Minutes – AAUP UNC-Chapel Hil Chapter – February 23, 2007

Present: Altha, Cravey, Carl Ernst (Presiding), Cat Warren, Glenn Howse, Frank Dominguez, Connie Eble, David Auerbach, Don Nonini

Carl opened the meeting at 3:06 p.m. The minutes from the January 26 meeting were approved

Carl reported back re filing our Chapter’s charter with the National AAUP. Glenn reported on his contact with the Associate General Secretary of Committee A, Jonathan Knight, of the National AAUP in connection with reviewing UNC-CH’s Faculty Code to ascertain its degree of compliance with AAUP standards.

The meeting then turned to the two items of main business.

Reviewing the Faculty Code
We discussed the changes proposed to the Faculty Code by a working committee of the Faculty Council. Don brought copies of amended “Article 6: The Schools and Colleges,” with some marginal comments about proposed changes. Changes which are being made to the prior language of Article 6 re terms of the Dean, consultation between faculty and administrators, etc. were discussed. Glenn will fax a copy of “Article 6” to Jonathan Knight, and ask him to report back to Glenn as soon as he can. There was discussion of procedures re tenure and promotion and the installation of a new elected committee on tenure and promotion in the Provost’s Office that is a higher level of review than the Arts and Sciences Dean’s committee with the same functions.

Carl brought up issues of Chapter organization and membership from last time. The question of Survey Monkey and its use by the Chapter to survey the needs of its members was discussed, and Don will make further inquiries. Carl announced that we have a basic web site, and we will go public with it soon.

We discussed the question of Research and Study Assignments brought up last time. Connie reported on her discussion with Dean Will Andrews about RSAs. Connie stated that Dean told her that the new policy is that once a person has been promoted with tenure, that person has to be given priority to a RSA within the Dept. These cannot be used as recruitment devices for attracting someone into a unit. According to the Dean, this new policy does not affect the number of RSAs allotted to a Dept or affect the policy of giving them to faculty without tenure. It does affect those who have been promoted with tenure, who have to be allotted an RSA within 5 years of promotion. Carl noted that this is in fact an unfunded mandate, because the number of RSAs has not been increased in allocations to Depts. Carl is going to investigate this by talking to the Dean, and point out how it is placing stress on Depts.

Cat mentioned a PowerPoint presentation given by Steven Allred that mentioned that universities in the UNC system are instituting faculty criminal background checks. So far the 16-campus System is not going to institute this, but it is already instituted at UNC Wilmington and NCSU, and being considered at UNC-A. Allred indicated that the UNC-Chapel Hill is going to institute these with new people on July 1, 2007. People already on staff but with new appointments
would also have to undergo these. A private firm would undertake such background checks.

Cat proposes that the AAUP demand that at very least there be transparency and faculty input, advice and consent with respect on these policies on criminal background checks. According to Cat, “all the arguments for criminal background checks suck,” e.g., we do it to staff so we should do it to faculty; or that it’s necessary for legal reasons in the post 9-11. She notes that the one currently at NCSU is frightening, e.g., taking out a State vehicle triggers a full background check on one’s driving record. Connie noted that with the document we sign on being hired requiring us to state any past criminal convictions already exists; only if a background check brings up a discrepancy does this become an issue for investigation. She thinks most faculty will therefore not be willing “to go to the wall” on this question.

Cat as President of the AAUP’s Statewide Chapter has sent the AAUP’s report on “proportionality” in response to post-9/11 concerns, etc. to President Erskine Bowles of the UNC System. Two key questions: Is this an abuse of individuals’ rights? Is this a good use of system resources?

Statewide AAUP Conference to Be Held at the Fedex® Center for Global Education on March 30-31
Cat passed out the tentative program of the March 30-31 State AAUP Conference, and described the panels and workshops that have been scheduled, on accountability, on Historically Minority Institutions, and on contingent faculty (the latter will be led by Cary Nelson). Cat asked for some help in finding people to lead some of these workshops. Bernadette Gray-Little, Provost, will attend, as will the President for Gardner Webb College. Cat also announced that Steve Wing will be running as candidate for Vice-President of the statewide AAUP Chapter.

Cat invited Chapter members to join David Auerbach and her for drinks with Cary Nelson when he arrives on March 30, along with Sherryl Kleinman and Andy Perrin, who helped greatly with preparations for the Conference.

Cat described publicity for the Conference. Conference registration is $10 ahead of time, $15 at the door.

Don asked about what the workshops had as objectives – and what might be of value as a resource for those who might be attracted to attend? Cat responded that for the contingent faculty workshop one objective would be to make resources available, e.g., there will be a great deal of AAUP literature on contingent faculty, and Nelson is a master of organizing contingent faculty. Cat also discussed what the outcomes might be for workshops on HMIs and on funding. Don asked about the possibility of issuing press releases about newsworthy statements coming out of the Conference. Cat said that local press (e.g., DTH) would be invited to Cary Nelson’s talk. Dick Gordon may interview Cary Nelson while he is here.

Other logistical details of the March 30-31 Conference were discussed. Don, Connie and Frank will be present at a table in the foyer of the Center’ auditorium representing the local chapter, next to the table recruiting new members to AAUP. Altha will be open the conference by
welcoming all those present. Altha will work with Cat in either introducing Cary Nelson, or mentioning the workshops.

The URL of the North Carolina Statewide AAUP web site is http://nc-aaup.org. Members of the Chapter wishing to circulate the details of the March 30-31 Conference to their respective listservs can draw off this web site for information about the Conference and Cary Nelson to pass on.

The meeting adjourned at 4:39 p.m

Don Nonini, AAUP Secretary