INTERVIEW OF DR. WILLIAM HALVERSON

JANUARY 20, 2004

Q. I’m William J. Studer, Director of OSU Libraries Emeritus, here today, January 20, 2004, to interview Dr. William Halverson, who served as Associate Dean of University College from 1967 through 1987. The focus of this interview is on the mission and history of University College, which was established in 1965 and eliminated in 2001. But first, a few background questions. Your higher education degrees, Dr. Halverson, include a degree in theology from Princeton Seminary, as well as a M.A. and Ph.D. from Princeton University. Does the degree in theology reflect an initial inclination to become a clergyman?

A. Yes, it does. As a matter of fact, I was ordained and served a parish for a short time before returning to the University to prepare for a career in higher education.

Q. What denomination, if I may ask?

A. Lutheran.

Q. And how long did you serve a church?

A. Just a little over a year.

Q. Just a little over a year. You served as Professor of Philosophy at your undergraduate alma mater Augsburg College from ’59 to ’67, before accepting the position of Associate Dean of University College at OSU. What entered into your decision to leave Augsburg for this administrative position?

A. I would say that there were two principal reasons. In making that change obviously I was moving from a small private college to a large public university, and at the same time I was moving from a professorial position to an administrative position. The change of
institution had to do with the fact that as I surveyed the higher education scene back in the middle 60’s, it appeared to me that the future of higher education lay primarily with the large University rather than with the small private church-related college. Secondly, I had developed an interest in academic administration. I had been offered and accepted a fellowship from the American Council on Education, a fellowship funded by the Ford Foundation, to spend a year as an academic administrative intern to test my interest in academic administration. At the conclusion of that year, I decided that I was indeed interested in academic administration, and therefore made myself available for positions in that area.

Q.  Okay.  The founding dean of University College, Richard Zimmerman, who served in that capacity from 1965 to 1970, hired you.  What is your understanding of why he stepped down, and please give us your assessment and impressions of Dean Zimmerman as leader of the college during the years you worked together.

A.  It is my understanding that Dean Zimmerman had let it be known when he became Dean of University College that he wanted to serve in that role for a limited time, that he did not want to spend the rest of his career in that position.  I believe that Dean Zimmerman, then Professor Zimmerman, chaired what I think was called the General College Committee, that was charged with the task of thinking through whether the University should establish a new college.  I think the concept was that it would be kind of a Columbus campus or Columbus area regional campus.  Similar, therefore, to Lima, Mansfield, Marion and Newark.  When the committee then recommended that something called University College be created, and the recommendation was approved, Zimmerman was asked to become Dean of that College.  As I said, it was my
understanding that he had let it be known that he did not want to serve permanently in that role but that he was willing to serve long enough to get the college off the ground. So I believe that it was basically at his own initiative that he left the Deanship after a few years. Now whether at the specific time that he left, whether it was because he decided that the time had come, or that Central Administration decided to take him up on his more general indication, I don’t know the answer to that.

Q. Elmer Baumer, whom you know and who we have interviewed about this topic, served on that committee.

A. Yes, I know that.

Q. And he had quite a bit to say about the due process that surrounded the creation and concept of University College. I think you would enjoy looking at his remarks.

A. Yes, I would enjoy reading that because all of that occurred before I came to Ohio State.

Q. John Mount was appointed to succeed Dean Zimmerman in 1970, and served until 1983. Tom Willke from Arts and Sciences was appointed Acting Dean until 1985, at which time Michael Curran from the College of Humanities was appointed Dean. Was John Mount’s appointment the result of a national search to your knowledge, or simply an internal transfer?

A. I am not aware that it was a result of a national search. It all happened rather suddenly actually for those of us in the College. We were informed I think by Dean Zimmerman that he had resigned as Dean, and it was rumored that the new Dean would be someone from Central Administration. Soon after that rumor was circulated we learned that John Mount had been appointed to this position.
Q. To your knowledge were there reasons for Tom Willke’s long acting period, two years, which strikes me as a rather long acting term. We have already answered the national search issue I think.

A. I don’t think I can give you a good answer as to why it was a two-year duration. I think in some ways a more interesting question is why was Tom Willke appointed to that position in the first place. And I think I probably do know the answer to that. The Provost at that time was Diether Haenicke. University College, by virtue of its West Campus location, was more or less isolated from the rest of the University. Many people in Central Administration I think had the feeling that they didn’t really know what was going on out there. When Dean Mount retired, I think that Provost Haenicke wanted to get some idea of what University College was like, what was going on out there on the West Campus. Tom Willke was a trusted associate of his. He was a Vice Provost, and I think that Deither probably said to Tom, “Tom, go out there and act as Dean for a time and make an assessment and tell me what you think we ought to do about University College.” Periodically, as a matter of fact, through the years, the question would come up, “Should University College be continued?” It was, after all, a fairly expensive operation. And I don’t know whether Diether had it in the back of his mind at that time that perhaps the question as to the continued existence of University College is reopened. In any case, I think it was on a scouting, a fact-finding mission that Tom Willke was sent out there. And part of what Tom found, I think, was that the College was humming along pretty well. And I think that he probably did not report any great urgency to the task of appointing a new Dean of the College.
Q. That’s very interesting. I don’t believe anyone else has commented from that particular vantage point, which makes sense. I know all of those players to some degree.

A. Yes, I know you do.

Q. Can you compare and contrast the leadership styles and effectiveness of the three Deans under whom you served, Dean Zimmerman, Dean Mount and Dean Curran?

A. Well, I can say a bit about Deans Zimmerman and Mount. Dean Zimmerman had spent his career as a faculty member and his instincts and values were those of a faculty person. He was very concerned about maintaining academic standards. He was a stickler for academic rules. His style was very much hands-on. He was much more comfortable doing things himself rather than delegating them to someone else. Case in point: The mission of the College involved the advising of students who were planning to take degrees in various degree-granting units. The College therefore had to enter into a kind of contract or agreement with each of those units as to how University College would be advising the students who had declared their intention to take a degree in, say, agriculture or business or arts and sciences, whatever. There was something like seventeen curricular academic programs in those days, each of which required its own advisement manual. And Dean Zimmerman personally wrote all of those manuals. Just an enormous writing task. Moreover, this was before the days of personal computers, so he was partly writing things out in long hand, partly dictating it, and his poor secretary was typing these day after day after day. And then they had to be reviewed by the academic units, then they had to be revised, which was also a bigger job in those days than it is today with computers. So it was a very, very hands-on style. Dean Mount, on the other hand, came to the College from a quite different professional background. He had in his younger
years been a junior faculty member in the College of Agriculture but had spent most of
his career in Central Administration. So he came there with a very different set of values.
He was very much a delegator. He did not personally administer any part of the work of
the College. He did virtually all of his administration through his subordinates.
Moreover, his instincts were really those of a public relations person. He was very
concerned about the image of the College to its various constituencies. And spent a good
deal of time and effort working on things that had to do with the image of the College.


A. Regarding Michael Curran, there’s relatively little that I can say. For all practical
purposes I was only there for about one year after Michael came. And I informed him
shortly after his arrival that I would be taking early retirement. So I was kind of a lame
duck throughout the time that I reported to Michael. He and I had a number of good
discussions together, but I didn’t really work under him long enough to truly form an
opinion about his administrative style.

Q. Please describe your understanding of the goals and function of University College when
you came as Associate Dean, and were these still evolving since the College was so new?

A. They definitely were evolving. I believe that at the time I became Associate Dean of the
College, which is to say the summer of 1967, the College had not yet enrolled its first
student. I believe that the first students were enrolled in University College in the
autumn of 1967, and at that time the only students who were enrolled were the undecided
students. The mission of the College had not really been defined yet at that time; it was
still under discussion. But there was no other college that had a strong claim to the
undecided students, so the decision was made to have those students enrolled in
University College, and at that point Lance Shreffler, who came to the College with a background as a counselor in Upper Arlington High School, was appointed to serve as the advisor of those students. This reminds me of something else about Dean Zimmerman. I mentioned that he was a hands-on administrator. Indeed, he was so much so that when the College enrolled its first students, he specified that he wanted 100 of those students assigned to him as their advisor. And he personally served as the advisor of those students during the time that they were in University College. Well, that was a bit of a digression. The mission of the College was eventually established in, I think, 1968. It was probably the spring of ’68 if memory serves me correctly. The College was given the mission to serve as the college of enrollment for all incoming freshman students. The concept was that these students would enroll in University College and would receive their initial orientation to university life and initial academic advising from University College in accordance with the wishes of the respective degree-granting units. And the college would serve then among other things as a kind of sorting place, a place where students could either confirm or change their educational goals and then move on to the degree-granting unit in which they hoped to take their degree when they met the requirements of admission to that degree-granting unit. So the role of the College certainly did expand greatly during those early years. But it was clear from the beginning that academic advisement was the central mission of the College.

Q. I think you really answered that next brief question about the College’s essential and defining characteristics, so we’ll move on. Is it more important in your view to have such a unit as University College at a large comprehensive research University versus, say, the kind of liberal arts church-related small school from which you graduated?
A. Let me say a few words about the role of academic advisement in the life of the student, because it’s really against that background that I want to try to answer this question. No matter where they go for their higher education, students face a number of important development and academic challenges during their college or university years. It’s the time in their life when they need to come to terms with their upbringing, to decide whether the world view and the values that were instilled in them by parents, teachers, ministers, etc. are correct. Whether they are views and values that they can accept and claim as their own. They need to decide what they care about enough to make it the focus of their university education. They need to identity their strengths and weaknesses and make academic and life decisions that will allow them to emphasize their strengths. They need to decide where they are going to find their place in the world of work. And when they enter the University, they need to learn how the University can help them deal effectively with these challenges. This then is the context in which academic advisement occurs. Accordingly there are many levels of academic advisement. At its loftiest level, it consists in helping students clarify their values, aptitudes and interests. And of course an advisor is only one of many people who are engaged in that task. This process of clarification obviously begins long before the students arrives at the University, and many people and events—parents, teachers, friends, experiences of success and failure, etc.—contribute to it. Another aspect of advising consists in helping students select courses quarter by quarter that will lead them toward the goals that have been identified, or in the absence of such goals, will at least keep open a range of suitable options and will perhaps help the student toward the identification of those goals. A third dimension is informing the student about institutional and other resources that may be useful to the
student—the University Library, for example, or the reading center or special resources for dyslexic students and so on. A university such as Ohio State has a rich array of services available to students. Academic advisors play an important role in directing students to those resources. Fourthly, students need help in learning to negotiate the system, to take the appropriate steps to enroll in courses, to change their schedule, to drop a course, to implement the plethora of academic rules and regulations that have been created. A somewhat pejorative way of putting this would be to say that students need help in learning to negotiate the bureaucracy, because inevitably a large university is, among other things, a bureaucratic organization. Now in the colonial colleges, which were the models for small private colleges all over this country, academic advisement was a faculty responsibility. Professors of history, for example didn’t just teach history. They tried to help students in all of the ways that I have just mentioned. And in the relatively uncomplicated world of the small college, the system perhaps worked reasonably well. At a minimum, students who didn’t get the help they needed from one faculty member could always seek out another one for the needed help. A small college is a more familial kind of setting. Now I think it is clear that such a system, that is a system where faculty members do all academic advising, simply would not work in the modern university. The multiple responsibilities of faculty members including research, professional writing, and the teaching of undergraduate and graduate courses are so demanding, that one cannot reasonably expect faculty members to spend a significant amount of their time assisting undergraduate students in the ways I mentioned earlier. Much undergraduate advising therefore, must be delegated to someone else. So the answer to your question is yes, I think it is essential in a large comprehensive university
that academic advising be treated as a separate task that needs to be done thoroughly and carefully and with the kind of focus that University College tried to give it. However, I think it’s important to remember that academic advising is fundamentally a faculty responsibility. It’s a delegated responsibility. An academic advisor performs a specialized role on behalf of faculty because in the modern university it simply is not feasible for faculty members to perform that role themselves.

Q. How would you characterize the level of support for the mission of University College, from university administration and the Council of Deans?

A. I think it varied from time to time, depending upon their confidence in the Dean of the College, depending on the quality of the information they were getting about what the College was doing. I think that some of the Deans were very appreciative of University College. I think others were less so. So I think it was highly variable. But I don’t have a lot of first hand knowledge about that, because I was one of those people who was relatively isolated from the rest of the University, was off there on the West Campus doing my job.

Q. Not in a position to get a lot of feedback.

A. That is correct.

Q. Did you sense any resentment from the array of disciplinary colleges as being separated from their prospective majors for the period of their enrollment in University College?

A. Yes, very definitely so. There were in fact some degree-granting units that were glad to have University College sorting the students out and giving the students an opportunity to prove their mettle before being admitted to that degree-granting unit. But there were others. The one that quickly comes to mind is the College of Agriculture. The College of
Agriculture worked very hard at student recruitment, and understandably felt a certain sense of ownership when the students that they had recruited came to the University. And it was, I think, very frustrating to them that for some period of time the students were enrolled in University College rather than in the College of Agriculture. However, even the College of Agriculture appreciated the fact that within University College there were many students who came not planning to pursue a degree in agriculture who learned about agriculture, learned about the availability, and who found it very easy to transfer from wherever they had started out into the College of Agriculture. I will give you as an example my own youngest daughter, who came to the University with well-developed interests in music—she was a violinist—and foreign languages. One would assume that she would end up with some sort of a major either in arts and sciences or in the School of Music. However, while enrolled in University she learned about the field of International Agricultural Economics, and that struck her as something that would be of interest to her. That, in fact, became her undergraduate major. And after graduating from Ohio State she became a kind of poster girl for the College of Agriculture because upon graduation she went directly to Harvard Law School. You can be sure that for some time the College of Agriculture used her example to demonstrate that when you come to the College of Agriculture, all kinds of opportunities become available to you.

Q. The number of women in that major at that time must have been very small.

A. I don’t know the answer to that. I can tell you, though, that she had a wonderful faculty advisor in the College of Agriculture, and he remains to this day one of her good friends.

Q. Whom would you single out as key members of the University College staff when you came and throughout your time as Associate Dean?
At the time I came, the entire professional staff consisted of Dean Zimmerman, Associate Dean Halverson and Advisement Coordinator Lance Shreffler. We didn’t really become a fully staffed college until some years later under Dean Mount. But let me say that I think Dean Mount assembled a very, very strong staff. He placed me in charge of academic advisement. He engaged Dr. Bill Watson as Associate Dean for Developmental Education, which provided a variety of much-needed support services for minority students. Betty Jo Hudson was appointed to coordinate student services within the College. Dr. Jim Tootle was a very strong College Secretary. Dave Marsh had first served in that role and then Dave moved to become the Business Manager of the College. Dr. Tom Minnick served as the Honors Coordinator. And after the untimely death of Dr. Watson, Dr. Mac Stewart became Associate Dean for Developmental Education. He is now, as you know, Vice Provost for Minority Affairs. So we had a very, very strong staff.

Q. Please describe your responsibilities when you assumed the role of Associate Dean in 1967, and how did those responsibilities evolve over your 20 years of service to become more or less inclusive.

A. At the time that I was appointed Associate Dean of the College, it was assumed that the College was going to be functioning in a way very much like the regional campuses—that it would, therefore, have its own faculty teaching an array of introductory courses. I was engaged to assist in assembling that faculty and to function as Associate Dean for Instruction within the College. At the time I arrived, however, that was not a part of the mission of the College, nor did it ever become a part of the mission of the College. So under Dean Zimmerman I in fact functioned as a high-level staff assistant. I worked on special assignments. We developed some special programs. One that comes to mind is
the Higher Education Opportunity Program, which we put together following the student riots in the spring of 1968. It was aimed at trying to identify minority students at the high school level whom we could try to prepare more adequately for entrance to the University. We followed up those students for a number of years, by the way, and the evidence indicated that that program did have some impact on these students. When Dean Mount came on board, he asked if I would be willing to head up the advisement program, give leadership to the advisement program, and I was glad to do that. And for the remainder of my years in University College, I served as Associate Dean with special responsibility for academic advisement.

Q. What problems and issues needed your primary attention during your early years, and were there particular goals you hoped to accomplish in those years?

A. Let me answer that with respect to my responsibility for the advisement program. It seemed clear to me that the advisement program needed some internal organization. Basically, at the time that I became Associate Dean for Advisement, all of the advisors in the College—and they numbered probably 40 or 50 by that time—reported directly to Lance Shreffler. It seemed obvious that this was not an adequate organization. So I recommended, and Dean Mount accepted the recommendation, that we create a level within the advisement program called Coordinators of Academic Advisement. And we divided, I think by that time it may have been as many as 19 curricular academic programs, into related groupings, so that we, for example, had one area—let’s say the medical related areas—that included pre-medicine, pre-dentistry, allied medical professions, nursing, optometry, pharmacy, and so on. We created five or six coordinator areas, and we then went out and found some very, very good people to serve in those
coordinator roles. This made it possible for us to provide some of the supervision that our graduate student advisors needed and some of the immediately available help that they would need as they learned to perform the very important roles that they had with direct student contact. Our coordinators were also able to stay in very close contact with the respective degree-granting units, so that we could keep them informed of what we were doing, and they could keep us informed about their wishes. So it provided for much better continuing relationships with the degree-granting units. So organization was the first thing. A second thing that required my attention was recruitment. It was very, very important that we get first-rate people to serve as academic advisors. Now to be candid, some of the academic units pretty clearly were sending us less than their best candidates. They were sending us people who were not going to be able to do the kind of job that we wanted done. And we simply did not employ those people. We just let the colleges know that in order to do this job well we needed good people. And we worked very, very hard every year at recruiting first-rate people and put them through a rigorous selection process. The respective coordinators of academic advisement interviewed them. I interviewed them. And many of them were weeded out at that point. Only those that we felt would really make a good contribution to our advisement program were then recommended to Dean Mount for employment. And a candidate could be turned down at any of those stages, and we would then to go back to the pool and continue to try. So recruitment was a second major emphasis. The third was training. We put our new incoming advisors through a rigorous training program. We wanted to be very sure that they were able to do the day-to-day advising, and to teach UVC-100, the University Orientation course, which was also part of their responsibility.
Q. Michael Curran mentioned this same issue of the continuing challenge of the quality of graduate students since the colleges were inclined to send you their secondary list.

A. But you see there was a certain self-correction in there, given the rigor with which we did our employing. If the College sent us people that we thought were incapable of doing the job, we simply did not employ them. Colleges are always looking for employment for their graduate students. They are looking for assistantships for their graduate students. And if they didn’t send us the kind of people that we would employ, they didn’t get any of their graduate students placed in University College. So it became a motivator. And it was noticeable over time that we were getting better and better candidates.

Q. From your perspective was the budget of University College adequate throughout your tenure to accomplish the College mission and to fulfill its plan? We all know budgets are never adequate.

A. Budgets are never adequate. So obviously had more money been available there is more that we could have done. We did two things, however, to try to make efficient use of the funds that were available to us. One is that with the better supervision and the nearby help that was provided with the coordinators of academic advisors that I discussed a few minutes ago, we did increase the advisor/advisee ratio. Initially we had assigned about 300 advisees per FTE advisor. Thus, an advisor with a half-time assignment, which was typical, would have approximately 150 advisees. We increased that to 400 per FTE advisor, which made it possible for us to make the dollars go farther. Secondly, we tailored the size of the advisement staff to the enrollment of the College. Because of the nature of University College, we were transferring students into the degree-granting units at the end of each quarter, and since the largest numbers of incoming students enter in the
autumn, it meant that the enrollment of the College declined from autumn to winter to spring. We therefore appointed a number of people on three-quarter time appointments in the autumn, and then dropped them to half time in either the winter or the spring, so that once again, we were making more efficient use of the dollars that were available to us.

Q. Were there similar colleges at other institutions that you sought to emulate, or was OSU’s University College considered a model?

A. I guess I don’t really know the answer to that. I know that there are a number of other universities that have something like University College. But we had not looked at those models in designing or in planning the work of our University College. We simply did what we thought was best to fulfill the mission that we had been given. And in point of fact, I think we were a model for a number of other universities. Virginia Gordon and I and some others in the College were from time to time invited to visit other university campuses to tell them what we were doing as they were considering how best to handle the task of the advisement of undergraduate students.

Q. To your knowledge, what was the relationship like between the OSU Administration and University College during your time, and even after so far as you know, and who were the College’s key supporters in University Administration, and was there particularly good support or lack thereof from the Office of Academic Affairs?

A. Well again, I think that the relationship between University College and OSU Administration varied over time, depending upon who was running the show in Central Administration. Very especially in the Office of the Provost. We had a series of Provosts during my years in University College. When I first came to the College, Jack
Corbally was Provost. He was a very strong Provost. He was one of those who helped to conceptualize University College and was therefore a very strong supporter of the College. We had a series of Provosts thereafter who had varying knowledge about University College, and varying opinions about University College. And so the fortunes of the College rose and fell, depending very largely I think on the sentiments of the Provosts.

Q. Were there any of the Presidents who took a particular interest in University College in your time, as opposed to the Office of Academic Affairs?

A. You know, I had the impression that President Enarson had a greater appreciation for University College than any of the other Presidents who were in that office during my tenure in University College. I don’t know the reason for that. But I think that Enarson understood what the College was about, and I think he was very supportive of the College. And I think it was probably during his Presidency that that University College kind of reached its zenith as an operating unit within the University.

Q. Were you aware of administrators and faculty, particularly faculty, who did not support the purposes of University College, and if so, what do you think caused their negative attitude? And did such attitude hinder the success and welfare of the College?

A. I certainly encountered faculty members from time to time who looked with disdain on University College. I think this was primarily out of ignorance, by which I mean they did not understand what the College was about. And it was so far removed from their interests that they simply had no respect for it. On one or two occasions I received anonymous disdainful letters from faculty people whom I would love to have been able to engage in conversation. It seemed to me highly unprofessional that they would write to
me anonymously, making absurd comments and charges to which I had no opportunity to respond because I did not know who had sent the letter. So yes, there was a certain pervasive lack of appreciation for University College, lack of understanding of what we were doing, and undoubtedly it did have some negative consequences.

Q. Presumably if people were writing anonymous negative commentary to you, it was also being written to upper administration at the same time or at least in parallel.

A. Perhaps, except those letters probably would not have been anonymous.

Q. I understand that you were in charge of hiring UVC graduate student advisors, instructors, advisors/instructors. What were their primary duties and what characteristics would you look for in the staff? And were you successful in filling positions with people who met your requirements?

A. Their duties were to do academic advisement along the lines of what I discussed some time ago, and to teach the UVC 100 course, which was really a way of doing group advising. Was I successful in filling vacancies, or were we successful in filling positions with people who met our requirements? I guess the honest answer would be: In varying degrees. Each year we would be employing probably in the range of 15 or 20 new advisors to fill the ranks of those who had left. Out of 15 or 20 people you would probably have eight or ten excellent appointees and about a similar number of pretty good ones. Occasionally—rarely, I would say—we would make a big mistake and there would be somebody who simply did not perform up to our expectations. We would try to work with that person, and if we did not see significant improvement we would determine not to reappoint him or her for a second year. In a very, very rare instance we might even terminate an appointee during the year.
Q. A seemingly frequent subject of discussion, which I certainly recall having heard from
time to time, was the debate between the values of fulltime professional advising staff
versus the part-time graduate student model that University College employed.

A. Yes. That was an ongoing discussion. To some extent how one came down on that is a
matter of budget. Clearly, if you are going to go out and employ fulltime professional
people to sit one-on-one with several thousand students, you need a large number of such
people. You need to pay them respectable professional salaries. You need to pay
benefits. And you’re paying them salaries that are presumably going to continue to rise
year after year after year. So purely as a budgetary matter I think it probably is not
feasible to expect to staff a large advisement program—at our peak we had something
like 14,000 or 15,000 students in University College—with fulltime professional people.
University College was a very, very large operation. However, I think one can make the
argument that even on ideological grounds it may well not be a good idea. I said before
that academic advisement is implicitly a faculty responsibility. If you look at the range of
faculty responsibilities, you can see that among people who become faculty members
because of their interest in ideas and research and teaching, you can find people who are
willing to spend their time, to focus their entire effort entirely on research. You can find
people who are willing to focus their entire effort on teaching. But how many faculty
people could you find who would be willing to spend their entire career in one on one
counseling? I doubt that you could find a large enough pool of highly qualified people to
create a truly effective staff. I think actually that the University College pattern, where
we found graduate students who are preparing for careers for the most part as professors,
worked remarkably well. They were people who were planning to spend their careers in
research and teaching. We looked for people with a good background of experience. We looked for people with an acceptable level of maturity. We looked for people who had experienced academic success. We looked very carefully at each candidate’s own academic record. We looked for people with some degree of life wisdom. We looked for young scholars who were willing, at this stage of their developing careers, to serve in this important role, and then we tried to give them the training and the supervision and the resources that they needed to do the job well. We succeeded in finding some excellent people to serve as advisement coordinators, and I think we put together a staff of fulltime professionals and part-time graduate associates that was able collectively to do a very, very effective job. So I make no apologies for the way we staffed that program, and I would not have supported the idea of a fulltime professional staff in University College..

Q. And, as you suggested, the budget probably would never have allowed for that direction to be taken in any event.

A. Probably so.

Q. I think you’ve answered these quantitative questions that follow, but let’s confirm. On average, how many students were enrolled in University College each year during your time? What did University College try mainly to provide these students? And how many curricular academic program areas were available for advisement purposes? And as an appended thought to that last question, who determined the number of academic program areas, curricular academic program areas, CAPS that would have advisement? I think you mentioned 19 or so? Why not 25? Why not 15?

A. Well, I think the number varied slightly, but my recollection is that the number of curricular academic programs was either 17 or 19 at its peak. And of course what we
tried to provide for them was all of the things that we’ve been talking about earlier here today. The number was determined mainly by the number of undergraduate degree programs into which such students could go. As we discussed advisement with, say, the College of Business, they preferred that we establish a single business curricular academic program within University College. So that is what we did. With respect to the College of Dentistry, there were in fact two different programs. There were students who were planning to become dentists and there were students who were planning on becoming dental hygienists, and those were two very different programs. So we had a curricular academic program for pre-dentistry, and these students actually went on from University College into arts and sciences. We had a separate curricular academic program for those who were planning on dental hygiene. So it was really a matter of fitting the program at University College to the degree options available in the respective degree-granting units.

Q. I think I heard you mention a number of students enrolled in University College in any given year as being above 10,000, maybe in the 13, 14, 15,000 ranges.

A. It may even have been above that.

Q. Since the average incoming classes of freshmen, even at their peak, were only 7 to 8,000, smaller now, what accounted for this virtual doubling of the freshman class number, which is what most people would assume are the enrollment bases for University College?

A. The principal cause was the slow progress of some students. Ideally, in most cases students would be ready to transfer into a degree-granting college by the end of their first year. But as we all know, not all students maintain that pace. Many students dropped or
failed courses. Thus they failed to make normal progress. We dismissed a lot of students from University College, and some of those students would later come back and seek reinstatement and we would sometimes reinstate them. So as years went by, there was a kind of accumulation of students in the College, many of who needed a great deal of help if they were going to succeed at the University. And of course many of them never did. They would eventually leave the University and go off and do something else.

Q. What was the response of first year and transfer students to the College program? Do you believe that the University College program greatly improved the undergraduate experience? And if so, in what ways?

A. The response was varied. Any time you are dealing with several thousand people you are going to have those who think you are wonderful, those who think you are just getting in their way, and a lot in between these two extremes. Did the University College program greatly improve the undergraduate experience? “Greatly” is a strong word, and I don’t want to make exaggerated claims. University College made a demonstrable difference in the lives of many students. University College contributed importantly to the retention of students. We did some studies three or four years into the life of the College looking at the dropout and flunkout rates of students before and after University College. There was a fairly dramatic difference that could not be easily attributed to anything except the fact that the College was giving students much more hands-on help than many incoming students had received previously. So I do think that the College made a significant contribution to the lives of many students.
Q. Okay. What part did University College play in organizing and presenting the Summer Orientation Program for incoming students and their parents, and how important do you believe this program was?

A. First of all, with respect to the importance, I think it was and is essential. I think that many students and their parents, as they anticipate the student coming to the University, do so with fear and trembling, because it’s a great big, scary, and potentially impersonal University. The function of the Student Orientation Program is, I think, to put a human face on the University, to humanize it for these students, and to start them down the road toward mastering the complexity of the University insofar as they need to and learning how to make the University work for them. So I think it’s very, very important.

University College’s role in that program originally was simply as one of the colleges in which new incoming undergraduate students were going to enroll. The responsibility for the orientation program originally rested with the Office of Student Affairs. I think it was probably in the spring of 1979 that a committee chaired by Professor Paul Yarrington of the College of Engineering reviewed the administrative placement of the orientation program and concluded that it ought to be with University College. So I think it was in 1979 or 1980—I may be wrong about the year—that University College became the administrative unit responsible for new undergraduate student orientation. Since that time, and until the dissolution of the College, the College supervised that program, planned it in consultation with the various degree-granting units, and in my opinion did an outstanding job. I think it ranks as one of the very finest achievements of University College.
Q. I can testify that having sent my son here in 1992, even though we were local and I knew the University very well and he to a degree, we went through the full program as parents and students. And it really was an outstanding program.

A. I’m glad to hear that.

Q. Were there any particular issues related to minority students, which you faced during your time as Associate Dean?

A. Yes, many. I got my baptism of fire in the spring and summer of 1968, when this campus erupted as did many campuses across this country, with demands from minority students for special privileges and special attention, feeling that they were not getting what they needed. I spent a couple of nights as a matter of fact as a night watchman in the building in which our offices were located. We took turns doing that because of the fear of arson. I was one of many faculty and administration members who were out mixing with students during those riots. As a matter of fact, I was personally taken prisoner by a group of students and was held against my will for three or four hours. I was not permitted to leave my office. The students simply came in and took over my office, though I don’t know what they hoped to accomplish by it. We engaged in conversation, and I must say I didn’t feel personally threatened by the situation. I didn’t feel that they were going to harm me physically. But the experience of being essentially kidnapped for a time was a bit unnerving to say the least. I mentioned that I helped to conceptualize and then administered the Higher Education Opportunity Program, which was a predecessor of what eventually became the program for minority students within University College run by Deans Watson and Stewart. There was another incident that comes to mind. We employed a significant number of minority students as academic
advisors in University College. In one case that I remember we had a very able but also a very angry young man, a black graduate student, who just created all kinds of problems. At the end of that year I recommended that he not be reappointed, and my recommendation was followed. I was then asked by some black students, “Why did you not reappoint so and so?” And the only answer I could give was that I as a matter of legality I could not discuss with you the reasons for this non-reappointment. “This person,” I said, “has a right to privacy on this matter and I simply cannot discuss his personnel file with you”—an answer that was taken by my questioners as evasion on my part. Soon thereafter, somebody broke into my office one night and the personnel file of this particular individual was removed from my files. Whoever stole it apparently read through it and, finding nothing incriminating, eventually returned it to me and I heard nothing more about the matter. So yes, there were a number of things. As you know, it was and remains a very difficult issue for the University to deal with. I think Ohio State has gone out of its way to be helpful to minority students. I think that there are a lot of success stories to tell, but we’ve also had our share of failures. That reflects the continuing problem of the role of minorities in our larger society.

Q. Was the transporting of students by bus to and from West Campus a major concern for University College, and do you have a point of view about the impact on the program resulting from the move of University College’s location from West Campus to central campus in 1988, even though you had departed by that time?

A. There is no doubt that the bussing of students to and from the campus was a problem. It was a great inconvenience for students, of course, and I’m sure that inconvenience resulted in their deciding not to see their advisor many times when they probably should
have. But in the other direction, it was a problem in that for those of us on West Campus it was very easy to simply live with our isolation out there and to not maintain a presence on central campus perhaps as much as we should have. The move to central campus was one that I strongly supported for both of those reasons. Unfortunately, it did not occur until several months after I retired. Thus I did not have any personal experience as to how well it worked, but I would have to speculate that there would have been improvement in both of those ways. The College was more accessible to its students and the central campus was more accessible to University College personnel as well.

Q. As a slight aside from there, we had our really best library, newest library facility on West Campus built as part of the original thought of building the West Campus learning resource center, which had state of the art equipment and the ability for students to re-listen to lectures they had missed and so forth and so on. And ironically because of the bussing inconvenience, while it was used reasonably well during the day, it was virtually empty on the nights and weekends and therefore lost its utility for all practical purposes. So when it closed down we really didn’t lose much in the way of a service point because it was not well patronized.

A. Right, I understand that.

Q. Relative to the UVC 100 course during your twenty years with the College, how was course content determined and please briefly describe the purposes and main content of the course.

A. It was determined very simply. We discussed together, I and other appropriate people in University College, what we were trying to accomplish with our students and which of these things could be most effectively accomplished in a course setting. We then
identified a number of topics that we wanted to discuss, and that became the outline of
the course. So we discussed such things as the idea of a liberal arts education, the
organization of the University. We had a very important unit on the University Libraries,
which was developed in consultation with Virginia Tiefel, who I believe was brought on
board specifically for library education, informing students about it.

Q. She was hired as undergraduate librarian but within the year made that transition, because
I decided we needed a specialist in that area. She took it on.

A. She was a wonderful person and highly professional and made an important contribution
to the content of the University College course. And I think by the same token
University College course served the library very well. Bear in mind that a group of
students in any given section of the University College course were students in the same
curricular academic program. So there would be, for example, one UVC-100 course for
business students, another for engineering students, and so on. Thus the course could
focus on the specific needs and interests of the students in a specific curricular academic
program. Representatives from the College of Business would be brought over to give
lectures on topics relevant to business students, engineering people to talk with pre-
engineering students, and so on. We also had a large group of undecided students and we
could therefore give focused attention to the specific needs of such students. So the
course was simply planned as part of the advisement program of University College.

Q. As you referred to earlier, it was a form of group advisement as opposed to one on one.

A. It was indeed.

Q. I understand that you were responsible for conceiving the University College Guidebook.
What was the basis for selecting the content for the Guidebook?
A. Let me say first that I was not unilaterally responsible for conceptualizing the Guidebook. That was done in consultation with the coordinators for academic advisement. I do remember the specific occasion. From time to time—once a year or so—we would have a staff retreat. The coordinators of advisement and I would get away from telephones and appointment books and we would spend half a day or perhaps a full day planning our work for the coming weeks and months. On this particular occasion I remember that we were meeting out on the back porch of my home on a beautiful spring day, and it was there that we hatched the idea of a Guidebook to serve as a textbook in our UVC 100 course. And that is what the Guidebook became.

Q. What year might that have been?

A. Oh, I think maybe in the middle 70’s or so. I couldn’t put a year on it.

Q. So prior to that time there was nothing equivalent to a text for the course.

A. The closest thing we had was a lot of handouts. We realized that we could do a better job if, instead of creating all of these handouts, we would create a single Guidebook and make it adaptable to all curricular academic programs. There were still handouts, of course, because there were some things that had to be tailored to a particular curricular academic program. The Guidebook contained the things that were common to all.

Q. Okay. What issues and discussions surrounded the ebb and flow of UVC 100 from a non-credit course, graded and ungraded, to a one-credit graded course. Did this change make a difference in student attitude toward the course, and to the attitude of advisors who taught the many course sections? And did the University administration take a position on the issue?
A. I think this is a non-issue. I think that given the way that the University is funded, it was assumed from the beginning that if University College taught the course, the orientation course, as all of the degree-granting units had prior to University College, that it would have to be a credit course. Because that’s how the University gets funded for instruction. So I don’t think this ever was a big issue. I think that as soon as we proposed this as a credit course, it became a credit course.

Q. If I may interrupt, at one time I think it was simply pass or fail. It wasn’t graded.

A. You may be right about that. I don’t remember that.

Q. Well, you should remember better than I.

A. To the best of my knowledge, from the beginning or almost from the beginning it was a credit course. And that was important, not least from the point of view of student perception, because to fail UVC 100 was to get an E on the record, as some students did. Some of them just ignored it and took the consequences. But it was also important with respect to funding. It was one of the ways that University College earned its keep.

Q. What would you count as major accomplishments during your 20 years time as Associate Dean, and what impact do you believe these accomplishments had on University College and its programs?

A. Well, I think that the most important accomplishment was my contribution to assembling an excellent staff. We had some very, very good people. I spoke earlier about the coordinators of academic advisement. We had in those roles people like Virginia Gordon, who developed a national reputation as an expert in the advising of undecided students, published books in that area, and was highly respected for her work; Sig Stokker, who came out of a background in agriculture and gave good leadership in the
areas of agriculture and engineering; Margo Voltz, who was a coordinator in the health area for a number of years; Fred Coggin from Arts and Sciences; Lance Shreffler became our coordinator in education; and Joe Weaver, who after Margo Voltz’ departure, became our coordinator in the health area. So the assembling of this truly outstanding staff of people is something of which I am very proud. They were excellent people and gave great leadership in their respective areas. With their help, we developed an advisement program that was a model. I think that our advisement program could be replicated with benefit in many, many universities in the country, and indeed has been replicated in some. I also think that what we did there had an impact on the advisement program in University College long after I left. I suppose the Guidebook would be a third thing that I might mention. But none of these things is my personal achievement. They are all things that were achieved in consultation with and in collaboration with my colleagues in University College and in some of the degree-granting units.

Q. By contrast, what were the major disappointments that you suffered during your time at University College? Perhaps goals unachieved or aspirations not fulfilled?

A. I guess that my principal disappointment during my years at the College have to do with the isolation of the College from the rest of the University and isolation from what was perceived as the academic mission of the University. At the time that I came to Ohio State, I had as a young scholar already published my first book. It was not my intention to turn my back on my academic interests, but I did find myself academically isolated at the University. My teaching field was philosophy. I was not offered a faculty appointment in the Department of Philosophy because it was assumed that University College was going to have its own faculty and its own instruction program and I would
have my faculty appointment there. Since that didn’t develop, I really did in fact become
an academic orphan at the University. That was not pleasant. I suppose a second
disappointment would be the fact that—partly, perhaps, because of its geographic
isolation—the College was not well understood or appreciated by the University faculty
or by the Deans of many of the other colleges. We were simply out there on the West
Campus doing nobody knew what. I think that lack of understanding and appreciation
probably is what eventually led to the demise of University College. Incidentally, I did
continue my academic pursuits notwithstanding this isolation. The book that I had
published prior to coming to Ohio State was an introductory textbook in philosophy that
was widely used nationwide, from Harvard on down to small colleges all over the
country. I published three editions of that book during my years in University College,
and I also published two other books. So I did in fact publish five books during my years
at University College, but that was simply because I was determined to stay alive
academically even though I found myself in a unit that was academically an orphan.

Q. Did you in the course of your time at Ohio State seek any affiliation with the Department
   of Philosophy?

A. I did not seek an affiliation. I did make efforts to stay in touch with the Department of
   Philosophy and I attended colloquia from time to time. I sent my colleagues in
   philosophy complimentary copies of my books so they would know that I existed. And
   as a matter of fact, after Diether Haenicke became Dean of Humanities he did in fact
   engineer a courtesy appointment in the Department of Philosophy.

Q. These next two questions I think you have answered in many respects, but let me pose
   them anyway in case you have additional thoughts or comments. What is your opinion of
the contribution and impact of University College over its 35 years of existence, and do you believe the influence of University College on the greater University will prove to be enduring?

A. With respect to the first question, I think that University College did have an enormous impact on many, many students. There are many students who owe their academic success, at least in part, to the special help that they got in University College. I think the College also had a significant and special impact on minority students. I think it was very helpful in recruiting minority students and through the programs instituted by Deans Watson and Stewart, I think it was very, very helpful in encouraging and assisting and retaining and helping toward graduation many students who otherwise would either not have come here or had they come here would have failed and been out of the system.

Q. Did University College have any official or unofficial relationship to the establishment and nurturing of the Young Scholars Program?

A. I’m not familiar with the program under that particular name. I did chair a committee that eventually developed the program for a National Merit Scholars at Ohio State

Q. This was different and perhaps largely occurred after your time. I’m very vague on timing. Dr. Jim Bishop was brought here to be the first Director and the Young Scholars Program was designed to reach down into the community at the middle school level through high school on a nurturing level and bring minority students along to the point where they would be quite comparable able students when they entered the University. So I guess University College was not part of that.

A. The answer is I don’t know if University College was. It was not a part of that during the time I was there.
Q. Please give us your opinion on the decision to close University College at the end of fiscal 2001. The closure was apparently a Provostial decision, which did not have much, if any, discussion among academic constituencies including Faculty Council and University Senate. Do you have insights into what factors and issues caused the OSU administration to eliminate the College?

A. As you know, I retired in 1987. I had been away from the University a very long time before this decision was made and I was not at all involved in the process. If, as you say, it was a Provostial decision, I just don’t think that’s the right way to make decisions like this. But I suspect that had the Provost in fact made a recommendation to the Faculty Council and University Senate, they might well have supported that proposal. As I said earlier, I think the function of the College was not well understood or appreciated University-wide. I think that what was lost was a certain focus on the needs of the newest and youngest students at the University. I think that University College focused very well on that. I think the College did an effective job and I do regard it as unfortunate that the decision was made. And I will predict that sometime within the next ten years or so something like University College will be recreated at Ohio State. It will be recommended and put forward as an exciting new idea that can contribute markedly to the success of undergraduate students.

Q. That more or less leads into the next couple of questions but as a digression I would observe that I was already retired myself when this decision was taken. And it may have had the consultation of the Deans Council, but beyond that, I think it’s fair to call it a virtual unilateral decision on the part of the Provost, which of course did not incur any
great opposition. And who will carry out the College’s function and fulfill its mission, especially advising? The individual colleges? And with the loss of the UVC 100 course?

A. Well first, insofar as the functions of the College will be carried out, they will have to carry out by the individual colleges. Some of them I’m sure will do an excellent job. Others will do a less excellent job. Some units will regard advisement as a high priority and will give it the resources and the people that it needs, others will not. With respect to the loss of the UVC 100 course, one loses what could be called one of the few common experiences of new incoming students. This is somewhat facetious, but I would say it was one of two common experiences of incoming students. One was to go to a football game together, the other was the UVC 100 course. It was the one course that all incoming students were required to take. It was not always a positive experience for them, to be sure, but it was a place where all incoming students were required to think about what it means to pursue a baccalaureate degree. How is that different from trade school? How is it different from job training? As recently as a month ago, I received a request from someone teaching a similar course in the OSU College of Business for permission to re-print a chapter from our Guidebook, a chapter that I had written called “The Idea of Liberal Arts.” I think that’s the title of it. That at least was the substance of it. And I was of course very happy to think, “Well, there’s at least one college that is trying to address the issue of the idea of the liberal arts.” As somebody who came out of Humanities, someone who spent part of his career at a small private liberal arts college, I deplore the waning of the liberal arts within the modern university. I think that University College was able to make a positive contribution in that area, and I think that
in many of the degree-granting colleges that will now be teaching their incoming
students, that is indeed lost.

Q. It will be very interesting to await the possible outcome of your prediction that University
College will be reinvented, perhaps by a cadre of administration that knew nothing of this
predecessor.

Q. What issues and circumstances led to your decision to take early retirement in 1987?

A. In large part it relates to what I said earlier about the academic isolation of University
College. By the time I retired, I had developed a very serious interest in what had been a
latent academic interest throughout my life. Because of my family background I had a
life-long interest in Norwegian language and culture. I was able to read Norwegian and
had a special interest in Norwegian music. And by the time of my retirement, I was
depthly involved in the translation of a wonderful biography of Norwegian composer
Edvard Grieg, a book that was published the year after I retired by University of
Nebraska Press. That book, by the way, remains to this day the definitive biography of
Edvard Grieg. And I simply wanted to be able to spend more time on my developing
interest in that area of academia without the distraction of a full-time job that had nothing
to do with it. So when the University offered me early retirement, when that program
became available, and it became financially feasible for me to retire, I did.

Q. Any other information and opinions about University College that you would like to
share with us that have not already been addressed?

A. No, I think we’ve pretty well covered the subject. I think that University College made
an important contribution during its 35 years, and all things considered I think it’s
unfortunate that the College was closed down. And as I said, I predict that sometime in
the future—if not in ten years, then certainly within twenty—something like University College will be recreated, and hopefully what we did during these years will serve as something of a model for what might be done again in the future.

Q. If I were betting on it I’d have to take a bet on the odds of that coming to pass.

A. On which side?

Q. I think you’ve commented on what’s occupied you intensively since your retirement in 1987, and I congratulate you on that work. And we thank you very much for the generosity of your time and attention in participating in this interview. I’m sure it will be of serious interest to future researchers of University College history. It is at this moment in our Oral History Program the only focus on the history of a College as opposed to the career of individuals and their observations about the greater University. Insofar as the College will become of future interest again, I suspect that these interviews by all of the principals basically, except for the founding Dean, will prove to be of serious interest.

A. Well thank you, I hope so. It’s been my pleasure to talk to you today and I look forward to reading the testimony of some of my colleagues who have also commented on the history of University College.

Q. Thank you.