

Jon Saari

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Magers Hall Marquette, Michigan

Interviewed by Marcus Robyns Carrie Fries

Start of interview

(Macus Robbins) My first question for you Dr. Saari when did you become involved with AAUP and why? Two part question.

(Jon Saari) Well I came to Northern in the fall of 1971 so I was a very young faculty member when all of this started heating up but I didn't have any easy honeymoon period because I can recalled already in the year or so after I was here in fact before I finished my dissertation in 1973 we had gone through a retrenchment in the department. And the only reason I survived then another fellow was let go, James McConell, was his name the history department sort of memorized a sidewalk to him out near the academic mall because the university had spent money for grounds and things but didn't have money for faculty and we went through a retrenchment in 1973-74 that involved about twenty positions. Some of those were attrition but some of them were actual fingered bodies that were sent away. And we were slated to lose one in the history department and McConell went because he had a Master's degree and I finished my PHD the rumor was I sort of did it in three weeks over Christmas break. [Laughs] Not quite true but I did fly to Boston to get the necessary signatures and approvals so that everybody knew it was proforma. And a week later McConell left and I stayed. So it was a baptism by fire in terms of various central policies at the university.

(M) Did you feel vurniable? You didn't feel...

(J) All of us did! Yeah beginning of every decade that I have been here practically has been marked by retrenchment pressures. And I suppose that was one aspect of it is that the political and the polices were very evident. And the history department had, it was no accident that two chief negotiators came out of this department because we had a tradition of independence and fierceness probably. [Laughs] we talked about McConell already you know about the McClellan incident in 1967 and that whole background but we were a chippy bunch. We prided ourselves in our independence when I came here we were a department of fourteen now we are down to nine. So we had a lot of sort of senior people, some of them were part of the oligarchy that ran this place when I first came here in the early 70s. That's the way it was being done and that is people like Dick O'Dell and those who worked in a very small academic senate used their personal persuasion and their positions to make things work on campus. And I think it was that oligarchic model that was being challenged by the whole drive to unionize.

(M) Did you become involved with the AAUP then imminently upon your arrival on campus? Or did it happened after the retrenchment period in 73'? When did you beginning to get involved because the AAUP had a chapter on campus beginning in the 60s.

(J) Right 60s. I think I was a member from the very beginning of my stay here I always regarded it as the professional watchdog organization.

(M) Why is that?

(J) Because of the enunciation of the principles and the defense of academic freedom going back to the 1913 when it was founded in that post war period when there were many violations of this brought in the country. I had already been in the late 60s as a graduate student supporter of the ACLU I had decided that was that this committee to the principle of the first ten amendments as a cause in themselves even when they were unpopular was important aspect of our society. So I was a... you could say a very principle fellow, I liked the defense of those principles and the AAUP to me was the ACLU applied to academia. So I was disposed towards thinking that way even though we didn't have a chapter I was I was a joiner in things I believed in. I learned that in a fairly early stage.

(M) Now Michigan Education Association was very active and as you probably know lost an election in 71' before you came to campus. What kept you from MEA? Bob McClellan was the president. He wasn't the president he was an active organizer of the MEA.

(J) Yeah it might would have been that I preferred an organization that was exclusive to higher education that understood the very special traditions involved in higher education, academic freedom, the ten year roll. The strong participation in academic governance these were aspects that didn't apply well in the K-12 situations. Even though the MEA I think was already organized at Central and Ferris they were some of the first ones in the states but I... they were always AAUP chapters. Wayne State, Eastern, some of them were getting started about, Oakland was another, Oakland I think and Wayne State may have been about the same time and ahead of us. So you had a couple choices there and I felt more drawn to the AAUP but if you look at this cartoon the one in the boxing ring there you'll see the representation of the MEA is a guy has a beanie on his head and I think some of felt they were a little adolescent in some of their positions. I read back in the album here the critic of from the MEA that the AAUP was letting out its positions on how to structure a just compensation or a money package so forth that they did things that were a little more closed and already in a negotiating stance. Where as I think the AAUP reflexed here again by the Gandhian fellow in the corner sitting there and sitting on his principles was more to my liking as a contrast. I was responsible for the student who created these cartoon and I probably influenced him also as I talked about the issues and he chose to represent them I didn't say make the MEA a big adolescent with a beanie on his head but that's the way it came out.

(M) Ok could you describe the general character of the organization in the 70s, Bob McClellan and his characterization of the AAUP referred to it as mambi pambi.

(J) [Laughs]

(M) And ineffective and inactive spending its time on philosophical ideas and notions and not really organizing, he liked the MEA to an actual union really hardcore organized with a lot of

money backing it. More of the traditional industrial union sense. Now is that a fair characterization do you think? And how the AAUP was operation on campus at the time?

(J) You are talking now prior to unionization?

(M) Prior to...

(J) Prior to the vote and everything else?

(M) Between 70' and 75'.

(J) Yeah it was a group of faculty members that were not at all persuaded that union organizing was the way to go! And that is reflected on many institutions, it was just coming in the 1970s it was a new idea for faculty so you had to get people out of the industrial model and work to create this as another tool that would allow us to achieve the AAUP goals but that was a different, new thought and a lot of faculty especially at the major research institutions weren't prepared to accept that. And they were the holdouts, it's the regional universities and those of our type which went most quickly into unionization because we didn't have the amount of governance input and we are often run by this oligarchic relationships. So yeah it was a discussion group certainly the MEA was there first and with much more of a union thrust that was unequivocal. The AAUP backed into this much more slowly but the principles aren't mambi pambi. The principles academic freedom and so forth were very much the core of what we were about and to have a group organizing that understood those principles and wasn't about to throw them out for some other cause ultimately is what swayed many faculty members I think to go with AAUP and not with the MEA.

(M) Um did you see yourself then maybe as a more of the proponent as one of the proponent of collective bargaining? Moving the organization towards accepting collecting bargaining as a role?

(J) I certainly felt it was a tool to cease and to especially since the MEA was happening it was a question of providing another alternative. So I am sure I was one of the voices pushing the AAUP towards unionizing.

(M) So you see a collective organizing as happening it was going to happen and you were concerned that the MEA would become the barging unit and that was the... ok.

(J) Yup. Right.

(M) What were in your mind at the time the primary concerns or issues that were motivating the faculty to organize and more to collective bargaining?

(J) Well I think the album summarizes the five, six, seven areas that were of concern. Money and compensation was of course one. We started early on comparing ourselves, the great search for the comparable universities inside of Michigan and broader nationally, which is something we are still doing I think. But we didn't want to fall further behind and we wanted it to be structured in a fair kind of way again in opposite of an oligarchic principle of dispensing these things from on high to whoever you want to. We wanted a compensation package that was structured that

addressed cost of living that addressed equity concerns especially of women the catch up factor which was involved in some of the early contract. That it also looked at market factors and we accepted merit as a principle important to higher education even though that was divisive among many of the faculty in the early years. So there was a range of things we didn't just pander I would say to some kind of lowest common denominator we also sought to educate in AAUP principles and to bring a faculty collation around that. With some humor but also persuasion I mean this stuff came out in May and the election was held that fall.

(M) Mm fall of 71'...

(J) No no no 74'

(M) No it was spring of 75' I mean 74' yes I'm sorry with the election May 6th was the run off.

(J) Right.

(M) And that's when the AAUP...

(J) Right so we had all through that spring and summer of 74' we were generating position papers of different kinds because we felt faculty members could think through this stuff on their own! They were big enough and in that sense we were anything but mambi pambi cause we gave people credit for understanding what was in their own self-interest and in their enlighten professional interest. And you had to persuade faculty members that's what you do. That was the rout to take because many of them were undecided and that's why we have you see on these cartoons you see monks standing out in the field you know where their chin on their fist trying to reflex which way to go. And the old rout here that takes us through the provost with his wheelbarrow full of papers or one that leads to the table where you sit down and they have to come from the castle to meet us halfway! We don't just endlessly carry things there, that strategically with all the crosses for dead committees and other projects sort of near the grounds of the castle. We recognized that faculty were divided and unsure about this rout and I think was our main intention was to raise these issues. Through retrenchment we had already been through we needed something much better on that and above all in retrenchment we looked to the contract as a way of complicating the process and slowing it down in assuring that it would never happen again. In fact in the last twenty five years it's proved to be that way, we have raised it once and they never went into it again because it was just too miserable. To have follow these procedures we made it as complicated as difficult as nasty as we could. So that was an issue and like I said retrenchment as I said was very lively here but we preferred other solutions like early retirements, annualizing appointments, all kinds of ideas were generated in order to save positions of people that's was very important to us as well. And I think the memory of Jim McConell in the history department was a very strong factor for those of us here. The Grievance Procedure that had been developed too during the oligarchic but it failed in the final step which is it had no binding arbitration so ultimately if there was an agreement and the president could still decide it and say well I still think the way I thought even though there's all this pressure and this reflection of viewpoints going up the ladder he could, it still didn't have a suitable ending.

(M) Now in 1971 the board unilaterally revised the proposed Grievance Policy that was approved by the senate to exclude the final role of the faculty in decisions, joint decision process with the president. Is that something that you are referring to that the faculty were aware of or upset about that they were allow another example of that?

(J) Yeah well we have a section in here one of the position papers deals with the Grievance Procedure and it's that final step minding arbitration and heading to the table we knew that too. Just a question about what we are going to pay for it but that was the only suitable conclusion to a Grievance Procedure not all the earlier steps and the mediations and the earlier bodies that was important. But if you don't have the final step you haven't got what you need. And that's the final step was binding arbitration which we had to go both sides before arbitrator and a third party decided not one of the two, not it's not the president in this case.

(M) Which is what we have in place today.

(J) We have the same thing in place I don't think there is any improvement on that model.

(M) No we were going to touch it last... How about governance? The issue of governance and the role of the senate?

(J) Yeah I think that was important to use again sometimes collective bargaining it's simplified the power relationships at the university such that it seemed as if you created a too power union. And we had models then circulating through AAUP chapters, people Dickenson University, Temple had another one. There were various ones that had experimented with ways of incorporating academic senate into a contract and we said that we wanted to do something like that as well in our model. That the AAUP exclusive committee was not going to be deciding how curriculum matters and all this sort of stuff but it required special language and efforts at the table ultimately to incorporate the senate as we did, especially in curricular matters but in a whole range of other things that are primarily dealing with our professional governments and leaves and research and those sort of things.

(M) Now this is jumping ahead a little bit but I want to ask this, the administration's response as far as I can tell was very negative to the role of the senate incorporating the role in the contract directly. Do you remember that? How you responded to that, how you dealt with that?

(J) I think their fear is always been that this process proliferates power and makes it harder for them to deal with. Either they control it all within their hands or they want to control it on the other side in somebody's hands and to split these functions up and have to deal with two bodies was more complicated for them. Just like dealing with five unions on campus.

(M) They called it a morass Tugin referred to it as a morass.

(J) A morass yeah but it was ultimately a morass they we had to persuade them did not the metaphor of the morass was inaccurate and that it did function this way and it think ultimately we proved that! It was very important on our side that we had the senate and the union in the same camp and very often the senate head was a member executive of the union, these never became opposite poles so that you had an anti-union academic senate and tensions between the

senate and the union. And we had to be very careful in the early years to make sure that didn't happen, that was more communication task than anything else because what the academic senate did whether the union liked it or not was passed on to the administration. So that was a real delegation of power because the senate especially in its curriculum areas it's got the graduate programs committee, it had the committee undergraduate programs, it was doing the deliberation on those issues the union did not what to get into that whole area.

(M) Wanted it to be the responsibility...

(J) Wanted that to be the senate which is departmentally based. Just like the bargaining council is departmentally based but that is focused on a process of negotiation on the contract. This was the ongoing in between negotiations to deal with the essential matters of program.

(M) Getting to little bit of mechanics in the fall of 73' the MEA petitions the MERC for an election and it's this point that the AAUP decides that they are also going to participate in this time with the election like in 71' when they actively opposed the election. Can you remember you know you mentioned that part of the mechanics of getting the faculty involved trying to win them over was the formulation of policy position papers which you began to do in 74'. What else did you do that you can think of besides of getting cards signed? Or did you do any personal politicking? What was it like at the time can you remember what you had to do? Because Jim Greene and Bob and others well Jim in particular referred to this a core group of fellas, you and Jerry Roth for example and other were the core group that was the AAUP. How did you guys try to branch out and get more people into the polls? Do you remember?

(J) Well I don't recall that we were particularly good in arm twisting and going around to departments or running symposiums and open houses all that sort of thing. Maybe the group was a little larger than you are suggesting the actual membership do you have some ideas of what it was?

(M) Yeah the actual membership was large...

(J) Yeah but in the atmosphere like this that you have members in every department and that's where the discussions were occurring so if we educated our members just like if you got a cell and everybody starts to think a like within that then they become the engine inside of their own departments because our image was that this had to be decentralized to a large extent! The whole process of collective bargaining preserved not just the academic senate but preserved departments as the fundamental building blocks within the university in terms of programs and personal policies and lots of other things so there was rare reluctance to do anything that was going to challenge that department decentralization. So we were much more likely urge people to discuss it in their own department meetings and to work that way with it. I don't remember open houses or things or that sort. And ultimately that was another aspect of the whole process is that this contract builds in departments this special spring point there was the bylaws because those were formally into the contract they still a big hassle and Jim Greene screams today about... what he inherited from Carlson what Carlson inherited from me in the early 80s when I was the grievance officer going around to all the departments, then we did a lot networking but usually through the grievance officer and through the bylaw connection because that was the point where you really

looked at individual departments and appreciated their variety. So departments were important as well individual career paths. I think we tried to really be sensitive we tried to use a union industrializing model but we had an image of the university is based on strong individual professionals and strong academic departments and a process of collegial peer review that started in departments and then assumed virtue at no level up from there. That was always one of my strongest feelings that the virtue is not in the dean, it's not in the faculty review committee it's not even in the department! It's in the whole process! So you establish a process and you say by the end of this it's going to come out fair and good results because the process is the key not you can have a weakness at any point along the way. But if you had a weakness at the department and you didn't have good things coming out of the departments then you had a flawed a foundation to start in any case. So academic departments are really the crucial cells of a good functioning university and I think we didn't want to do anything to disturb those and give them more leeway to participate in academic senate not just in a bargaining council. Some would say we gave this university gives too many expectations on governance and that it burns people out and tires them out because there is so many place where you have to contribute and to do things but that was our ultimate assumption that we were citizens of this as a community not just individual profession entrepreneurs in our own disciples. And I think that is something important about this whole thing, most of us that were engaged in this were coming out of the 60s and most of us had an idealist streak, did things not because they were going to get us ahead professionally or for our money but because we really believed they were right. And we believed in building communities and things, I have some good friends from that same era who are at various other universities now and some of them, one particular Ken Walsers down in Michigan State who is now an administrator down there feels that the atmosphere among the professional now is much more selfish and concerned with their own advancement. Much less willing to put in the common time for the common cause at an earlier stage and that was necessary if we didn't have that sort of motivation I don't think we would have gotten very far.

(M) Now we have identified some events that we think are key to the faculty thinking about issues of governance and grievances such as McClellan controversy, the grievance issue itself, retrenchment as you mentioned, the Fred Harris case. Can you describe your interpretations feeling, relationship with Jamrich himself and how Jamrich contributed, if at all to the faculty's motivation to organize? Because Jamrich himself presents himself presents himself in the documents as someone who is successful in inclusion and shared governance and bring faculty to the process. And in fact was shocked, terribly shocked when they lost the election.

(J) Well I think he was shocked because ultimately those who believe in that still want to do it in their way. And to really share governance and to have to deal with people that disagree with you, that is the nub of the process. And there he is look at what is on his gloves it says trust me.

(M) So there cynicism with the dome?

(J) Yeah

(M) A good way to put it? Mistrust?

(J) I had a personal relationship with him which was cordial, I was never a friend in that sense but there was cynicism, there was distrust and maybe it was exaggerated! But it was a psychological reality among the faculty and it didn't seem as if it was going to be changed by anything that he had done since he came in what 69'? There was nothing he probably could have done that would have stopped this train that was moving in the 1970s. He was certainly better than, he had moved a shift from where Edgar L. Harden had been in the late 60s but Harden was widely respected and even afterwards I think was remember as one of Northern's strongest presidents. It's hard for me to put my finger what it is about Jamrich that... it could have well been that he was somewhat isolated and again that happens when you have an oligarchy is that you only listen to certain ones. And it may also been that we groused a lot unfairly. That's I think often the view from the top administrators is that the faculty have unreasonable expectations and they don't appreciate what is involved in the administrative side and we looked at the numbers we looked at their numbers growing and again like the cartoon of the Cohodas the new structure was going up just at this time.

(M) There was the state honor report so before it seemed to show some serious misuse of funds.

[Phone rings and Jon Saari answers]

(M) On a related question then the selection of Bob Glen as provost was also a catalyst I must say it really got the faculty irate and that whole process and how that happened. What was your interpretation of that event? And how did you, how do you see perceive Bob Glen and his role in faculty's perception of the administration?

(J) When was he appointed?

(M) This was 74'.

(C) 71' I think.

(M) No no he was appointed arts and sciences then. 73- 74 was when he was appointed provost vice president.

(J) And before that who had been provost?

(M) It would have been oh god it's on the tip of my tongue I can't remember. He was vice president the position was created provost vice president similar to what would have done just recently is the reason why. But a faculty administration committee had been appointed by Jamrich a search committee and they recommended three candidates and Glen had not been one of those. And Jamrich rejected the three candidates on hand and selected Glen.

(J) Now there you have it. That was the exactly the kind of capricious behavior and rejection of considered judgment that was behind it. Again I got along ok with Bob Glen he was a little unpredictable he had some qualities that Michael Myers didn't have but my personal relationships with them were fine. But you just don't do that in the context like this. It's all the work that goes into these committees and these decisions and things and then you expect some consideration, serious consideration of them and that was true whether you were finding department heads, provost all these slots, every one of those was a battle ground in the first

negotiation because we wanted to have a say and we wanted to do it serially if we could instead of presenting a list of two three four people and then letting them pick and choose. We wanted to put them up one at a time or indicate a preference and that's what we were fighting for so that the departments or the faculty in this case would have a strong say. But we realize these were not issues that we had a right to determine in a one way fashion.

(M) Now once the petition was won in the election, collective bargaining election was established I mean the date for the election it almost took a year for the actual election to occur and the reason for that the administration challenged the format of the ballot and the issues of the chairmen, the inclusion of the chairmen. Could you talk a little bit about that? How you perceived that at that time? And your position on that issue, on those two issues?

(J) Well I remember the position of the chairmen we always regarded them as the pivot people. That were right down there close to the faculty and were in all case faculty members. There was the Asheville case that had been decided for private university that department chairmen were actually, well actually faculty as a whole were actually entrepreneurs! And that I said was a big setback in private unionization among private schools for a long period of time. But we always regarded the chairmen as our people. And I would say even after they were excluded through the MERC hearing which went on for many many weeks and involved a lot of different testimony. I can't recall whether I was directly involved in that whether Neno Green was already helping us with the MERC hearings but these things just took a long time to present and to resolve. And we thought of it as a delaying tactic essentially. We're not it didn't make us any happier about the process.

(M) What about the two question ballot issue?

(J) They give member but not as I can't even articulate now exactly what the differences were. Whether we were to have three or just two?

(M) Two questions whether you were for collective bargaining if you were which unit would you select?

(J) Yeah ok opposite to the one that you...

(M) One that you just...

(J) Do one of three choices. Which one did we ultimately do?

(M) The two question one is the MERC ruled um?

(J) So do you want collective bargaining yes or no?

(M) And then which do you prefer? It resulted in a runoff between...

(J) No collective bargaining and the AAUP.

(M) That's what you had then on May 7th I think a selection of the AAUP was pretty resoundingly. [Laughs]

(J) How much did we win by?

(M) I can't remember it was like hundred something to twenty or...

(C) Yeah it was quite a bit.

(J) So probably the MERC hearings and Glen and all these things that had happened Alumni was just more fuel for the fire union organizing.

(M) Ok we move into the negotiations now and I'm wondering if you can explain why we have asked McClellan this but maybe you can address this question, why was McClellan asked to be chief negotiator given his history as being very active in the MEA and his sort of full course status among some of the faculty perhaps?

(J) Well Bob McClellan is like nobody else. He was a very sporadic teacher, a very provocative one who would deliberately antagonize in order to get life out of people and colleagues. [Laughs] and if you were putting someone up there to be feisty and sharp umm Bob was a natural. And he couldn't stay out of the fire either, he would burn out rather than not be there I think at least that was my observation sort of what happened. He made other plans and he was going to be leaving country and go somewhere for a period of time and he just left after, in January. But we got four five months from him and it was an advantage actually to have been with the MEA longer and at that point we needed in the sense that he was familiar with unionizing and organization and what was involved because of their interest in it. And we were in a some of a healing mode at least those on the collective bargaining side. So he probably was the only one of the initial team.

(M) Yeah I don't see any other names that were...

(J) Everybody else I think was probably AAUP except McClellan but he had a certain notoriety and a respect for skills and he wasn't just a fire brand especially if he's, I mean this wasn't a one man show! The team is there, the team is also present at the table you can resource any time if you wanted to discuss something. But this is a man that had already at that point in his life seen a lot and been under attack and was not about to fold or be intimidated.

(M) He said he saw himself he thought he was chosen because he would be the tough guy. What do you think of that?

(J) I think a certain tone was... yeah but Bob he had different faces too. He wasn't only the tough guy.

(M) Can you characterize or describe the tenor of the negotiation sessions? Because you were a member of the team with McClellan. When you read the minutes what exists and what I've been able to find is fairly...

(J) You have these big folders now? Oh you have some minutes oh ok.

(M) I have some but not complete.

(J) Yeah...

(M) How can you characterize they were contiguous initially there was demands for data and salary and so forth that weren't being... at one point he threatened to break off in December

because they were coming across with curriculum position. I mean can you describe a little bit about how things went those first few months?

(J) Well they had James Topin out there as a bulldog. To just hassle us for a long time. None of us had release time we were meeting a couple times a week. I think we met forty some times over those eight months.

(M) Yeah long long time.

(J) And they were late in the afternoons we had to fit it around our teaching schedules sometimes in the evenings. We met at different people's houses to discuss positions, we had a good kind of understanding among the team, we had quick thinkers like Temple Smith in physic who we call a squirrel he was probably the quickest mind, he was a sort of Jim Green mind. And Temple left he to go to the Los Alamos laboratories after a yeah or two afterwards and landed up in Harvard or some place. But we had people like that and then we had the Buda like principle types like Leslie Foster, who didn't say much. Arny Aho who was taught collective bargaining here so he knew some of the ins and outs and what was expected from that. I was, my role in the early stages was as a writer. We needed language on stuff fast and we sometimes needed it created over in between sessions or during breaks. And we got this sort of problem what can we find as a way of getting out way out of it, how can we put this in language? So that was one of the kind of roles that I did. But then Bob had to take all these pieces and he had to go in there and he had to present it and argue with it. Topin did a lot of the arguing on their side even though when the final analysis Glen Stevens signed it as the chief negotiator but Topin ran the negotiations I'd say for the first few months. And they made us feel as if we were betraying our professional existence! There was battles over what they would cause, over little words I'm sure some of those were mentioned in the thing. Just the way they refer to us, always as employees. There were a number of other examples I can't think of them right now but this was a deliberate wear down sort of tactic to show us that we were.. Alright you guys are going this way this is what you are going to have. Ultimately we outgrew that very immature start but this was probably be consistent with the anger and the sense that they had the resources to throw a top flight lawyer in their firm, down state as well as his young side kick Tom Hustles who is still doing this! He is the old guy now!

(M) He is the old guy now. I was on the negotiation team this last contract and so it is interesting for me to juxtapose the two and its remarkable the difference in tenor and approach and we spent time in nutiae detail things on that were... you guys were dealing with the definition of the primary issues of governance, the retrenchment, the grievances...

(J) Yeah we had to create language for everything.

(M) Created everything...

(J) Started with a blank sheet.

(M) From the very beginning and that is what struck me as one of the most amazing things.

(J) But we had other AAUP contracts some that sort of went in directions we were looking at, but ultimately we had to hammer out a lot of the language as to what was expectable at our institution with these people. And there were certain things we knew where, like I mentioned already the grievance position is going to have binding arbitrations just a question of when.

(M) And they were very resistant to that.

(J) Oh yeah that was one of the last pieces. That one of the last pieces. They were big and strong on management rights, this was their great symbolic issue article two so we gave them a strong management rights clause because we felt ultimately it's restricted by the terms of the contracts. So let them. You read the management rights and it sounds like [Laughs] they can fire at will and abolish programs!

(M) By November though things seem to be coming to a head and seem to be getting really bad. We have the state auditor's report comes out, the senate votes to censor the faculty entirely, I guess votes to censor the administration because of its apparent misuse of funds. The senate passes a resolution to consider approaching the North Central Accreditation because of the issue of governance well the board of control decides not to proceed with a, to follow the retrenchment policy that had been previously been approved agreed upon by both the senate and the board they just decided unilaterally opposed that. To not follow that. There's a vote to file an unfair labor practices charge with MERC on administration entrenches curriculum and retrenchment. How does all this end? I mean how does all this...

(J) All that is the maneuvering and the sideswiping and the propaganda wars. Things happen like this and you had to cease them and turn them and give them what we now say spin. We didn't have that word back then but that's what you sought to do. So that was a division of labor between the union and the president which was Jim Green at this time, he had to organize the board political context within which the negotiations were proceeding. Those of us at the table had to still keep plugging away to get the language and everything else we wanted but we knew those two levels were still connected so the MERC and the national labor relations, unfair labor practices anything publicly the university created was all different kinds of pressure including the threat of censor.

(M) How did MERC rule? I haven't found yet any ruling. Was a petition for unfair labor practices charges filed? Do you recall and how did it work out? Because I haven't found yet in the records what the outcome was.

(J) I don't know. I don't know whether some of those things stay at the level of threat and how much was actually carried through.

(M) Um now when did you become chief negotiator and why were you why did you volunteer, were you approached, you said that your role at time...?

(J) I'm sure I didn't volunteer. [Laughs]

(M) When did you said it was in January?

(J) I think it was in January when Bob left. He was just tired out with the whole process as most of us were. But then you looked at... the first time through the process you don't... you know that it's going to... you don't know how it's going to work, if there is going to be there backlog of stuff that is going to hang there and then it's going to be resolved through a series of trade-offs and usually that happens later and often under the context of a strike! You didn't have that it was an unusually long process. I think the union leadership or the team members felt that I had more of a moderate tone. I was much more moderate than McClellan, I just don't have his irrationality. I can't really work up a lot of anger towards people. We couldn't, we didn't want to turn it over to Leslie Forster or Temple Smith either.

(M) Were you tenured or non-tenured?

(J) Oh I was non-tenured.

(M) So you were non-tenured chief negotiator?!

(J) Yup. I think it was just the chemistry I don't know why for sure and probably we thought it wasn't going to take much longer than we were going to be engaged I think all through the winter semester still in this process. But I obviously agreed to do it. I think I was quite close to Jim Green already at that stage and you needed a lot of mutual respect and tolerance and if Bob was sort of the bad guy, tough cop, I was the consistory pick up the pieces kind of person.

(M) Do you think that was right at the right time because here this is the point when things were starting to come together a little bit more?

(J) We still needed Temple Smith to shout and rail at them. We did this act sometimes right at the table. We let Temple go at them and play the bulldog role and then I sort of picked up the pieces and be the one that was more reasonable. But that's... so the same style continued somewhat except Bob had combined both he had to be both.

(M) What goals did you focus on then? What remained to be as far as curriculum control was still there was retrenchment by this time been decided?

(J) Article seven I'm sure was still had to be hammered out and of course the compensation elements weren't resolved yet. But I think we made a lot of headway in sections like professional responsibilities and personal policies. Article seven a bunch of reduction of layoff but that had its standard clauses in it too. I mean the board never gave up, the language there its determination of financial exists it seems exists. We would have preferred that they just say when it exists and then to give language to defined what it was. But they wouldn't give us that so we had to take this this formulation of it. But we did get serious and compelling reasons and we did get... these phrases all have a legal track record and it was important to get them in... in this ladder of peer review and administrative where they are all layered together to get the presumption to rest with the lower body so that the higher one is only over turning it for serious reasons, or serious and compelling if we could get that. Because we knew these had legal meanings out there in the larger world.

(M) How did you know that?

(J) Oh.

(M) Because of your study and your background?

(J) Well we knew this from people like Army Aho we knew it from Neno Green and we also some of us had gone to... I don't think in the early years we didn't do workshops in New York and stuff dealing with how to negotiations. But we pretty quickly got the lawyer away from the table and ultimately after this first year both sides did. And that was a very healthy development I mean they had Tobin there throughout the first negotiations, they wanted them they weren't secure they felt better with that. We never had a lawyer at the table we did it entirely on our own from the very beginning. So...

(M) Did you clearly in your mind when you took over any kind of objective that you thought was different than or did you just continue...?

(J) No I didn't think it was different it was a process that already had a shape, that had a lot pieces in place and the final tradeoffs yet to be done. It was a matter of persisting and beginning to then to educate the faculty also to where we were so that they would prepared to accept this initial contract. I remember a lot of meetings involved in the ramification stage and I had to do a lot of the main arguments. Well we used to meet in rooms like 102 over in Jamrich hall and they would be packed with faculty and we would have to explain where we were not just the bargaining counsel. We did some meetings also with the faculty as a whole, especially when we were up for ratification to persuade them why this was the best we could do, what was the pattern of tradeoffs and so forth and why we felt it was worth ratifying.

(M) It was intended.

(J) Yeah.

(M) Got a lot of interest.

(J) Yeah well these were the first ones. And very often with the tread of some kind of action behind it you needed to have an overwhelming support, you couldn't afford to go out on strike or on any kind of action without 90% of the faculty showing up. So if it was as much communications at that stage and holding people together it was a long difficult process but I think the general feeling was we were going to get something out of this that was preferable to where we were before. It was just simple things to point out to them, where they could see obvious improvements.

(M) When did you finally arrive at a tentative contract? When was that? There was no records of where I found...

(J) You haven't found any? Well the thing is it arrived at continuously through the TAing tentative agreement was probably under Bob we had all kinds of stuff.

(M) He had a lot of TA

(J) That's already TAed in the first semester going through.

(M) So by the end of the winter semester though you pretty much had the document...

(J) By the end of the winter semester certainly.

(M) Winter of '72'.

(J) Yeah.

(M) So it was a yearlong process.

(J) It was a yearlong process.

(M) So we spent what maybe three months.

(J) Yeah I wish I knew exactly how many times we met because I, most of us were just overwhelmed. I felt so badly that I was neglecting some of my teaching! I remember the following fall I had my office hours in my home so that I had a closer connections with some students and to do some things that were really special for them because I can remember walking straight out of negotiating sessions and sort of holding my head for five minutes and then walking into a classroom of forty students and trying to conduct a class! I mean it was absurd! My wife thought it was just unbelievable what we trying to do I mean she thought it was crazy. And if we weren't young and idealistic and perhaps a bit fool hearted we never would have started.

(M) So is it fair to say that when you took over as chief negotiator a more moderate tone developed and there was a little bit more movement towards conciliation and compromise and things to the final product? Is that fair to describe?

(J) Um I'm not so sure that as I have said we continued to have people who could yell and shout but I think the process had its own momentum on both sides so that once you get through the worst stuff and you pulled out and you shot most of your arrows then you realize you got to create a document. And you are only going to get there by trade-offs so the final stages have to be marked by compromise and reconciliation and I think we were started to move there in January and February even though it took some time to get final agreements. So I'm not sure that it has much to do with my role or maybe let's put it this way maybe I was maybe the kind of person that suited that phase of the negotiations. And maybe Bob suited the early nastier phase of it when both sides were doing a lot of testing and pushing.

(M) See the problem I have right now is that the minutes that I have been able to locate end of December, I almost have nothing I haven't been able to find any of the minutes of the negotiation sessions when he was chief negotiator even in your records that we have.

(J) Wow!

(M) And this is really troubling and I...

(J) What have got from me? You have this big books for the different for each part of the contract for each section for the drafts.

(M) Yeah I have two boxes of material I think they must have taken material out of the books and the folders when it was processed in.

(J) So those have TAs on it and all that sort of stuff?

(M) Yeah we have the wording of the contracts and there have been some hand written notes but I don't have the typed minutes. Well I may! But I haven't found them yet I have looked through much of the material.

(J) Typed minutes of the negotiation?

(M) Yeah we had typed minutes of the negotiations sessions up through December.

(J) Wow who was doing those?

(M) I... it's not clear. I think Foster was initially and then it changed the format changed. When Foster was doing it he would capitalize... it would be like this continuing narrative with the administration's response in capital letters and then there was suddenly in December somebody else was doing it where the actual person speaking and then a civilization of the response.

(M) I think I quick handle on...

(J) Well it be interesting to know actually tentatively agreed to at the time Bob left. Cause it may well have been that he thought another month or six weeks were going to do it.

(M) Quite a bit was at that point. Now when Bob left the curriculum issue was sticking point the administration had yet come back with a proposal in December for curriculum control.

(J) This was a faculty senate and all that?

(M) Yeah.

(J) I was reading that section here in the first contract you notice how it is described as minor curriculum changes? That was our device to make it easy for them to swallow this but in fact the minor curriculum changes were anything but that because that was the whole important work... here it's in section 3324; recommendations for minor curriculum or academic program changes shall be submitted to and acted upon by the association. Minor and curriculum or academic program changes are those that involving such matters as changes in title or numbering. Those are truly minor. Changes in departmental prerequisites, less minor. Introduction or deletions of courses in the major/minor or elective category, already quite substantial. Evaluation of student performance, academic program content to find this to include the structure of the academic program as it relates to certification

[Marcus Laughs]

(J) The degree requirements subject matter and any other recognized professional criteria.

[Marcus Laughs louder]

(J) And these are carries as minor so that we could get them through they were automatically done.

(M) How did they accept that?

(J) Because they were minor. That was the covering tool for that. And that was later removed in subsequent it's not in our current contract anymore and there is some slight alterations to that. But we had done that because you see the minor ones went straight to the association and the association to the provost and he implemented them. There was no second guessing of these minor things. Ultimately they came back at some later contract and went after that. And made it a little more acceptable that became a high point for them. But that was our device.

(M) That's a really good point. Is there anything that I missed that is important to include that you would like to comment on?

(J) The whole agency shop induced things came in later probably in the second contract. It wasn't in the first one although we intimated a position paper that might come but if we did it we had the escape clause that would allow conscientious objectors to donate to a scholarship fund and we kept that up. The management rights were their big symbol as I have already mentioned. Faculty participation was there but it now had the language that assumed that the initiating level must make the strongest possible case and that should have a certain presumptuous, reasonableness as it went up the ladder. But again not virtue anywhere including faculty we realized we could air as well as ours so this wasn't just a power grab. There were certain principles that had been long evolved in AAUP practice that were standard at many universities.

(M) And articulated in the 1966 statement of governance.

(J) Oh yeah the red book of those years all in there. We used to carry that around and study them and although the piece we got into there about academic freedom is pretty weak now that I look back on it. It did not absorb a whole chunks of the red book and put it in there but that's what we were hammering with at the table. We brought the red book to every negotiation session and we could sick Les on them. Well you couldn't quite sick Les on them because Les was monotone and very slow and extremely reasonable. He persuaded through reasonableness. But that yeah I think... that got pretty much embodied in there, the Grievance Procedure got its final clincher. The personal policies probably more change in that but the still the bylaws are a fundamental piece of that as departments define what these things mean in their particular area and flexibility for career paths that differ by departments and by individual choice by some extent! We wanted people to decide whether they were primarily professional development or everybody had to well in their assigned teaching but we allowed people not to be superstars in all three. We tried to create some sort of balance in that which we felt was, we still kind of have. And then the budget reduction and layoff and recall, I mean they stuck the layoff on us, that language that's I think that's still in there. I mean that's right out of the industrial language it's probably still in here because we don't want to give anything to get rid of it. Yeah it's still called budget reduction layoff and recall. As I said we made that so complicated and so many steps that we really protected almost everybody they went into it once and never again.

(M) And when did they try to do that? Was it in 81'?

(J) In the 80s yeah. So I think that succeeded in the long run to make, we just want to say this not a routine administration action to declare well we can't balance the budget therefore we are going to fire these people over here in speech pathology! This was the kind of thinking we feared and we had seen some examples of it in the early 70s.

(M) So you feel then you were successful in the areas of governance? You know in participation of faculty...?

(J) The senate that was a very important one. And making that in the years after this that it didn't end up in an interfaculty dispute and feud.

(M) And the Grievance Procedure.

(J) Grievance Procedure heavy on mediation and on talking things through in the early stages we have I think compared with other very very few binding arbitrations we settled them most of them inside. Which is good in terms you are using our resources as an association and the universities. And that's a sign of a mature relationship that you can handle most of these things face to face. And I think that was there in the beginning. I had a good relationship with Glen Stevens considered him a friend after this, I remember meetings in his office where they would tip us off, we are prepared to do this. I met with him sometimes one on one in the latter stages of this when some of those final tradeoffs at issue. So there was respect established through the process and we could build on that with the lawyers away from the table. Now we have someone like Terry Setaw who used to be a faculty member who has come up through the system for twenty five years as the chief negotiator on the other side so there is not many punches you can pull. There's not much ignorance. And Jim Green was there from the beginning too so you got an enormous amount of continuity through the process and good people who have been coming forward. Neil Carlson, Candy Bays we've have had different people, all of whom be reasonable. We haven't had anybody like McClellan during the negotiation since then. He was only the first one.

(M) Interesting. The right at the right time. Well I have no other questions for Saari. Is that it? Anything else that I that you tell about the early days and the first formation?

(J) I think it was a shock for some of us coming from graduate schools that had long establish faculty traditions, the modeling on the senior people and those places where we graduate students. These were all major research universities PHD grant institutes some of that was brought along to Northern when we were hired here in the 60s and 70s, late 60s and 70s was when many of the great bulk of this older faculty now came. And I think that fit in its own way too, why we were not prepared to except this what vie called oligarchic arrangement here. A certain type of paternalism so forth, yet it just didn't fit with our sense of how universities, real universities ran and we wanted to make this a real university.

(M) Well thank you very much Mr. Saari I really appreciate it.

End of Interview