INTERVIEW WITH ELMER BAUMER
FEBRUARY 28, 2002

Q.  This is a telephone interview conducted with Dr. Elmer Baumer by Fred Roecker, Head of Library User Education, on Thursday, February 28, 2002. First, Dr. Baumer, thank you for taking the time to share your memories of University College with us.

A.  Well, you’re very welcome.

Q.  Great. To start off, I’d like to get a little background on you. What attracted you to come to Ohio State? And if you could describe some of your academic positions you held throughout your career at Ohio State.

A.  Yea. Well I first came to Ohio State as a high school graduate from Minster, Ohio. And I continued going there. Most of my academic career was there of course. I went there simply because it was affordable. I felt I could work my way through college, and that’s what I did. I did have another friend from there who also went to Ohio State and that no doubt helped me to continue. I mean, we were together and that’s the way it was. When I got there, I wasn’t sure what I was interested in. I did have an interest in such things as veterinary medicine. I wasn’t really acquainted with such disciplines as Ag Economics where I ended up. But I did take some courses in veterinary medicine. But while the coursework was not difficult, I became quite aware that I was not cut out for that discipline. Dissecting one more cat would have been too much for me and my mental wellbeing. So I switched to Ag Econ. And completed a Ph.D. in that field.
After finishing my Masters, I was employed by a marketing cooperative in Cleveland. And I was there for 2 ½ years. I always intended to finish at Ph.D. and I was strongly urged to do that by my advisors. When the opportunity presented itself, I completed my Ph.D. in 1952 and was offered a position on the Ag Econ faculty as an Assistant Professor. My advisor passed away six months before I finished my degree and it was his position that I was offered at the time. And so what positions did I hold? Well, I was Assistant Associate and Full Professor in the Department. I was active in student advising in our department and in the College. I have to say that I think the College of Agriculture did a better job of student advising than was the case in most of the colleges on the campus. Those of us who were considered on the faculty all had students assigned to us and I almost always had at least 40 to 50 undergraduate students who were my advisees. Then I taught courses and did research in Ag Econ. And then as a member of the faculty, I served over the years on many committees, as a member and as chair. For example, Department Committees – I was on every one of those, as you can imagine. I was also on a conference committee of the teaching staff and served as Chair of that group. I’m not sure that committee has continued to exist on campus. But it was very active in those days. I was on the Faculty Council and served there. And also on the University Athletic Council. I was on that committee. Then I was of course a member of the University College Committee. I have been on many search committees. I’d hate to say how many search committees I was on, but when I was Associate Provost, Dr. Haenika was the Provost and I was Associate. But I was often the Provost person on various
search committees. So I have been on many dean search committees. Then I became Associate Dean of the graduate school and I was in charge of the fellowship program and I was responsible for the graduates that were at Wright Patterson Air Force Base. And at that same time, I was also I think first I was the Associate Dean in the University College, to help get it started. Now I kind of came into that position because, working on that committee became almost fulltime. And so the question was, well, how do you meet your obligations to the Department and all this kind of thing. So, all in all I ended up being Associate Dean at University College. I did that for a limited period of time, as I’ll get into a little later. And then the other thing I think I should mention is, I acted as the OSU liaison with the Ohio Board of Regents for some period of years while I was in the graduate school and later on, as the Associate Provost. So, that’s how I became interested or became part of the Ohio State University. That’s pretty much my background.

Q. Okay. Thank you. Could you describe some of the conditions in the State of Ohio and also at Ohio State prior to and kind of leading up to the master plan for state policy in higher education that was created in 1966?

A. Yea. And I think it’s important that we all remember at that point higher education was really ________ in the whole state. And I think you will see this as I recall some of the kinds of things that were going on. The governor at that time, Jim Rhodes, had a real fix on open admission. I mean, he talked about this all the time. And he also talked about decentralized education available at each state supported university. At that time, there was this effort to make a state
supported campus available within 30 miles of all residents of the state. And the
governor, he was out supporting and promoting that whole idea. And I have to say
it was very popular with many people. Because at that point there was an interest
in going to college but so many young people worked and they could not give up
their job or did not want to give up their job, so that all in all the whole idea of
having these facilities available within 30 miles was rather popular. Furthermore,
the governor went to all these locations and he talked about jobs. Building all
these buildings freed up jobs in the local community. And of course it did. Then
there was the whole matter of the increasing percentage of population interested
in going to college. I think we’ve already mentioned that. High school graduates
and adult education was making its inroads and there was a demand for it. And
here again, adult education is really what I was kind of talking about a while ago.
People have a job and how can they also go to school? So this provided an
opportunity. For lots of people, they would not have had these opportunities if it
had not been for decentralizing some of the facilities. I have to say, I think that
this whole decentralization out a bit, I think this figure is correct, we may want to
check this with the Ohio Board of Regents. But I think we ended up with like 64
state supported campuses in the State of Ohio. And that means Ohio State has
four, really five branch campuses. And these other institutions all have these
branch campuses. And if you start adding all that up, the State of Ohio has a very
significant number of campuses all over the state. I do think it might be important
to get that number and I think I might be able to do that. At that point, the major
universities in Ohio, there were six of them, Ohio State obviously and Ohio
University and Kent State and Bowling Green, Miami, and Central State. Then, some of this we may want to move around in this discussion, but I think that I want to say, while those were the state, the old time state supported institutions, there also were other state institutions that became a part of the Ohio System, like the University of Cincinnati, University of Toledo, Akron University, Youngstown State. And then, after the Regents came along, they set up a Cleveland State became an entity in and of itself and Ohio State certainly was a part in helping set that up. And then there was Wright State University in Dayton that was also set up and Miami and Ohio State combined on helping set that one up. In addition to that, there were all kinds of community colleges. Those are two year colleges and many of those are still there. I might say, once these entities were put, were developed, it’s very difficult, if not impossible, to close them out or do something else with them. Again, this becomes political very quickly. And local people take real pride in these kinds of community colleges. And rightly so, I suppose. And then also, you raise the question about what was going on at that time. The talk of setting up a Columbus State University someplace in Franklin County certainly stimulated President Fawcett to say, “Well, if you’re going to do that, it should be a part of the Ohio State University. So he was very much aware that such discussions were going on and he wanted whatever was going to happen to be a part of the Ohio State University. It didn’t happen that way in the final analysis, as you know. Columbus State was set up and all that. But I think it was his vision that Ohio State would play a very prominent role in any other local colleges that would be developed. And that it
would be a part of the Ohio State University. About that same time, the Regents, I have to say the Regents were put into effect in about 1962 or 1963, I forget the exact date, but we can find that out. The Regents kept talking about a system of higher education. And this term system was not well received, especially at OSU. Here at OSU the question was being raised, “Well, what do you mean by a system? Are you, you being the Regents, planning to dictate what we do at the Ohio State University? What will be the role of the trustees as compared to the Regents?” All of these people were political appointees. But often from different parties and they had different interests. And all of that was very contentious at that point. Some of these people were very strong politically and some were not. And these all played a role in where branch campuses would be located and where they were finally located. And I might say that many state senators and representatives ran on their ability to attract a branch campus in their county, for example. Then a very major impact was the funding available to each of the major institutions. If I go back to the six major institutions, as I understood it, before the Board of Regents came to do it, the effective method used was pretty much the presidents will sit down and divide up the money. But that obviously breaks down and it did. And so one of the first jobs, one of the first assignments, the Ohio Board of Regents, was to decide how these monies were going to be divided. And that’s what brought on some of the funding system. And I’ll talk about that a little bit later. I do want to mention also that Ohio University, I think, was the institution that really decided to go it alone. And this I think was tied to political power, assumed political power and also I think the other system simply
left a lot to be desired. And these presidents, while they could sit there and discuss these kinds of things, it was very difficult to come to an agreement about how the monies are available at the state level were going to be divided among the six institutions. So you can see that funding was a major issue. Now then so the Regents had to set up some kind of a funding formula. Now, Fred, I thought about this yesterday and I think I have some of these funding formulas that were developed in those early days. And I think you need to take a look at those because of the obvious impact that those funding formulas would have on the interest of the Ohio State University in moving toward a University College or toward that concept. We can certainly talk with Bill and work that out where we can get a copy of those.

Q. Yes.

A. I think we can get those and I may have a copy of one of those at home. I don’t think you need all of the formulas that have been developed by the Board of Regents. But to have some just to give people to look at, what difference it made. To go on, there was also a concern about the size of state universities and especially Ohio State University. And so the Regents limited state aid for OSU to $40,000 FTE’s a year. That’s full-time equivalent students. But the real question was, who was included in the 40,000? For example, 40,000 FTE did not include the College of Agriculture and the College of Veterinary Medicine. Because they were housed across the river. Now that may be a first hint about why the facilities at the University College were put out in the cornfield across the river. I think there was feeling on the part of some people that that would exempt the students
who would be enrolled in the University College from being counted against the University’s 40,000 FTE limit. Now these funding formulae, they were dependent on the cost of offering courses. At least the cost figure was included. And there was a subsidy rate for lower division courses, a subsidy rate for upper division courses, one for graduate masters, one for Ph.D., and one for professional. Now you can imagine the difference in cost between a class in the College of Education that might have 100 students in it, as compared to a course in physics or engineering that required a lab facility and all those kinds of things. So that funding levels for these various courses and programs was very different. And you’ll see that when we get a copy of that funding formula. So that if Ohio State had 40,000 FTE and you could remove from that 40,000 lower division courses which generally generated lower subsidy levels, and replaced those numbers with courses at more advanced levels like grad, masters or Ph.D. programs, the total funding to the University would be changed significantly. So there that issue. Now the extent to which all of that really caused the University College to be moved over across the river, it’s hard to say. I think it had its impact. Then, as you saw in the master plan comments for higher education that were of the Board of Regents. There were in several years clear indications that OSU should concern itself mainly with upper division graduate and professional programs. This also was not well received across the state. And of course Ohio State, I don’t think Ohio State really responded to that, to the extent that they might have if for other circumstances. There were interests at Ohio State. We wanted contact with the people and freshman students. There was no doubt about
it. They were not going to abandon their mission. And that mission for graduate or professional programs. Even though again, in the Board of Regents comments, that is clearly stated. Then there was one other factor, I’m not sure how important this was. But I know that it was being discussed at the state level. And that was doing away with the duplication of some of these high cost degree programs. Not every institution in the state has to have “x” or “y” Ph.D. program when there are only a total of five students in the state enrolled in those degree programs. Ph.D. programs are expensive. And so the state people were trying to say, “Now let’s concentrate these degree programs at one institution or another. Let’s not offer them at all at the state supported institutions.” Well, here again, Fred, you know that that kind of talk is not popular with some people. So that had its impact as well.

Q. So President Fawcett then appointed a committee that you served on to address some of these issues, is that correct?

A. Yea. Right.

Q. Could you talk a little bit about that committee? What roles he looked for for that committee, who was on it, etc.

A. Yes, but before I get to that, let me make this additional comment. I think President Fawcett and his staff wanted a University College but not by that name. It was a way to enroll everyone who was not admitted to a college. And they also felt that would meet the Franklin County Commuter College talk and whatever else came there. It was two year undergraduate and vocational college of some sort. Here again, there is a speech that President Fawcett game to a twilight
dinner at the Faculty Club and he first broached this subject. Now I have seen that speech. I will make every effort to get my hands on it because I think the wording in that speech is interesting. And it also kind of points to the fact that hey, they were not very certain about what was happening or which direction they wanted to go or anything else. And this was before the committee had been appointed. But you start talking about vocational college, a two year college, Franklin County commuter college, all those types of things. Anyway, that was all in the background. Now one other thing I think I’m not sure this belongs here, although I guess it does. Dick Zimmerman met up with President Fawcett and others to get a clear picture of what was intended for this college. I don’t think that matter was ever adequately clarified for us. I know it wasn’t. When we raised questions about the academic climate that might prevail if we went certain suggested ways, they would want more time to think it over. But we very seldom got any response. The central administration at that point was really unclear about what the charge would be here to a committee if it was set up. And of course, with Dick Zimmerman, he pressed hard to try to get some clarification of that. But I don’t think anyone, to be fair with the people in central administration, they had little opportunity to think through these things to the extent that we did working on it as a committee. At any rate, we may want to do a little more with that later on.

Q. Okay.

A. Now the two year general college committee consisted of Bob Fisher, who was a profession in math and Ed Robbins, who was a professor of English. Delos Wickens, who was a psychologist, and myself, who was an economist, and the
chairman was Dick Zimmerman, all participated throughout this deliberations. I have to say that when meetings were called we found time to be there. And there was a period of time when we were putting this together when we met almost every day. I mean it was a real chore to put this whole thing together. Our chair, Dick Zimmerman, was strong. And he was an excellent person in that position. He always pushed for academic excellence. And set up a college, whatever the name would be, that was academically sound. And that is a kind of philosophy that I think all of us on that committee had in state. I’ll have more to say about that a little later. But there was a general bottom line. It was academic excellence. Now, that was the committee now. You’re asking did you have a sense of why you were selected to serve? Well, not really. I served on University committees and I think I was known on the campus. And I kind of came up through the system and had a concern for basic education. And people knew that I had all these advisees and I tried to do a reasonable job and I think I did. And one thing led to another and the first thing I knew, here I am on this committee. And I have to repeat, it was a major assignment. Now, the next question what were some of the discussions of the committee regarding the design of University College. Well, this was a major issue. Once we got to a point where we could design the College, the other issues kind of fell in line. But what is it that we’re putting together here. Is it a general college? Is it a vocational college? Is it this or is it that? That was a major issue and you’ll see how that worked itself out through these discussions. This was the time for study and reflection for all of us. I feel the committee was first to agree on a role for this college and eventually
others in central administration began to agree with us. I think we set out what we thought the role of that college should be. I’m talking about the committee. And while that was not necessarily the views that were held by central administration. But once I think the committee had a chance to present its views, that people in central administration started coming around. I think eventually we had the support of most of them. I don’t know how strong that support was, but I say supportive. Also I want to say, once the committee had an opportunity to present its views to the faculty, I think we got solid support from them. Now the first couple of sessions with the University faculty as per one of the letters I sent you, there were people raising questions and rightly so, and they were good questions. They should be raised. But once we had an opportunity to discuss this whole thing with the faculty, we had solid support of the faculty. The faculty did not want a second rate institution or a second rate college. They wanted something that everyone would have to be a part of and it would be a quality college, where people wanted to teach, where all students would go – good ones, bad ones, whatever – all the students would go there. And those concepts were endorsed totally by the faculty. Then, we felt we could use better teaching methods, better teaching facilities, get better interaction between students and faculty. A better beginning would reduce the first year dropout rates. Those first year dropout rates at Ohio State were appalling. And make articulation clear – that is, the University College with the Colleges on the campus, where students came into the University College, and then they matriculated to the various colleges. Those who were interested in degree programs. Then we had a regular route that
students would follow who wished to be a part of one college or another. We felt it was important to make that whole process as easy as it could be. And understood by the students. I guess I feel that the very significant number of students who switched colleges during those previous years was partly the result of not having had an opportunity to see what the Ohio State University had available as a University. So students would go in one direction and then they’d switch to another direction. And we felt at University College, with the kind of program where every students would be given an opportunity to see what this University had to offer, was a real asset. And we worked on that one.

Q. Now this was presented to the Faculty Council in 1966 by the Council on Instruction.

A. Yea, we presented it to both groups.

Q. I see.

A. And I think you have a copy. I think I sent you a copy.

Q. Yes.

A. And you can see that there were questions and there were legitimate questions. There’s no question about that. I expected that.

Q. And what was the response from the Board of Regents? You were presenting to the University but certainly they must have gotten wind of this.

A. Yea, well let’s see. I’ll get to that in a little bit.

Q. Okay.

A. The other kind of issue that’s important here, that we have to remember these branch campuses were also being set up at that time. And the branch campuses
were then put under the aegis of the University College. And then the question was, well if a student took an English course at Lima or Marion, would it automatically transfer to the Ohio State University? The answer should have been without question. The same was true, those questions were being raised right on the campus. If we have this facility out on the west side of the river, who’s going to be teaching there? And what will be the difference between courses offered there and are they the equivalent of courses that are being offered on campus at the present time? And those questions had to be answered and the answer to those would have to be it didn’t matter. Those courses offered at University College had in every way to be the equivalent of courses that were at that time being offered on the main campus. Otherwise, you can imagine what would happen. The committee, now we’re going to your question before, describe the committee’s division of the University College as reported to the Faculty Council in 1966. The committee wanted a high quality, academically sound program for students who entered OSU. Academically solid instruction, opportunities to see the entire University, become acquainted with the library, the main library, the college libraries, the departmental libraries. The advising system that was in place in each of these colleges. And who was available and interested in seeing the students. I mean, those things were very important to us. Housing, if needed, recreational opportunities, a better opportunity to know what’s available on the campus. I’ve already talked about automatic credit transfers and all that type of thing. What was not wanted was that this was a flunk-out. That the students there would not be the equivalent of students on the main campus, all of that type of
thing. That the courses were not the same; the instructors were not the same. That we avoided, that we stood on firmly. And we also felt that faculty at Ohio State should want to teach there. This is where all the students, that’s why we pursued the whole matter of the common portal of entry. Alright. What role did any of the council members play in the development of ________? Well very little at first. But they were solid supporters when we issued our first report. That is, while we were going, we would hear rumors and all this and all of us were active in faculty matters on the campus. So all five of us on this committee would hear comments. And rightly so. That was fine. But the role of the Council on Instruction and the like, they really stayed out of this until our report came out. And you have that letter that I gave you a copy of. And I thought the response was quite good. They sent an excellent letter of support for our major concepts. You look at that second letter that came from the Faculty Council. That’s good support. Now let’s see. What were the major arguments against University College? Well, there were some, without a doubt. Another layer of administration. And there were all kinds of comments made like, “Why do we need this? Why can’t this be done within the College structures that exist on the campus and we really don’t need to set up another dean and have all these deans at these branch campuses and a very complicated structure.” In fact, at one time we had deans meetings on the campus and I think there were 19 deans. I don’t know how many of those still exist. But many of us had to laugh about this. That’s a tremendous number of deans. We may still have 19 deans, Fred, I don’t know. Then, there was the argument that students might not be close enough to
their colleges. That is, their colleges wanted their majors available to them in terms of doing advising and whatever else. But you can imagine. Some colleges were more interested in that because they did a good job. Some colleges did not. But I know that most of the colleges who did a good job, also did a good job through the University College. I was impressed with the way the administration of the University College got set up and worked with the major degree granting colleges on campus. I think they did an excellent job. Now off campus, the fact that these facilities were built off campus was never very popular. I have to admit that I wasn’t in favor of it myself.

Q. When you say off campus, you mean west campus? Across the river.

A. Yes. That created a whole array of other problems. Now one other point, it was not easy for colleges and departments to withstand the funding. And who was responsible for what. For example, the English Department, somebody who taught there was an Assistant Professor. I think there was some question in some peoples minds about the whole tenure process and all of this. Who makes the decisions about who teaches there? Well, we tried our best to say to the department, “It’s your responsibility. It’s not the University College’s responsibility.” I think we finally got that point across, but it was not easy. Some of the departments, well okay, you want the students over there. Take them over there. Just don’t bother us. But we finally convinced all of them that you want good instruction, it’s important to you, you as a department to have good instructors, then it’s your responsibility, not ours. So those are some of the arguments against University College.
Q. I need to turn the tape over here, Dr. Baumer. So let’s take a break for just a second.

A. Okay.

Q. Okay, this is side 2.

A. What was the concept of University College widely discussed? Under the conditions that existed at the time, pretty much so. There were no entrance requirements. It was first come, first serve. Most faculty were looking for some improvement in all that. What was the initial response of the Board of Regents? I’m not sure about that. I think the Regents had already decided to support what is now Columbus State. It also offered an opportunity to increase the first year course programs that existed at that time. For example, we had requirements for fall incoming freshmen, like phys ed. requirements, ROTC requirements. The survey courses and all these kinds of things. And how could these be improved or should they be changed. Well, out of this whole thing, we did away with the phys ed requirement and the ROTC requirement. Here again, if the branch campuses are a regular part of the University, all of the students at the branch campuses are not able to enroll in these things. That was only one reason. Some of the colleges did a good job advising the new students. The whole matter was a matter of trying to recruit what is going on. I guess I think the Board of Regents felt we had something going. I never got a negative comment from them about the whole University College set up, once they were aware of what the committee had in mind. I think they pretty much supported it. Now, let’s see.
Q. So now that you have the support, how did the project of the University College become a reality? The activities that took place on the campus.

A. At first we had to convince central administration that this is the way to go. And your question was (unintelligible). Well, I think he finally got, this is the way we have to go. And we did have strong differences of opinion with some people in central administration. But I feel eventually all of them got in line. I think you have a copy of some of the letters that floated back and forth. I have another letter I’m going to send you also. It’s really even stronger than the letters I sent you. The location was always a problem. I can say that at that time there were all sorts of people getting involved in this whole concept. That is, once there was an indication that these buildings might be built across the river. I saw pictures, plans in the architect’s office for four more high rise dorms on the west side of the river. These were to be used by the University College. And that’s where the University College students were all expected to be housed. Now that whole concept kind of disappeared after all the problems with the two that were on the east side of the river. But such plans existed. I saw them. Now just as an aside, I might say that this was alleged that some people felt, “Well if you put all the students over there in those high rise on the west side, that will keep the incoming freshmen students away from sin on High Street.” That of course is what was talked about a little bit. Let’s see, where are we? After the recommendations of establishing University College were accepted, describe the activities that took place to bring the college to reality. Why was Zimmerman selected? I’m not the one to answer many of these questions. While I served part-time as the Associate
Dean, some others on the scene and I and there were others on the scene and I was more interested in my responsibilities in __________. Okay. Let’s get back to why Professor Zimmerman was selected. I have to say he was favored by almost everyone because of his solid work on the committee. The faculty felt good about him and I think he had the confidence of the faculty. He made it the very best and provided a solid academic experience for all incoming students. He kept hammering at that point. All of us did, but he especially. And he was very effective. Was there a perceived relationship between establishing University College and ____ on west campus? Well this is the part that is difficult to define adequately. Most faculty were not in favor of going to the west campus. And I think I told you I wasn’t either I can tell you that I had a discussion with the President one time in his office with Dick Armitage who was at that point Dean of the Graduate School.

And I asked the specific question of why do you need to go to the west campus? And his answer was something to the effect that this is what I have to do and I can’t tell you why. So we just dropped the issue at that point. There’s nothing more you can do. Now the extent to which there may have been funding available that the President was aware of to build some buildings across the river, I do not know that. That has been a litch. Well, he was promised money to build those buildings and here was an opportunity. This included administrative offices, classrooms, library, recreational facilities, and lots of parking. Well, that no doubt … well. I have some hesitancy about saying that that was a reason. Some people say that the legislature and the governor had promised money to all of
these branch campuses and they got built and here we are in Franklin County and we want money to build one in Franklin County. And so the west campus became a reality. I don’t want to put all that kind of stock on that one, but I want to say I was aware of it. Now I served as the First Associate Dean of the University College, what in your opinion why were you selected and your responsibilities and so forth. Well, let me just comment about that a little bit. I feel, I had been working closely with all facets of campus community. And frequently I was the one who probably presented our ideas most frequently to the campus community. I met with departments, colleges, faculty groups all over the place to explain what it was that we had in mind and the various facets of the report. And at that time, I put in enough time there that I was almost a non-resident of my own department. I think the decision was made while it was vacant, he was Dean so he’s over there. Okay. But about that same time, I was Chair of the Graduate School Fellowship Committee. And Dick Armitage who was then Dean asked me to be a part-time Associate Dean there and to handle the issue at the University level. That is, all the scholarships, fellowships that were available at that time were coming through various federal agencies and those required a significant amount of time and effort to get those all at the right places. So I said okay, I would do that. Then he also asked me to take over the graduate program at Wright Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton because the person who had been doing that from the College of Engineering decided he did not want to do that anymore. So I had that assignment and I had to make a decision. And I felt the decision I made was the one that I should make for myself. I went with the opportunities to be part of the
graduate school. And that did not mean that I ended all my associations with the University College at that point. I continued to do some work there but not as the Associate Dean. Now that Wright Patterson assignment I had, there were, I don’t know the extent to which you were all aware of what was going on there, but I’m sure you saw some of the stretched out limos at the Faculty Club every day. We would pick up our regular faculty from the physical sciences and engineering and also programs in the social sciences and business. We picked them up at the Faculty Club at noon and transported them to Wright Patterson Air Force Base because that program started at 3:00 in the afternoon. And it was a good program. It was all taught by our regular faculty. So I guess I preferred my association with the graduate school and that’s why I made that decision. Being a dean at both of them was not going to work. I felt that way. And Dennis Bell had been hired as an Associate Dean at the University College. And his main function at that point was to bring the branch campuses into the system. And he did a good job at that. Dick Zimmerman was the overall dean. And it was kind of first among equals role. Now Dick pulled that off very well and from all I recall, he was able to satisfy the deans at the branch campuses. I do not know the extent to which that general approach is still being used or was being used while we still had a University College. I got out of the loop. Okay. Now, how well did the new University College meet the goals of President Fawcett? This is difficult for me to judge because I was no longer in that loop to the extent that I could make a call on that. I’m aware that some colleges did a better job advising students. And the survey courses that were developed in the University College I think were
excellent. It was also true that some of the colleges, business and to a letter extent engineering, put more effort into the upper division and graduate programs than they did in this lower division category. I think that’s probably true on almost all the campuses. But some of the colleges were better contributors than others.

When was University College 100 course started? I’m not the one to ask that. I don’t remember it exactly. But it was one of the first things that University College put together. And they asked all the various colleges to make a contribution. And most of them did an excellent job. What was the relationship between the Office of Academic Affairs and University College? Well, I’m going to send you another letter. Provost Corbally, he took over for Weaver. Weaver was Vice President for Academic Affairs. And then he left to be President someplace, I forget. And Jack Corbally was made Provost. That’s the first time we had a Provost at Ohio State. And I’m not sure the extent to which Professor Corbally was aware of all of what went on. But I think when we first had a presentation of our report was pretty much rejected. And Corbally wrote a letter to that effect to Professor Zimmerman. I have a copy of that someplace. I don’t have it here. But I’ll get that for you. I think that’s an important document. We responded. I think I sent you a copy of my response. Dick Zimmerman also sent a blistering counter. Once everyone understood what we were talking about and what other options might be available and the pros and cons of those options, I think Provost Corbally and his office fully supported it. I was never aware that the Office of Academic Affairs, once the plan was understood, would not support it. I think they would. Let’s see here. What were your major accomplishments during
your time at University College? Well, here again, setting up an academically viable college that had the potential for assisting all students to become successful college graduates, I think that’s what we were trying to do. I think the move across the river presented some real problems. The physical location was a problem for students and a problem for faculty. And I might say that as a result, even the offering at times of courses, class offerings, was changed. Because we had to bus so many of those students across the campus and bus schedules caused some offering times to have to change. It just wasn’t, in my view, the thing to do. But once the buildings were built and the buses were purchased, it’s too late to do anything about it. You can tell my feelings about going over there. I think that was a mistake. Now, just as an aside, I can say some of this had to do with the availability of classrooms and class times and all that type of thing. I think the University Registrar has a copy of a report that we made about that time about classroom use. And while classroom use was high during certain hours of the day, as the hours of the day went into the afternoon, the classroom use percentage was pretty low. So I think there were facilities available, but we may want to talk about that some other time. What, in your opinion, was the impact of University College over the 35 years? I feel it served a purpose. Gave incoming students a much better feel for the whole campus. I also think counseling and advising was improved. Many students in that University made a serious effort to reduce the drop out rate that was so costly to the students and the University. We had a terrible drop out rate. And I think they had some good people there. I want to say one other thing about all of that. It slipped my mind. I’ll get back to it. What
was your assessment of leadership? Well, beyond Dean Zimmerman I have a hard time responding to that. I feel he was the right person to begin that college. I agree the deanship seemed to be internal. And when John Mount was appointed, I did think he had some different views about freshmen students than did Dean Zimmerman. I do think the University College had many excellent people employed there. And I see some of those peoples’ names on your list. I was really impressed with those people. I thought they were very, very good. Now let’s see. Please comment on the closing of University College. I really was not aware that the University College had closed until after the fact. And of course I had retired. And it happened through the Provost’s office as I understand it. And the Provost thought that was reasonable. I think many things changed and the need was different. The one thing that really changed was entrance requirements. You have to go back to what we said earlier in this discussion. At one time, it was first come, first served. And there was a limit on numbers. Who were going to be the first come, first served persons who were going to be admitted? Well, that wasn’t the easiest thing to come to an agreement on. But I think that now that we have entrance requirements, some of the things that caused the recommendations of the University College to go in the direction that they did, had been alleviated. I don’t know that they’ve been eliminated, but they’re no longer as significant as they were at that point. I think it was a move that had to be made; there was a need. Or explaining the full resources of that University to all students as soon as they could do that and to offer students information about such things as the library. Such things as recreational facilities., such things as
what goes on in the various colleges. And how do I go from point A to point B if I have this kind of academic interest, as compared to another academic interest? How do I get from here to there? All those kinds of things, I think we helped students in that respect. Now, what’s going to happen now? I don’t know. I do think that some of the advising that was going on at University College is very important and I think very good. That’s all from second hand information. But that’s what I hear.

Q. Yes.

A. What will be the impact to OSU students throughout University College? Well, this remains a critical issue. I feel strongly that another all faculty committee should be set up to address this problem. Many things about the University, both internal and external, have changed, but one problem remains. How and what can be done by the University to provide new students with their adjustments to University life on a large research teaching campus? We should not leave this to change. Students make errors. We don’t care where that drop-out rate. These new students are our future and the University should care for them at least as well as we seem to care for our athletes. We try things for athletes. Hey, how about the incoming freshmen students? I feel strongly that the University has an obligation here and it’s just not something that’s going to happen. I think it needs attention. Okay, now I have a few other comments I want to make. Are you ready?

Q. Yes, I’m ready.
A. Now, again in presenting these kinds of things to various departments and colleges, I set out for myself first principles of the University College. And you’ll see some of these in the report as well. I’ve put them in my own context. Excellent in teaching and counseling, especially new, first year students. That was the first principle. Two, effort at simplicity. The common portal of entry. Then help all students pursue their degree program. Get them all in there and then explain the whole University opportunities to the students and help these students pursue their degree programs. Three, emphasize or emphasis on improved instructional principles. Do a better job with new incoming students. The opportunities were there to do something with new teaching facilities. And I think some of that was done. Of course they are no longer teaching. They are no longer using those facilities across the river, but I think there was an effort made to introduce some new teaching systems there. Four, emphasis on curricular and functional articulation. Make the shift to degree colleges and programs easy, not give students a hard time about shifting from one college to another or making a decision. Make the whole thing easy. And then, we felt we had to have our own budget. If you wanted to have this work, there had to be a way to do it. And that meant there had to be budgetary things set up. And we had to have a budget. And then the last one of these that I felt was a first principle was the image. And I felt it was not a second class, it was not for second class students or second class faculty or second class facilities. It should be first class on all of those. And we pounded that as you heard throughout the faculty. Okay. So those were first principles that I always used when I would make presentations of University
College to faculty and departments or colleges. Let’s see. The master plan, I had a couple of comments here. Two year community college is serving principally undergraduate students residing in Columbus. That is a comment from President Fawcett’s comments at that Twilight Forum I was talking about. I’m going to get my hands on that. I will give that to you because I think that’s an important document.

Q. Okay.
A. No second class students. Funding the University, FET and undergraduate colleges can be selective. Well, that’s about it. I know that I have a few other things that I have written down here I’ll probably put in there.

Q. Well you’re going to receive a copy of this tape, a transcription so you can edit it. And then we’ll ask you to return that within 60 days.
A. You’re going to have it typed up.

Q. Right. We’ll type it up and we’ll give you a copy of that. And then you can edit it and send it back. And I think at that time if you want to add something to it, you can.
A. I know I will.

Q. Right. And then you send it back to us in 60 days and you’ll sign the release form. And then if there’s anything on there in re-reading it that you want to hold confidential, you can mark that area and let us know how long you would like to keep it confidential.
A. And I’ll send you this other letter that I have here and the material that I have.
Q. Great. I’ll include the material and the names that you’ve mentioned and things like that for the file. And we’ll get it all done.

A. And I want to say to you that if there’s anyone else’s comments that you wish me to review in a historic sense, I saw something in one of the University publications that said, “Well those of us that had a long history may want to help the library in reviewing some of these matters,” if I can be of any help, just send it over. I’ll look at it.

Q. That sounds great. I’m sure Bill Studer will be in touch with you.

A. Well, you tell Bill if there’s anything like that, just send it over. For goodness sake, I can sit here and work on it.

Q. Well I really, really appreciate the amount of time you spent with us, Dr. Baumer and the insight you’ve given us into the University College. You’re the first interview we’ve done for this and we’ll be doing a lot. But it’s a really solid foundation to get an oral history of the University College. It’s important for our record.

A. Well I feel like some of it was a little bit disjointed. But I think once I see it, we can move some things around so that it reads better.

Q. Certainly. Okay. Well thank you again. I don’t have a timeline of when this will be sent down to you.

A. We’re going to be here until the end of March. We’re planning to leave here probably on the 28th, 29th, something like that. And we’ll be back in Columbus right after Easter.
Q. That sounds good. If I find out anything about any sorts of dates when things are going to happen, I’ll give you a call so you an expect it or know that it will not be coming down there until come back to Columbus.

A. You tell Bill if he wants me to read anything I’m sitting down here most of the day and I would not mind at all reviewing something for him.

Q. Okay. We appreciate that. Well thank you again very much for your time, Dr. Baumer. Good-bye.

A. Good-bye.