc committee.

**b. FUSA’s initiative to publish quantitative results of student evaluations of teaching**

For the first time in over a decade, representatives of the Fairfield University Student Association (FUSA) elected to publish the results of the quantitative section of the current student evaluation of teaching forms. Throughout the year, FDEC worked with FUSA representatives to determine (1) the best way to make this project available to the faculty and to encourage them to participate and (2) the best questions to publish. In Fall, FUSA made FDEC aware of their intent to publish the results of Fall evaluations in a Spring publication of the *Mirror*, to allow students to make informed decisions about class selections during registration. Shannon Harding then sent out a memo via faculty announcements and discussed this at a General Faculty meeting in October to make faculty aware of the publication and their right to “opt out” of the process by checking a box on the envelope containing the forms. In addition, Shannon Harding and Rick DeWitt (then general faculty secretary) met with FUSA president Jeff Seiser to talk about both the student’s intention and about how to encourage faculty to participate. Seiser gave a presentation to the General Faculty in the Spring of 2009 explaining the reasons behind the publication, and the document was produced before Spring registration and circulated to the students.

FDEC plans to continue discussions of student evaluation of teaching with FUSA in the coming year. To that end, we have suggested that the ad-hoc committee set up by the
academic council to implement IDEA contain two student representatives: one undergraduate and one graduate student.

b) Evaluation of Teaching as a Whole

The FDEC continues to examine the evaluation of teaching as a whole, including the use of portfolios and peer review. Experts suggest that student evaluation of teaching should only “count” as 30-50% of teaching evaluation for review, yet anecdotally speaking Fairfield tends to weight these forms more than they should. To that end, CAE has put together a series of workshops about Peer Review that ran throughout the year. The second workshop in the series ran on December 12, 2008 as part of an FDEC co-sponsored Faculty Development Day discussing the “Nuts and Bolts” of Peer review. The workshop was presented by Roben Torosyan and Laurence Miners of the CAE and was well attended and very well received.

c) Organizing Summer Work

A second faculty development day took place on May 4, 2009 and focused on summer work: teaching and research. The first half of the workshop focused on creating a new syllabus, and the second half discussed getting research/writing done over the summer. Presenters included Shannon Harding and Brian Walker from FDEC, and Laurence Miners and Roben Torosyan from CAE.

d. Assessment Coordinating Team

At the request of Ann Stehney (Office of Institutional Research), Shannon Harding attended the first meeting of the Assessment Coordinating Team in December 2008 to discuss ongoing assessment issues on campus.

6) Decisions Taken by the Committee

a) That FDEC invites Dr. Roben Torosyan and Dr. Laurence Miners of the Center for Academic Excellence to attend FDEC meetings for the entire 2008-2009 academic year. The FDEC truly appreciates the work of the CAE this semester and their vital input to this committee.

b) That the FDEC invites former Chair Dr. Bill Abbott to attend FDEC meetings for the entire 2008-2009 academic year. Given the amount of effort Bill has put into the IDEA initiative, it was the opinion of the group that his insight during the year would be particularly useful. The committee would like to thank Bill for his hard work.

c) That the FDEC invite representatives from FUSA to attend our meetings. FUSA has provided some valuable insight to the projects related to student evaluation of teaching, and we are grateful for having them in attendance.
d) With regard to IDEA:

**Motion 1.** That the Academic Council set up an ad-hoc committee to consider all issues pertinent to switching to the IDEA teaching evaluation form and system, including: ongoing funding for the project; consideration of who is responsible for the work involved in distributing and collecting the forms as well as distribution of results; issues related to online implementation; consideration of who will be responsible for workshops and faculty information sessions for educating faculty about the form and the results; consideration of whether or not to allow continued use of the “yellow sheet” qualitative evaluations; consideration of the accessibility of the data beyond the faculty member.

**Motion 2.** That the Academic Council agrees in principle with switching from the current evaluation of teaching forms to the IDEA form and system, produced by the IDEA Center at Kansas State University, as soon as practical and contingent upon receipt of the subcommittee report and acknowledgement that all implementation details have been satisfactorily worked out.

d) That the FDEC together with CAE continue to run workshops about the IDEA form.

e) That the FDEC shall continue to educate itself about other methods of assessing teaching, notably peer review, and work together with CAE to create a standardized system of peer review.

7) **Anticipated Effects of These Decisions**

   a) Adoption of the IDEA form

   Representatives of FDEC will be working together with members of the Fairfield Community as part of an ad-hoc committee to address the best way to adopt the IDEA form in place of the current quantitative student evaluation of teaching form as stated in Item 6d. In addition, representatives of FDEC together with the CAE will continue to have informational meetings about how to use the IDEA form and how to interpret its results.

   b) Other Methods of Evaluating Teaching

   FDEC expects to continue investigating and educating the faculty on other methods of evaluation, including peer review. FDEC will continue to work closely with the CAE to develop a school-wide system of peer review. One suggested method for moving forward on this initiative is to launch a pilot program for peer review, asking for departments to volunteer in the process, with the intention of creating a template for peer review to be used by other departments in the future.

8) **Unfinished Business**

The projects mentioned in item 7 can be considered unfinished business, inasmuch as they are ongoing projects. Other issues include:
a) Continuing our relationship with FUSA to determine best practices for distributing information gathered from student evaluation of teaching forms to the students themselves.

b) Establishing a role with the Office of Institutional Research, at the request of Ann Stehney. The Assessment Coordinating Team (ACT) will begin meeting again to discuss assessment issues on campus, and it’s been requested that FDEC send a representative to apprise the committee of our progress.

9. Future Agenda Items

a) Academic Integrity and Faculty Development. Over the summer, Dean Crabtree began to form a task force composed of members of FDEC, CAE, and Ed Tech to discuss the rising number of cases in academic dishonesty. It may be time to put together a workshop / series of workshops to address this issue and best practices to address it.

b) Working with SCT to “streamline” the current evaluation process. As it stands now, three members of FDEC have to “sign off” on the processing of evaluation forms, and it’s unclear why that is. With recent budget cuts, the process seems to be taking much longer (for example, this year forms were not sent to FDEC representatives until July (!), which resulted in a longer-than-normal hold-up).

Respectfully submitted,
Shannon Harding