

January/February 2008



# NEWSLETTER

A Publication of the University of Nebraska at Omaha AAUP Chapter

## Nominations Sought

The UNO AAUP is asking for nominations for the up-coming election of officers. The offices to be filled are: President-elect [a three year commitment with one year as president-elect, one year as president and one year as past president]; Second Vice-president [Grievance Officer] and Secretary [both for two year terms]; representatives of the ranks: Professor, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor and Other Bargaining Unite Members i.e. non-professorial ranks [one year terms].

In addition to these, who constitute the Executive Committee, volunteers are sought for other Association duties, such as Membership Co-ordinator; Social Functions Co-ordinator; Clerical Assistance. It is hoped that more members will become actively involved in the organization and the running of the AAUP. With the 'graying' of the Executive Committee, it is especially hoped that younger members of the unit would take an active role in Association governance.

Do yourself and your colleagues a favor and take an active part in your AAUP. Or if you know of someone else who would make a contribution to the organization through service, nominate him or her [with permission, of course]. Nominations should be sent to Sharon Wood, History, Past President and Chair of the nominating Committee; Joe Brown, Psychology or Roger Holberg, Chemistry.

## Fall Dinner a Success



The Fall Dinner of the UNO AAUP Membership drew about seventy-five members and their guests to the Upstream Brewery West for an evening of feasting and comradeship. This was one of the largest such gatherings since this semi-annual event has been in place. Current members were joined by several emeritus members, as well. These evenings are a great opportunity to become better acquainted with your fellow AAUP members and to catch up with old friends.

The Spring Dinner will take place on April 25 at the Greek Islands restaurant, with promise of a delicious Greek menu. Further details on reserving your place will be forth-coming, but mark your calendar now and reserve the date. Plan to join your fellow UNO AAUP members for an enjoyable evening. [Ability to Greek dance is not required.]

## **Kolasa Scholarships**

Once again, the UNO AAUP will be awarding graduate scholarships to UNO graduates who are entering a graduate program in the fall of 2008. Any student who graduates during the 2007-2008 academic year [including Summer 2008] is eligible. There are two \$1,000 scholarships available which can be used in any way the graduate student wishes.

For details on the application process and criteria, contact Sharon Wood, History, chair of the scholarship committee or check the UNO AAUP Web Site: [unomaha.edu/aaup](http://unomaha.edu/aaup).

The scholarships were established several years ago and were named in honor of Professor Bernie Kolasa, Political Science, one of the founding members of the UNO AAUP and one of the chapter's first presidents. Bernie died in 2002, suddenly and unexpectedly, shortly after his retirement. He was a strong advocate for the AAUP and for education at all levels. In addition to 32 years of teaching at UNO, he also served on the OPS School Board for 16 years.

## **Twelve Month Academic Year**

With the report of the Task Force on a Twelve Month Academic Calendar out, many have asked about the response of the AAUP. The Report is just that, a report setting out the pluses and minuses of such a calendar, and carries no recommendations for implementation. Until there is a proposal that can be responded to, the only response of the AAUP is that any change in working conditions, which such an arrangement would seem to necessitate, must be negotiated in collective bargaining.

## **State Conference**

The Nebraska State Conference of the AAAUP will hold its Spring Meeting on Saturday, March 29 on the campus of Nebraska Wesleyan University in Lincoln. The meeting will convene at 10:00 A.M. At noon, lunch will be served and the keynote speaker, State Senator Amanda McGill, who represents District 26 in Lincoln will address the Conference. She will discuss some of the implications for the University if Affirmative Action is abolished in Nebraska, as is proposed by a petition. This will be a very important meeting, in as much as there will be some revisions to the Constitution and By-Laws voted upon. Members of the AAUP will be receiving copies of the proposed amendments in the State Conference Newsletter, which will be arriving shortly by electronic mail. Specifics of meeting place and directions to NWU will be sent. Please try to attend. Car pools will be available.

Candidates are also needed to fill state-wide offices. Nominations are needed for Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and two At-Large representatives. There will also be elections for two delegates to the National Conference and up to four delegates to the Assembly of State Conferences. If you are interested in standing for election to any of these offices, please contact Jim Czarnecki, Art & Art History or Janet West, Economics.

## **AAUP National Elections**

Ballots for the 2008 election of national AAUP officers will be mailed between February 25 and March 3. They must be returned on or before April 15. The next issue of this Newsletter will publish statements from the candidates for Representative of this district.

## **From National: Faculty Handbooks**

One of the more important services provided by the AAUP's national staff is the review of proposed revisions to faculty handbooks.

About twice a month, year after year, campus faculty write to the staff of our Department of Academic Freedom, Tenure, and Governance and ask them to comment on new language or procedures that administrators are proposing for inclusion. The issues can be complex, and our staff is adept at drawing out the practical implications of regulations that may seem innocuous on the surface. Staff analyses give individual faculty, faculty senates, and AAUP chapters the arguments they need to resist major erosions of shared governance, due process, and academic freedom.

To keep abreast of trends in policies, the staff tracks faculty handbooks online and maintains a continuously updated "wall of handbooks." Recent years have seen a variety of new proposals for post-tenure review and for the handling of sexual harassment cases. Occasionally, proposals reach us that are, one may say, bizarre, such as a board of regents demand that the faculty handbook state clearly that tenure is relinquished upon death. Some proposals are put forward without full consideration of the consequences, such as one providing that faculty could be required to undergo a mental examination by a psychiatrist of the president's choosing. Yet others are downright pernicious—this year, for example, administrators at one institution put forward language giving them the "expedited" right to terminate faculty appointments.

[Excerpt from a news item from  
Carey Nelson AAUP President]

## **Note from the Government Relations Committee Chair, Gerry Turkel**

As we enter into this election year, two factors are dominating higher education finances. First, the United States is facing what at best appears to be a serious economic slowdown and at worst a potentially deep recession. In the past, bad economic times have seriously eroded state and federal support for higher education. With the slump in housing and the decline in state revenues based on property taxes and transfer taxes, this erosion may be even worse than usual at the state level. Second, according to an article in the Washington Post on January 26, college applications look like they are at an all time high this year, as baby boomers' children graduate from high school and go on to college at ever-increasing rates.

In the face of this perfect storm of declining revenues and increased student demand, we must do our utmost to make higher education a priority in state and national elections. We should press for adequate levels of funding to keep higher education accessible and stress its importance for our country's economy and democratic vitality. We should also strongly resist demands for cutting full-time faculty, weakening tenure, and eliminating academic programs in the name of efficiency and output-based measurements of learning. Our voices and the voices of students and their families must be heard in establishing accessible and quality higher education as a key priority in this election year. Through lobbying efforts, op-ed pieces, letters to the editor, participation in candidate forums, and by using candidate questionnaires, we should make sure that higher education issues are a visible part of the public agenda and political discussion.

## 2005-2006 Executive Committee

President: Ann Antlfinger, Biology  
First Vice President: Joseph Brown, Psychology  
Grievance Officer: Michael Peterson, Geography / Geology  
Secretary: Claudette Lee, Social Work  
Treasurer: Don Greer, HPER  
Assistant Professor Rep.: Robert Darcy, English  
Associate Professor Rep.: Donna Dufner, ISQA  
Full Professor Rep.: Roger Hoburg, Biology  
Other Bargaining Unit Members Rep.: Maria Knudson,  
English  
President-elect: Ken Deffenbacher  
Past President: Sharon Wood, History  
Newsletter Editor: Jim Czarniecki, Art & Art History

## UNO's current list of peer institutions

University of Northern Iowa  
University of Colorado - Denver  
University of Missouri – St. Louis  
University of Arkansas – Little Rock  
Cleveland State University (Ohio)  
University of North Carolina – Charlotte  
University of Texas – San Antonio  
Portland State University (Oregon)

