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AAUP President to Visit

Feb. 23, 2011

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – Cary Nelson, president of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), will speak to Illinois Wesleyan faculty and staff Wednesday, March 9.

Nelson's talk on "The Future of Higher Education," which is free and open to the public, will be at 4 p.m. in room C101 of the Center for Natural Science Learning and Research (201 Beecher St., Bloomington).

His visit is at the request of Joerg Tiede, IWU associate professor of computer science and president of the school's AAUP chapter. Nelson will discuss the importance of preserving academic freedom at American universities, the central point of his latest book *No University is an Island* (NYU Press).

Nelson highlights trends in higher education such as a lack of tenure-track professorships and diminished faculty governance over areas such as curriculum. He believes these changes are damaging to academic excellence.

According to Tiede, the AAUP sets standards for university governance that include the delegation of authority to faculty because of their individual expertise.

"These concepts are based on the claim that faculty, who have specialized training in their disciplines, are better prepared to create and sustain a curriculum and to evaluate the teaching, research and service of their peers than administrators and trustees can," said Tiede.

Tiede believes Nelson's message is important for Illinois Wesleyan to hear. "Although liberal arts colleges, like IWU, are one of the last hold-outs in terms of having a majority of faculty in tenured or tenure-track positions, the national trend is likely to affect IWU in the long run," said Tiede. "I believe that faculty governance in the areas of curriculum, promotion and tenure is very strong at IWU, and that is something worth preserving."

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