Q. This is Raimund Goerler. Today’s date is December 4, 2009. I have the pleasure of interviewing Martha Garland for the purpose of creating an oral history product for the OSU Archives. Thank you, Martha.

A. Sure.

Q. I want to begin, as we had planned, with the origins of your academic background. Tell me what the factors were that led you to choose an academic career.

A. Sure. I was an undergraduate at Tulane University and had some wonderful professors, who were inspiring, both intellectually and also personally. Tulane had long had, when I was there, a study-abroad program, really before a lot of places in America did, and so I spent my junior year at The University of London at Queen Mary College in London. I went to England thinking that I would be an English major or possibly a History major. I had had very good courses in both and loved both of them. But when I was in England, and I tried to take work in both the English program and the History program there. They don’t do that in England. You major in something, one or the other. But I was able to kind of compare the two fields and just found myself more comfortable in History, really sort of socially, through the History Department was well organized. The English Department was sort of chaotic for whatever reason, and I had friends in History. So I came back for my senior year in college as a History major, firmly cemented as a History major, and with a lot of background in British History, because I had this whole year that really focused on British History. And I was a good student. I was a strong student as an undergraduate. And I decided that I liked this life and wanted to continue in it. And I have to say my thinking was pretty naïve. Universities just seemed like pretty places to hang around and the people were smart and nice and interesting. My professors that I knew at Tulane seemed to have a very nice lifestyle. They clearly weren’t rich, but they were very well-situated. They clearly were well set up. I thought a bit about what kind of life are you making for yourself when you make this decision. I guess I always assumed I would marry and have children, but I never assumed that that was all I would do. I always assumed I would have some kind of professional career. I’m not sure why exactly. My mother had been a math professor and then, when she married my father who owned a hardware store in a little town in southern Illinois, she immediately stopped working and then went home and reared me and my sister. But I think she probably let us know in some kind of way … I think we for many years were the only two Ph.D.s that came out of Salem, Illinois. So my mother must have put something in the water. I really remember thinking, “I won’t ever be rich,” but thinking kind of purposefully about what I wanted out of life, just from a material perspective. And I thought, “I need to be able to send my children to college and I want to be able to travel.” And, “I don’t buy a lot of things,” but I was sort of in the business of collecting books. I had a pretty good library. So I thought, “I need to be able to buy books,” but you can pretty much buy books without being rich. That seemed like it. If you’re a university professor, you have some help in getting your
children educated usually, in many places including the United States. You do get to travel, just in connection with the work. And of course you have to buy. So it seemed to me that my basic needs were going to be met just by being a History professor. I really didn’t think very much about doing research, about scholarship. My professor, my main sort of icon professor that I looked up to, well I had one in England and one here, at Tulane. They were both very active scholars, really very serious well-regarded scholars. But that wasn’t what I liked about them. I liked that they were good teachers and they were good mentors. And I think I went to graduate school with the idea of becoming a teacher. I went to Cornell, had a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship and went to Cornell. And I discovered there that the expectation was that you would really do scholarship, and that the teaching was kind of secondary. I did not, my relationship with my professor there, was not particularly a happy one. And I met Jim Garland who had been a brand-new beginning graduate student in physics. He had just come from Princeton. And we met in September and married in June. And so then, well yes, so then I stopped at Cornell, just with my master’s degree. And I taught at Ithaca College for the next three years while Jim finished his Ph.D. My idea was, well, I liked teaching at Ithaca College; I liked it a lot. And I kind of decided while I was there, we had a very good friend there, who had also been a student at Cornell in student affairs, kind of student development. And she was, I think, younger than I. I think we were both probably 21 or 22. She was the dean of women at Ithaca College at this very tender age. She was a very bright, wonderful woman. And the two of us were very good friends. And we both sort of decided while we were there together, I was there three years, I think she stayed five, that we wanted to be in the academy. And that if we were going to do that, we needed PhD’s. And I wasn’t really certain that I could do a Ph.D. that I wanted to work as hard on the scholarship as I seemed to have to at Cornell. Jim won an NSF grant to do post-doc work, and he chose to do it at the University of Cambridge in England, which was a very great gift to me because, of course, I was a British historian. So we went to Cambridge for a year. And that was in ’69, ’70. And I said to myself I would try to do some kind of piece of research. While we were at Cambridge, on my own, and if I could do that, if I could come up with a topic, work on it on my own without owing it to any authority figure, a supervisor or anything, then that would be a sign that I should go to graduate school, and wherever we went, wherever he got a job, I would do that. If not, I had decided I would go to law school, that I would forget about the academe. But I did. And I chose. We had a baby at that point, my daughter Elizabeth, and I chose to do something in the 19th century. My earlier work had been in medieval. But I thought 19th century. I had done an honors thesis at Tulane in 19th century, and I thought I could get into and out of a 19th century topic more quickly, we only had this year. I also thought, if I did something on the history of the University of Cambridge, I would be able to sell myself later as a university administrator. I knew I was going to get a degree wherever Jim took a job. I also thought I knew that I would never therefore be a faculty member at that institution. But if I had done something on the history of the university, I would be able to sort of present myself as somebody who should be able to do administrative work of some sort. And also, because we had a baby, that I could get into and out of the archives quickly. It would all be there in Cambridge and I wouldn’t have to travel around Great Britain. So that’s what I did. And I came to Ohio State then. This is where Jim took a job, and I went to the History Department and asked if I could do a Ph.D. with the modern British
historian, a wonderful man named Philip Poirier, who took me as his advisee. And he wasn’t a specialist at all in 19th century intellectual history. He did 20th century history of the labor party. But he was a terrific scholar and a wonderful man. And so he said I could write this thesis. He said to me two things. He said, “I don’t know anything about your topic, so I’m a good reader and I can look to see whether you’ve made sense of sources and stuff but I’m not going to be able to guide you (a), and (b), do not expect me to get you a job. There are no jobs.” This was 1971. He said, “I’m not going to take that responsibility on. But I’ll help you get your Ph.D.” So I did it. That’s what I did here. I used that as my thesis. I finished up quite quickly. Started in ’71 and finished by ’75. I had a TA-ship. We had another baby, Jimmy, Jim, James. And so then, there I was, with a Ph.D. from here and I served as a lecturer in the History Department for a quarter. I served as a lecturer in the English Department for a quarter teaching freshmen English, which I believe was the lowest I ever sank. It’s good and noble work but not if you think you’re a historian. It just was really hard. And so then I started looking around for jobs. And I shot my resume around to Otterbein, Capital, Kenyan, Denison. But nobody needed historians at that point. And so then I started looking for jobs at Ohio State. And the first job I got was as an academic advisor in the College of the Arts and Sciences, which was the Denney Hall operation. Arts and Sciences had been, there had been a thing called Arts and Sciences. And in 1968 the University had decided to make it into five separate colleges that functioned as a kind of confederation. And that’s one of the three main things about the University, that I’ve thought about the whole time I’ve been here, because my senior colleagues, people that I came to know through my program or through Jim’s, inculcated in me the belief which was, I have no idea whether it was factual, but certainly it was perceived among the circles that I moved in, that the Arts and Sciences were disproportionately powerful in the University, and it would be better if they were fragmented. I had never talked to anybody in any of those schools to find out whether they actually felt that …

Q. It’s interesting you bring that up because one of the people that we interviewed, was the last dean of the old College of Arts and Sciences.

A. Art Fuller?

Q. Art Fuller, exactly. He had quite a few things to say about the process and goals. Needless to say, he was terribly opposed to it and left the university shortly thereafter.

A. This packet of materials I bring you, it’s really not quite as a gift, more as [a loan], but I think you can have it ultimately. Tom Willke was the, not the very first, but one of the very earliest people running that Denney Hall operation. After they pulled things apart, there was the College of Humanities, the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, the College of Math and Physical Sciences, College of Biological Sciences, and the [College of the Arts]…the five colleges. But then the students were all advised in this central office which operated out of Denney Hall. What this is, is a really good record of committees deciding to break it apart, the faculty getting all up in arms, a thing called the
Committee of 26, I think, who pulled it together. You may have all this already in your records but it’s quite wonderful stuff. And Tom, I got together with Tom earlier this week to just go over the Committee of 24, to ask him to help me, to see if he remembered it the way I did. And I’m going to meet next week with Charles Babcock, who was the first Dean of the College of Humanities under the new rubric, again to just sort of check my memory against some of these people. Because these are older guys now. We are losing people who remember the day. So anyway, the job that I took, I took it in ’77 and Tom Willke hired me. The job he hired me for was to head the pre-med program, which is, of course, is completely what you do if you’re a British historian. But it was a perfect position for me. I remember we were laughing about it together the other day because he said, “Are you going to find this job interesting enough? Is this going to challenge you enough?” And I remember quite literally saying, “This job would challenge anybody for quite a while. It might not challenge me forever but it’s very complicated and very important.” It was an advising job, advising students who were pre-med students. You make a mistake, I’ve often said, about academic advising, which I have from that day until now always had a soft spot in my heart for, because for one thing I was one, and I had colleagues and friends, but also I know how important it is. I’ve often said it’s like being a tax accountant and a priest or a psychological counselor. Students have great existential challenges that they are facing as they are trying to figure out what they’re going to study: ‘Is [that] what am I going to be when I grow up? What am I going to do?’ And at the same time it’s really important that you not screw up their curriculum, that they get the requirements that they need, that they take the right chemistry – the pre-med chemistry and not the pre-nursing chemistry – or they can set themselves back a year or two.

Q. For my own clarification, you were an undergraduate advisor in the College of the Arts and Sciences. How did the undergraduate advising relate to the advising that was going on in University College (UVC)?

A. University College, do you know when University College was founded because that’s not a thing I have?

Q. It would have been in the early ’70s. I can’t identify the exact year.

A. I’m not certain about that either. But the difference between the two was that University College, from whenever it was founded which was then or maybe perhaps a bit earlier, was to be the intake college for most students. In fact, I think when first founded, for all students. Freshmen would all go to University College and then when they were ready to go into their major, they would do – it’s called an IUT – an inter-university transfer, and they would move to the college of enrollment, the college of their major. Some of them did that quite quickly, but many of them didn’t. And when we were open admissions, which of course we were at that point, many of them weren’t prepared to do the work they needed to do in the colleges of enrollment. So when I first came to the University, our undergraduates were about two-thirds freshmen and sophomores. They weren’t evenly distributed over the classes at all because it was very common for people to get University College and just stall out there, sometimes stay there three years, four years,
and never get into a major and never graduate. Sometimes stay three or four years and finally get into a major and take a really long time to finish up. Arts and Sciences was the academic advising unit for all the students who had declared a major in one of the five colleges that were in the confederation of the Arts and Sciences.

Q. I understand.

A. There was a certain tension between Arts and Sciences and University College. The students in AG, as it was then called or the Health Sciences or Business or Engineering, were students who knew what they wanted to do and they were smaller programs, fewer students. And the programs were quite personally supported. So the academic advising ranges across campus, it still ranges across campus, but in a field like nursing, for example, there’s almost no advising you have to do. You sort of get on the train and get off the train. It’s all very lock-step and very straight-forward. Engineering is much the same. Ag, which has a lot of choices in it, has always been very loving to its students, and the faculty are directly involved in advising. So those students got good advising, and the Business College always had a tradition of good advising. If you’re Engineering or Business, if you are those disciplines, the accreditation process requires you to be able to report on the outcomes of your students. So doing well by them in terms of their career planning is an important part of how you are measured in the national arena. And so they’ve always had good – “always” means as long as I can remember – always had good career offices and good academic advising, straight-forward academic advising. UVC was just the great unwashed. Huge number of students, pretty undifferentiated. This is harsh to say, but when the University admitted anybody, just on a first-come, first-served basis, and the attrition rates were so appalling and graduation rates were so low, it seems as if it was hard for the institution to make a kind of psychological commitment, for faculty members but also for the administrative structure, to do things to help the students. There was sort of the premise that a lot of them didn’t belong here. And a kind of mindset that said “there’s a screening, you weed them out, you’ll have courses that are taught and they won’t make it and then they’ll go.”

Q. So there was a weaning approach to education.

A. Yes. And that’s very much the way it was when I first came here. I remember because, of course, I was a TA while I was in graduate school. So I taught freshmen classes and then I got to be on the faculty. But even when I was a senior TA I had classes on my own, upper-division classes. I remember thinking we were doing a wonderful job because look how smart they are when they’re juniors and seniors. I mean, they know so much. They’re wonderful and they were so stupid when they were freshmen. Well, of course, it’s not the same kids. Only half of them were showing up as juniors and seniors.

Q. So you were advising the students who were thinking about entering medical school as to what courses to take?

A. Yes. And the pre-med curriculum then and now is very prescribed. You can major in whatever you want, but you have to take three quarters of real chemistry followed by two
quarters of organic chemistry, lecture and lab, three quarters of real physics, then introductory biology, two quarters of introductory biology, and then microbiology. Now, pretty much, you have to take molecular genetics. In order to take the chemistry and physics you have to have calculus. So you do that. Much of that overlaps with the science and math requirements of the regular curriculum, or some of it does, but for everybody you have to have two quarters of work in math and physical sciences and two in the biological sciences. Well, you can count your first two chemistry and your first two biology [classes]. But then there’s a boatload of other chemistry and physics and everything. So most pre-med students are biological sciences majors or chemistry majors because it’s just efficient. But some of them are history majors and psych majors and studying other things.

Q. You remember that so well. It sounds as if you could go right back into advising again.

A. You betcha. I’ve watched that all these years. That’s important stuff. And so I did that. There was another person who also did pre-med advising then, a wonderful woman, Anne Pernaveau. Her Ph.D. was in genetics from biology. She was just right and wonderful. I don’t know whether she’s still alive. She was somewhat older than I, but not a lot. She’s probably still alive. She’s probably fine. But she retired long ago from the University. She had notices, and then we began looking at it together, it was sort of my first real experience with enrollment management kind of stuff. There are several different moments when you can tell that students are going to be pre-med. They come to the University saying they’re going to be pre-med. We do an incoming freshmen survey that comes out of California. And we’ve participated in it since 1966. And we have our data for our freshmen, many, many questions. You maybe see it reported every year. Students this year nationally care more about making a good living than finding or developing a philosophy of life, or vice versa. It changes over time. We’ve participated in that since the beginning. It’s called the CIRP. I don’t know what that stands for. And it’s administered during orientation, freshmen orientation. And so we can compare our freshmen to our freshmen last year or ten years ago or twenty years. But we can also compare our freshmen to freshmen around the country at any point in time. Huge wonderful body of data which we still, I think, have not used as vigorously as we might. And it was the first time I had ever run into data sets like that. Mind you this is when, if you wanted to figure them out with a computer, you had to have punch cards and go to the computer building at night, neither of which I knew how to do. That was not a thing you did if you were a historian at all.

Q. You prayed that each one of those cards was punched accurately.

A. I’m sure, I’m sure. So we started looking at that. The incoming freshmen said they wanted to be pre-med, and they kept saying that in as large numbers as ever. I mean, I don’t know what the numbers were, but 25 percent of the incoming freshmen over time say they want to be pre-med. But then when they got to the point where they did the IUT, the transfer from University College to something, again they have to say whether they are pre-med or not because they would either come to me or Anne or not. They’d drop off quite considerably. I’m making up these numbers ‘cause it was a long time ago, it was 25
when they came in, it was 20 when they do the IUT. But then they have to take the MCAT in their junior year, and the numbers just plunged. Say it’s maybe 10 percent who take the MCAT, and then they actually apply to medical school which our office had to sign off on. And it’s 5 percent. So there’s a kind of natural attrition. And what we did was we looked at the natural attrition of the class that came in in ’75, and then in ’76, and the slope was getting much sharper. So we were trying to figure out what’s going on. And what we noticed along the way was that, if you see something at Ohio State, especially then, it wasn’t like any other place in the country exactly. But it was kind of like every other place in the country because we were so big and we had everything from UVC freshmen who were absolutely going to flunk out to PhD students in molecular genetics, and everything in between. And we were the biggest university in the country. And we were right here in the middle of the country. And so that news about that study that Anne and I did was on the front page of the Wall Street Journal. It was in Time Magazine. We said to medical schools, “Watch out, our kids are turning away from medicine.” And we didn’t really have a thesis about why except that they just didn’t seem to work as hard. They didn’t want to work as hard. We didn’t truthfully, we had hypotheses, [but] we didn’t have a way of testing them exactly. But it kind of hooked me on that sort of analysis of large numbers and data sets. And it was a very sloppy piece of work. And it was right. The medical schools believed us, and a lot of them – they had loaded up to deal with a kind of shortage in doctors. And one of the ways they had done that was, a lot of medical schools all over the country had gone to three-year curricula, so that they could get people out in three years. And when they began to see these numbers dropping off, they made their curriculum four years long again, which what they didn’t want to do was become less selective, if there were fewer people applying. They didn’t want to have to take further down in the pool. It was quite an interesting little piece of work. I was assuming at this point that I would be an administrator. I say that, but meanwhile I had sent my dissertation off to Cambridge University Press. You know the book because you’re part of the chorus, Cambridge Report, and I just sent the manuscript pretty much unmodified to Cambridge. And I said, “I know the difference between a manuscript thesis and a book. But would you all have any interest in this?” And amazingly they said they were very much interested and made some recommendations about some modifications, some of which I made. And I fleshed it out a little bit. But basically it was based on my dissertation work. So I pressed on. Cambridge was publishing that. I gave some papers on different pieces of the curriculum. Gave one on mathematics at Cambridge, which was really a stretch as I think about it. And I was working in Arts and Sciences. I found out about a program called HERS, Higher Education Resource Service I think, something like that. It’s a group that provides academic administrative educational opportunities for women, women interested in academic administration. This is 1978 when there really weren’t very many women in senior positions. And it’s at Bryn Mawr and at that time it was about a five-week program in the summer. And I got the University to support me to go to that. Al Kuhn was the provost and I went to him and said, “This is what I’m doing. I want to be an administrator. And you and I both presumably believe in education, so why don’t we get me educated for this?” You had to get the University to support you, or they wouldn’t accept you.

Q. So at this time you were still an academic advisor?
A. Still in Arts and Sciences as an advisor. But because of Jim, I knew socially a lot of people in Physics and Chemistry and Math. And also some engineering. And also I knew about that curriculum and the kind of politics. ________ was the dean, I knew what kind of guy ________ was. Meanwhile, I was in history and I knew what kind of dean Art Adams was. And also I knew, probably our social circle was more tending in the direction of French and English and the History Department. I’m not saying the Math people are boring, but the Humanities people are definitely not boring. So we knew a lot of them. But I didn’t know people in other fields like Biology. But then doing this pre-med thing was wonderful because I had to meet faculty from Biology. So I am a huge fan of academic advising as an educational frame for potential University people. Because it just provides you with, if you take it seriously and get it right and learn it all. And then you learned things like how do you do a petition, who needs to be persuaded that a student is not ruining the standards of the university, how do you work with all of that? So I was doing that. I had done this pre-med study. And my book was being reviewed. And so it was not crazy for me to be somewhat ambitious. So I went to the HERS [Higher Education Resource Services] thing. I came back and Art Adams had just retired as Dean of Humanities and been given the job as Vice Provost for Continuing Education. At that point, so this is now 1978, the population was doing this as it does periodically. The population of 18 year olds, and the University was worried that we were going to have a market problem and that we were going to need other students. So we committed ourselves, the institution committed itself to reaching out to nontraditional age students to try to keep paying the bills.

Q. I remember this was the era of President Harold Enarson and we were doing such initiatives as weekend universities at shopping centers.

A. That’s correct. Shopping centers was my project. Weekend Universities was Stuart Grover. But we worked on those together. That’s correct. In fact, I would say, and I of course didn’t know him very well because I was down pretty low in the hierarchy, but I would say that Harold Enarson’s presidency, from my perspective, had a populist, sort of Democratic streak. He was the president who, coming off the riots in ’70, ’71, enabled the [University] Senate to come into existence. And the Senate, our Senate, is an extraordinarily representative; it’s not a faculty senate, it’s a University senate, with students and administrators. I think there’s an argument to be made that it doesn’t serve us as well as it might. But at the time, it was necessary to make that kind of program. Another thing that the Enarson administration was really committed to, I think Audrey [Enarson] gets a lot of credit for this, but was the accessibility of the campus. That people in wheelchairs should be able to get all around the campus.

Q. … federal program.

A. Sure, sure, but Ohio State was a good place to do it because we’re such a flat campus, that it wasn’t unreasonable to try to put in ramps and make it possible for people to get around. And then I think the Continuing Education [Program] also fitted with his view that we should be the people’s university. That was all kind of coherent.
Q. I remember when I arrived, when [some] of the people I worked with were up in arms because Audrey Enarson was serving beans at university events. And of course this was the common touch, also [the] Southwestern touch. But very different from what had transpired in the past.

A. When did you come?

Q. ’78.

A. So just right as I was kind of getting my career kick-started. When did Enarson’s presidency begin?

Q. It began in ’72. The work of creating the University Senate was already in progress. The Senate was largely an outgrowth of University governance when students were not represented in the faculty body.

A. So I wasn’t paying attention, so I’m not remembering. But I did feel that Enarson welcomed that. He was not offended by the notion of students being in the Senate. It all fitted with his kind of world view. I knew faculty members who were offended, didn’t think that was appropriate. I also knew faculty members who were completely in favor of it. Two of my favorite colleagues in the History Department were Merton Dillan and John Rothney. And Rothney was much less. Rothney came a bit later and much less reliably active. Merton was really kind of a _____________ Marxist. He was very much in favor. He’s one of the people that sort of worked with the students and liked the Senate the way it shaped up. I loved Merton. He’s still alive and living in Michigan, I think, now. But long retired. So anyway, do we need to continue with this or get more into the broader University?

Q. Art Adams was Dean of the College of Humanities. Was that when your career in undergraduate History Department? What made the link there?

A. Okay. I did my degree. I finished in ’75. I did the lecturing for about a year and then I started in January of ’77 in the Arts and Sciences. I did that in ’77 and ’78. [In] ’79, the beginning of ’79, I went over to work for Art Adams in continuing education. And I worked there through until the fall of ’82, at which time … meanwhile, someplace along in there and I don’t remember exactly when, but Phil Poirier, my professor, had tragically died of lung cancer. And they didn’t, the University was in fiscal challenge, and they didn’t allow the department to rehire a British historian. I know somebody, the other day at my thing, was joking about, the point was irrelevance of British history, but I think, for Americans, British history, especially late 18th-, 19th-, 20th-century history, really is not irrelevant. We went for three years, I think, without a British historian at all. And then, the Dean then was Dieter Haenicke. And when he [came, he] allowed the History Department to hire in British history. And they did a national search. By this time I had my book out with Cambridge. It had gotten quite good reviews, not uniformly brilliant, but very, very satisfying reviews. And they hired me. And what a blessing. It was just
amazing. I’ve often said it seemed like proof of the existence of God because I wanted to be a historian. I wanted to be at a major university. I wasn’t going to leave Columbus, Ohio, and God just finally went, “Okay.”

Q. An opportunity congealed.

A. Yes, yes. So anyway, I joined the history faculty in ’82. And at that point, Jim and I had been struggling, our marriage. He was asked, [OSU Pres. Edward] Jennings came in ’81. This is the kind of thing I think I would then censor out of the transcript but let me say it to you and we’ll see where we are. Because I was tucked in under Art Adams’ wing and because he was a mensch, well-connected and politically very alert, he was very good friends with Ned Moulton. And not very good friends with Al Kuhn, who was the Provost. And Ned was the chancellor of the Board of Regents. He had been our Vice President for everything money. And Al was the Provost. Both of them were candidates for the presidency. Both of them wanted to be President. And Ed Jennings was selected. And there was no love lost between Al and Art. And by the time I finished working for Art, there was not a lot of love lost between me and Art, which has always been, I have come to be very fond of Al.

Q. We agreed that we would see your career in the larger context of the presidential administration, so before turning to your career in the context of the Jennings administration, is there anything more that you wanted to add about Harold Enarson? Enarson, as you pointed out, left at a time of fiscal crisis. It was a national, one of the worst recessions. There were rumors, I think unfounded, that Enarson was forced to retire. There was a period of controversy between Enarson and the doctors, the medical practice plan.

A. I was enough distant, low enough down in the weeds, not to be very knowledgeable about that. My memory of Harold Enarson was that he was a Democrat with a small “d.” Kind of across the board, these various things that we’ve mentioned as evidence of that. Not very well-beloved by the faculty. Kind of the, not a Brahmin, with respect to academic work. I can’t remember what his discipline was. It seemed like public relations.

Q. It was political science.

A. Was it?

Q. He was the first University president at OSU to have a Ph.D.

A. Not public affairs or something more like that, public administration?

Q. He had a career in public administration. He served under Truman. And when the Republicans came in, he went to Philadelphia and served the mayor of Philadelphia in one of the agencies and went to higher education in Colorado. And _____ State plucked him, if you will, from _________ in Colorado, and then here.
A. The way the people that I knew spoke of him was as kind of a bureaucrat, kind of public relations, not public relations at all, I said that before too, but public administrative, and not very scholarly. And then this egalitarian business of sort of thinking that whatever the students, the students had as much right as the faculty. And the people that I knew, I would say tended to be more thinking that faculty members know something, that’s why they’re faculty members.

Q. One of the reasons I’m dwelling on this a little bit is because Enarson was instrumental in having the University pay more attention to minorities and women. So I was kind of wondering if the Enarson environment was one that helped to foster your own career. You said you went to HERS but there were other people involved in that.

A. The person who let me go to HERS, who funded it, was Al. I’m not certain I ever met Harold Enarson except maybe right at the end of his term as he was leaving. And the people who gossiped about him or talked about him in my presence were not fans.

Q. Enarson hired the first woman Provost, the controversial Ann Reynolds.

A. Right. I didn’t realize he had hired her. I knew her because Ed, when Ed came, he set up for the first time a Vice President for Research. We had not had that office before.

Q. Actually, we did under Novice Fawcett. It was discontinued under Dr. Enarson.

A. Okay, that’s quite possible. This was *de novo* as far as I was concerned. But Ed asked Jim Garland to be the first Acting Vice President, Interim, whatever, to get it started. And Jim was, he was a full professor of Physics by that time, having ascended to full pretty rapidly. Jim is a very good scientist, and also more than typically, socially competent for a scientist. And he was well-credentialed. He came from Princeton to Cornell, and then he had the Cambridge degree. He was just sort of strategic. And so I don’t think he had been chair of the department. He chaired a committee on, it can’t have been called Termination of Tenured Faculty, but it was something like that.

Q. Jennings created early on in his administration a University Faculty Committee to define what financial exigency was, and this was early on when the University and the country was under economic recession, and he had no processes for defining when financial circumstances were so bad that we should begin thinking about releasing tenured faculty.

A. Yes. So Jim chaired that committee and I think co-chaired it with Ron Rossbottom. At least Ron Rossbottom also served on it. They became quite good friends at that time. Ron Rossbottom was a classmate of mine at Tulane. And he went junior year abroad, he and his wife, the woman who became his wife, junior year abroad they went to Paris; I went to London. We were good friends when we came back our senior year. You can imagine what little snoots people are after they’ve spent a year in Europe and all the pedestrian Americans. And so we hung around with each other. Then I went off to Cornell; he went to Princeton for his graduate degree. He had a job at Pennsylvania, a job that had been defined as short term, and then he came to Ohio State as a senior assistant professor. And
we reconnected and became friends and continue to be friends until this day. And he and Jim worked on that committee. And I think Ed was pleased with that work and then asked Jim to be the first Vice President for Research. I guess not first but new. Jim put the office together and we were really struggling in our marriage. But this seemed to us, he was asked in July, and we had really almost come to the point of saying … we had done a lot of counseling and stuff. And that seemed to us like a possibility that it would maybe give us a whole new way of framing things and that maybe we could go on together. We always were good partners, sort of facing out, to the outside world. People, when we got divorced were astounded, people were astounded. So we thought, “Well, this is a project we can sort of work on together.” And we did for six months or so. But it wasn’t …

Q. The project of setting up the office …

A. Being Vice President and his wife and being University people. It was in July that he got the job, and in September I went to the History Department as an Assistant Professor. And we went through that sort of six-month period. We had a party on New Year’s Day for senior administrators. ____________ was a Vice President. So we were quite young to be doing that, not so young I guess. But by that time we were just miserable and two or three weeks later we told our children and separated. And then I can’t believe that that mess in his social life, in his personal life, helped him as a candidate. He was a candidate, but they selected, I don’t remember his name. He was from Berkeley. He was also a physicist, a theoretical physicist. And he had a wife or a partner, a woman who was a classical pianist, beautiful woman. So then he came in as the first permanent VP for Research.

Q. I don’t recall the name but I do remember meeting him and his spouse.

A. And Jim went back to the physics department and then shortly became the chair of the physics department. And then after a bit, the Dean of the College of Mathematical and Physical Sciences. But our ways separated. So I was in the History Department then as an Assistant Professor. And almost immediately the department asked me to do administrative kinds of things, especially having to do with the kids. I was in charge of the undergraduate advising office in History. It just made sense, that I knew that kind of thing. But I loved being in History. And I just committed myself quite completely. And it was funny, I was talking to somebody about this the other day, how when I had this job as Associate Director of Continuing Education with Art, and Art had this very Machiavellian view of the whole world and he shared it a lot. And then we went through with him the search that led to Ed Jennings and then I heard his opinions about Ed Jennings. Then Jim got this job which put us in the circles of influence. I went from that to being an Assistant Professor in the History Department with no connections anywhere. And it was interesting. It was an interesting kind of shock to the system, although I was fine. My world sort of shrank. I don’t know, did you hear David Franz talk the other day? He gave this speech at my retirement reception. And he said that I had always treated, right away made a point, the boys in the History Department, a group of guys in the History Department, which at that time were mostly guys, ate lunch and eat lunch together in the Faculty Club down at a table, at a bigger table.
Q. And they still do.

A. And they still do. And I immediately joined them. I just felt, “I’m a historian, I can do that.” And they are just dreadful. They are boring. But then, on the other hand, sometimes they’re foul-mouthed. They’re just silly. And I just wouldn’t let them get me. And David, in talking about me, said that that was one of the things he thought was part of my strength, was that I just insisted that I had a right to be included. And you asked about Harold [Enarson] supporting diversity, including for women. I’m not a very good source on all of that. I have really pretty much, I have not experienced in a felt way discrimination because of being a woman. I think there probably are structural things, if you stood back and did a structural analysis, that do amount to, if not discrimination, at least disadvantage. For example, I was at Ohio State. Jim applied for jobs when we were looking for jobs from Cambridge. He was interviewed at Penn and at Brown and at Oregon, and I think Arkansas. And he got the job at Oregon and Ohio State, maybe he took himself out of Arkansas. He didn’t get the jobs at Brown and Penn. If he had gotten the jobs at Brown and Penn, I would have a Ph.D. from Brown or Penn. I went where he went. Then I don’t know what my career would have been. I remember at one point while we were still married, Tulane hired a modern British historian. It was advertised in The Chronicle. And I said to Jim, “Look, Tulane …” Now I don’t think at that point I could have gotten a job anywhere in the country or many places, but I could have had that Tulane job with my credentials. I could have gotten the job at Tulane. And he just said, “Oh yes, isn’t that too bad?” We really didn’t consider that we could move for me to get a job. When I stopped at Cornell with just my Master’s degree, quite considerably a factor in it was that we didn’t have any money. We were trying to live on two fellowships. And we didn’t have clean socks. I was expected to produce the clean socks. It wasn’t that Jim was a pig at all. Nobody’s husband produced clean socks. So I think there have been limits to my career that are structurally sexist. But what I’m saying to you is that I personally have not ever felt humiliated or put down or limited.

Q. One of the people that we did interview was Kathryn Schoen, first Vice President at this University, the first woman Vice President at this University. And she talked about being a young professor in education, I think it was. And she bumped into a department chair at the mailbox, never been introduced to anybody, and he grilled her as to who she was and why she was in the vicinity of the faculty mailboxes. You never experienced anything like that?

A. No, I wouldn’t say I did. I remember the mailbox story. I was with Bradley Chapin. He was a terrific, funny, varied kind of guy, in the History Department. And I was at my mailbox and he was at his. And I dropped my mail on the floor and he just instinctively bent down to pick it up. And then while he was down, he said, “You’re not going to give me a karate chop for doing this, are you?” “No, no, it’s fine if you want to be gallant. I’m okay with that.” It’s not that people didn’t have prejudice. I’m not an idiot. But it’s just not been a problem for me. I am sympathetic to the challenge that some women feel. And there’s no question that, when you’re way outnumbered in any kind of category, you can feel lonely, even if people aren’t being ugly to you, you can still feel limited. But I’m not
denying that that happens to some people. And I think it’s particularly challenging in the fields where there are fewer women. The History Department over the time that I’ve been there, and I did a lot to help this happen, has gotten many more females, about 35 percent women now. And I think once you get sort of past about 15 percent …

Q. Continuing on this topic, I look at the campus and I see the number of women versus the number of men, and it makes me wonder what’s happened to the men? Why are the men’s numbers down and the women’s numbers are continuing to go up?

A. Our student population is still about 50/50. But it’s really, I think, because we have a very strong College of Engineering, which is way disproportionately male; if that were not the case, if we sucked them out, we’d be probably maybe 55/45 or 52/48. Anyway, we’re really about 50/50. But Engineering tips it quite significantly. I don’t know, I think that we’re not clear yet about how that all works. Girls are, little girls are, way better at being in school than boys are. They’re much able to sit still and be obedient. And they’re more mature at any given age. So 6th grade girls are just more tractable than 6th grade boys. Years of that, you get 12 years of school and you get to college, I think boys have been privileged and have come out on top historically because we all expected them to, not because they really were out-performing [the girls]. There does seem to be, at the risk of sounding like [former Harvard University president] Larry Sumners, there does seem to be some aptitude in, especially the highest mathematical reaches, that just is distributed more to men than to women. But there are very few on the ground in either gender. I don’t know. And we go in phases. But the women that I know on campus, it’s common for women on campus to be watching out for other women and to think that they need to because it’s a boys’ game. But you know we went through that period when the president was a woman, the provost was a woman, and a number of the other senior administrators. When Ed Ray was Provost, all the people in Academic Affairs, except Randy, were women. I think women actually have pretty good access to the highest administrative positions. The hardest thing for women to get to be is a full professor, and especially a full professor in the sciences. There’s just a lot of sort of weeding out that makes that hard to have happen. Very interesting.

Q. Since you were in this period in the undergraduate advising, albeit now in the Jennings administration, focused on that responsibility in the History Department along with your teaching and research, one of the great changes of the Jennings administration, implemented during the Jennings administration, was the advent of competitive or selective admissions. Enarson curiously enough was, as you accurately say, a person with very democratic large “D” and small “d” views, but he had doubts about open admissions and was very concerned, because doubts were very much shaped by the fiscal environment that he was in. And he felt that the University was spending too much of its resources on …

A. Remediation that wasn’t working, yes.

Q. Because the high schools weren’t working. We were being impacted by poor preparation and did not have the sufficient [resources] to both educate well people who came to us
with good credentials and those who didn’t. But Jennings was able to basically make Enarson’s concerns into a _________ change, selective and competitive issues.

A. I, of course, had been not only the beneficiary of that move but also the implementer of it over the last 15 years. So I’m a great fan of that shift. But I wasn’t on the ground watching it when it was happening. By the time he was doing that, really, I was doing lectures in western civ and British history and very much engaged in that and working on a second research piece, and trying to pull things together. My understanding of the move to, well, two things. I think that Ed thought this, but I don’t know that he did. I’ve said it to him and he’s affirmed that he thought it. But it’s my, I’m not sure that I’m not putting words in his mouth, but I think he thought it, which is that our students were not a good match with the resources of the University. We’ve always had a very strong faculty, stronger all the time. But faculty was way stronger than the student body, than the undergraduate student body. And we had good facilities and good resources. But we were bringing these students in and washing them against it like a wave against a rock wall. It didn’t fit well together. So it’s a variant on wasting the resources, as Enarson saw it. Then the other thing that was an interesting phenomenon and probably, I wouldn’t say Enarson started this, but all over the country [people] started worrying about the education, the exclusion from education, pretty systematically, of African Americans. And Enarson I think, was committed to shifting us on that. But so was every university president in the country, starting with those riots in the ’70s. People all over the country tried to get black kids to come to campus, and give them an opportunity. And by the time Ed was here, that was a decade long effort and it wasn’t showing a lot of, bearing a lot of fruit. With open admissions, the Board of Regents, and I don’t know how this worked, but you probably do or can find out, the Board of Regents put a cap on how big we could be. And I think it was to protect the possibilities of Bowling Green and Cincinnati and all the other schools which were getting – more and more schools were being made city universities, were being made into part of the state system. And as that happened, they were sort of dividing up the customers. And so we were allowed to be only however big. I always thought it was something into the ’60s, but I don’t know how big it was.

Q. As I remember, there was an enrollment cap that was in the 40′s [40,000 students], there were exceptions in engineering or agriculture or specialties if you will, that didn’t count against us. But anything beyond that enrollment cap, there would be no state subsidy.

A. No subsidy. So anyway, we could only be so big, to speak, quickly, I mean roughly. And so the only thing that was limited who came was first-come, first-served. Well, children from white middle-class families knew better than children from inner-city, African-American families that you needed to get your application in on time. So with open admissions we were becoming more and more white, and Ed was really determined to cope with that in some way. So when we went to selective admissions, one of the populations that we strategically selected was talented African-American students, looked for them actively. And even if they didn’t get their application as early as somebody else, if they were the kinds of students we thought could succeed here, we were eager to have them. And Ed also invented, or at least I’ve always attributed it to Ed, the Young Scholars Program, which was not specifically for black kids, but operationally it was. It was for inner-city children – sixth graders – and his hope was that that would become a
state-wide program that children all over the state would go to these, I think there were eight cities that were involved, and they would be in that program. And then they would go to university wherever and that the state would support it more extensively. And, of course, that state support never came.

Q. We did an interview with Jennings. And that’s one of the ironies of that program, [the] Young Scholars Program, that it was not set up to exclusively channel to Ohio State. And I think the reason for that was to establish the base for state funding because it’s a state-wide program rather than just OSU. As you correctly say, funding for higher education shrunk and that state-wide funding never happened for this program.

A. So part of what, it seems kind of paradoxical when you look at how selective we are now and how competitive. But part of Ed’s motive really was about diversity, and access for underserved populations. But at the same time, better students who were going to be better able to succeed at the University. So the first thing that happened was in ’86, I believe, possibly ’84, they started conditional admissions, which said you can come to Ohio State, anybody can come, first-come, first-served, but if you haven’t had a full college prep curriculum, you will have to make up your deficiencies here and you’ll have to pay for them, pay tuition, and you won’t get college credit for them. And that had an incredibly salutary effect on all the high schools around the state, because Ohio State had always had taken, probably not the lion’s share, but a very big chunk of the high school students. And so the high schools all started teaching at least two years of any language that they taught, and often three years. They started providing more math, started providing four years of English. And it really improved just like that. The K-12 system tightened up to be able to meet this standard at Ohio State. So then in ’88, they started selective admissions. And what that meant at first was just the most egregiously unprepared students are put in a pile at the back. The ones that looked like they can come, you just let them in. And we were still admitting 95-, 96-, 97 percent of the people who applied. But the ones who looked really problematic were then arranged down from the top in terms of capability, and the top ones were admitted. So some few started being rejected. But it was not, that didn’t work very fast. I mean you can’t just announce that you’re competitive admissions and suddenly you start getting all the smart kids in the state. It was a beginning but it didn’t transform things at all. So you could say all you wanted, we’re competitive admissions. But it still was not the place that the able students wanted to come.

Q. There’s a school of thought that maintains that [because of] our land grant mission, that we had an obligation to be accessible to many, and they would argue that competitive or selective admission seems to be against that spirit. Historically, however, when the University began, there was an admissions test.

A. Is that right?

Q. Yes, it was controversial, but President Orton and Joseph Sullivant stipulated, said in one of the addresses defended it, saying that we cannot take our precious resources and basically squander it on people who aren’t prepared at the expense of people who could benefit from this education.
A. Right. That’s very interesting. Ed, in his strategizing about whether we could be competitive or not, quite strategically looked to the regional campuses. Because the regional campuses continue, to this day, to be open-admission. So we are able to say – we’ve been able to say since ’88 – that the University is open-admission. It’s just the Columbus campus is not where you can start if you are not well-prepared. And I will tell you a little bubble anecdote that just kind of illustrates the discussion on the campus about this. It’s not so much related in terms of the land grant. But the whole problem. We were having a discussion among, this would have been probably about ’95, and we were beginning to make some progress on getting better students. And somebody in this conversation said, “Well, if you’re taking these better students, whom are you prepared not to let in? How are you feeling about the ones you’re not letting in?” And Jack Cooley, who was Ph.D. from here, a graduate from Oberlin, he worked here for many years in academic advising connected with honors, and he’s now the Dean of Arts and Sciences down at Columbus State. He’s a terrific guy. He’s a big Democrat, too, with both a small and large “d,” and very active in Clintonville Civic Association. Clintonville Resources Commission. Now on the Regional Planning Commission for the whole larger region, City Council, great, great guy. But anyway, Jack said, “Well, I’ll tell you whom I don’t want to admit. I don’t want to admit students who are not going to succeed here, who come here thinking they’re going to college, find that they are unsuccessful, fail and leave the University feeling like failures, when in fact there are 13 other universities in the State of Ohio, public universities, that they probably could have succeeded in, and they leave here with their lives really quite damaged by what we did to them, when in a way gave them a false promise by letting them come here.” And there was general, sort of agreement about that around the table. And then, Tally Hart, who was then the Director of Financial Aid, said, “And I’ll add to that. I don’t want them leaving here feeling like failures and with a load of debt.” Because over the course of time between Enarson’s financial crisis and the present day, tuition has done nothing but go up. And the federal government has provided loans increasingly and students take those loans, and it’s a good investment if at the end of the game you get out of here with a degree and you go get a job for a graduate. But if you leave here with that feeling of defeat and debt, it’s really not honorable of us to do that. And I remember this whole room full of people who all thought a lot about undergraduate things. It would be good if I could tell you what the meeting was, but I can’t remember. That was a general statement of agreement, that this is honorable for us to do because we’re dealing straight with people. And when I speak to groups, to community people or anybody, I say that the way we were doing it before was not fair to the students, to their parents, and to the taxpayers of Ohio. It was not using the resources wisely. Plus, through the time that I’ve been here, longer than that, but going back into the ’60s, the State of Ohio has just massively expanded the educational opportunities. We have, [former Gov. James] Rhodes did that – a school within 35 miles of every student in Ohio. So they don’t all have to come here to get a college education. And we are still essentially open admission for transfer students. So if transfer students do a year somewhere else and are in good academic standing and want to come here, they can. And our regional campuses remain open. So I think we’ve found a very good balance. Land grant, you had mentioned that phrase, sometimes is code for agricultural history, and that’s a particular challenge in this environment. Because the students who come here under-prepared are often from the rural schools. And they are where we had
traditionally gotten the students who would go to study in old AG or now FAES. And so, it’s been a problem, a challenge for them. Now, I don’t really think that studying agriculture has declined just because rural schools are having trouble getting kids prepared to come to Ohio State. I think it’s that agriculture has changed from being a family farm that you return to, to being a giant agribusiness complex that doesn’t draw the same kind of people. So sometimes when people say we’re violating the land-grant mission, they say I’m worried about FAES [The College of Food, Agricultural and Environmental Sciences]. But we’ve worked, the admissions office and the enrollment management people, have worked very closely with Bobby and a number of people.

Q. Bobby Mosier?

A. Yes, in the last five years. And we’ve got, the enrollments are doing fine now. But it’s a different view of [what] land grant means.

Q. One of the differences between the Enarson and Jennings administrations was that Enarson advocated, as did Jennings, for public support of institutions of higher education. I think that Enarson would have been, I won’t say adverse, but uncomfortable, with the kind of private fund raising that Ed Jennings saw as the necessary course for the public university when state support was diminishing and increasingly going for underfunded social service. He was looking for an alternative source of funding, not that the University hadn’t raised money privately before. After all, the development fund was back in the 1930s. But the concept of major institutional commitment towards private fund raising really wasn’t there until the Jennings administration. In fact, I’ve heard Ed Jennings even say post-presidency, that he would just do away with public support for this university, and make it entirely private. I wonder if you care to comment on that, with your experience as a faculty member during this period.

A. It’s interesting because I’d never tied that to Jennings, but I think you’re right. I remember when Mike Riley was hired as Dean of Humanities. I’m not able to say what the date was but he was there for several years, five or so anyway, and gone in ’92. So late ’80s, mid-’80s. And he’s a historian. So he came and interviewed with our department to get the blessing, to be a full professor of history. It was interesting. I remember he said that he realized, I’m not remembering where he came from, maybe western Michigan, but he said, “My scholarly record would not entitle me to a full professorship in your department. You are a wonderful department and I respect that and I’m aware of that. My career has taken a different direction. I have done administrative work, and I hope that you would find me worthy of membership in your community based on the contributions that I can make.” And the department did, without demur, I think without hesitation, really. But I remember in that interview, he said that it had been made clear to him that as dean, he would be doing fund raising, that that would be part of his role. And that was not something that he had done previously but it was not something from which he shrank. And he thought that he could be good at it because he could be enthusiastic about telling the story of the humanities. And it was the first time I had ever heard anybody here say fund raising, that you have to do fund raising. I think I knew there was a thing, a development office that did it, but it never had occurred to me that a dean would do it. Certainly not that a chair would ever have anything to do with
that. I’ll tell you the first time I ever learned that there was such a thing as development was at Bryn Mawr, the HERS Institute, because they did chapters, sections of the curriculum over this several week period, that dealt with different things. And one of the things was fund-raising development. It was the first time I had ever heard the word development used to mean that. In fact, when I first heard it, I didn’t know what we were talking about and somebody had to tell me that that’s fund raising. So it was not a pervasive part of higher education in the public sphere at all. Because Jim Garland had gone to Princeton, I was, however, familiar with fund raising, because Princeton is brilliant at that. And one of the things that sort of distinguished, and Cornell had come after us for fund raising. But I wasn’t aware of that happening here at all. We were state supported. My time recollection confirms that it was under Jennings that we began talking about that.

Q. It was the first, we undertook a consultant firm to assess our fundraising efforts and what our potential might be. And the result of that was the first University Campaign. And the campus campaign also has origins under Jennings, and people were shocked when the expectation was that the University campaign might raise several hundred thousand dollars from the University’s own faculty could be true.

A. That one puzzles me a little bit because I thought that Gay Hadley and John Harrick were the first, sort of volunteer leaders, of the first Campus Campaign. And Gay Hadley did that from her job in human resources, I’m pretty certain.

Q. ________ was co-chair.

A. And she was in Human Resources when Linda Tom was the head of Human Resources and Gordon hired Linda Tom. So you have the ability to check this and I don’t. But look into that. Gay might still have been in Continuing Education I suppose. It might have been before she went over. And she might have gone to HR and then Linda Tom came in over here. That might be right. Madison Scott was in charge of HR before Linda. I’m not sure that there was a gap there.

Q. Yes, the Wexner Center grew out of the first campaign.

A. But I’m not talking about the campaign campaign. I’m talking about the Campus Campaign.

Q. Yes, that too began at the same time because the principle was, how can we ask others to give to us when we’re not willing to give ourselves?

A. Gay is still a friend. I can ask her when she started what she was doing when she started that. But I remember, it was quite splendid. And I remember when we, I don’t remember when it was, but I was at a board meeting when we crossed over the million dollar mark with that campaign. And I thought, “My God, what a splendid thing.” I mean I loved the Campus Campaign because it does say how much we love it; how committed we are to the institution. And I think that’s a great thing.
Q. One of the focus points of the campaign from its beginning and throughout has always been more money for scholarships and including scholarships to support honors students, and the honors program is one of the big developments of the Jennings administration under the heading of the University and the Campaign for Excellence. Do you remember Excellence?

A. Oh my God, everything was excellent. We were so excellent we just almost couldn’t sit down. It was crazy.

Q. Who had the familiarity with your undergraduate advising career with honors programs and the whole re-shaping, if you will, of the Honors Program?

A. I did. Honors was, when I was in Arts and Sciences, Honors was just in Arts and Sciences. Nobody besides Honors really did it, besides Arts and Sciences really.

Q. Austin Gray was the head.

A. Austin Gray was the head of honors in Arts and Sciences. Jack Cooley, whom I mentioned earlier, worked for Austin Gray. And he then, you’re probably right, it probably was Ed [Jennings], although I associate Gordon with some of this. Gordon came in '91 or '90?

Q. I should know this. I believe '91. No, it should be 1990 because the Jennings administration ran nine years.

A. '81 to '90. Yes. Well, honors as a University-wide thing, there were several pieces. An honors dorm, and it was Taylor Tower. But I believe that Taylor Tower was an honors dorm, I guess just for the Arts and Sciences Honors kids, as early as the ‘80s.

Q. Let me interject here. I believe in the earlier portion that was under Gray, Honors was college-based. And I’m not sure they had an honors dorm at that period. Because I think the concept of an Honors Program as a living community happened later.

A. I’m uncertain about that. I wouldn’t, the reason, this is funny how your memory works. The reason I have it earlier is that Jim Garland hosted a physics conference, an international physics conference, called ETTEPIM, or something like that, acronym, electronics. I don’t remember what it stood for but we had people from all over the world here. And he had been made full professor but not much more than that. So it probably was in ’80 or so. And we housed people in Taylor Tower. It was in the summer. And Taylor Tower was selected for the job because it was air conditioned and it was the honors dorm. And it sort of the best dorm we had, so we put people up there. We had a party on our back lawn in our house, but people sat out on the lawn on blankets. And we had a caterer who went around and gave every little group that was sitting their own bottle of wine. So it was really quite a splendid party. But that’s just one of those little windows, [a] peak through window vision. We can both check on that. Mabel Freeman, her first, so there was honors housing, which at first was Taylor Tower. Then there was an honors program which was housing connected. So Mabel’s first job was the programming part of honors, and it was in Taylor Tower. And then the other, sort of
artifact of course, was the taking of Enarson’s house, or was it Enarson? Did Enarson ever live in that house? It was Fawcett’s house. Fawcett’s house had morphed through several things. I think political science was in it for a bit. But then they decided it would be a good place for the Honors house.

Q. No, it was Kuhlmeier’s house.

A. Because Al Kuhn was made the first faculty director of the University Honors efforts. So the University Honors effect, which first was in Taylor Tower, was supposed to be the, the courses were managed by Grey Austin, with Cooley’s house, and students got honors by, I’m a little worried that maybe there were some honors students in engineering somehow. Because the engineering kids have always been very bright. Pound for pound they have higher test scores and stuff. But I don’t think they ever did any honors work particularly. The engineering college, in fact, always said everything in engineering is honors.

Q. Honors back then was very much college bound as opposed to university bound.

A. So Honors House, as they were getting Honors House set up, Mabel was running co-curricular kind of programming in Taylor. Al was the, I don’t know what, the icon, the representative of deep thought and conversation with the students, and didn’t I think do much in terms of … I think he was a wonderful representative of high culture to the students, but I don’t think he managed any programs or anything. Mabel brought all the pizza and arranged for the faculty fireside chats and stuff. Then they got the house. And so then the house became more of a … they used the house, they used the dorm, they used the possibility of honors courses and doing an honors contract and a senior thesis, all, but most of all, honors priority scheduling, so that you could schedule, and what we used to say was, you schedule at the same time the football players do. Before the graduating seniors, before anybody else. And that bundle of things became Honors, University Honors. And then that existing enabled us to, and I say us but I wasn’t involved in it, enabled the university to begin trying to recruit to Honors. When Gordon came, he added to that scholarship support. Now maybe Ed had had some scholarship support, but we had, probably, because we had Battelle Scholarships, just a handful, and Joyce Scholarships. But Gordon said what we need to do is get more National Merit Scholars to come here. And if we give National Merit Scholars money, they will come here. Then we’ll be able to brag that we have National Merit Scholars. Then we have this beautiful Tudor house, and we’ve got Al Kuhn sitting there thinking deep thoughts and reciting poetry, and we’ve got Mabel throwing parties and bringing in people, and if we had money, we’d be able to get a real Honors Program going. There was a committee called URISC, and Bob Arkin, who had come here probably in ’90 to be the head of the Denney Hall operation, I took some notes from Tom the other day. Let me just look here for a minute. I think that Tom was in Arts and Sciences, in that role, pretty much through the 80’s. And then I think that Don Good, who was his Associate Dean, did it for a year, but they did a national search, and they hired Bob Arkin, who was from the University of Missouri. And ’87 is when Tom stopped being there. So probably Arkin came then, which would have been under Jennings. And the job is called Vice Provost of Arts and Sciences and Dean of Undergraduate Studies. So it sounds like a really good job. And
Arkin was a pretty good social psychologist. He may be a really good social psychologist. I’m not in any position to judge. But he came here I think thinking he was going to be the Undergraduate Dean of everything and found that he was in fact the head of an advising office, which had some rights with respect to curriculum, enforcing of the curriculum and to some extent the things that in the curriculum, but I don’t think it was the job that he wanted. And he was not happy in that job. And he and I have crossed swords—almost literally swords—over the years at a level that I’m not a good source on them, nor would I suggest to you that he’s a good source on me. But he was the chair I believe of URISC. And it’s worth looking into because it accomplished some …

Q. It’s URISC?
A. Uh-huh.

Q. That had to do with undergraduate?
A. It had to do with enrollment management.

Q. Okay.
A. Mabel served on it, using Honors strategically to pull us forward was kind of the idea of it.

Q. I’ve always thought of the Jennings approach that we use the Honors Program to both recruit high quality students, and then when they’re here, make sure they have a special education.
A. That’s correct, that’s correct. But what happened was, we got pretty good at using it to recruit with, and then we weren’t so good at enforcing the expectation that they would have a particularly reverse program. So as the students, as all of the students got better, this is to jump ahead of the story, but in the ’04, ’05 kind of period, some of the students began complaining about the Honors Program. Students had the privilege of this special scheduling, but they weren’t doing anything to earn it, and that you got in Honors just because you had a good ACT score, but then you didn’t have to perform once you were here. They had something of a point. It was probably more like ’03. But back in ’01, in 1990/91, it was basically a recruiting strategy, and it was small enough that we did, we had honors courses for them and honors experiences. It was enriched. But as it began to grow, and our Honors Program over the last two decades has been bigger than it ought to be, if it’s really an honors program. But it’s been such an important part of our recruiting. And I’ve sometimes used the metaphor that the honors program was like the engine that’s sort of pulling along the rest of the class. The problem that we had, and it’s not unique to us, is that if you get a really good honors program in an essentially egalitarian and open admissions institution, you find pretty quickly that you develop a bi-mobile student body, a small number of people who are really, really good, but then since the rest of them don’t get this enriched experience, they don’t come. And we found that we were competing with ourselves. But we got to the point where the Honors Program was well enough known that guidance counselors and parents were saying to the kids, “If you get
into the Honors Program, go to Ohio State,” but otherwise don’t because it’s a big factory, big farm.

Q. I always had the sense that while the Honors Program was pitched as a recruiting mechanism to bring in high quality students, one of the aspects of it was the desire, that there would be belief that if you improve the quality of the undergraduate students, you are also going to make the faculty happier and improve the undergraduate classroom experience. Is that a fallacy?

A. No, I don’t think so. I think it’s quite right. We’re probably coming close to the end of today. But let me say one more little chapter. In ’90, ’91, I was in the history department. I had been tenured and was working on a second book which I never finished, a source of some consternation to me still. And I was in the Senate and got elected chair of the steering committee of the Senate, which at that point the faculty council of the Senate wasn’t terribly active. So the chair of steering was understood to be sort of the symbolic representative of the faculty to the administration. So I got included in various things because of that. And one of the things I did, I got to do, was meet monthly with Gordon. And that was during the period when he first came here and his wife was ill, and then ultimately died. So we saw each other once a month and he would ask me about things going on. But his daughter went to CSG. My daughter had graduated from CSG. And one’s heart just went out to him. And we became friends I would say. When he came back, he said he had cited that period as wedding him to Columbus, and I believed him. I believed that version of things because I just was there as he went through that. But I remember saying to him then, it was kind of a culmination of a lot of different things I had worked on. As I said to you at the beginning, the reason I went to graduate school was to be a college teacher really. It sort of startled me that I was put in as a researcher. But fate put me into this undergraduate advising role, then I kept being involved with the students in my later roles. I was a pretty good teacher. I was always very well liked as a teacher. And so, I remember saying to him in that context, “You know what I think this university needs to do, we’ve got to do a lot of things and we’re working on all of them. Excellence, more money, all kinds of things. But I think we ought to have a plan for better students better served. If we’d get better students and then take better care of them, we could get more good ones and take better care of them. And I think the whole place would be happier. The faculty would like it better. The students would have better success. If I could just work on that for my career, that would be a really good thing to do.” And he sort of said, “Yeah, that would be a good thing to do. And then, that’s what I’ve been allowed to do. But I do completely agree with you that, getting the students, and I could show you the U.S. News and Word Report, we break out literally what all the components to our ranking, the student profile was way out of line with how much we pay our faculty, with the reputation of our faculty, with the quality of our facilities, all kinds of other, alumni giving, all the other indicators were kind of clustered up here and our student body was way, this is all up, as an institution in the 20’s, and this had us out in the 80’s, 90’s. So we worked on making that better and as that has gotten better, so has the overall ranking. And that makes everybody happier. Then we get more NSF [National Science Foundation] grants. It all fits together.
Q. If I understand you correctly, selective admission and the Honors Program helped to balance the, or create more, harmony, if you will, in the academic community by making the undergraduates at an academic level closer to the faculty that was supposed to teach them.

A. Exactly.

Q. Why don’t we break at this point. Let me turn this off.

Part 2 – 12-18-09

Q. Okay. I think we’re in business. Last time we talked about the rise in the quality of undergraduates and the parallels, the harmony if you will, with faculty. You were co-chair of a very important consequential committee called the Committee of the Undergraduate Experience. And this was during Gordon Gee’s first administration.

A. That’s correct.

Q. Can you talk a little bit about the origins of that and the dynamics and consequences?

A. I’m not really certain where the idea came from to establish that committee, although I think I would give some credit to Bob Arnold, who was a professor of art and a vice provost, or maybe he was called an associate provost for undergraduate curricular matters, and in a certain sense my predecessor, partly because he pushed to have that committee established. When I got the job after he had stepped down, there was a big agenda that needed to have happen, so the job that I ultimately held grew beyond what he had held. But I think he was really the inspirer of it. And he was very committed to students having a good experience. And I think he thought we could do better. So I think he was probably an important part of it. The committee was appointed by then provost Richard Sisson and Vice President for Student Affairs David Williams. So the fact that it was appointed by those two, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Vice President for Student Affairs, together signaled that it was to look at all aspects of the student experience, in class and out of class. That the whole experience of the student on campus influenced the learning and the outcomes, not just what goes on in the academic side. And they appointed co-chairs. The co-chair from student life was Eric Busch. I think he was an Associate Vice President or Assistant Vice President, I’m not certain. And then I was Associate Dean in the College of Humanities and I represented the academic side. And then it was up to the two of us. There was quite a lot of conversation with Bob Arnold. The three of us talked a lot as we got it moving that the thing was not going to be credible. Let’s put it the other way. It would be more nearly credible if it had a lot of student input. Many committees on campus have student input. In fact, most. But it’s common to have a committee made up of largely faculty, a sprinkling of appropriate staff, and then one or two students. Sometimes we’ll have a student from each of the three student governments. But since this was all about students, we felt that it was really important to have lots of students. And we made up a list of … Eric and I had something to do with saying who should be on the committee, but Bob and Dick and David had already come up with their own folks. And there were people from all across campus,
faculty and professional staff who worked directly with undergraduates, and who probably I would say had a reputation for being effective, being willing to look at things and maybe change things. So it was a terrific committee in terms of the senior members of the University who were picked for it. But then we said right away that we wanted to have an equal number of students, which was pretty startling, and it made the committee huge. So there were 46 of us altogether. Twenty-three of the grownups and 23 undergraduate students. So we started by getting that whole gaggle of people together. It was huge. It met over in the Union. People were asked in advance to think of things that they thought, if you were worrying about what was the students’ experience like, what would you think ought to be talked about. And we handed out cards, index cards, and everybody had a stack of index cards, and you could put on it anything you thought was a problem or could use improvement, without regard to whether it was academic or not. And then we had these huge piles of things that people thought were important. And Eric and I sorted them into kind of clusters of things. And we made sub-committees, sort of a management committee, sub-committees on different topics. And that was, it’s sounding easier than it was. There was a lot of preliminary talking. We sort of stewed around for a while trying to figure out how we were going to do it. But the groups were, the academic experience, the physical environment, finances, and health and wellness. Those were the things that stuff clustered into. And then there was a steering committee. And we had in each of those areas an academic chair and a co-curricular chair, a student life chair. And so the steering committee was made up of those eight co-chairs plus Eric and me. And we had a wonderful graduate student assistant who worked with us, Sherri Noxel. And so the steering committee met very frequently. These working groups met as frequently as they did, as they could. And then sort of got topics, identified topics, that they thought were important and pursued them. We were pretty clear, I don’t know really quite how to describe the logic of that sort of activity. There was no sense that there are three things you have to consider and each one is divided into four sub-topics. There was no sense that you had to achieve parallelism or that everything was equally important. It was kind of stuff that bubbled up. Given that we had these 23 students working with us all the time, they could complain about things that were driving them crazy, and things would come up to the surface. And then the different groups were differently active, [had] different levels of engagement. Kind of based on how busy people were, or what other things they had going on. And the groups would report to the steering committee. The steering committee kept sort of poking at the different projects. The whole group would come together periodically. I would have to say that the students were probably, as a category, slightly less faithful about being at every single meeting than the senior people were, although that’s not true across the board. There were some students who were absolutely active all the way along. It was fun to look back at the report and see the names of people that I met through that activity.

Q. How were the students selected? Did they represent student organizations? Or was this the coming together of the willing?

A. We put an ad in the paper saying what the job was, trying to describe it pretty aggressively, that it was going to be quite a lot of work. We asked for applications. And we had 70 applications and we selected 23, looking for distribution. I mean, we didn’t want them all to be honor students. We didn’t want them all to be fraternity kids. We
wanted equal, wanted variety, diversity, racially and ethnically. Some older, non-traditional students. It was a various group. But they also had to write kind of an essay about why they wanted to participate in it. So it was really kind of a try-out situation. We had, as I said, about three times as many applicants as we were able to use. So it was pretty good I think from that perspective. So it was a lot of work. We started in, I think, the summer of ’94 and worked very steadily, many, many meetings. I don’t think I’ve ever worked on anything that was as involved. There was a kind of moment in the life cycle, or the cycle of the year at the university, where you’ve got to get an argument made for funding. And so we were racing against that clock, to be able to assert in kind of late February or March, what we thought some of these things might cost, so that we could get at least a bookmark in to say that we thought things were coming that would be expensive. Different entities worked in different ways. So there were some things that would have cost a huge amount of money recommended by people who were kind of in the practice of making budget proposals that represented a huge amount of money. And then we had things that the students recommended that would be, “Can you find $7,500 to do something,” and they thought that was a big request. So it’s one of the messiest activities and messiest reports that I’ve ever been involved in, in the sense that it doesn’t … I like to write a paper that says, “I’m going to tell you three things and here they are and now let me elaborate on each one.” It’s not like that. It was just kind of throwing things at the wall and seeing what stuck. And to some extent it stuck if it had an advocate on the committee who was prepared to do the work, to get a budget request together or to go and talk to the people who were involved. So we tried not to make a claim when we reported out or along the way, that this was all inclusive or even the right thing. We felt pretty sure we were right about the things we were talking about, but we actually thought there might very well be other things, either other problems that we zeroed in on, or other solutions that we just weren’t knowledgeable to come up with. But we did feel pretty certain that we had made kind of a collage of stuff that needed to be addressed, and in general that there was a direction. So I think we were comfortable about that.

Q. We have the report of the committee in the archives. But I’m curious, were there any particular issues that were very hard fought, were controversial, within the committee?

A. I would say that the Student Life professionals and people who came to the activity from the, sort of non-classroom side of things, probably tended in the direction more frequently, of talking about the student as customer and the need for us to provide, [to] serve the student appropriately, take the students’ opinion more seriously. I think the people from the academic side were more conservative in sort of, small “c,” but more thinking that the university has its sort of _______ majesty, _______, to let students have at it, and that we know better than you know. I do remember one, this was at the very end, we were writing the report, and one of the committees, I think it was from the physical environment. In the physical environment, well we, those were how we started, but then we found ourselves coming up with different, sort of sub-topics, for areas of work. And one of the areas was traffic and parking. And I wouldn’t say it was, certainly it wasn’t, the majority position—and it was not even a large minority position—but there were voices saying that students were really the customers and they should be taken most seriously with respect to the convenience of traffic and parking. And somebody said, “If this were Lazarus, the employees would park out on west campus and bus in, and the
customers would park around the oval.” And we had some discussion on that. We had some considerable discussion about whether the students were customers or not, that whole concept. One of the things that happened in the middle of our doing the report, was that the Ford Corporation invited a bunch of university leaders up to Dearborn, do you remember that? For the Total Quality Improvement Initiative. Ford wanted to tell us how they were doing TQM and wanted to encourage us to operate that way, partly because they had become kind of true believers about quality. But they also wanted us to be educating our students toward thinking in terms of continuous quality improvement. And people, a number of people from “Q” were allowed to go along with that on that trip. And it was very fun and exciting. And it inserted a lot of language into our thinking that we hadn’t had before, about continuous quality improvement, and the student is customer. They did something, a bit of regression, they did an exercise called Voice of the Customer. They had done this for themselves, where they had a group of people who were Toyota and Honda owners. And they sat upon the stage. And they were interrogated by an interviewer. And Ford employees all sat out in the audience. And the interrogator asked these Honda and Toyota owners why they had Toyotas and Hondas, what they liked about them, and would they ever think of buying a Ford. And they would just speak frankly back to him. And these Ford employees heard all this stuff, which was startling to them. And they asked us if we would like to have them set up a Voice of the Customer exercise for us. And we said we would. So they got alumni, Ohio State alumni, and they had a person querying them and we were all sitting in the audience. And the alumni were, I think more differential to alma mater, than Honda owners were to Ford. Or maybe it wasn’t differential. But they were very nice, by and large. And they selected students mostly from the business school and engineering college and some from FAES [The College of Food, Agricultural and Environmental Sciences], because those were the colleges that were most interested in this TQM business. And they asked them what they liked about their education, what they hadn’t liked about their education. And there were lots and lots of good sound bites, things that you could take away. I remember one thing was—the engineers and the business students said surprisingly to a lot of us—that they had liked their general education curriculum, and they wished they had been forced to take more general education courses. They got jobs but once they started to sort of rise in their companies, they were finding themselves in social situations where they wished they could talk more intelligently about a variety of things that they would have learned if they had paid attention in the GEC. It was kind of nice. But Bill Shkurti I remember asked them, because they’d been very nice about the academic experience, and he asked them about the bureaucracy, “How do you experience business at Ohio State?” And they all kind of, they didn’t want to say. They looked at their fingers. And then one of them said, “It’s not very user friendly.” And then the floodgates sort of opened and they talked about all of that. That was terribly valuable to us on “Q.” We heard that very powerfully. So then that mindset of, to what extent, you could leave that Voice of the Customer experience thinking we had done a really good job with those students. Cause they had a good education. They said they had a good education. But they hadn’t enjoyed it all that much. And so part of what motivated us then was, how can we make it more to their liking but without … clearly students are not customers when it comes to deciding whether or not they have to learn the _____ cycle, or whether they have to learn the difference between Heredities and Thucydides, or even rigorous analytical things. We get
to decide whether they have to do that. And the customer isn’t always right in that sense. But on the other hand, the customer could say that waiting half an hour on the phone is too long. In that sense, it is legitimate to say they’re customers. So there was that kind of debate. And I remember the thing about parking, whether the students should park around the Oval. Eric Busch and I were kind of doing the last phase of writing it. And he said, he was angry, and said, “They are the customers and they should be allowed to park on campus. And we should park on west campus.” And I said, “My colleagues will burn your house down if I write a report that says that. I’m not going to do that.” And he said, “Well, I wouldn’t want your colleagues to burn your house down.” And Sherri Noxel, the graduate students, was helping us with saying, trying to mediate between us. Because we had previously gotten along completely beautifully and we overall absolutely did. But we were at the end of the game and we were tired and we were snapping at each other. And she said, “I think what Eric means is … and what I think Martha is trying to say is …” And that united us and we both turned on her and said, “Shut up, you don’t know what we’re trying to say.” There is a balancing act between the extent to which you think the students get, what does it mean when you say students first? It doesn’t mean they get to call the whole tune, and it turns out it doesn’t mean they get to park on the oval.

Q. Parking has always been a particularly strong flashpoint.

A. I think it is everywhere. It has status implications as well as convenience.

Q. Am I correct in assuming that the deliberate balance between the number of non-students versus students was an effort, not only at communication, but also to make sure that the outcome of that communication was something that was perceived as balanced and rational by those who would have to allocate resources to programs?

A. I think the University could have accepted a report that just came from senior members of the University doing the best thinking they could. But I think that those of us who worked on us, including the senior people who had appointed us, Bob Arnold and Dick and David, had, I think we believed that we would get better input if we lots of students. I don’t think we thought we could count on a student here or there to be able to speak for the whole. But we had a couple of students we purposely selected who were almost on probation, were really struggling academically. Cause we wanted to hear it from sort of everybody’s perspective. And so I think it was more about the input, the quality of the input, that made us have a lot of students then, anxiety about how the output would work, how the communication later would work. I do think it helped us, that we had a lot of students. I think that in terms of the public relations part of it.

Q. I look at that report and think of it as a planning document that served, in fact up until the present, as guiding investments and programs to nurture student life. Is that a fair assessment?

A. I don’t think that’s much of an exaggeration. I think it really pretty much did try to do that and has worked that way. Every single thing in it hasn’t come to pass and some of the things have sort of fallen … I’m sure you haven’t looked at it, but if you would look at one of these kind of spread sheet things, let’s see where they are … I’ve got of lost my
grip on … this sort of thing. See, we had columns where we said, “Woody, what is the thing that we’re looking at and what did we do to find out about it.” And what do we recommend given this? And then, who would be responsible for fixing it if we’re right? And how much would it cost if we can figure that out? We didn’t take responsibility for figuring out how much everything cost. We set this sort of format up for everything. And we said when we delivered the report, say you’re the library, “You can go through at look at all these topics and see if there’s something that speaks to what the library should be doing. And then you can read it. You don’t have to read the rest of the report at all. You can read it and you can say, ‘They’ve got that dead wrong.’” Or, “They’re on to something. I think they see the problem but I don’t think they’re recommendation is right. Instead of that, I would do this. Or, this is an unfair accusation. We’re doing much better.” People could react however they wanted. But we tried to be as explicit as possible so that as many people as possible would get how this related to them. And I presented it to the University Senate, which is not perfect but it’s kind of what we have in terms of being able to speak to ourselves. And I said that. I said, “This is how it’s laid out and you can go through and find things that are relevant to you and you can decide we haven’t got it right but …” And this was a very important strategy, and I think we should do this much more, we should all brutalize this. I don’t know that it’s happened regularly since. It does a little bit with kind of the academic plan thing. Sherri Noxel, the graduate student who worked for us, who is a graduate student in higher education administration, so this was an appropriate interest to her. And she helped us do the research; she helped us do the writing; she helped us put budget things together. She just worked on the whole thing. She was really terrific. And I recommended this to the Provost and he did it. Cause I had had a similar experience myself at Cornell, where I had served on a committee as a Graduate Associate. And then the next year the Provost had hired me to go around and check to see whether people were doing what we told them to do in the report. So it was just imitating that. But I said, “Hire Sherri and have her do that.” For reasons that I can’t quite explain, I think it’s good but I was surprised at how well people responded to it, the Board of Trustees loved this report and felt that it really was a blueprint for a good direction. And a lot of it is very much in the spirit of total quality improvement. It has a kind of keep looking, look at everything and tweak it and measure how you’re doing. It’s philosophically kind of connected to that movement which was hot right at that time and the University had invested some energies in it. And the Board agreed, I don’t know whether Dick Sisson said this and they said they would do it, or they demanded it, in any case every month, for more than a year, there was a report on “Q” at the Board of Trustees, put together by Sherri, who went around to those people in that fourth column, month after month, and said, “How are you doing on getting more buses? How are doing on cutting the red tape with respect to graduation?” And people had to answer and she had a spreadsheet on reports and they would go back to the Board. It was an accountability strategy that really worked. And then once you’ve taken something and woven it into the fabric of the community like that, it has kind of a life of its own.

Q. “Q” is more than a decade old. And I think it’s fair to say in University history that was the broadest effort at trying to study the student experience. I don’t think it was the first because in the 1950’s there was an effort to do that. It wasn’t as broadly based. Was there any sense of how often this analysis or project ought to be undertaken?

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A. I don’t know that. Nobody said, “This is historic. We haven’t done this before.” Nobody said, “We ought to plan to do this every five years.” Shortly after that, this came out in ’95, May of ’95, June, at that Senate meeting. And then it was in ’95, ’96 that it was checked on over and over again by the Board of Trustees. ’96-’97 was the last year Gordon was here. And it had kind of vitality then. Then when Britt came, Britt spoke about making this formal academic plan which had pieces and sub-projects, and one of the pieces was the student experience. And a lot of the pieces in it came out of this original body of stuff. But not just the document but the spirit of that. So I would say, and then Karen Holbrook, when she was brought here, my understanding was that she was absolutely directed to continue the academic plan and she seemed to. Gordon, in coming back, has not talked about the academic plan but we’re still using the same kind of mindset of, what are the six themes and how are we doing on them?

Q. And one of them being students first.

A. One of them is students first and one of them is, cut the red tape, simplify, which was one of our main kind of things.

Q. I believe at least two programs that are in existence today, owe their origin to that “Q” report. One is the scholars program that is the residential program. Is it fair to say that that …

A. No, Scholars, the Scholars Programs with that name, were a sub-set of Living/Learning Programs that were specifically aimed at students who were not quite Honors students but the next tier. And that was an outgrowth of two things. One was that when Ruth Weimer Mount died, the university was determined to do something to honor her memory. There were a group of people, [an] ad hoc committee, trying to come up with an appropriate monument to her. And the other was then, when Britt came, I’m not sure the date of Ruth’s death but that’s certainly something you can check. It’s got to be late ’97, mid-97, something like that. Gordon appointed the committee to work on something for Ruth. And a number of us who had been on “Q” were on that committee. I was at that point, you know Gordon maybe didn’t appoint that, maybe it was Dick Sisson, right in that interim between Gordon and Britt. But when Britt came he had had the experience at Maryland of a thing called the Scholars Program. And they had specifically had a problem which we were beginning to have too, which is that the honors program was sort of counter-productive. Their Honors Program was very strong but small and people were, they had a bimodal student population. A small, very talented group of students in honors, and then the rest of the student body was very ill prepared, and it was still pretty much open admissions. And we were kind of like that and people were saying to us, guidance counselors were saying, “If you can go to Ohio State in the honors program, you should go. But otherwise you shouldn’t go.” So we needed something that wasn’t honors but still was rigorous and appealing kind of thing. So we mimicked the scholar program at Maryland, and the first one that we invented was the Mount Service Leadership Scholar Program. So that was the first one, and then the next year we had three more, and then we grew a lot more. I think there are 14 of them now. But that would not have been until 2000. But now whether we were talking about Living/Learning in “Q,” I’m just not remembering that.
Q. I think there is something in there about harmonious communities.

A. That’s true. But the business of housing people together around a common interest to make a small community, that’s really something, that came, we were picking up on the slogan phrase that Gordon used a lot, when he was doing recruiting kinds of things, he would say, “You can make a big university small but you can’t make a small university big.” Or, an expression that I’ve always liked, I think Nina Hoppes over in honors coined this, but says that, “Ohio State is a fascinating, sophisticated, really interesting city with a lot of wonderful neighborhoods.” And that’s a good way to think about it too. Because it’s huge and anything you want is here, but to make it manageable, especially for freshmen, you’ve got to make it, you’ve got to pull it down to a manageable size. But that an idea, that’s not incompatible with things that “Q” said, but I don’t think that was an idea directly out of “Q.” I think that is a later development. Now what we did say in here, one of the things, there were two things that you thought that existed now but didn’t. What is the other one?

Q. The other one was the First Year Experience.

A. That one is definitely a consequence of this, definitely. Because we identified, and others had as well, we did a lot of work not only here at Ohio State but on looking at national patterns and stuff, it is very unarguable, that where students fail to persist at universities, where they leave and don’t succeed, is typically in the first year. Back in the day we were losing more than 40% of our students, not even 60% were graduating. And of the 40% that went away, half of them went in the first year or at the end of the first year. So if you could keep them their first year, if you could make them succeed … and then we probed into what makes people succeed. And there are, put it the other way, there are three things that make people not succeed. One is academic difficulty, which can be either lack of academic preparation or lack of support when here. The second is, and this is really quite important, financial challenges. If people have to work too much while they’re in school, if they have to borrow too much money, they’re too anxious about it, their parents can’t afford it, you know, all the things around finance. And the third one is failure to affiliate or identify. If people feel alienated from the place, they’re likely to leave. And put the other way, it’s pretty clear, in fact this is fascinating to me, if by the sixth week of being on campus students feel like this is a good place, this is where I belong, they’re very likely to stay. And they know by about the sixth week. That’s why all over the country people have parents weekend, little sibs weekend, about that time, because if you can get them to feel okay about it and quit being homesick, they’re very likely to succeed. So we started worrying about the whole business of their entry into the university, take care of them in the first year. You can see it through the report, there are a variety of things that we emphasize that did make it better including better orientation. So a lot of things that happened later, the invention of the First Year Experience Program, and then linking it to admissions, was definitely an outgrowth of the “Q” idea. But making orientation part of that, integrated effort. Welcome Week, we talk about Welcome Week in this report, and making welcome week into something. Kids just came back at the beginning of the year and it was time for school to start again. Now, you know what it’s like. Holding a real Convocation, a ceremony, and making Convocation meaningful. Really welcoming people. And then with the whole question of were we properly
handling students when we put so many of them into the intake college, into University College. So although this report didn’t say let’s try to do without University College, it hints in that direction, cause it’s worried about advising with so many people in this undifferentiated intake college, and would we do better if we put them more directly enrolled in there. So those are steps that came later, actions that we took that were implied in the whole business of a good first year experience.

Q. The subject of academic advising has been a controversial one. Because some would main, some did maintain—[those] who were advocates of University College—that they did a better job of advising than many of the other colleges. And that a reason for University College to exist was because of the poor quality of the advising that was common to many colleges. But on the other hand, some of the colleges, as I understand, were unhappy with (a) being separated from potential majors, and (b) the quality of advising that went on in University College.

A. I’m not certain I’ve ever heard anybody say the University College advising was better, unless it was maybe people professionally in University College.

Q. That’s where it came from.

A. There was a unit in University College that specifically focused on undecided students, students who didn’t know what they wanted to major in. And that same unit took care of students who, having thought they knew what they wanted to major in, but not making it—like say you want to be in engineering but you don’t come back there and get it, looking at other options. And I think that particular sub-part of University College was professionally pretty well informed. Virginia Gordon was a member of the professional leadership staff at University College and she’s written quite a bit about the first year student and the undecided student. So I think there was some real expertise about that there. But that was a pretty small sub-set of the students in UVC, and the staff in UVC, the lion’s share of advising, was done by graduate students. And they weren’t graduate students, they weren’t mostly graduate at all graduate students in higher education or administration or counseling or anything, they were graduate students who had exhausted their graduate student eligibility in their academic disciplines. They were not, in my experience, highly motivated to be great advisors. They were just kind of paying their own tuition. So I don’t think that was a terribly good structure. And then the other colleges, like nursing, business, engineering, they’ve always had very highly focused and good academic advising. It was good if you were in the right place. If you were in nursing and you were going to be fully in the program, then there were no spots on the nursing advising. They did a very good job of getting you through. And, similarly, engineering and business. Those places were not so good if you wanted to be in nursing but you were not making it. They weren’t so good at helping you figure out what an alternative was. I think the place, the other place, that’s always been vulnerable to critique of advising, is Arts and Sciences, where huge enterprise, almost always about half the students are in one of the five colleges of Arts and Sciences. And that’s where there’s the least direct connection between what you’re studying and your potential profession. So the career advising that you get there is not, it can be frustrating. So I would say probably people in University College were critical of the advising in Arts and
Sciences, and the reverse. But I think in the event the folks believed that the direct enrollment where students, most students go directly to their college, has been a good thing, a good change.

Q. I’ve digressed from the subject of “Q.” Is there anything more you would like to say about the quality of the undergraduate experience?

A. In “Q,” in the process of “Q,” we did talk somewhat about the fundamental issue of having better prepared students, how to attract better prepared students. Although that wasn’t the goal of the report, the report was, “Okay, we’ve got these students, how are we taking care of them?” The recommendations to do things differently and in a better way made us, justified our going after better students, but also in the process of studying everything, like advising, we looked at other institutions doing advising. Like what are our students complaining about compared to other students. It enabled us to position ourselves to do a better job of strategic recruiting. Jim Major, I don’t believe he was a member of the committee, but he was a very important sort of witness to the committee about recruiting and the student population. So I would say that, and for myself, I’ve always thought that what I was working on was getting better students and then taking better care of them. “Q” was taking better care of them but then having done that, we were entitled to get better ones still because we could now say that we were going to do a better job for them. With better students, it was easier to take better care of them because welcome week, which hadn’t been anything from the perspective of the faculty or the adult University, began to be glad to see the students come back. And so I think “Q” was really, really important in setting kind of a direction. But it didn’t do the work by itself at all. One other thing you talked about was structures. One thing that we did get here that I think was very helpful, has been very helpful, is the Student Advocacy Center, which is the office it’s in Student Life, and it’s specifically set up to help … when a student is kind of trapped in his own problems or the bureaucracy in some way, this is an office that can help you figure out how to negotiate things.

Q. The Student Advocate Center has had a complex history in that it grew out of, it actually succeeded, the University Ombudsman position.

A. I think that’s right, but the Ombudsman position very seldom took care of student stuff. It really was more faculty and staff in sort of the permanent university. And that was eliminated along about the same time that the Student Advocacy Office was put in place, and I don’t really remember why.

Q. I’ve always thought that, I know the Ombudsman service was controversial because, for example, it reported directly to the President. And the Student Advocacy Center of course became part of Student Life. In a sense, it was closer to the students, part of Student Life. But some would argue that the change in the hierarchy meant a lessening of the stature of the office.

A. Yes. I see what you’re saying. I don’t believe that the Advocacy Office was an outgrowth of the Ombuds Office at all. I think it was a whole new thing. It came later. And in fact, the Ombuds Office existed, then it was sort of decided we didn’t need that anymore, then
there was the advocacy office. But I honestly don’t know that for actual fact. The Advocacy Office, there was some debate in the committee about whether it should report to Student Life or to Academic Affairs, Student Affairs/Academic Affairs. Because some of the time the stuff that they’re unraveling has to do with, the student has a grade grievance and has gone through the formal grievance process and isn’t satisfied. They go to the Advocacy Office. Well, the Advocacy Office just won’t get into that, or academic misconduct. Students charged with cheating. The Advocacy Office will not advocate for them but they help them put their argument together. But that’s as far as they go. They’re very careful not to say that that professor is doing the wrong thing or that you have a case against that professor. They just try to help the student understand. But I’ll tell you why, I really believe this how it started when we were doing “Q.” My husband and I have six children. They’re all grown up now. One of them was a student at the University of Indiana and was sick enough that she had to come home. It was in the middle of the fall quarter when we were working on “Q.” She couldn’t stay. And we went over to get her in the evening. She called and was a mess and we went over to get her. And we came back. It’s my step-daughter. And I took responsibility for disentangling her from Indiana University, because I know universities I thought, “We’re in for it now.” We paid for room and board and tuition and she had gone far enough in the term that she might be generating bad grades. I just thought, “This is going to be a mess, but I’ll take care of that. The other parents can deal with her.” And I called Indiana University and they said, “You need the Advocacy Office.” And I called their Advocacy Office and they said, “What’s the student’s name and we’ll take care of it.” And they dropped her from all of her classes without a mark on her transcript. They sent us back our tuition. They sent back all the money that we had spent on room. They sent back a portion of the money we had spent on room and board. They charged us for the rent she’d used up and the food she’d eaten but not the rest of it. And it was incredible. And I compared that to the way, I felt pretty confident we would handle a situation here at Ohio State at that time, and laid that out to the committee and they said, “We need one of those.” So we made the Advocacy Office very much patterned on the University of Indiana. And then it has evolved over the years. The Advocacy Office, you perhaps know this, perhaps don’t, the Advocacy Office is the center that handles real student emergencies. Student death is handled through the Advocacy Office. They are the ones who notify. The police may learn first but the Advocacy Office contacts the family, deals with the family afterwards, disengages the student from the University, handles the press. They are wonderful, wonderful people. And hard workers. Remember when we had the student who had gone up Mt. Everest and the Advocacy Office was the nerve center for taking care of all that, communicating with the press. Ideally you don’t see them operating at all. You hold below the radar. And I’m very, very proud of that. And that’s not one that I’ve managed or anything but I’ve regarded them as powerful colleagues all along.

Q. I see what you’re saying, that the Advocacy Center just happened in timing to follow the demise of ombudsman.

A. I think so. And different target audiences and different activities. And they may very well have gotten mingled in the public perception about this one was replaced by that one. And I know that this one, the one that we have now, did not serve the ombuds type purpose for faculty and staff any longer. And I think, I didn’t have anything to do with
this, but I think when the University got rid of the ombuds office, the idea was that we
now had such processes in place in Human Resources, that those kinds of things could be
taken care of that way. But as you probably know, the Senate has just reinstated an
ombuds office, because there’s a feeling that the HR staff wasn’t working adequately.
But I don’t think the Ombuds Office is supposed to help students. I think it’s for the
professional staff.

Q. Yes, my understanding is that it’s for faculty.

A. Faculty, yes.

Q. In fact, that I think could also be related to the demise if you will of University ombuds
services, and all of a sudden, students have an effect and the faculty don’t, even though
we have all kinds of rules, processes for faculty to file a grievance.

A. Correct, what you’ve just heard is my memory of it. So it would be appropriate to check
on that. But I don’t believe the two things were—that one caused the other. They just sort
of look alike.

Q. Is there anything more that you want to add about the first Gee administration, 1990-
1999?

A. Was he here til ’99?

Q. Oh, I’m sorry, that’s a typo. 1997.

A. I came into the office that I’m in now in August, I think of ’97, and the first day I was in
the office Gordon held a press conference to say he was going to Brown. It threw my
plans into a ______ because pretty quickly Dick was acting in an interim role, and Ed
Ray was then acting in the interim role in the provost office. And I had not been hired by
Ed Ray, and I had been counting on Gordon, who had such a student friendly approach. I
thought, “Dear heavens, what’s happened here?”

Q. You’re mentioning Gordon having a student friendly approach. I’ve often thought, I may
have said at another part of the tape that, I think sometimes trustees hire presidents who
have qualities that are slightly different than the previous one. Gordon Gee has been
remarkably colorful and empathetic to the students.

A. Yes, he is. Toward the very end of his time, of that period, he and I had lunch at the
Faculty Club. I’m not remembering why exactly, but as we walked out, there were some
students and he went up and introduced himself to them, just overwhelming. Since he’s
come back, it’s times ten. He’s really intense about the way he interacts with students.
But I remember even that one day thinking, “Dear God, how does the man keep his
energy level up?” It’s extraordinary.

Q. Britt Kirwin was here for only four years, and in fact it’s a mystery to me, it’s only been
four years that he is the largest of the presidential portraits. There isn’t any rule about
square inches for portraits here. What can you tell me about your experiences with Britt Kirwin, especially the undergraduate experience.

A. I felt that Britt Kirwin was an absolutely just splendid president, just splendid. He had at Maryland, he had done at Maryland in terms of student profile and student experience, very much the kind of stuff we were trying to do here. They were just a few years ahead of us. I don’t [think] Maryland overall was or is as good a university or as highly regarded as Ohio State. But it had really sprung forward from being a very plebian state university without much pizzazz, to being something quite remarkable, especially with regard to the experience of students. And that had been Britt. He’d been president there a long time and had a long shadow there. And he just brought a lot of those ideas here. When he was in the process of moving here, he must have been appointed in something like March or February, and he was over there but coming here a lot. And we would send our plane for him, and then back and forth. They worked it out. A lot of people wanted to go to Maryland and find out things he had been doing. So a group of us went over to specifically find out about the scholar programs, because we were interested in that. And we took the plane over, and then he got on it to come back. And then when he came back, we took it back. We ran into him in the airport. And he had been named President but he wasn’t here yet. And he was a very impressive person, tall.

Q. Silver hair?

A. And he really was so lovely. I just remember running into him there at the airport in the passing of the plane back and forth twice. He was so nice to all of us. So helpful and encouraging about what we were looking at. Very, very, very good about telling us what they did in Maryland, without saying that Maryland was better than we were. In fact, saying, “Well you all probably do many things that are better but this is a good idea. You might want to take a look at it.” He was so lovely about encouraging without, I don’t know, he was just a lovely man. And he had very clear academic values. This idea of a systematic academic plan that we would put together with these different components. I just don’t remember having done that before quite so much, although truthfully, how well you see, I think this would be true of anybody, one sense of how the administration is doing, and what the University is doing, I think must change depending on how close you are to the top of the structure. So when, I thought a great deal of Jennings, when he was President, but I was buried down in the depths of continuing education and then [as] an assistant professor struggling to get tenure in history. So it was very much an uninformed kind of view. And not only uninformed, but uninvested. He was the President but he wasn’t necessarily my President. Then Gordon, as I think I told you when we talked before, I got to know Gordon pretty well because I was chair of the steering committee of the Senate, so I was working with him kind of closely. But I certainly wasn’t invested in that kind of way. Britt came at the same time that I really was beginning this job as Vice Provost, and was in Bricker Hall really for the first time. So, I probably liked, approved of, know the goals and motives of Britt’s administration more than I had of Gordon’s, and certainly more than I had of Ed’s or Harold Enarson’s. So partly it’s just because I was on the team with Britt and less so with earlier people. I have been on the team since Karen and with Gordon again now. But I thought he was wonderful. One of the things he did, in working on the academic plan, he took a group of senior leaders out to Colorado
to meet with Jim Collins, the author of *Built to Last* and *Good to Great*. He was writing *Good to Great* when he were out there. He’s quite a well pleased with himself man. But capable I think, interesting. And there was a small group of us, I’m picturing some of the people that were there, I think Ginny Trethewey and I were the only women. Probably there were ten altogether. Collins won’t come to you. If you want to consult, you go to him. So we all flew out to Boulder for 48 hours. And talked about what the University would be like if it fulfilled all of our hopes. And I came across when I was going through my files, we each wrote up a kind of piece about what we wanted, what we would dream of. And a lot of it has come to pass. This was in 2000 and it was what the University would look like in 2020. And it’s virtually 2010 now. It’s more than halfway on the things that I had hoped at least. But that [is] kind of [a], if you don’t know where you’re going, you won’t get there kind of mindset. I think he really inculcated that into us very clearly. And measuring it, doing it, and measure it. Say what you’re going to have. He wrote me a note a couple of weeks ago, knowing that I was retiring, and said that he enjoyed working with me. And I wrote back to him and I said that it was all wonderful and such fun to work for you, except one horrible day. At a retreat at Darby Dan, he took, I always felt it was being taken to the woods or the wood shed, because it was all senior leaders, vice presidents and Britt, talking about what we were going to do with respect to each of the pieces of the academic plan. We had the plan which was long term, but then every year we would talk about the initiatives for that year, that were going to advance the thing, the steps. And my approach I think has always been pretty much little by little and bit by bit. Not so much grand initiatives, but that’s not working very well, let’s fix that. And this is not … So I had a number of things I thought we ought to do but they were kind of steps, small steps. And he kept saying, he said, “I don’t know, I’m just not hearing any killer apps here.” And I thought, I should have wrote to him and said, “Except for that part where he kept saying he didn’t hear any killer apps, I felt like going across the table and choking you,” and saying, “You want a killer app, here’s a killer app.” He wrote back right away and said, “You should have come across the table; that was intolerable to do that. I don’t remember doing that but I’m very sorry.” I felt, there’s no question, that people in the community, possibly the legislature, I don’t know, felt a terrible loss from Gordon to Britt. There was less of a presence. But I think faculty really liked him and identified with him. He was a real scholar.

Q. My sense of him is that he fit more of the traditional model of a president, commanding without being noisy.

A. The one thing, when he came they had a welcome for him in the alumni lounge of Fawcett the first night that he was there. And he made a little speech and he said there were four anchors to his goals. One was the commitment to the greatest excellence we could achieve with respect to scholarship and research. One was to stake as good care of students as we possibly could and to provide an excellent educational experience. The third was service to the larger community in the sense of fulfilling the land grant mission. And fourth was to be the most hospitable, supportive institution in the country with respect to diversity. And that fourth one was a surprise because we had not had a president say that before. The other three are the classic teaching, service and research. Those are the things that public universities do. Commitment to diversity was new news. Not that anybody had ever said they were against that, but we just never said that was a
foundational pin. But that was a foundation stone for him. And he lived that through his whole time that he was here. He moved us forward. It’s not just window dressing or coincidental that they established the Kirwin Institute, gave him that as a gift, because that was very important. And I think that people of color really appreciated his presidency enormously and there were real advances. And the irony, worse than irony, tragic irony really, was that it was on his watch that we had that communications workers strike. Do you remember that? Which became racial or was interpreted as having racial overtones on it. It did because the folks in that union were disproportionate compared to the rest of the campus, were people of color. And it was couched as being racial. And if ever there was a president who should not have been accused of insensitivity on that, it was Britt. But he wasn’t the one who had failed to get the contract resolved in time. But it came on his watch and he was very saddened by that. That was a very hard for him.

Q. When I think of the Kirwin administration, we have two things that stand out, from my limited perspective. One is the academic plan which would become the legacy for, as you pointed out, for Karen Holbrook. It’s getting a little aged now. The other is the whole library initiative. What do you think of as the, particularly vis-à-vis undergrad? You mentioned the Living/Learning Program. Anything else you want to say about the Kirwin years?

A. It’s hard to be too concrete. The spirit of things of things when he was the President with respect to students, but with respect to faculty, it just was to me almost Camelot. We were on the same page. The university knew where it was going and was happy with itself. I’m not really remembering economically but I think those were not bad days with respect to the budget.

Q. They weren’t terrifically good days. In fact, I thought that one of the, almost comical aspects, was in leaving Maryland, Kirwin complained about the lack of legislative support for higher education. He comes to Ohio?

A. I think that’s true. This governor who we have now has been kind of a miracle. But the university budget itself didn’t seem to be at risk. I think, he was a mathematician. And I know people in the sciences and mathematics and were just so pleased with him. They felt that he got it. The university felt really good, both in the sense of virtuous and in the sense of excellence. It felt like it had the right kind of values and going in the right direction. We had been saying that for some time. We certainly said it with Ed Jennings, the struggle for excellence. Gordon was all the time saying that we were moving forward. It somehow felt with Britt, to me, as if we meant it, as if it was really substantial and serious. But I don’t think that was because Gordon was not serious and Britt was, but sort of the investments that had been made were now coming to fruition. And when we made claims for ourself, they just seemed legitimate, more nearly legitimate than they had earlier. We were not so much whistling in the dark, we were now really, things were paying off, going in the direction that we wanted. But that could very well be just about my, at least just not about, but to some considerable extent, about my resonating with him personally. Others, I don’t know people who didn’t like him, but I do know people who thought explicitly that we had lost a lot in the transition from Gordon to Britt. That
Gordon had more energy, that Gordon was more out and about and advertised us better to the legislature and to the community.

Q. I look at that as more matter of style or substance. In fact, I know when Gordon left after his first administration, University Relations folks struggled because so much of the identity, public identity of the university was wrapped up in the public persona of Gordon Gee. And it was a real struggle to remind people that we have another president who is also a stellar figure.

A. Right. And I think Britt, in the way he organized public relations, with Lee Tashjian, was much more about the university, much less about Britt himself. And so some people found that admirable in Britt and admirable in a more grown-up way for the university to be behaving. But other people missed Gordon and missed the excitement, and the personal touch. Gordon does these wonderful little handwritten notes to people. He notices your achievements. He’s very attentive, very kind and unbelievably energetic. One of the things that was just a style matter, surprising about Britt was, if you’d go in Britt’s office during lunch time, trying to fit somebody in quickly, he’d be eating lunch. He’d talk to you but he’d eat. Gordon doesn’t seem to ever eat. He doesn’t sit down long enough to eat; he just sort of zips around. So you could say Britt has the sense to eat lunch, or you could say that Britt doesn’t have the energy that Gordon has or didn’t have.

Q. You were saying about Gordon’s first administration, I remember one of the innovations that he brought to Commencement, was staying after Commencement and having his picture taken. And I don’t think that any other president [before] ever did that.

A. Yes.

Q. Shall we move on to Karen Holbrook?

A. Sure.

Q. Kirwin was here only four years. But of course he left the legacy of the academic plan. And many of his, the goals that I remember right now of Gordon Gee, are closely related to those goals of the academic plan. Karen Holbrook, as you pointed out a few minutes ago, followed the academic plan as outlined by Kirwin with her own kinds of initiatives, and particularly initiatives concerning undergraduate research. Would you like to comment on that?

A. Yes. Well I think that Karen was actually the most active scientist/scholar president probably that we’ve ever had. And she really had had a very stellar career herself as an academic, and had been a vice president for research at Florida, and had been the provost at Georgia. She really was a scientist. And she, I think, bit into the project of moving the University’s vision of itself with respect to research forward pretty aggressively. She’s definitely the person who got us on the train of influencing people being selected to the AAAS. Just this last week they announced another 17, I think, people who were selected for the American Academy for the Advancement of Science. And she just knew that world and how to do that, and helped us do that. And she was very much committed to the notion that as a research one University, we needed to include our undergraduate
students in the research mission. This is really a sort of truism I think that had been noticed, well sort of articulated earliest by the Carnegie Foundation in, I think, the late 90’s, maybe ‘96 or something like that. But if a research one university does not find a way to include its undergraduates in the research mission, then being a research university is actually a disadvantage to the undergraduates. If the faculty are all doing their research and don’t include the undergraduates somehow, the undergraduates will be taught by graduate students and be really neglected. So she really got that very vigorously and was committed to that. She also had had good experience in Georgia with undergraduates, with honors programs, and particularly the very highest end honors program. They have a program called Foundation Fellows at Georgia, which is like our Collegium, helping prepare, finding really, really, highly able students, and helping prepare them to be competitive at the very highest levels after they graduate—to go for Rhodes and Marshalls [scholarships]. And this [is] an exemplary program that they had at Georgia. Karen had not, I think, at either Florida or Georgia or Washington prior to that, had much experience with undergraduates in general, except these super bright ones and the idea of research. So she brought that to bear. That was the stuff she knew most about. I felt that she, I think she definitely got it, with respect to that part of the undergraduate experience, and had really good ideas about how to advance that. I don’t think she, in her life—I’m sure as an undergraduate herself, and then in her professional career—she had not had a lot of experience with just sort of general run of the mill graduates, kids that weren’t interested in research and weren’t interested in honors programs, and were interested in drinking beer. I don’t think that much in her previous life had prepared her to be much involved with any of that, or much enthusiastic about it. And then she ran into, and I don’t think it was really our fans’ behavior as much as a very bad experience she had at Wisconsin. She went to the Wisconsin game at Wisconsin her first quarter here. She had a degree from Wisconsin, so she was in a certain sense going home, and expected to have it be fun, and was exposed to very rude behavior. I’m not sure the details of it but she was shocked and distressed, and unhappy about it. I think people yelled things at her. She was miserable about it. And then came back and looked around our stadium and noticed that very much the same kind of thing was happening here. And took on the business of making us behave better. Plus, that year we had a series of unfortunate rumpuses bordering on and tipping over into riots after games. She was just determined to do something about that, as were a lot of presidents around the country. And sort of a general effort made to deal with celebratory rioting and inappropriate excessive drunkenness and so on. That was not a good cause for her to take on politically because peoples’ feelings around tailgates and football games are not really rationale in Columbus. And I think that she suffered enormously because she was a woman and because her articulation of all of that was kind of lady-like and timid really, and sort of angry but in a timid and lady-like kind of way. The abuse was horrible and a lot of it was very sexist and awful. And she lost, to the extent that she had had the affection or even a neutral welcome from the larger community, she lost it with that. I don’t spend a lot of energy worrying about feminist objections to society’s behavior, but the treatment of Karen Holbrook by Columbus, by our fans, by our alums, by the local press, and by our board members, I think was appalling and unfair. And I think that she accomplished, pushed things forward very dramatically in two really good ways. One was the whole research agenda and our visibility in research and the other was in taming ridiculous
behavior around alcohol and particularly around football. And I think we’re better for it. We just beat Iowa and got to go to the Rose Bowl. We beat Michigan. Both of those things passed pretty much without incident. And that would not have been true prior to her work.

Q. Others have said that timing is everything. And the timing of this is that we happen to have a championship football team the first year, which meant that the mutual frenzy of football was at record levels. And the importance of timing I think is that it happened early in her administration and [was] a very tough issue. Right or wrong, it was a tough issue. And she did not have the credits, if you will, to tackle that.

A. That’s correct.

Q. Which sort of stained her throughout her presidency.

A. Yes, I think that’s exactly right. And it’s also the case that Karen, I believe, I haven’t been in touch with her much since she left, but my read of her while she was here is that she was fundamentally a kind of shy person. She was very capable intellectually and organizationally, but timid in social situations. The kind of hail fellow, well met (punctuation?) persona that’s necessary to be a university president is easier to have around being a man. It’s not required to be a man to have that, but it’s helpful, especially in a place that’s so athletic. You think of somebody like Nancy Zimpher. Nancy Zimpher can hustle with the best of the boys. But that’s not a common female self-presentation. And Karen just was, I think, kind of overwhelmed. And not very welcomed by the community. I don’t know whether it was whether they were real or … “The Columbus Monthly” had a long article about her very shortly after she came, in which the editors of the Monthly took really prurient delight in the fact that she had not been greeted, she had not paid abeyance to the Dispatch and the Wolfes. Now I don’t know whether she did or she didn’t. But they had a photograph of her walking downtown and seeming not to … I can’t remember the story. But there was something about the Wolfes had not been asked whether they wanted her, whether they wanted a woman. Then when she arrived she didn’t bow to the throne. I think all that’s kind of crazy. It’s the sort of thing that “The Columbus Monthly” says. They have a fight going with the Wolfes always. So I think Karen was just fodder for that argument. But it made her look weak to the Titans of the city. It looked as if she wasn’t being welcomed.

Q. She was also our first president since Novice Fawcett to have entered that administration without having been a president elsewhere.

A. Yes. So the language that people used was that, “This job is too big for somebody who’s not a sitting president.” But to have her be not a sitting president and a woman, and from a school considerably lower down the pecking order, just didn’t … Gordon and Ed, even Britt to some extent, had come from universities that we would not see as our aspirational peers. But they had been presidents of both places. Or [had we] taken the provost from Michigan or Berkeley, that would have been alright. But [we chose] the provost from Georgia who was a woman, and then beyond that, who seemed shy personally, not aggressive socially. And then the other things were just bad, bad luck. I mean she was
here very briefly when that dreadful fire happened just east of High Street and the five youngsters were killed. We hadn’t had her inauguration yet. The inauguration was scheduled for a couple of weeks later. It seemed inappropriate to have the inauguration in view of that, so it was put off. There was no way to be right about some of the things that she faced. So from my perspective, getting us to stop drinking ourselves into oblivion and burning couches and cars and acting like idiots every time we have a victory, was an incredible gift and setting up the undergraduate research office, advancing the ________, advancing our grants—overseeing all of that—getting more people into the national academies, I think she made wonderful contributions to the University. And I am very distressed by the almost total silence about any of that and even [a] negative spin. The Board [of Trustees], when they just recently gave Gordon his bonus and renewed his contract, talked about how the University had been adrift and then he set it back on its path. I’m not in favor of talking like that. I think we go this way and sometimes we go that way and sometimes we go that way. But we’ve been moving forward. And she moved us forward in some pretty significant ways. I am not happy with the spirit that makes us think we have to be ugly to the past.

Q. She also made some remarks after leaving that were carried here in Columbus as casting aspersions on something of the nature of the athletic fan culture.

A. Yes. I think she did do that and I think she was unfairly outed with that. I think she thought that was a private interview and it was broadcast. I also think it was quoted to some extent out of context. But I think beyond that, her leaving here was not attractively done. We’re not very good about letting people go. We don’t do that gracefully. I don’t know whether it’s done gracefully anywhere. But I don’t think it reflects well on institutions when you make changes and look like you’re beating each other up. I think places that are really confident in themselves would make turns and let people move on with as much dignity as possible. I don’t think that happened with her, and I think by the time she got to that interview she had good reason to be grumpy. [It’s] not wise to be grumpy in public but I don’t it’s difficult to understand.

Q. My son happened to be an undergraduate during her administration. I heard from him and his friends their perspective that they just didn’t like her. I think this had to do, as you pointed out from the very beginning, her forthrightness in requiring propriety at athletic events.

A. Yes. I would not say that her presidency was an unmitigated success, but it was not an unmitigated failure either. There’s some real bright spots from her leadership.

Q. Aside from the establishment of the ________, do you want to comment anymore about the establishment of the undergraduate research office?

A. Well, that was part of a general drift in the direction of trying to incorporate the students into a research vision, to strengthen the rigor of the student experience, but I have to frankly say I wasn’t the instigator of that. Barbara Snyder came to me from Karen and said, “Karen wants to have an Office of Undergraduate Research.” And I didn’t understand really why we needed a central office because it seemed to me that
undergraduate research was done by the different faculty members including the kids in their research. But it’s turned out to be quite a terrific thing. We provide help to faculty in locating students who might be helpful to them, and to students in locating faculty who want help. And then all kinds of workshops on how to handle human subjects or bibliographic help or how to write grant proposals. And then they provide a kind of community of young people who are engaged in research and they sort of help each other out and encourage each other. So I think it’s been a good thing, really a very good thing. We looked for a good leader for it. And Katherine Meyer in my office, in Wayne Carlson’s office now, was associate provost, helping with those parts of the agenda that I was working on that had to do with more of the directly academic stuff. And she pretty much led the process of trying to identify a potential leader for that. And in the selection of Allison Snow I think we did a really great job. She’s a really distinguished scientist who also loves kids and loves the idea of research. She’s just been excellent. It’s a little office but it gets a lot done, and I think it’s valuable.

Q. Holbrook was here from 2002 to 2007. Anything else you want to say about this period, especially concerning undergraduates?

A. Well, from ’94 on, without a slip, every year the students kept coming better prepared. And Karen was very good at helping us say so and making a fuss about it, and helping it keep going. She helped us in recruiting, talking to the students, talking to the parents. She encouraged the continued funding for the efforts that moved that forward. So I don’t think it’s ever appropriate to give any one person credit for something that big, but she certainly didn’t … it takes money to do that. You spend more money on the recruiting itself, on contacting students. You have staff who call them and say, “Are you still coming? Is there anything we can do for you?” And [more money is spent on] events, receptions and things, visiting people. And then we give merit scholarships. So she continued the push to fund those activities so we could continue to march forward. And I think that, I don’t know how long it can go on, but I think that’s been quite a good rallying for us, to be able to say, “For the eleventh year in a row, once again for the twelfth year in a row, once again for the thirteenth year in row, the best class we’ve ever had.” And then the consequence of those stronger classes has been coupled with better care for them in all kinds of ways in some special programs. Like Mac Stewart’s office has put together the Bell Center for the African American Male, where we look specifically at trying to be certain that those young men get the best support that they can. We’ve been able to get the retention rates to the sophomore year going up and up. And then the graduation rate is going up and up. And those markers are the kinds of things that you can say about an undergraduate program, those are just the gross, as they say in baptism, outward visible sign of inward spiritual grace, but they are real tangibles. Those charts have been marching up on the diagonal for 15 years now. And Karen fully embraced that vision and encouraged that. I don’t think the university went backwards under her leadership at all.

Q. Certainly not in terms of research dollars.

A. Absolutely. And to the some extent that really does have to do with the president because you need, or the president’s knowing how to work it, because you need to have people
pointing out to the NSF [National Science Foundation] what you’re doing and helping with that networking. She’s brilliant at that. She really knows how to do that. So on all the markers that we said in the academic plan were important to us, we continued to move forward.

Q. I want to turn, if I may, to the return of Gordon Gee, but I’d like to focus attention on a subject that was troubling during the Gee administration, particularly during the Holbrook administration, and possibly even during the Kirwin administration, namely the decision in the late 1960’s to dismantle the old College of Arts and Sciences. That’s a subject that we are continuing to wrestle with, with ever increasing intensity. And I wondered if, given your involvement in the University administration across the line of several presidents, if you would comment on that?

A. Yes, I would like to do that. I’ve been quite involved in it, an observer with opinions, and then quite involved in the latest round. So I would be glad to do that. Would it be possible for me to take a quick break and go to the ladies room?

Q. Let me pause here.

A. What time are we looking at now?

Part 3 – 12-22-09

Q. Today is December 22 and this is Raimund Goerler, and I’m interviewing Martha Garland. And the subject for today is the College of Arts and Sciences, which has gone through a number of changes, beginning with the 1960’s, one being to try to create independent colleges within, and other efforts to divide the college to restrengthen it. Care to comment on these?

A. I came here in 1971, the very beginning of 1971, and I was in the History Department, and came to know it as a graduate student, but then ultimately as my colleague, a number of senior people who had been here in the late 60’s when the Arts and Sciences were pulled apart. So from the time I arrived here, I heard about the notion of the Arts and Sciences. And working on it later, much later, in trying to pull things together so as to strengthen the central Arts and Sciences, I reviewed some of the documents from the earlier period. So I think I have a pretty good sense of how it happened. There was a thing called the College of the Arts and Sciences until 1968, but it did not incorporate all of the things you and I would probably think would be in Arts and Sciences. The Arts part of it was the Arts and what we think of as the humanities, and some of the disciplines in later social sciences. And then the Sciences part was what we came later to think later of as math, the physical sciences, chemistry, physics, geology, math. The biological sciences existed at Ohio State but they were housed, probably 90%, in what was then the College of Agriculture, with a small amount of biology being done in the medical complex.

Q. Arts, for example, existed in the College of Education.
Some of it did, things like art education and so on. The social sciences, economics was in the College of Commerce, which later became the College of Business. And psychology was in the College of Medicine. So the disciplines that we’ve come more recently to think of, not just we, but nationally, picture of the liberal Arts and Sciences, were sort of scattered around in different disciplines. So the people worked on getting, clarifying, defining the Arts and Sciences at Ohio State, I think in the middle of the 60’s. And I spoke to Charles Babcock about this. Charles Babcock was the first dean of the College of Humanities when it came into existence. He was recruited here by Oz Fuller. I don’t know what Oz’s full name is, Osborne Fuller, and he was the dean of the Arts and Sciences. But bear in mind lacking biology, lacking psychology, lacking economics, and so on. And he had recruited Charles who was at the University of Pennsylvania and a classicist, to come and be his associate dean. But Charles said as he arrived, he learned that a College of Biological Sciences had been created, and he said that made it clear that the fix was in. That there were going to be separate colleges. He was startled at that. He says that he might not have come, had he thought that the Arts and Sciences were going to be busted up. But he did, he was here. And then there was quite a lot of negotiating back and forth, but they concluded, they settled on these five different colleges. And I’m not sure whether it was right out of the gate or slightly afterwards. But they turned to Charles Babcock to be the head of the one which became the College of Humanities. A debate was held right from the beginning about whether the curriculum of each of those five colleges was to be owned by each of the five colleges, or somehow collectively, and whether the students, specifically the undergraduate students, were to be owned by the individual colleges or somehow collectively. And there was a committee, when you look through some of this stuff from Willke, there was a committee I think called the Council of 24 or the Council of 28, something like that. And they were very angry at the possibility. They thought if you were going to make a college of Arts and Sciences, or [if] you had one and you were going to add some things to it—even if you decide administratively it’s going to be divided up—certainly you should keep the concept of a liberal education together. And there should be some kind of general education curriculum and it should be for all students who are in the college of the Arts and Sciences. And so I wasn’t involved in that. By the time I got here, in addition to the five colleges, there was a vice provost for undergraduate Arts and Sciences who was the overseer of the Denney Hall operation, which was the academic advising unit, for all of the colleges. And all of the students in the five colleges all had the same general education curriculum. There was some difference between if you did a bachelor of arts or a bachelor of science. You had more science if you did science, and maybe more arts and humanities, I’m not certain about that, if you did arts. But all of them had foreign language requirements, and all of them had general education [requirements], English and math and so on. And then the curriculum was also understood to be collectively overseeing the curriculum of the Arts and Sciences, the general education curriculum specifically, by this collectivity. So the vice provost for the Arts and Sciences, for the Denney Hall operation, was by, ex officio definition, was the overseer of the curriculum committee of the collective Arts and Sciences. And the way it evolved was that each of the colleges would put forth its own curricular ideas, like a new major in history and the framework for a sub-discipline in physics. And that would bubble up but it would be decided on by this overseeing Arts and Sciences curriculum committee. So although they
were moved apart administratively, they did have this unity around curriculum and academic advising for the undergraduate students. And that’s the condition things were in when I got here. I didn’t pay much attention to it right away because I was busy getting my doctorate finished up in the History Department. But then the first job I got was as an academic advisor in Denney Hall. And I still had friends in the History Department and of course friends in the Physics Department because I was married to a physics professor. I heard peoples’ opinions about the Arts and Sciences. And in an interesting kind of way you had these five colleges and then a sixth entity, this thing that did the curriculum and the students. But, and this is really key organizationally forever, that office had no faculty members and only enough budget to hire these staff people to do the advising. So the colleges, the five colleges, were way more powerful than the Denney Hall operation, even though the Denney Hall operation theoretically had sign-off power on the curriculum. In fact, if you have promotion and tenure personnel and budget at a university, you have authority.

Q. So Denney Hall really only served as a service center?
A. Exactly.

Q. For matters of curriculum and advising.

A. Yes. That’s right. I think the very first person in charge of that Denney Hall operation was a political scientist named Lawrence Herson. But he wasn’t there for very long and then Tom Willke was there. Tom Willke did it probably for seven or eight year I think, through the 70’s. He may have done it longer than that. That’s a matter of fact you can check on. The deans of the five colleges were differently powerful, and it seemed to depend on the kind of psychological nature of the disciplines. People would go into this field or that field had different kinds of ideas about things that had to do with the history. The biological sciences college was never very strong. It had been, I think we had good biologists, when they were people in agronomy or animal science or plant biology. But when they tried to be theoretical scientists, we hadn’t recruited to that kind of scientist and they never had the kind of, not never but they struggled, with the kind of history of being applied rather than theoretical. The Mathematical and Physical Sciences College had some very strong departments, particularly physics and chemistry, and I think math at some times was quite strong. That dean had good faculty and the faculty in those fields make good money. They always could go out and do chemistry at Dowell Chemical or something. But the dean I think was never so powerful. The chairs in that college were strong compared to the dean, because the fundamental money of that college depended a lot on grants. And so if you had a good grant debtor, it didn’t really matter whether he was nice, or did a good job of service. And the dean wasn’t about to mess with departments that were bringing in a lot of grant money. The social sciences were not nearly so well endowed. But I think maybe, I’m not really sure what the structure was there, if there were structural issues, but the deans in social/behavioral sciences tended to be pretty hands off, with the chairs being more powerful. Up until Joan Herbers, and I don’t know when Joan Herbers came, I would say probably in the 80’s, but prior to that those departments had been pretty much individually run. The College of Humanities, and I don’t know whether this was force of personality or maybe that the humanists
didn’t particularly care to do politics quite so much, but there was strong deans in the College of Humanities. And it has to do with the way you manage the budget. If when a faculty member leaves or dies or a line becomes open, deans can either leave that money in the department or they can pull it back to the center and make the departments come and make a case. In humanities they did it that way. Money stayed at the center. In MAPS [the College of Mathematical and Physical Sciences], there really was almost no money at the center because it was these grants. Biology there wasn’t so much money anywhere because of kind of a general historical weakness. And SBS [the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences] was probably somewhere in the middle. [The College of the Arts] never had much money and was always kind of subsidized by the center—[more] or less depending on whether the president or the provost had a strong commitment to the arts. But the arts, operating on anything like thinking that you’re responsible for your own revenue stream, always struggled and needed to be subsidized by the University. That was kind of a challenge.

Q. Do we need to emphasize here that the budget model was not the model that we have today?

A. Yes, I think that’s important. The budget was basically an incremental budget. The University got money centrally from the subsidy. We were much more dependent on subsidy than on tuition. That has shifted as we’ve raised tuition, and really, as the subsidy has dropped, but also the cost of education has gone up. As we’ve gotten better at getting grants, I think a percentage of our money has come from grants. And so the subsidy has been less significant. But subsidies used to be a very important chunk of our funding and that would come to the central University, which distributed it, so far as I know, pretty much according to historical precedent. So if you had had previously 20% of the budget, then when 1% more came in you got 20% of the 1%. And everybody went up at the same time and down at the same time. We talked about that a little bit before, when I was talking about why I thought Ed Jennings was such a good president—because he made it a more rational process, then we interfered with it. But that’s quite right, the budget was just basically historical. But you could manage it. So a college would get money based on the subsidy, and then it could manage it either by distributing it out to the departments and letting the departments have their lines, or they could hang on to it more tightly. The various people that we had in humanities were strong leaders and tough, and they just ran a tight ship. The humanities also always had a lot of, did a lot of the service teaching. The English Department and the History Department are both huge pieces of the curriculum. And both of those things can be taught cheaply by temporary staff, and historically had had a lot of people, a lot of the teaching done, by graduate [students], supported by graduate TA’s or done entirely by graduate TA’s. Certainly English could do that. And if you keep all the money centrally and then you do a lot of your responsibility very economically, you have money to use strategically in other ways. And that’s the way the dean of the College of Humanities operated. So the colleges developed very different characters. And it had to do with the personalities of the leaders, but I also think it has to do with what people are like. The scientists, for example. I knew best, humanists and physicists. And the physicists, they were very assertive—careful about getting their own grants. They knew how to do that and they did that. They could care less [about] University politics or University economics or any of the rest of it. Humanists study
political systems of the past. They are articulate. They speak up at Senate meetings. So they were just, they were a powerful kind of force. And the colleges became disparate with respect to one another. But what they didn’t become was cooperative with one another. Because it really felt as if there were zero sum game. The University only had so much money and if you got yours, we didn’t get ours. And there was, even before we moved to the new budget model, there was a strong sense that your own department would be advantaged by having an important role in the general education curriculum. Now I think, to put the best possible spin on it, and I do think that on a good day people had good motives, that historians think that young people should study history, that it’s good for their souls. And so we want to make them all do that because it’s good for them. But it is also the case that if you have a big chunk of the enrollment, you seen to have authority and power within the University. So departments would work in different kinds of ways to influence the curriculum in ways that they regarded as being in their favor. When we moved to the budget model that we’ve been operating under for the last decade, which is to say that the revenue flows to where it is earned, there are two parts to that. Some of it is earned by grants; the grants come to you and you get grants. That had always been pretty much the case but it was made even more explicitly. So like the indirect cost recovery that the University gets, then goes back to the college that generated the indirect cost recovery. And so it’s really to your advantage to get grant money. And then tuition and the subsidy connected with tuition, with instruction and enrollment, would flow to the department. The ideal was not ever, I think, to reward people for having enrollment; it was to enable people who had enrollment to pay for it. Something that I’ve said a hundred times, and nobody ever repeats it back to me, so I’m not at all confident that this is smart, but I do believe it. Universities are not money making organizations. They are money spending organizations. They need to get their hands on resources so that they can do the good things that they want to do. We’re not in the business of accumulating cash. Not if you would accumulate cash in the business school and you don’t accumulate it in French, the business school is going to be able to hire more people than the French Department, so there’s a natural tendency to be self-aggrandizing. But that’s not the point. The point is to enable business to teach business or to do business research. It’s not to get the money itself. As I say, nobody else ever says that, so I’m not certain that’s wise. But I do believe it to be true. Okay, so we’re going along talking about excellence, we began in the late part of the first Gee administration to talk more, and I think Dick Sisson had a lot to do with it, to talk more about benchmarking and accountability comparisons. Sisson initiated, Ed Hayes was the Vice President for Research, they did a study on the research ranking of Ohio State, and compared how much funding our Physics Department got and the Physics Department of Michigan, how many articles were published by our people, just very elaborate kind of comparisons. And as we did “Q” we did comparative stuff. We looked at other institutions. And I remember being in a meeting, in probably about 2000, and we actually were looking at things like the maintenance and cleanliness of our buildings and we did comparative studies there. How much are they spending at the University of Illinois for so many square feet. So we began to have a mindset that said, you don’t just let the local units say I need so much money to keep my building clean; you begin to have more systematic standards. I think one of the people who contributed a lot to that, with respect to that side of things, was Janet Pichette, who was Vice President for Business
Administration I think, or Business Operations. And she was very much influenced by the continuous quality improvement movement. In fact, that whole notion of continuous quality improvement had a lot to do with our … it infiltrated our thinking about how do we get better. We have to know where we are and measure it, and then make changes and measure what happened because of the changes.

Q. Earlier you had mentioned that your “Q” committee members would look forward to that experience.

A. And I think, I don’t think we would have gone, the University would have gone if we hadn’t already been thinking that that was a good way to think. And I think that that then permeated a lot of our thinking. Anyway, we were going in the direction of better management of the university with metrics. So that was an important kind of force. And I think in that context we began to be aware that universities that were really great, and we identified these benchmark universities. The thing that put people on the benchmark list was they had to be organized kind of like us. So they needed to be complete. They needed to have a medical school as well as a law school. They needed to be shaped like us. The needed to be public and more or less as big as. And then we had some that were clearly better than we are. Once we began looking we could see by all kinds of measures, but also some that we were more comparable to. And we talked about aspirational peers. As you began doing that, sort of systematically. And one of the areas that we looked at all the time was the kids, what are their ACT scores, what are their class ranks, how many of them graduate. In my other work we were doing that all the time. But people began to articulate [that] the places we would like to be like had really great colleges of the Arts and Sciences at their heart. To be sure, we are a land grant university and what land grant means exactly is enormously debated and it certainly means that you were founded on the moral act. And its origins here meant a connection with mechanical and engineering and business and agriculture. But there are land grant universities that are better than we are, that are highly, highly regarded. And they have the Arts and Sciences at their core. And so we began saying that this business of setting the five colleges against each other in competition for resources—and then with the new budget, competition for enrollment for resources—this was really counter-productive. If we wanted to be the kind of university we wanted to be, we needed to have a presence which is the Arts and Sciences, which needs to be pulled together. And it isn’t just this advising office of the undergraduates. That’s sort of the last thing. That would be a consequence of being well organized, not the thing that you use to hold it together. And a lot of people were saying that. Ever since I got here I had been hearing people say, I think I told you last time maybe, that these older colleagues of mine said that the reason it had been busted up in the first place was because Roy Kottman and the engineering school didn’t want Arts and Sciences to be too powerful. They wanted it to be smaller and more diffused, so that they could really be influential in the University. I have no idea whether that’s true. That kind of attribution of motive is common but not necessarily sensible. But that was commonly believed. And then conversely, if we’re going to be the kind of university we’re now thinking about being, and see the places we looked at were UCLA. Berkeley is not on our list of peers because that aspiration seems almost being us. But the University of Washington. We looked at North Carolina. I mean, there are places that are originally land grant universities that are, the heart of them is, Arts and Sciences. So I’m not sure where
talking about it started toward making a change. But I know that we did talk about it in
the Office of Academic Affairs. And my first provost, Dick Sisson hired me in the
Provost Office. But then he almost immediately became the Acting President, and then he
went on to just back to the faculty. So I worked for him, if at all, just a couple of weeks.
And then Ed Ray was the acting, the Interim Provost, and when Britt came he made him
the permanent Provost after a bit. So the first people I worked for were Ed and Britt. And
we were all saying that an important step forward, in taking the University forward,
would be to get the Arts and Sciences back together in some way, [to] at least get them to
quit fighting with each other. I don’t know, I’m not aware—I don’t have a feeling—of
fighting. For example, biology and MAPS [the College of the Mathematical and Physical
Sciences] I don’t think were hostile to each other particularly. But neither were they
vigorously collaborative. And an example of that was, there were three different
biochemistry departments on campus, one in the medical school, one in the biology
college, and one in MAPS. And so we have this clump of biochemists all around campus
who don’t work together, don’t talk to each other, the funding is diffused, the ability to
get out the grants is less effective than it might be. So it wasn’t so much that they acted
ugly to each other, but there were synergies that seemed like they were opportunities that
were being missed. The boundary that I think has always been very contentious and
unhappy is between humanities and social and behavior sciences. And I may just think
that because I came out of the humanities. But they had very different, they evolved into
two very different, sort of philosophies of kind of everything. Humanities had these very
powerful deans and powerful centralized budgets. SBS [the College of the Social and
Behavioral Sciences] had powerful deans, after Earl Brown. Earl Brown was not a very
aggressive dean, but Joan Herbers was and Rick Ripley was. But they did not assert their
power. They asserted their power sort of intellectually, which was, they said, [as] they
believed; I know the two of them believed because I had occasion to talk to each one of
them. They wanted the social sciences really to be sciences. They pressed very hard for
that. And they were not very much interested in humanistic kinds of things or in new
fields that were kind of qualitative. They really, really valued the quantitative research.
So in psychology, for example, the emphasis has been really on neuro-anatomy. And the
program in counseling psychology, which is much more touchy-feely, they put that out of
business. In The School of Journalism and Communication (which had gone very much),
the communication side was kind of like classical rhetoric, and the journalism or the
applied kind of thing, they merged that together and flipped it in the direction of strategic
communication studies, made it more quantitative. If you were not going to go that
direction you were not happy. They squeezed that. Rick Ripley oversaw that change.
Anthropology, which is a funny discipline, right at the boundary really between, I mean
there’s cultural anthropology, and then there’s sort of physical anthropology. Cultural
anthropology and a lot of anthro departments around the country is where the action is,
but not in our Anthro Department. Our Anthro Department does basically archeology and
physical anthropology. And the Political Science Department didn’t for many years do
much in the way of political theory but it did vote counting. So it was very scientific,
very quantitative. Our Humanities College on the other hand, you know, is let a thousand
flowers bloom. Not very much focus on “We’re going to be like this and not like that,”
not very much decision making, squeezing it down to focus. I think humanists would say
that’s just the way humanities work, and that you’ve got to let that happen. But that isn’t
the way the University has been talking. The University has been talking about, pick a few things, do them well, focus, figure out what you’re good at and then do that. Don’t try to do everything. I quite get that argument but I’m just saying that the two colleges had very different views on those two things. The social/behavioral scientists figured out how to use the new budget system very effectively and increase their enrollments and got lots of revenue. And in fact, were sitting on a big surplus because they accumulated. They knew how to accumulate cash. I attribute a lot of that to Don Haurin, who was the very long-term Associate Dean, is now the chair of the Economics Department. And he’s just a whiz bang at economics and accounting. He’s just very, very smart at that stuff. The Humanities College managed itself strategically okay but much less with a sort of large principle about managing the money, and had some real problems. [It] ran a deficit at one point. A dean lost his job over it. So the view of the central university of the two colleges is very different from each other. Social/behavioral sciences has in it some of our very strong departments, poly sci. and psych are really highly, highly ranked departments in those fields. And history is very highly ranked in humanities. Nothing else quite at that level. And you couldn’t, for example, comparative studies is in humanities but it’s where anthropology, cultural anthropology is done at this university, because cultural anthropology is just not welcome in SBS. But you’ve got people who are doing archeological anthropology who could work with people doing cultural anthropology. But because you have this college boundary line and the money flows to the colleges, it really has been difficult to do inter-disciplinary work. So I would say that the two largest motives from a Bricker Hall saying we want to get Arts and Sciences together are, there is no great university without a great Arts and Sciences, and these silos are standing in the way of the kind of inter-disciplinary work that really needs to be done going forward. It’s very clear, for example, that some of the best biology is mathematical biology now. The whole Genome project is both chemistry and math and biology, and has humanistic and social science implications. We need to be able to cross those boundaries and we were set up so we can do that very well. So we talked in Bricker, in OEA, about what could we do to pull the Arts and Sciences together more effectively. We’d had a pattern, probably going back to Sisson, early Sisson, of clustering the colleges in sort of affinity groups, so that the Provost would really only deal with an executive dean of each of the colleges, on an ongoing basis, as sort of a management strategy. And the clusters were Arts and Sciences, the Health sciences, the regional campuses, and then the last one was called the Professional College. It really ought to be called other because it includes Engineering and Ag [FAES], but it also includes Law and Social Work and Education. But in any case, those are the clusters and each one has had an executive dean for the last 15 years. Well, the first thought was, let’s make the executive dean of Arts and Sciences real, instead of being a convener of these five colleges. Let’s give that person some real authority. And Ed Ray produced a white paper on the Arts and Sciences. Well first there was kind of a feeler talk at one of the early Senate meetings, probably in ’00, Ed said, “I’m going to oversee a pulling together of the Arts and Sciences.” And Britt backed that. Britt wanted them to have it. And he then issued a white paper and there was a terrific amount of push back. Where the negativity rested mostly was in the college offices, cause each college had a dean, several associate deans, assistant deans, communications director, a budget officer, blah, blah, blah. That was one of the arguments for getting rid of it, was that you had all this bureaucratic structure which certainly must be costing us
money. But people weren’t buying that. And what they said would happen is, if you try to put something over all of them you just have a sixth college that would be competing for resources with all of them, and you’d have even another layer of bureaucracy. The two things that, again it’s just the same as it was before, the things that make a college dean powerful, and then he can use it however he wants, are promotion and tenure and the money. And if he’s got control of those things, he’s got something and can be somebody, and if not, really not. So Ed [Ray] and Britt were going along, in my opinion, toward a real executive dean of Arts and Sciences who would have high authority and be able really to get it all pulled back together. And they asked Michael Hogan, who was the Dean of Humanities to take on that executive dean’s job. Now previously the executive dean, and that’s still the case in the others, is just one among equals. The med dean is the dean of med but also the dean of the health sciences.

Q. Serves as a liaison.
A. Yes, a convener. But in this case they said to Michael, “You’re the executive dean.” Then Jacqueline Royster was made the Dean of Humanities. So Michael was a wonderfully feisty and smart kind of guy. Thought he had a mission, a charge, and he said about it implementing it, and he got terrific resistance from the deans of the five colleges. The deans at the time were Joan Herbers in Biology, Rick Ripley in SBS, Bob Gold, then followed by Rick Freeman in MAPS, Jackie in Humanities, and Karen Bell in the Arts. And the five deans didn’t agree about much of anything except that they didn’t like Mike Hogan and they didn’t want there to be a powerful central administration. But he kind of didn’t take no for an answer. He really was a tough battler. And I think had Britt and Ed stayed and had his back, that probably would have been when it got resolved. But they didn’t. Britt left, and when Britt left Ed was left hanging out there. Ed, I think, would have been considered for the presidency [after] Britt left. I don’t know whether he was considered [and then] not selected but he wasn’t selected. And so he did not find the situation acceptable and was going to look for another job, and did almost immediately.

Q. He also had led some controversial aspects, particularly the change in the budget model.
A. Yes, he and Shkurti together had been the architects. They kept having those meetings. They called them “Bill and Ed presentations.” But I don’t know that there was great anger toward that. I think it was kind of puzzle of wait and see, not wait and see, but troubled kind of view. But I don’t know.

Q. I suppose it depends on where you were in the food chain, because certainly the opportunity to derive revenue directly from enrollments could be potentially very attractive.
A. Yes and very frustrating if you were a little college or college that didn’t have the opportunity to grow. But I didn’t get the sense that Ed was in trouble except that his champion was gone. Once Britt was gone, and then Ed was not given the permanent job, the president’s job, Ed was clearly on the market almost immediately. And so backing Michael Hogan in a pretty bloody fight was not one of the things that Ed wanted to waste
his remaining energies on. And so the documents that came out from Bricker about the way Arts and Sciences was to go did not authorize budget control for example. And I don’t have the timing on this really clear in my mind, Britt left and Ed left and Michael left. And I’m not sure exactly in what order. I know Britt was before Ed but I’m not sure whether Michael left seeing Ed looking around, or what exactly. But anyway, he went to be the Provost at Iowa, and Ed went to be President at Oregon State. And that left Karen, whose fight this was not, she had never, her own background was out of the biological sciences but specifically out of medical sciences and the research side of it. And this thing is really kind of, what’s it about? It’s partly about enhancing the ability to do research, particularly inter-disciplinary research. But it’s very significantly about the brand of the University, the presence, especially in this liberal arts area—and then the general education curriculum that you expect of your undergraduates. And those were not the things that Karen most resonated about them. She was more interested in pushing forward, particularly the biological sciences, medical sciences. Barbara Snyder’s own undergraduate degree is from Sociology, and I think she has a very vigorous appreciation [for]. And I don’t mean to say Karen doesn’t, but where you sit depends on where you stand, depends on where you sit. And they hadn’t picked this fight, and there were a lot of other fights to be fighting. And so they appointed Jackie Royster then as the interim and ultimately as the permanent dean of Arts and Sciences, of the executive deanship. Now my belief is that, when they were trying to figure out who should be dean, Jackie got a lot of support from the other four deans. But I believe why was that when Michael had been the dean, Jackie had been one of the most vehement members of this quintet in resisting a powerful central dean. And she was very collaborative with her fellow deans. And I think they thought she was just what they needed up there because they would go back to having kind of convener dean. But that is almost not ever the way it works. Because once she was made the dean, she then tried to be the dean and they were all surprised, offended, betrayed, angry. And the relationship between her and her five deans, and then John Roberts was elevated to be, he had been the Associate Dean under Jackie, he was elevated to be the Dean of Humanities. The rest of it was the same cast of characters. Except Barbara had selected to replace Rick Ripley [with] Paul Beck. And Paul Beck had made it clear to pretty much everybody that he would follow the principles of Ripley, which was [to] resist at all costs. Rick Ripley really, really didn’t want a unified Arts and Sciences. SBS [the College of the Social and Behavioral Sciences] had done well by being really rigorous about this quantitative approach and the scientific approach. They had advanced, they had hired carefully. And then they had worked the enrollment thing very, very well. So they were rich. And they had no desire whatsoever to be part of a larger thing. And Beck when he was hired made it pretty clear to everybody that he felt the same way. And so that’s the kind of measure. If Barbara had really intended to push this one all the way home, I don’t think she would have hired Paul, because Paul was not getting with the program, if the program is getting unified. So anyway, they went through three years or so of Jackie. So then Randy [Smith] and I chaired a committee to look at where we were with Arts and Sciences. It seemed like there were three possible options. One would be to say that it’s working okay and just leave it alone. One would be to say that it’s really not working okay, and what was working okay was the situation we had before, so let’s just bust it up. Get rid of the executive dean, have a convener dean from among the five, and go back to the silos. And the final one was, make it real, which
would have to involve the budget, sole control of P&T [Promotion and Tenure], and probably a [thinning out] of all [of] the elaborate bureaucracy that had flowered up. Under Jackie, she had not been able to force them not to grow so big. So they did things like an office: a dean would have a communications office and he would hire a second communications person. Instead of all five of the communications people working together, you would have ten. They did not play nicely. And what I think you have to assume, since it’s always best to attribute good motives to people, is that they didn’t agree with, they didn’t believe that the university had a real commitment to going this direction. And they didn’t believe it should. They really believed in the five individual colleges. I don’t think they much believed in the five individual colleges so much as they believed in my individual college. ‘I don’t care what you guys do.’ And so they didn’t work very well collaboratively at all. And Jackie Royster, for her part, wasn’t at all a street fighter like Hogan and she wasn’t prepared to grapple with them. And so what she began to develop was, she’s very insulted when we say this, we say it in the report, people who worked with her are insulted about it, but it came to almost like a sixth college. Because [what] they were doing [was], they got responsibility, claimed responsibility, for genuine inter-disciplinary work. So if there were programs—majors and undergraduate work that were genuinely inter-disciplinary—[they] would be run out of the Arts and Sciences office. And then they did have, they still have historically, the control of the Denney Hall operation. So they use that as kind of a power base. It had [a] significant budget connected with it just because they have a bunch of employees. [Jackie] would have events like the home coming for all the Arts and Sciences alumni. They had previously been having one for Humanities, one for SBS. She just had one for everybody. Some of them gave up their own but some of them didn’t. So you’d be invited to two. And we concluded, I mean the sort of short word is, that it was dysfunctional. And again that word makes everybody kind of crazy, both the five deans and the central dean. But it resonated with the faculty of the five colleges and others. So I think really it was an organizational thing that was a problem. I don’t think, if you’re an English professor, you much care what college you’re in. You do care that you’re in the English Department. That’s a really important identity. But what you want then is that the lights come on, you have the teaching equipment that you need, that the university provides for you, the library is good. [Who cares] who is in between you and President Gee [if they’re] not of salient interest to you? And if you have multiple layers, especially if the P&T has to go to multiple layers and you have multiple chances to trip along the way, that’s very fear inspiring. And if you’re spending hundreds of thousands, millions of dollars on bureaucrats that you can’t [see], when you could [gain] another colleague in Shakespeare. So we found very little resistance on the part of the faculty. I would say practically none. I would say [we had a] good amount of push back from the deans and the associate deans, and people began to sort of define that as self-serving. It’s one of the early things that Joe Alutto did when he came in. Karen left, Barbara left. They had not been killer vigorous on the point of getting this thing going forward. Joe, I’ve got to get this clear, we issued this reporting April of ’08, so we must have started working on it in the fall of ’07. Joe charged it and had us go forward with it. He said, “Let’s get this thing straightened out.” And the officers, this is the report, you probably have that, but people who were in were from all the different colleges. We had Sandy Stroot from the College of Education. Everybody else I think was from within the five colleges. We had some
staff officers, like the computer guy from MAPS, who was on the committee, and the fiscal officer from one of the units. We interviewed all five deans, all six deans. We had open sessions with all different faculty. We talked to the different staff people like the development officers. An example of dysfunction, they were trying to raise money for scholarships and inter-disciplinary research or scholarship in the liberal Arts and Sciences. And there would be a development officer for each of the five colleges and then for this central thing. And when somebody would be talking to a donor about, “I’d like you to give money to psych.” And they would say, “No, I’m not interested in psych but I would like to give money to history.” They’d say, “Okay, well sorry to have bothered you.” They didn’t want to make donors for each other. And it wasn’t hard to see that that was happening. I mean, they didn’t bother to dissemble about the way they were behaving. So it was decided that we could not go on this way. We needed to get a dean, executive dean, from outside who could make it work. We needed to get some work done towards rules changes and organizational structure while we were hunting for somebody. And so Joe asked Joan Leitzel who had been an Associate Provost with us, and then Provost at Nebraska, and President at New Hampshire, retired here in town now, wonderful person, if she would take this job on, and she did for a year. And she was the Executive Dean, and she just smoothed it along. She’s very non-confrontational and calm and just lovely. And she listened to people and talked to people and told people in some of these operational offices that probably there wasn’t going to be need for all of them, and so if they wanted to start looking for other things, she would try to help them. And meanwhile they did a search and got a number of good candidates but the best among them was Joe Steinmetz from The University of Kansas, previously had been at The University at Indiana, Indiana University. And recruited him here and he came and he’s here now and he’s doing it.

Q. This has been a project for probably around 20 years, to revisit the decisions made in the 1960’s.

A. I would say that it was an irritant and a worry to a lot of good people, from ’68 to probably ’98. But starting about then, there was this kind of effort to see if we couldn’t get it somehow better. And there were definitely two stages of that. I’ll tell you a good metaphor I think. The first version was like the Articles of Confederation, and the second is the Constitution. We couldn’t, we didn’t give the federal government enough power the first time to be able to make it work, and the second time we have. The question is, there are complicated questions. There are 41 departments in the collection of five colleges. And if you think of the difference between astronomy and classics for example, or sculpture, the business of evaluating whether somebody is good at their discipline is just done very differently in things that range that widely. And that I think is the thing that faculty worry most about: being handled fairly and appropriately; ‘how is a dean from psych going to know that what I do in poetry is good?’ And so it was an easy, easy thing to say that the two colleges of the sciences, the lab sciences, should be thought about as an aggregation. The boundary between them is increasingly irrelevant. Chemistry and physics are biology, and biology is math. The Arts and Humanities have lots of things in common and lots of things not in common. But I think the logic of Arts and Humanities [is] kind of being thought about together. First of all, there [are] some “boundary disciplines” like Art History, which is both kind of a humanities—humanistic
But if you think about [literary criticism] even, [it] is a kind of humanistic scholar studying artistic output. So there are a lot of ways in which they do work together. There are [also] ways in which they don’t. The stuff that you need to do dance is not a library. And so being certain that somebody gets all that, both in terms of the kinds of resources that are necessary, and the way the classes should be organized, and the way you evaluate whether the faculty are doing a good job, there’s a strong sense that that needs to be done by somebody whose either very wide-ranging and is understanding, or has helped somehow. Social/behavioral sciences could have gone—in fact if you were just talking kind of platonically in the mind about how things go together—I think you might have said the sciences go together, SBS and humanities go together, and the arts are a separate thing, just because of the way they play out in the university. The fine and performing arts are. But the fine and performing arts in terms of number of faculty, number of students, credit hours, budget, is quite small. The two sciences going together, nobody struggled over that at all. SBS is, in terms of enrollment, is half the enrollment of the whole five. And it’s about 45% of the faculty of the whole five. And so what they’ve ended up with are three clusters. Think of them better as clusters of departments than as colleges. So you’ve got the departments that were previously in the Arts and Humanities together under one divisional dean, who works as a very close member of the team of the executive dean, but is the one responsible for gathering up the P&T [Promotion and Tenure] materials and understanding the needs of this group of departments that he is shepherding. And then a dean for the two science fields who really understands NSF [National Science Foundation] grants and NIH [National Institutes of Health] grants and wet labs and dry labs and all of that. And then just because of size really, a dean of the social/behavioral sciences, a divisional dean. And those people are John Roberts and Matt Platz, and Gifford Weary. Roberts and Platz were deans in the old deal. Matt came in after Rick Freeman sort of emulated. And those two, as we did the study, made it very clear that they could work happily in a different arrangement that existed already. And that in fact, in their intellectual opinion, it was needed. They both argued that we needed to move to something that was more real in terms of unification. And the other three, Karen Bell, well it’s really four, Karen Bell and Paul Beck and Joan Herbers and Jackie Royster, all resisted any changes. These three in the direction of de-unify, and Jackie in the direction of, just leave me in charge. And it was very clear that you couldn’t make organizational changes with all that team of people in place. And so, the Provost just called them in and said he was going to make organizational changes. That is sometimes referred to as the “Monday Morning Massacre.” But I do not believe it would be good to put that in your notes, because he had them in half an hour at a time and just told each one of them that they were going to be returning to the faculty. And then Gifford Weary, was the chair of Psych and had been on the committee, and was not eager about the conclusion the committee came to, she was of the committee members the one most, she agreed we needed to do it but she said, “I just wish we didn’t have to because this is going to be bloody to get from here to there, and so many things are working well now that I think we’re making an organizational change that we don’t.” But in the final analysis she did vote for it and affirmed it. And of the people in SBS who seemed like you could go to them and say, “Will you take this on,” she seemed like the most promising.

Q. She’s was an acting dean?
A. Well all three of them have been acting. But just this past week, I’m not sure if this is public, I think it is, Steinmetz has said that he’s asked them all to stay on. But they are divisional deans. They’re not deans of colleges exactly. That’s why I use phrases like aggregation of departments, is the cluster of things that we used to call arts and humanities are now together, the cluster of things we used to call the two kinds of sciences. The extent to which, the money all comes to him, and then he gives it to them to manage but with a great deal of oversight on his own part. And they are not to push it all down to the departments and let the departments squabble. And they are all definitely part of his cabinet, and they work together to make certain that the whole thing works well. And I think real progress is being made. Randy and I had both come to believe, because we really were in on the conversations with Ed and Britt back at the beginning, that this whole direction was the right way to go. We were all very disappointed when it sort of floundered. And when Joe asked us to take on this chairmanship, we did that with some commitment, because we both thought it would really help the University. And so we’re both very excited about the Steinmetz appointment. He’s extremely good, and he really knows … he’s got this … have you met him?

Q. Sure.

A. He’s got this very low key kind of, people do things that are just incredibly stupid, and he just … he’s seen it all before. He was the Associate Executive Dean in a structure just like this at Indiana, and then he was the Executive Dean in a structure just like this at Kansas. So he’s seen the tricks that people pull. So he’s good. But it’s not smooth. It’s not automatic that it rolls forward.

Q. So the Executive Dean, is that the proper term, the Executive Dean for Arts and Sciences?

A. I think that is what he’s called, yes.

Q. Has the power in this incentive for an earnings based budget to be able to move money derived from courses in what used to be the college, well it still is the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, the division is called the Social and Behavioral Sciences, move it around to strengthen parts of the College of Arts and Sciences that need to be subsidized?

A. Need to be subsidized, right.

Q. And also to use that earnings to foster inter-disciplinary efforts?

A. Exactly, exactly. So you know, it will depend on whether people put up a howl. Suppose a department, a really great department, let’s just say so we can talk about it, the Department of _______, decides that it’s not being funded adequately. And it’s really, really good. And decides that they’re going to go talk to Gordon, and Gordon decides that they’ve got a point. Well, then we’ll have trouble. Gordon says, “Don’t talk to me. Joe Steinmetz is your dean. We’ll be fine.” I feel confident that Gordon will say the latter, because he was very enthusiastic about making this real, when he came back and knew this was happening. And in fact, you can probably imagine. My diagnosis of the whole
thing is tied very much to sort of the great man theory of history. When we had Britt and Ed and they were concentrating on it. When we lost them, and it was Barbara and Karen and they were concentrating on other things, it wasn’t fine. But Joe and Gordon are committed to it. And it really quite depends on whether Joe Steinmetz gets it far enough along and cemented into place before we have a change at the center, which God forbid, the change at the center doesn’t see this as important. But I think it will. I think we’ll be alright now because you look at places we’d like to be like, and this is just how they are. Michigan is the College of the Literature, Science and the Arts, LS&A. There’s a similar kind of core at UCLA. Washington is very much organized like this. North Carolina is organized like this. The argument is [that our College of Arts and Sciences is] too [big]. There are almost 1,000 faculty in this college, as compared to 20 maybe in Optometry. And there’s 80% of the general education curriculum in this college. And so it’s very big and cumbersome, unwieldy, clumsy, powerful, scary. There are all kinds of reasons to worry about it. But by the same token, [it is] well managed and well led. It has the potential for making terrific breakthroughs in fields that bridge anthropology and biology and cultural studies and politics. I think it’s going to be an important part of the University. Now with this, and moving to semesters, we have, let me take them in reverse order. We have the obligation to look at every single course and every single piece of the curriculum in the University, and the opportunity to do that slightly freed up from obsession about the revenues, because the Arts and Sciences have one revenue pot. So the possibility [is] that we could get a new [general education] curriculum that has some stuff that is not just the names of departments, but more like problems. Like a student could fulfill part of his biological sciences requirement and his social sciences requirement by looking at the issues involved in global climate change and how to control it. So you could have genuinely team taught inter-disciplinary courses, courses from separate fields. A student could have studied, I’m talking about now, say maybe a student who is studying poetry. Well, if he did [what] I just described, wouldn’t that be more likely to stick with [him] and turn [him] into a thoughtful citizen than [having him take] intro biology followed by intro economics, neither of which he was really paying attention to. So I think the possibilities for real curricular creativity are quite enhanced by these two things which are happening simultaneously, the new calendar and the new Arts and Sciences structure.

Q. It will provide more liquidity

A. Yes, and less motive to resist change. So that’s my thinking on that. And these are a report that Charles Babcock had. His team [was] put together as the Humanities College was being founded, and this is our report.

Q. Okay, thank you. I’d like to continue along two fronts. The first being you’re working in making the bureaucratic environment more customer friendly or student friendly.

A. Okay. Well there are just a number of things. Generally speaking, these improvements are small. They are incremental steps but I am pleased with them. One thing I think is not so small is the creation of the First Year Experience program. We had been admitting students and then what happened to them next was not organized very well. So they had a summer orientation program and they came at the beginning of the fall and we had very
little in the way of welcome week or anything to pull them out. And we sort of said to
ourselves, this was one of the things that “Q” had said. We need to have an integrated
phasing-in process. So we created the First Year Experience program, put it in the office
of admissions, so that the admissions people were aware of what was going to happen
next to them. They had to deliver on their own promises. And then they became
responsible for orientation in the summer. And they became responsible for the academic
side of welcome week, which is very largely managed by student life, student affairs. But
they do it in harmony with each other. So that’s one thing. That’s been a very good
program with a lot of visibility and a lot of real success. Of course their fundamental
measure is how many kids return, the retention through their freshmen year. So that’s
something that I think has been very good and we’re pleased about that. One of the things
that I think, a couple of things that were just mechanical but good. We had the Registrar,
we changed the way we did registrations. Students used to turn in what they wanted to
take, including a schedule of what they wanted to have. They did that every quarter but
the one that was really troubling was between spring and coming back in the fall, because
they would ask in April for what they were going to take in the fall. But over the course
of the summer all of the freshmen would come and register for classes. So all these
requests would come in and then they would do a computer run right before school
started to sort everybody into their classes. And people tended to get the courses that they
wanted but they didn’t get the schedules that they wanted at all. And the schedules
mattered quite a bit because they have, I mean they have preferences, they’d rather not
take 8:00 classes, but also they had other obligations. Like they had gotten a job over the
summer and now they were not going to be able to have the job. So what we did when we
had that on-line, not on-line but phone registration, registration kind of in a request mode,
was that we’d come back in the fall, everybody would get their schedule, they wouldn’t
like it, they’d line up in the college offices. I remember year after year lines out the door
in Denney Hall with people waiting to change their schedule. And the first couple of
years I was in this job, one year out of every two, the computer system would crash on
the first day of school because we were trying to put so much information into it. So we
moved to on-line registration, where the kid gets on-line and stays on-line until he has the
schedule that he likes. And the ones that are low on the pecking order, they don’t get the
schedule they like. But the athletes, the graduating seniors, the honors students register
first. But even if you’re a returning freshman and you have very little time choice, you
know what it is before you leave the computer terminal. And so you’re satisfied with it.
That just stopped lines out the door and the red tape. And then people know, ‘I’m a
freshman now but next year I’ll be a sophomore and it will be better.’ So that’s a change
now. And it may seem like why did anybody argue about that at all? But the colleges and
the departments would see the number of requests and then they would use that
information to staff their sections, in their instructional sections. And that took away
some of that flexibility on the part of the departments and they had to adjust the way they
did things. And some of them adjusted quite quickly and saw it as a customer service
thing, and some of them are still not happy about it ten years on. But anyway, I think
that’s a good thing. Another one that I think is nice like that is the move to Sunday
Commencement. We had always [held] Commencement on Friday morning, on Friday
morning of exam week. In order to do that, we have this commitment, and it’s funny
about the institutions, I don’t know where this came from because it’s very unusual. It’s
unusual for a university of this size. We give students their actual diploma which we have certified they are entitled to. In order to do that, we had senior finals, which we gave during the tenth week of class. You’d be surprised that a hugely high percentage of all classes have at least one senior in them. So faculty members absolutely routinely were having to develop two exams. Faculty complained vociferously about that. We already just have ten week long terms, and so one of those weeks was going away for the senior finals. Students knowing that a senior final was being given, even though they weren’t seniors, would say they wanted to take the senior final cause they had a plane booked to Florida or whatever. It just was not a good thing from an instructional perspective. Beyond that, Friday morning is not a very family friendly time to have a Commencement. Professional parents can take the day off, but that’s not easy for people on wages. And you might be able to do it for your son or daughter but you don’t do it for your grandchild or for your niece. And when we moved to Sunday Commencement, the attendance went up at Commencement, first double and now it’s almost triple what it used to be. It’s easier from a traffic perspective because we’re dealing with Sunday traffic instead of Friday traffic. But there are a whole bunch of people who have to work on Saturdays, checking final grades. See we were able to get rid of the senior finals because we now had two or three extra days in which we could check grades. We didn’t give up on the live diplomas which I think is a highly desirable attractive feature.

Q. The undergraduates insist on it.

A. They love it, they love it. So for you and me, you had this role this last while where you were the head of your big unit, could be required to go to Commencement four times a year, four Sundays, four Saturday nights for the Commencement dinner instead of four Thursday nights. The Board of Trustees is expected to show up. The President does it every time. The Graduate Dean does it every time. From the perspective of the University officers, including a lot of academic advisors, who are not paid lavishly to show up on a Sunday, there are a lot of people who make that commitment. And I don’t think love it but do it because it’s so much more friendly to the students. So that kind of change represents a real shift in our thinking about who is it for and who is important and how are we going to do it. That did not make friends everywhere, but I think people are accustomed to it now and think that it’s appropriate. We’ll only have three once we move to semesters. Another thing which is both academic but also bureaucratic was that we decided to move to direct enrollment, so that students come in now and if they know what they intend to major in, they go directly to the college of enrollment, rather than having the intake college of University College which we used to have. University College was not a bad idea and a lot of other universities do have an intake college which looks especially after the needs of freshmen, and sometimes that’s the way a university will organize a first year experience program. They’ll have it under that kind of auspice. But what we had here was a kind of segregation of the freshmen. We put them there. Many of them stayed through their sophomore year, even beyond, because you didn’t leave there until you were eligible to go into the college that you wanted to go to. And an awful lot of students left without ever getting into their major. And we felt that having being advised by professional staff or faculty members very closely related to your actual discipline was going to get you more identified with your discipline, going to get you better advising, and move people along better. And that represented, it was a huge
bureaucratic process because you had the whole budget and staff and space of University College. And we took all of those people and the money associated with it, and distributed the out to the different colleges. And it was quite tumultuous, difficult. But I think people think it is better. We always had in University College a unit for people who were undecided. And we still have such a unit but it’s much smaller, and the goal there is to get them out as quickly as possible. Get them to pick a major and move on as quickly as they can.

Q. Is it fair to say that selective or competitive admissions brought in the student who was more decisive about his or her [future], or is that an overstatement?

A. That’s probably an overstatement. There’s something to that but some of our very best students are undecided. But they tend to be undecided now because they’d like to do maybe literature or possibly bio chem. That kind of undecided as opposed to, “I don’t have any idea what I want to study because I’m not very good at anything.” It’s a different kind of undecided. But we have a lot of honor students who come in and go into the exploration unit and then try to figure out which direction they want to go. So undecided is not the same thing as weak at all. In fact, it’s important for us to say that to the undecided [that they are] really talented kids. There’s nothing embarrassing about being undecided. However, college being what it is, you can’t stay undecided terribly long and do well. You’ve got to get going on something.

Q. I was just curious about this because of the demise of University College is not far distance, chronologically, from the return to selective admission. But the two are really different issues.

A. They are different issues although I think that they are related in the sense that, if we get better students we have to figure out what are the optimum ways to manage them and take care of them. And I think direct enrollment is helpful in that goal. So it is part of the business of red tape sort of stuff. So those are examples of kind of cutting the red tape. We talked about this in connection with the “Q” report. We established the advocacy office, that could help students find their way if they have problems or have trouble negotiating things.

Q. The Advocacy Office is in Student Life?

A. It’s in Student Life, right. I didn’t oversee that but the “Q” report did recommend that, and I worked with it a lot because we refer people back and forth. So then the other side of, I think, better students better served is, enriching their intellectual experience. For that, let me go back to the red tap thing just a moment. One of the things that used to be a burden for students was that they would come and find that they would be closed out of courses that they needed on the particular curriculum that they were in. And that was very much ameliorated by our moving the budget. When the revenues flow to where the enrollment is, then people, the departments are willing to have enrollment. They can see if there is a road block they need to address it. And the resources are there for them to address it. So that’s one of the things that we don’t do to students much anymore. And sort of related to the same thing, we organized the advisors all over the campus, partly
through the orientation process or in the context of that, to help the students understand what they needed to do to get through in a timely way. And at orientation we make it very clear that they all get a plan, a four year plan for the program they are interested in. You take these courses in these quarters and you will graduate in four years. We’re not saying to them that graduating in four years is the only honorable way to do college. That’s not true. There are a variety of things that they might want to do. And things that impede them. They can be sick. They could need to work. But I always close my part of that orientation thing by saying to parents, in short, “If you’re on the four year plan, we’re on the four year plan. We’re not going to be in your way. We’re not going to impede you.” And that’s the kind of thing that I think makes the service better for them. On the enriching side, we’ve spent a lot of energy, we had been using Honors, the existence of the Honors Program, as a kind of badge of honor to recruit good students, to flatter them into coming. We also had merit scholarships associated with it. So we would tell them that they were good, and then we would give them some money, and they would be in the Honors Program. But what we had been doing, as the students have gotten better, and as we’ve worked on this whole project, is to make certain that their experiences in honors are really enriched, so that they take hard courses and they learn well. And we push them increasingly towards writing a thesis, to graduate with distinction. We want to challenge them to do good work. And the Honors Program, we’ve done a lot to make the Honors Program real. So it started in the, I don’t know, probably 50’s, being basically a thing in the Arts and Sciences. But in the last 15-20 years, it’s really all over the campus. And the University Honors Center is an academic center. It got formal center status several years ago through the Office of Academic Council of Academic Affairs. Each college has to say, “What do you have to do to get Honors in college x?” There’s a minimum grade point average that everybody has to maintain, and then they have to spell out to the University Honors Center what they are going to require of their students. There’s a kind of framework that everybody has to match, and then they can enhance it beyond that. And so there’s a central oversight of the quality of the Honors Program. So that’s very much better. And we bring student in to Honors because they look like they’ll be able to perform well. But then if they don’t, they get thrown out. And that didn’t used to be the case. They used to just kind of get this badge of honor. Their perception was that they pretty much got in on the basis of their ACT score and then they didn’t have to do anything more. It’s just not like that now. It’s a real program. Then I think we talked a little bit before about Scholars. Scholars are, instead of being organized around the highest academic aspiration and preparation talent, they are organized around themes that students are interested in. And I think we have 14 of those now. They’ve grown over time, increased in number. So there’s one in architecture, and there’s one about service and community service, and there’s one about health and wellness and physical fitness. There’s one on technology, using technology. You live together in a residence hall. There’s co-curricular programming. To some extent we put you together in some of your introductory classes but not so much of that. It’s really that you’re a community. They all do public service of one kind of another. And they become each others’ friends. The over-arching idea I would say is an extension of Gordon’s old expression that you can make a large university small, but you can’t make a small university big. That’s taking the 6,000 new freshmen and breaking them down into
a group of 150, where you can get to know [them] personally and with whom you have something in common. So that’s been a really successful approach.

Q. Almost going back to the medieval concept of the college as a residential and academic community.

A. Yes, exactly. Or the residential college system at some of the Ivy League [schools]. And this is not, I’ve worked on that, I’ve worked on Honors which does live together in a place. But they could be thought of as, [a] specific example, a subset of the broad concept of [a] learning community, which is basically something sponsored by Housing and Student Life. And we have about 90% of our incoming freshmen live in some kind of named learning community. But the Scholars ones and the Honors ones are selective, because you have to have certain entrance requirements to get into them. But the rest of the class, if they want to be, I mean there’s one that’s really great called MUNDO, which is interested in multi-cultural and global cultural kinds of things. And they do sort of projects like, go to an inner city spot in Chicago and work with inner city youth. But they travel and they have speakers who come in and who are interested in global things. And that’s open to anybody in the freshmen class. See, if you begin to be selective admissions, and you have a large applicant pool, eventually instead of having a bell shaped curve of aptitudes, you have kind of a truncated curve that is flat on the left side and then trails down. We don’t have many students who don’t meet a minimum standard, which is much higher than our old average used to be. But then of course the number of students who are very, very bright still is small. So pretty much everybody who is here now is capable of having an enriched experience of some sort. And that’s probably what I said to you before is, that I think the new Dean of Undergraduate Education has, as part of his charge admission, to be enriching the intellectual experience of everybody, not just the kids at the top end. And we have this sub-group which you call Collegiums and which we should call Collegium, for reasons that just had to do with the way Americans pronounce g’s before I’s. And it’s made up for starters of the ten students who were given the Presidential Scholarship through the Maximus competition every year. The Presidential is a full ride, a full cost of attendance, scholarship. And they are just very bright. They are selected on the basis of test scores and class rank, and an essay competition, and then an interview process. And ten of them are selected. And they are automatically admitted to the Collegium. Then, if at the end of your freshman year, kind of in March, April, a call goes out to say if you’d like to be in it, you can apply. And they take another ten to fifteen. So the Collegium now is at full force. We’ve got all four years full, and it’s about 70-80 students.

Q. Okay. And what does the Collegium do? What does it represent?

A. It’s purpose is to enrich the intellectual educational experience of our very brightest students as much as we possibly can figure out how to, toward helping them be as competitive as possible for the things that would come next in their academic lives. So we want them, the quick answer, is we want to win some Rhodes Scholarships. But we want to help them be ready for competition, for Rhodes, Marshall, Truman, Fulbright’s, Goldwater’s, NSF grants. We also want to help them get into the very most competitive graduate schools, laws schools, medical schools. We want to be able to say to them and
their parents that we will take as good care of you intellectually here as they would at Princeton. And your chances of having the next phase of your life be as valuable as it would be at Princeton are good if you’re in this program. And they have speakers. If a really imminent speaker is on campus, we try to get them with him or her. They do service projects together. We tip them off to things that they might compete for that are not in that top tier of scholarships but [are] ways they might be able to study abroad. We have social activities for them. They do a lot themselves. They organized two years ago and it’s still thriving, their own research colloquium, where they present their research to one another on Friday afternoons. And they’re just terrific. They’re really fun, great kind of kids. They have a person who’s in charge of sort of the social programming for them, or the co-curricular kind of stuff, a woman who’s in charge of being as knowledgeable as possible about the interview process for the Rhodes and Marshall, and things like that. And then [there is] a faculty director who is now Brian Weiner, who was just elected to the AAAS. He’s an astronomer/physicist, or probably the other way around. Terrific guy. The previous head of it was David Tomasco, who is now the Associate Dean now in the College of Engineering. One of the things we do is we help people develop their applications for these post-graduate things, including for graduate work but other things. And then we do mock interviews with them to help prepare them for the interview process. It’s just in general an environment designed to be as rich as we can make it at Ohio State. And I think it works pretty well. It seems to be, probably nobody would complain to me so I don’t know that I’m right, it seems to do what it’s supposed to do for the kids who are in it without really irritating everybody else. I’m not sure exactly how it does that, but I don’t think the people are sitting around thinking it’s un-Democratic or unfair or anything. I think if they notice it, and think it’s really worth being in, they probably try to get in it. And if they don’t, they don’t.

Q. I would think with 70 or 80 students it’s a pretty small organization to draw a lot of visibility to.

A. Right, no it’s quite small. And I don’t think it ever would desire to be bigger. We pushed it forward pretty aggressively under Karen Holbrook because she came from Georgia, where they had a thing called the Foundation Fellows. They had had donors, well their foundation board gave money, so that they had $40 million that they worked with. So part of what they promised to their Foundation Fellows was that they would have $10,000 beyond a full ride scholarship in the bank for them to enable them to do a study abroad opportunity or a research project or something. They have to write a grant proposal. They have to justify what they’re going to use it for. But it’s there for them. We’d love to have something like that. And I think as we go into the development campaign, getting real support for the Collegium and have it be positioned. It’s kind of a star, [the] jewel in the crown. Not for everybody, but to the extent, you may remember a couple of years ago, not last year but the year before, we did have a young woman who won the Rhodes scholarship. And that’s just very valuable to the University, to be able to say that. We’d like to have more and on a regular basis. We’ve done pretty well with Truman’s. We do much better with Fulbright’s. We send a lot of kids abroad on Fulbright’s. And we do well with NSF’s and Goldwater’s. Really we do better on the science side than if Rhodes and Marshall, the Humanities side, which I think they kind of are. There’s room for improvement there. And then, I guess the _______ of other things.
The Undergraduate Research Office, Karen Holbrook particularly really felt that getting our undergraduate students to participate in research efforts at the University was very good for them and would make all of us, make a harmonious structure. So she wanted us to have an office for undergraduate research, which we did put together. And Allison Snow, a professor in Biology is the head of that. And that has been very good. We have these wonderful donors, Rick and Marty Denman, who have given us money for the Denman Undergraduate Research Forum. The Office of Undergraduate Research combined with the Honors Program staged the Denman Forum, coordinated that. That’s become a very powerful thing. Kids aim at the Denman. That’s something that they’re going to do. And I think nationally we are really pretty well recognized for having this research forum that students participate in. And it does get them ready for the next stage of their professional lives, intellectual lives. And I guess the final thing would be that, several years ago when we were having some really respectability difficulties, branding difficulties, the Student Athlete Support Office was brought over to report to my office, with the idea that it needed to be watched over by Academic Affairs. And I think we have had very much less, I was worried about that, less bad behavior but much better academic results from our varsity athletes under the auspices of OAA [Office of Academic Affairs]. Because we just, we have teeth in some of the requirements that we have. There always are these NCAA requirements and Big Ten requirements. But we have Ohio State requirements that are tougher than those. And we enforce them. And the coaches are extremely cooperative about it and helpful. They know that if students are not doing well, they are not going to be able to play. We’re all in agreement about that. The newspapers just this last week had stories about three students in some kind of difficulty which is not published, and one in academic difficulty. There’s no discussing it. We are excellent in athletics and I think have reason to be proud of it. And it’s very valuable to the university—but not if it comes at the cost of academic standards. So we have a very good director there. I like him very much. We’ve had good help. The Athletic Department pays for it entirely, but not surprisingly. ________, when he was talking somebody in his office was applying for a job in his office and asked him how it was that he managed to have so much influence to be able to actually make it work the way we want. And he said, “Well, I have a very rich uncle,” who would be Gene Smith, “and a very powerful aunt,” which would be me in the Office of Academic Affairs. Because Academic Affairs just is a heavy luger. So I’m proud of the way that’s worked.

Q. And the changes in the NCAA rules that athletic programs can actually do scholarships must have made this relationship work quite well.

A. It all fits together. It has been good. You say things like that at your peril because students all over the University get into difficulty one way or another. They are young people and make mistakes. And when they our varsity athletes in some of our most visible sports, and of course they aren’t just in trouble—they’re on the front page of the paper. You talked about doing well at your risk, but I felt very good about that. It’s run well and been very well pleased with. I think a lot of places have moved in that direction, moving the athletic advising office over to academic affairs, and I think it’s a good idea.
Q. Okay. We’ve had a very productive and focused interview. We’ve pretty much covered the outline and I wanted to give you a chance to give some reflective thoughts about your career here at Ohio State.

A. Thanks, I’ve enjoyed talking about this, it’s been very nice of you to take the time and I really appreciate it. I think I’ve been very fortunate to have had a career at Ohio State. I didn’t come here exactly of my own volition, as I said to you back at the beginning. I followed a husband here. And I suppose I could have followed him to some other university, which I would come to love. I don’t know. But I do think this is a particular noble animal here. I like that it’s public. I like that it’s big. I like that it’s on the march. I’ve been with it as it’s kind of awakened and decided to be more than it used to be. And that’s been wonderful. And particularly around the business of the undergraduate and stuff. And the things I’ve talked about with you, where I’ve been involved with them, are things that I am pleased with. I’m trying to think of anything that has just utterly frustrated me. Probably but I’m not really thinking of what it is now. As I said to you earlier, I’m very happy to have the Arts and Sciences pulling together as a real thing, and I’m very happy that we’re moving to semesters. I think both of those things have generated power for the University in general. And I’m very happy that our students are better prepared and more successful when they’re here, and that we’re doing things to make their lives simpler. So I’m very pleased with all of that. I think that people who work at universities, it’s probably a little overblown to call it a calling or a vocation, but it’s mighty good work, and it’s a mighty good environment. The people I’ve had in the course of time I’ve been here, I’ve had my share of the kinds of troubles that people have, been ill and my daughter was in a very terrible emergency that was very dangerous and which she, thank God, emerged from all right. The support that people provide for you when you’re in that kind of situation is just extraordinary. The number of friends that you have at a place like this, and the right that you have to feel proud to be associated with it. When I first came I didn’t like the football at all because I thought that that distracted everybody from what the University really was about and was actually harmful. But I’ve come over the years to feel differently about that. I think that the athletic side of it is part of what makes people feel … it’s such a big place that having that to kind of rally around is very energizing and good. I came during the last years of his time here quite to admire Woody Hayes, who had behaved badly, but who had many wonderful qualities. I can tell you a little story that would be not bad to have somebody hear sometime. He had fallen from grace and then he didn’t apologize, but he made a speech to the Rotary Club about how he, I think it was the Rotary Club, it might have been the Chamber of Commerce, but he said that he had no complaints, that what he had done was unacceptable, and what the university had done was what they had to do. And he completely felt that that was fine. That he was going to go on now. And it was just kind of classic Woody. And then after that, everybody just sort of, [even] if you were pre-disposed not to, everybody sort of forgave him. He would eat in the Faculty Club a lot and people would see him. I would see him and say, “Hi Coach.” At an earlier time, I had thought he represented something that was not helpful to the University, but I came to think he was wonderful. And we have a graduate from our department who is really an eminent historian, Donald Kagen. He was a classicist with his Ph.D., and he went to Cornell, and I studied under him at Cornell. And then after that he went on to Yale and he was a classicist at Yale, and he was ultimately Dean of the College at Yale. So he had a really wonderful career. And
he’s just one of our department’s most imminent kinds of scholar. He was a huge football fan and was here during Woody’s time here. So we had Don come back to the department and honored him as a distinguished alum. They asked him if there was anything he would like while he was here, and he said, “Would it be possible for me to meet Woody Hayes?” Well, Don Kagen is a scholar of _____dities, that’s what his work is on. And Woody Hayes loved military history, and particularly _________dity. So it was arranged that they would have breakfast together and they did, and it was one of those wonderful things where two men are equally honored by the other. Don Kagen by the great coach and the thrill of that, and the great coach by the great Greek historian. And they talked about the Peloponnesian War. And that was the day before Woody Hayes died. Isn’t that nice?

Q. Interesting.

A. And to me, it pulls together a lot of stuff about Ohio State.

Q. Good story. Well, I guess that brings us to the end of the interview and appreciate your participation.

A. I appreciate it too, Rai. Thank you very much for the opportunity.