

KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH EDWIN A. RUGG

CONDUCTED BY THOMAS A. SCOTT

EDITED BY LAURENCE STACEY AND THOMAS A. SCOTT

INDEXED BY THOMAS A. SCOTT

for the

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Interview with Edwin A. Rugg

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Part 1: Wednesday, 5 November 2008; and Friday, 7 November 2008

Location for Part 1: Dr. Rugg's Town Point office

Part 1A: Wednesday, 5 November 2008

TS: Ed, we start with everybody just asking to talk a little bit about their background of where you grew up and where you went to school and some things like that.

ER: I don't know how far back you want to go. [laughter]

TS: As far back as you can remember, I guess.

ER: I was actually born in New Jersey, but I didn't live there very long, a total of eight years. My father moved the family out to Arizona after he returned from World War II, Pacific Theater. He loved that part of the country, and so we literally packed up in a truck with all our worldly possessions and moved out to Arizona, leaving all of [the rest of] our family in New Jersey.

TS: The family roots are in New Jersey?

ER: The family roots are in New Jersey. Not too many members of the family still have roots in New Jersey. New Jersey is, I like to say, a great place to be from, especially in that northern area near the New York metroplex there.

TS: What's your father's name?

ER: Harry Rugg. He unfortunately passed away when I was twelve—eight years later at the age of thirty-six. My grandparents promptly bundled us up and brought us back to New Jersey.

TS: So you went to Arizona until you were twelve? How old were you when you moved to Arizona?

ER: Four.

TS: When he came home from World War II—you were maybe a few years older than I thought you were, but what year were you born?

ER: I was born in '49.

TS: When you say he came home from World War II . . .

ER: He was on some of the last missions, B-29 bombers; he actually ferried folks back after Japan surrendered.

TS: So he stayed in the military a few years after the War?

ER: No, but he had quite a story of [his time in] the Pacific; I think he was shot down two or three times.

TS: Really? In a B-29?

ER: B-29. It was a tough battle. Unfortunately, we grew up in Arizona, but didn't really have an opportunity to really get to know my father as well as we could have. He got out to Arizona, and a buddy of his and he were planning on going into business together, but it turned out they didn't, so he ended up getting a job with Goodyear Aircraft starting on the floor as a machinist and working his way up to supervisor. He always took night shifts to earn a little extra money, and, of course, when Goodyear Aircraft was doing well we had two cars, and when they weren't, we sold one and scrimped a bit. He was quite a mechanic and quite a builder: he built an addition to the house, which was his workshop, a twenty-five by twenty-five foot workshop. It had work benches, and I learned tools of the trade, so to speak. My [middle] brother is probably the most mechanically inclined of the three of us; he's actually used that skill set throughout his career. I'm a Mr. Fix-It, but I'm not the mechanic that he was. At any rate, we moved back to New Jersey.

TS: This would be '61 maybe if you were twelve?

ER: Yes. It was culture shock because I was used to riding my bike to school. It was one of those suburban neighborhoods in Phoenix that was new and out in the desert almost, twenty minutes from downtown. I've been back to the home place, and it's now in the middle of Phoenix [laughter].

TS: It's grown quite a bit over the years!

ER: Quite a bit. I moved from an environment that was extremely reminiscent of life in the 1950s and all those great TV shows of the 1950s.

TS: *Leave It to Beaver.*

ER: All that good stuff, that homey stuff. I moved to New Jersey where if you didn't wear pointed shoes and Brylcreem on your hair and look cool you were in trouble because *West Side Story* was alive and well, and gangs and switchblades and all that stuff was just the nature of the environment. It's a pretty scary place actually.

TS: It's a little bit colder in New Jersey.

ER: A lot colder. I discovered what snow was, and how long it stays on the ground, and how it turns from white to black over a period of time.

TS: So your mother takes you back to live with your grandparents, her parents.

ER: Her parents.

TS: What's your mother's name?

ER: Betty Rugg. Elizabeth. She also passed away several years ago, but did live into her seventies. We moved back, and she remarried after about three years of life in New Jersey. It was a good time in the sense of learning about my grandparents because we lived down the street from them literally two blocks away, and I saw them every night and played horse shoes with my grandfather and got beaten every night [laughter]. He had a garden, and we would garden, and he also had a little workshop, so I kept going with the home repairs and all that good stuff. I worked my way through scouting at the local church, the Reform Church of Linden, and basically . . .

TS: Is the Reform Church Dutch?

ER: It's Dutch, yes. It's a Dutch extraction, Congregationalist, Protestant, Presbyterian connection. It was a very fine church, very close-knit kind of community there, and I had a great scoutmaster. I worked my way through Eagle Scout while I was under his tutelage. It was really interesting because the night my father died he had agreed to become the scoutmaster of our troop in Arizona.

TS: Your father?

ER: My father. He passed away that night of a heart attack about two in the morning. So to go and find two other father figures, one my grandfather and the other my scoutmaster, was neat.

TS: What's your grandfather's name?

ER: Leroy Houlroyd.

TS: And the scoutmaster?

ER: I wish I could remember his name, but I can't off the top of my head.

TS: That's okay.

ER: Those are good experiences. My mother remarried, we moved to Florida to start a new life together. We lived in Boynton Beach over in the southwest Palm Beach area and bought a house there, and it was more like what we had been accustomed to in Arizona in terms of neighborhoods and schools and an environment that was much safer [laughter].

If you know anything about the northeast, the infrastructure has a lot of history, a lot of age on it, a lot more congestion; even the nature of people's dispositions is a little tighter than it is certainly in the South and certainly than it was out in the Arizona west. You run into cultural differences that are really pretty interesting.

TS: So you were glad to get to Florida.

ER: I think so. A lot more sun, a lot less smog. Of course, we were near the ocean and generally enjoyed that area quite a bit. I got connected literally with a Presbyterian church just up the street from where our house was, so we got engaged there. At the point of high school graduation I was thinking of two career paths: one was the ministry and one was accounting. I'd always had an interest in numbers.

TS: Ministers have to keep the books of their churches.

ER: Well, that's true too. Good ones do anyway.

TS: So ministry or accounting.

ER: Yes. And I guess Florida Presbyterian developed out of my interest in the ministry because we were Presbyterian and that was a fairly . . .

TS: It wasn't called Eckerd College back then was it?

ER: It was Florida Presbyterian College back then.

TS: Florida Presbyterian. Then they got a lot of money from the drug store?

ER: [Jack] Eckerd gave them \$10 million, pulled them out of the ditch, and they changed their name. It was a very fine school. It was one of those new-age places that developed in the late 1950s or mid-1960s roughly; it was a four-one-four model. They really brought in a talented faculty.

TS: You had one January . . .

ER: We had winter, January winter term.

TS: One-month time you can do a lot of studies abroad and that kind of stuff.

ER: Exactly. And we had a four-year General Ed curriculum, and it was interdisciplinary. So we were constantly engaged in readings and discussions with faculty across the entire campus.

TS: How big was the school back then?

ER: Only twelve hundred, and everybody lived on campus; it was all basically traditional students, full-time, nobody could have a car [laughter]. You're at the end of the peninsula in St. Pete, so you're literally right on the water, but it was hard to get to anywhere unless you were up to riding your bike a very long distance. Of course, St. Pete has grown up around it so much more in recent times, but it still maintains that small college, liberal arts college feel. It was an interesting place; I thoroughly enjoyed it; I was challenged by the faculty and my curriculum. It's more rigorous than many places; I had friends who partied a lot more than we did! I had a work study the first year which involved building and grounds, so I was cutting grass and picking sand spurs out of my socks all the time, pretty dusty. The last three years I lucked out. I was in charge of the boat dock because in the summertime I would go to a YMCA camp in Lake Placid, Florida and work in the summers on the waterfront typically. I started as a kitchen aide out of high school, but ended up learning how to sail and ski.

TS: So you were a counselor at camp all summer long.

ER: Yes, they sent me off to WSI School.

TS: What's WSI?

ER: Water Safety Instructor. I ultimately became a swim director and then a waterfront director and managed the skiing, sailing and swimming programs. I had that background and that interest, and so when I had this opportunity emerge at FPC to, in essence, take over responsibility for the boat dock—we had sailing, we had canoes and it was part of the PE program as well as the recreational program—I grabbed it. For three years I was in charge of the boat dock, and my roommate and I were both working there as work study students. Once small craft warnings formed, we'd go up and we'd take a little sloop out and enjoy the high winds on the bay! [laughter]

TS: You graduated from there in '71.

ER: Right. I actually met my wife there, my current and only wife of thirty-eight years now. Sharon Rock was her name back then, from Rome, Georgia. She had gone down there a year before I did, and we met I guess my sophomore year and married after she graduated, but a semester before I graduated. I graduated a half year ahead of schedule because I had done some extra summer work. Since she was ahead of me by a year I didn't want to make it a whole year distance. We married right before my last semester. We rented a little one-bedroom, two-story cottage three blocks from the college. It was a delightful place; we don't know how the basketball player who lived there before us managed because everything was built for our size and height but not for his! [laughter] It wouldn't have worked for you, Tom! It was a little turn around kind of place, but pretty—it was furnished—so we had basically everything we needed.

TS: What was your degree in?

ER: I took a degree in psychology and sociology as a double major.

TS: I noticed in the catalog they had it listed as a BA.

ER: It was a BA degree.

TS: So psychology and sociology even though social sciences, were a BA degree?

ER: In a liberal arts college that's more typical. At Kennesaw we had both for a while, and the only difference was a language requirement. I guess during the semester conversion they elected to go the BS route. In a more traditional, liberal arts environment, all those would have been BA areas of study.

TS: Are you still thinking ministry at this point?

ER: No, actually what happened is I began taking World Religion courses and discovered that Christianity might not have the market cornered!

TS: You got interested in comparative religions.

ER: I did. I got interested in both the similarities and the differences, but the fact that there were other faiths that had as much if not more history and had some appealing aspects—that caused me to question the degree to which I could only be an advocate for one branch of religious faith. I had picked psychology in part because I thought it would be appropriate if I were to go to seminary, and obviously I was too far along at that point to change my mind and was enjoying especially the mix of sociology and psychology from a research perspective. I actually had a research paper that I worked with an experimental psychologist on during my junior year that actually got published. I was intrigued by the research side, and I was also intrigued by the degree of difference of how sociologists view the world and the kinds of data analysis they did versus the way in which the psychologists did.

TS: Big difference.

ER: Very big difference. You'd think that both of them being social sciences they would be more aligned with one another, and yet the world views are so different, and the ways in which they approach understanding are rather different.

TS: Any mentors at Eckerd College that had an influence on you?

ER: You know, we had a lot of faculty; there's not one that I can pick.

TS: It's the institution in general?

ER: Yes. A Dr. West who was a clinical psychologist—probably I did more with some of his work; I didn't do a study abroad although going to California almost counts [laughter]. It was during the age of humanistic psychology.

TS: Oh, yes, we're talking hippie age.

ER: Hippie age. He was on sabbatical, but he brought a group over during the winter term to look at humanistic psychology, and we met with some of the key players in the field at that time in Palo Alto and went to Big Sur and enjoyed the baths on the mountainside and worked at Haight-Ashbury Medical clinic which had gotten pretty hard-core.

TS: That's where all the hippies hung out—Haight-Ashbury.

ER: Right. It was eye-opening again, another culture shock, if you will.

TS: Was your hair as short then as it is today?

ER: Yes. I didn't go into the full-blown '60s look. Yes, I was probably . . .

TS: You probably stood out in San Francisco.

ER: In San Francisco, not at FPC [laughter]. I mean, it was a pretty liberal church-related college.

TS: As church-related colleges go.

ER: As church related colleges go, right. It was not Berkeley, clearly not to that extreme. But it was eye opening in a lot of ways about an interest and branch of psychology, one that I didn't pursue really, but you do get immersed in all of that kind of interest.

TS: How do you get to Peabody?

ER: I was looking for a program that might blend my research interests in psychology in the social-developmental area in particular, and Peabody was one of those places. To be honest with you, there probably were better places, although it worked out very fine. At Peabody there were two big program thrusts, if you will—one was psychology and the other was education. Peabody's history was as a center for educating teachers, but over the years the Psych department working closely with Special Ed had brought in three or four million dollars worth of research money [each year].

TS: Which was a lot back then.

ER: It was a lot of money back then. They built two buildings during the 1960s called the Kennedy Center for Human Development using federal money, so they had these two state of the art buildings sitting on this historic campus and these are contemporary buildings.

TS: The Kennedy Center was named for President Kennedy?

ER: Yes.

TS: So it's not philanthropic money; it's all federal?

ER: It was all federally supported largely. Again, they brought in all these other dollars for grants and contracts. In fact, half the faculty in Psych were on soft money. That too was a bit of a culture shock; in fact I'll admit to the fact that I almost left after one year of graduate study there because teaching was not central at Peabody—this is interesting, a college for teachers where teaching is not central.

TS: Really? Research was central?

ER: When half of your faculty is on soft money, you do or die.

TS: And soft money basically means they're grants.

ER: Right. If one person's grant falls, then they have to be pulled back onto hard money, which means somebody has to pick up the slack with a new grant, so the whole department had an understanding that they'd work with you from highs to lows, but number one priority was grant money acquisition. So research and grant getting were the principal concerns. I had some of the best faculty I've ever encountered in my higher education. In fact, my major professor, Ray Norris, was one of those who was one of the best. In fact, he's probably more influential in my going even deeper into the Ed research and Ed stat and research method side; his background was as an educational researcher, heavy into the stat side, and he was an excellent teacher in that area, but was old school. He was pre-computer, so in his line of thinking we really had to know the formulas; we had to know the calculations; accuracy in your derivations; the bottom line numbers were critical.

TS: Of course, "computers" back then was going to a big lab and running a bunch of punch cards through a machine.

ER: Exactly. We had teletype before that, but . . . yes, we had punch cards and you literally did go and run it in batch process mode at the central site. He didn't know anything about that, so he didn't use those techniques and those tools in his classes, and I had to acquire those. In fact, as I moved into the teaching of statistics, I took a turn from where he would have taken me and said, "I've spent all this time learning how to calculate these statistics," and was constantly bombarded with colleagues who needed help on understanding why they were doing certain things or when to do certain things, how to interpret certain results because we spent so little time talking about those bigger issues. We were so concentrated on the mechanics of doing it.

TS: Yes, it was not applied statistics.

ER: No. I said, "What we're going to do in my class is I'm going to give you word problems, you're going to have to solve the issues of when do you use what test and why and how,

if you see these kind of results what do they mean, and how do you interpret the findings. If I give you a set of printouts, you interpret them for me. Because in the real world of the new technology you're not going to be hand cranking this data any more if you're smart! You're going to let the computer do the heavy lifting on that, and you're going to focus instead on the bigger picture." I was proud, frankly, of the fact that I would have students come up to me after the classes were over, saying, "I had great trepidation about taking stat, I wanted to just get through this class and be done with it, and I really saw some utility here. The light-bulb went off for me. I'm interested in taking another course"—that kind of thing. To me that was a special accomplishment.

TS: How long were you there before you were actually teaching your own classes?

ER: Well, I was teaching right before I got my doctorate, so in typical fashion, post-master's prior to the doctoral completion. I earned my doctorate in '75. I had actually started working full-time with them [Peabody] prior to the completion of my doctorate; they were up for NCATE and SACS re-accreditation, and they approached Ray Norris, my major professor, and said, "Do you have anybody who can help us with number crunching and analyses and write-ups on our accreditation reports?" He put them on to me, and I gladly took them up on it. Initially it was just a graduate research assistant type or role. We got a new president in. He liked what I had been doing on the SACS and NCATE projects and hired me full-time, prior to my doctorate, to be Coordinator of Management Information. That was a new role there to try to facilitate informative decision-making based on numbers and analysis.

TS: How independent—I know Peabody was like the education college for Vanderbilt by that time, but at one time it was separate wasn't it?

ER: Peabody was still separate at that point. It had been separate for over 100 years. Vandy had never established a College of Ed because Peabody was across the street, and they had a joint enrollment arrangement. You know we had a joint university Ed library. We had cross registration, and that was routine.

TS: Right. So your diploma when you get your doctorate, does it say Vanderbilt or does it say Peabody?

ER: I got my doctorate in '75, and we merged in '79. My actual diploma says Peabody. Today it's Peabody College of Education and Human Development, Vanderbilt, and it is their College of Ed since they didn't have one.

TS: Right.

ER: I stayed on with them after that in that role. We got a new dean comparable to our vice president for academic affairs—a chief academic officer and a history colleague who had come out of the state system. But he had had Peabody roots as well, so he was really coming home to his alma mater and hoping to finish out his career at Peabody and did in fact do that. Much of what I was doing was academic-support-oriented, and he was

looking for an assistant, assistant dean basically. I was teaching in Education areas mainly in the Stat area. I was also juggling administrative positions. I worked right up through the merger with him.

TS: So you're there until '79?

ER: I was there till '79. I was there through all the trials and tribulations of the merger, and that was another eye-opener and a good lesson for what happens to institutions who run their course, so to speak, and haven't planned to transform themselves with the times. Peabody had an incredibly rich history of contributions to bringing education to the South, but had failed to endow itself properly.

TS: Oh, so they had to merge.

ER: They really did. They had only ten million left in the bank for their endowments after over one hundred years of history.

TS: This all starts with George Peabody giving them a lot of money one hundred years earlier, obviously.

ER: Right, the late 1800s, around 1875, somewhere in there. But yes, George Peabody gave the money to get it started; back then it was plenty of money to endow the place . . .

TS: But they didn't grow that.

ER: They didn't grow it, and so to have over one hundred years of history and only \$10 million in the bank . . . when frankly the administration was burning it at \$2 million a year. In the private sector your sources of revenue are limited, and the interest from an endowment is one. If you can't make ends meet, then you sometimes get your board to approve the use of capital, which can get really tricky if those were restricted funds in terms of what the original intent of the donors was. It's one thing to release funds that are not restricted but were invested for the long term; it's another to start taking money that was given for a purpose and changing its purpose. But, anyway, they were at a place where he [the new president] had mounted the first major capital campaign of \$40 million. He was half way through that campaign and only raised \$8 to \$10 million. He knew that he wasn't going to make forty, and as soon as he made forty he would have to turn it around and double that probably. He was the third Peabody president that came to the same conclusion that Peabody needed to merge or go out of business. Vandy was the natural partner. And in the previous two presidencies, the board chair won that argument and dismissed the president. In this case the board dismissed the board chair, because they too thought that this particular president had done everything that was humanly possible to pull it out.

TS: If he couldn't raise it nobody could.

ER: If he couldn't do it nobody could. It was apparent that three independent presidents coming to the same conclusion—there should be a message there. It was probably time for the board chair of long standing to give up his seat instead of the president. The downside is that had Peabody merged with Vandy years earlier, it probably would have been taken lock, stock and barrel. But in '79, Vanderbilt was going through retrenchment for the first time in its history. It was a bad time for education

TS: That was a double-digit inflation period.

ER: It was a time of great turmoil.

TS: Unemployment was high.

ER: Yes. So when our president went across the street and talked to their president . . .

TS: And the baby boomers had kind of played out by that time too.

ER: Right. But the gist of it was he came back and reported that they [Vandy's president] only wanted about twelve of our 120 faculty, and they wanted the sixty acres; they wanted the ten million, and they just wanted to create a policy institute.

TS: Twelve of the faculty.

ER: He [Peabody's president] said, "If we want to go out of business, we'll just spend the ten million for the next five years, and shut the door." But we were really interested in seeing some kind of preservation of what it is, of the mission in a more substantial way than a doctoral program in a policy institute and hardly anybody left.

TS: That's all Vanderbilt was interested in was the doctoral program?

ER: Well, they weren't even interested in all of it. They were interested in a doctoral program possibly in educational policy. It turned out, they came to a compromise, but what triggered the compromise was that we started negotiating with other institutions. The one that came closest to actually coming to pass was the merger with Tennessee State University, a public, historically black institution, in Nashville. The Board of Regents were already expecting the court ordered merger of UTN campus, the downtown Nashville branch of the University of Tennessee to be merged with Tennessee State, and we were going to be coming in to bring a second campus and a different mix of students and doctoral programs, which they didn't have. The Board of Regents were ready to, in essence, make this new Tennessee State University their flagship. The UT system has its own board.

TS: Yes, I guess in Tennessee you've got, it seems like there are five institutions in the University of Tennessee and then a separate board for all the state colleges and universities.

ER: Exactly. They were willing to, in essence, back off of MTSU in Murfreesboro and even back off of their focus on Memphis and turn instead to Nashville, which is the capital and which didn't have a [comprehensive] state institution in the center of town, so to speak.

TS: That could have been an intriguing merger.

ER: It was, and frankly it had been approved by the Board of Regents. A hundred percent of the [Peabody] faculty had jobs. They probably all would have gotten salary increases because our salaries were so low. The tuition would have dropped from \$125 an hour to \$25 an hour, and we would have been back in the historical business of serving educational professionals.

TS: So you all liked that idea then.

ER: We did. I mean, the president, the administration at Tennessee State were going to be in charge, and everybody understood that, and so obviously our president wasn't going to be president. He was going to be a dean or possibly move on, but it was a very attractive arrangement. It was to go to the Peabody board on Monday, and the Sunday night before the Monday board meeting, the Vandy board chair and the Peabody board chair cut a deal. The deal was to take seventy-something faculty, but to let forty-six go, twenty-six with tenure, some of them with thirty years of service. It had to be done before the merger, so that responsibility was Peabody's.

TS: To let them go?

ER: Yes, and to handle whatever fallout came from it. But that was a tough deal. It had all kinds of lawyers involved in negotiations and marches on the administration building, and, I mean, it was not as attractive a deal as the Tennessee State deal.

TS: Right. So why did the Peabody board like that deal better?

ER: Well, it's long-term history. You have to remember too, not only did we have joint enrollment and joint registration or cross registration, we had an agreement with the NCAA that Peabody students could play in Vanderbilt football teams and basketball teams. We had the PE program; we had the education majors; so sometimes as many as half of the Vandy teams were from Peabody. The joke in the SEC was, "Here comes Peabilt-Vanderbody." [laughter]

TS: I can imagine too, I guess the board for Peabody was probably a self-sustaining board.

ER: A lot of long term ties; there were a lot of assumptions that the two institutions would always formally merge; they were complementary all those years, they were cooperative all those years, so for all kinds of reasons they wanted to go that way. It was just unfortunate that the timing was such that when Peabody was finally ready, Vandy wasn't, for the merger. Like I said, had it occurred several years earlier, it probably would have

been a very smooth and complete acquisition rather than this severance of half the body almost.

TS: So they took the elitist approach instead of what could have been a very democratic approach for the college.

ER: Yes, but it was an interesting decision because typically they would not bring over faculty that were duplicative, so we only had a couple of historians who lost their positions, some with long service, almost too late in their career to go anywhere and too young to retire. A place that big could have absorbed a couple more historians, but it was the principle of it; it got down to, "Well, we said twelve and now we're taking seventy, we're just not going to take everybody." They had a Psych department, but they didn't have one like ours with the three million in grants and contracts and the Kennedy Center buildings, so they took this Human Development group that's allied heavily with Education and Special Ed in particular. It was all part of the mental retardation research interest back in the 1960s, so it was heavy in that area. They thought that that was a different enough department that they could bring it over, but not the others.

TS: Right. It was a great experience for you though for your future career.

ER: It was a good experience, it was a trial by fire, and, like I said, I learned a lot about higher education and what happens. The NCATE and SACS reviews gave me the big picture view of the institution, but then seeing what happens historically to institutions . . . I was expected to stay and help in the transition, and frankly I was interested in moving on at this point.

TS: This is when you get to Ole Miss?

ER: I went down to Ole Miss. I got into the Educational Administration department down there, teaching stat and research methods.

TS: So you were full time teaching at Ole Miss?

ER: I actually had some administrative responsibilities also in institutional research and planning, so I was still working there, but also teaching. It served me well; I've discovered that public institutions aren't too far behind the private institutions. I don't know what you know about Ole Miss, but it's had a hard time crossing the 10,000 student mark, and I think it might still be hovering in the 12,000 level.

TS: I was surprised when I checked, a few years ago. I think it was a little higher than that, but they were less than Kennesaw.

ER: Oh, yes. When I left there three years later every average faculty salary in academic ranks at Ole Miss was lower than they were at Kennesaw, and they had doctoral programs and a law school.

TS: Is that right? Wow.

ER: It's a state where they have two million people and eight doctoral granting institutions. Nobody was that big; Mississippi State wasn't too much bigger. The fastest growing was [the University of] Southern [Mississippi] where all the people lived down between the coast and Jackson. In fact, it was so challenging that because Memphis had grown up, Memphis State, the University of Memphis had taken over that trade.

TS: That's what I was thinking; a lot of students from the northern part of Mississippi probably go to the University of Memphis as their local school.

ER: Right, but in the old days, Ole Miss was the place where those folks went. It's only seventy miles from Memphis, but we're three and a half hours from Jackson. We only had two [football] games that were played in Oxford every year; the rest were played in Jackson where the legislature was and where all the people are. There were interesting dynamics operating in this historic institution. They still had trouble recovering from the [James] Meredith desegregation flap [1962]. They were having a hard time mounting competitive teams in part because of the image they had.

TS: They couldn't recruit?

ER: We had, I think, a much better environment than we were given credit for, but it was the history; it was still calling the shots on whether Ole Miss was the right place to go. Frankly, we encountered some first-hand experience with that. It was interesting when we left Nashville. I got interviewed for the position, and I was offered the position the same day I got interviewed. We stayed a few extra days to look around for houses and things and found a property that would work for us; there were only twelve that we could look at that were in our financial area. We had made a pretty good equity gain on our house in Nashville in three years, and there weren't too many houses that we could avoid capital gains on in Mississippi. They showed us one more. They said, "It's kind of far out, but you might like it." So in ten minutes we're there, and it's a twelve year old ranch, four bedroom house on a two-acre lot. It backed up to a national forest, big Redwood deck out back; you could see deer in your backyard; and because you're off the two-lane on a little gravel road you had six neighbors, but you couldn't even see them from your house. So it was very peaceful, very serene, and we took it, and it turned out to be owned by the fellow whose job I took. [laughter] Small town, small world. Three years later with the '82 recession we tried to sell it, and there were two hundred homes on the market and 35 percent unemployment, and that's when interest rates were in the teens. People would come out and look at it and say, "Gee, this is a beautiful place; you've done so much work on it; it's in great shape; but you're just so far from the square; you're too far out in the country; you're five miles from the square." By our standards it was nothing, but by Oxford's standards, you're pretty far out in the country. But the good side of the small town experience was the people were so accommodating. The moving company in Oxford actually brought empty trucks up to Nashville, loaded us up, and brought us back the same day, and it was cheaper than taking a one-way van to move us. The bank had our deal cut for the mortgage in ten days because the vice

president was the loan manager, and she called the shot anyway, and I was working at the university, so it must be fine. You go into the square, and you're insurance man is on one corner and your utilities are on another corner, your bank is down below, and everything is done in close to an hour or two.

TS: So why did you leave a place like that?

ER: Well, we encountered some of why that institution is called Ole Miss. Sharon didn't have a position when we went there; she had her master's and lots of experience. I guess she had been in the field of social work for at least seven or eight years by then, and an opening [occurred] in the Social Work department. A faculty member was going off to work on her doctorate, and Sharon had a lot of good credentials, so they hired her on a temporary appointment. She taught for two years, and there was an opening. The colleague was coming back, but there was a new position, and she goes down to the short list, she and one other fellow. The other fellow had been through a one-year program and had maybe one or two years of experience and no background in teaching or anything else, but it was a male-dominated department, and she was told point blank, not only by her chair, but also by some of her colleagues that he was the primary bread winner in the family and needed the job more than she did. Since I was already employed at the university, they could continue to use her on a part-time basis. So I'm sitting there shaking my head saying, "This isn't even legal!" [laughter] Where are we?

TS: This is 1982.

ER: Which decade is this?

TS: Right.

ER: Ironically, as she scouted the territory around town, she ran into some old ways of thinking. She did get a job with one of the local mental health centers that was headed by a woman, interestingly enough, but some of the men she met on other opportunities would give her the good ole boy treatment, and this was part of the culture still. That time had really passed this area by. For all the pluses of the area, it was a downer. The other downer, frankly, is I began to realize that the university seemed to be struggling. It had been in the mines so long, the easy ore was out. You can't get a non-traditional student very easily. They have to commute for hours at a time, and all my graduate courses were taught at night [to accommodate them].

TS: Right. Nobody lives near Oxford.

ER: No. Ten thousand people in Oxford, and nobody lives near it. Those who were dedicated enough to drive one or two hours up there participated, but it was a struggle. We had competitors. Southern was more convenient, and they were booming and developing and growing. This was an institution that was struggling, and we went through our retrenchments. Because they had been birthed at a much earlier time, arts and sciences were well healed and well established, and the institution was being pressed

to feed some of these more professionally interested areas. Students were interested in business and engineering, and a lot of areas needed some pretty big bucks to make it work. How do you reallocate resources when you've already allocated so much one way, and you've got a new demand growing in another area? It was reminiscent of Peabody days, but in the public sector. It didn't ever get to the state of merger or going out of business, but it was challenging.

TS: How did you hear about Kennesaw?

ER: Interesting story. A colleague of mine from Peabody days who had also left Peabody after the merger and ended up at Kent State called me one day and said, "We just had this woman up to talk to [my] College of Ed, Betty [L.] Siegel. She's just become president of this college in the Atlanta area. Isn't your wife from Georgia somewhere?" [laughter] I said, "Yes, that's right." Literally based on that phone call, I looked into it and applied, and it was interesting because there were a couple of hundred apps apparently for that role.

TS: The position at that time was assistant to the president?

ER: Right, executive assistant to the president. It was interesting because I was being interviewed on Memorial Day. That's when everybody still worked on Memorial Day instead of taking the day off. I came over to the campus on Sunday. We drove over the night before and visited Sharon's folks up in Rome. I drove down to look at the campus with Sharon Sunday afternoon. We pulled up in front of the Administration building, and I looked out on that little junior college campus and said

TS: It still looked like a junior college campus.

ER: It did. All of our one and two story buildings right around that little square. The library was the biggest thing you could see, but it was pretty modest compared to the three thousand acres at Ole Miss and the other buildings and a fair amount of investment over a long time. I turned to Sharon and I said, "I don't think so, sweetheart!" I guess the turning point came the next day. I was singing a different tune in part because I was so impressed with all the people I met here. There was an energy here. There was an optimism about the future. There really was opportunity to grow and develop as an institution. In both cases, I had been associated with institutions with over one hundred years of history. It's hard to move that history in a new direction, but here's a place that hadn't developed much history yet and could make choices and choose to be a contemporary place.

TS: Yes, we have less than twenty years from the chartering at that time.

ER: And we're only four years into the four-year business, so there were no colleges, no schools, no departments to speak of—still organized like a junior college. So it really had so much potential. Again, I'd seen how difficult it was to serve the older adult population, either being priced too high in the private sector or located geographically in

the wrong place. Here was a place where you were a bargain as tuition level indicated, and you were in the right place. The growth of metro Atlanta was knocking at your door and moving up the interstate as fast as it could.

TS: I guess we were a little bit over four thousand.

ER: Four thousand eight hundred the year I came in '82. Yes, I said to Sharon and I meant it, "We really need to give this a second thought. We're going to lose our shirts selling that house in Oxford at this time because the market is so bad." It turned out we did lose our shirts on it.

TS: You didn't want to rent it out for a few years?

ER: You couldn't even do that. There were so many properties on the market, and, by the way, we're so far out in the country, don't forget that!

TS: And you would have to be a landlord from eight hours away or more.

ER: The other thing I said, and it was true, "I'm really too young to garden and can for the rest of my life." One of the things about being in a rural area is that you aren't pressed by the urban demands of all the different services that want you to be connected and all the people that want you to speak. You can imagine in your line of work what it would be like. It's serene, and it's very peaceful, but if you're looking for an opportunity to be engaged with community, it's not there.

TS: After you talked to the Rotary Club and the Kiwanis Club there's nobody else to go to.

ER: Exactly.

TS: The Garden Club.

ER: Right!

TS: The DAR and the UDC and that's about it.

ER: Yes, so I said we really needed to look at it, and we obviously did. We did have a hard time selling back then. Everybody's house was on a contingency contract, and we lucked out. We put a contract on one here over in West Cobb, and those folks had already moved to Florida. Within a week we got a contract on our house, but it was contingent on the sale of one in California. The week before the move was to take place, they called up and said the deal fell through, so our deal had to fall through, and we had to rent a place here instead of buy this one. The poor fellow in Florida thought it was such a certainty, he had already extended himself with a construction loan on a new place down there. It was a very hard time financially and our place ended up staying empty for eight months. We chewed up a lot of our savings and had to sell it at a fraction of what we had

in it just to get out of it. It got worse after we left though, so maybe it was good that we got out when we did.

TS: Who all interviewed you here at Kennesaw?

ER: Well, there were a whole raft of people: George [H.] Beggs [Chairperson of the Division of Social Sciences], of course—was he chairing the search committee? He might have chaired it.

TS: I don't know.

ER: I believe it was George who was chairing it. I met a number of people who had been involved in the View of the Future and, of course, all of the key players on the president's staff, the Roger [E.] Hopkins [Controller] types and Gene [Eugene R.] Huck [Dean of the College] types and so forth.

TS: I'm just trying to think how many; there weren't that many then.

ER: There weren't as many then. Literally we only had back then, I think it was 120, if you could count anybody with any kind of faculty status. It was a fairly modest number.

TS: The whole faculty was 120?

ER: That included the librarians and the registrar!

TS: Right.

ER: It wasn't the kind of job where you'd meet everybody on the campus, but it was a good representation. I think Betty and I seemed to be complementary in talents if you will; she was looking for somebody who could handle details and deal with the internal things.

TS: I was going to ask how they advertised the job. What were they looking for exactly or what was she looking for?

ER: She was looking for a blend of things. It was an interesting collection of responsibilities that I had because the computer center reported to me. You probably remember Jim [James W.] Woods [Director, Computer Center and Registration], he was . . .

TS: Yes. He reported to you?

ER: Yes. He reported to me because both this president and the previous president and maybe Gene Huck in-between had agreed that it was time for Jim to fish or cut bait, either get some more education or leave.

TS: We were behind on computerization.

ER: We were really behind. Oh gosh. We were so far behind. We had keypunch machines still, and we had a minicomputer with all of its stations sitting next to the keypunch machines in data processing. They weren't distributed to the end user sites. We were still operating in a very old way. We had a fifteen-year-old Honeywell that processed the punch cards. It was lucky to run one or two hours a week. Everything was really behind. Jim had all high school graduates working with him, except Randy [Randall C.] Goltz, who had dared to go and get his associates degree, and who was as a result a little bit on the outs with Jim for having more education. I had told Betty after I did an interview with Jim and met him—because she wanted me to give her my assessment of what that situation was there—I indicated to her that the institution was very behind, but—and I guess I was optimistic—I said there might be a way of salvaging Jim. There just wasn't. We came to an amicable parting of ways. I think he ended up going down to Lockheed after he left here, but he pretty much knew he was behind and off-track. He admitted to colleagues that he started packing his bags as soon as he heard that I was coming mainly because there was going to be some accountability, I guess, that he just wasn't equipped or ready to deal with.

TS: So is that when Steve [Stephen E.] Scherer . . . ?

ER: Steve was already involved with academic computing, but we had ten or fifteen dumb terminals sitting in a room over in what's now Willingham Hall, I guess. Steve was managing them, but Steve wasn't getting a lot of support out of Jim Woods, and he was basically doing it on his own, bypassing Jim and trying to get the campus moving in an area that it hadn't been moved very fast or very far, and dealing mainly with the academic applications as opposed to the administrative system, so he could do that effectively. But yes, we brought Steve into the pool a little bit more tightly and resourced him a little better.

TS: Then Randy Goltz took over the administrative stuff?

ER: Randy Goltz took over the administration of the administrative side of the house [as Computer Operations Supervisor]. For the most part the two of them carried the water and really expanded our efforts pretty well for a period of time. It was only after, under my vice president's administration where we took a new view of needing to elevate all those computing initiatives to a cabinet level kind of connection and get a CIO kind of player in here. Until that happened we had made a leap forward, but we hadn't made the next leap forward which came about when we brought in Randy [C.] Hinds

TS: Right. I can't remember how long Randy Hinds has been here now, but was that while you were still vice president that he came in?

ER: About ten years [1998]. Right, yes. Tina [H.] Straley was my associate VP and the computing folks and others, librarian folks, et cetera had been reporting to Tina. She and I invented basically the [technology] fee concept after researching it and seeing the need for an infusion of money. But then we also got . . .

TS: The fees meaning the student activities fees?

ER: No, the technology fee.

TS: That you pay with your registration?

ER: Right. It was \$25.00 initially. It was a big shot in the arm for advancing the computing on the campus. Finding then the talent who could move us to the next level and serve as a direct report to the president was also we thought a strategic move that was pretty important. So, anyway [back to 1982], I was managing the computing operation. I was doing the equivalent of IR [institutional research] type work. It was a jack of all trades thing. One of the biggies was the View of the Future. She [President Siegel] wanted somebody to try to steer or coordinate implementation.

TS: Okay, the report's already out by the time you got here?

ER: Right.

TS: Because that started immediately when she came.

ER: That's right.

TS: So now she wants to implement it. That's something I really wanted to ask you about—your perspective. We've got interviews with Betty Siegel and she gives a lot of credit to the View of the Future of shaping the campus. I guess my question is—is that true? Is this the Bible that you all followed step by step?

ER: It's partly true.

TS: That's what I'd like is your perspective.

ER: I think the elements of the View of the Future that were golden for us were anything that related to the facilitation of the centrality of teaching and to a more invitational stance on that, if you will.

TS: Okay, which is what she wanted to do before she ever got here.

ER: Yes. But I think Kennesaw had developed a reputation as being a very rigorous place a la Georgia Tech model. If you know anything about Georgia Tech, they take no prisoners [laughter] with their students!

TS: I remember that very well where the philosophy was we want people to respect us, and the way to do it is to have these really high standards, and if they can't make the standards, that's tough.

ER: Right. Its kin to what I refer to as “teach the best and shoot the rest!” We weren’t that bad. We were seen as rigorous, but we were valued for what we were giving people. Having had two kids go to Tech, I know that they are more extreme on that philosophy! And yet, you know if you graduate from there, the cognitive dissonance kicks in, and you love it and give them all kinds of money!

TS: If you’re one of the survivors.

ER: If you’re one of the survivors. That part was good. I think having an administration facilitate rather than being an impediment was a philosophy that was important. Ironically, there was perceived to be a fairly autocratic style operating under [President Horace W.] Sturgis, and, in fact, building an institution probably required more direction [before] evolving to the next stage where more participatory activity was involved.

TS: Well, when we opened up just about all the faculty were in their twenties or early thirties.

ER: Right. Those elements were, I think, important. The needs assessment actually came along the year after the View of the Future, and it actually served as a complement to the View of the Future.

TS: Okay. Who was on the Needs Assessment committee, I mean, in terms of title?

ER: I don’t even remember who chaired that one. I know I had an involvement in it. It was one of those board-mandated reports that we were supposed to study our students and the kinds of services that we were trying to provide and what the needs were for different programs.

TS: Did you appoint the committee or did Betty appoint the committee?

ER: I think Betty did. I think it was the View of the Future that said that the non-traditional student is our traditional student. In essence, there was an ownership for this older adult population and the need to be connected to more than the traditional, the eighteen year old. Not that we didn’t serve them, but there was this richness with the non-traditional, and having come from places and having experienced them here too, they’re your best students; they’re the most dedicated, hardest-working.

TS: This is new to you from where you’d been in the past?

ER: Well, not totally because I taught graduate students, so they were more like that. The difficulty at Ole Miss and Peabody was getting to them because you were either too far out from where they lived and worked or getting too expensive. Here we had them climbing out of the woodwork because we exist where they live and work, and we’re cheap. But I think the Needs Assessment helped us fine-tune the direction. I’m not sure that the View of the Future had a good sense of direction about what kind of four-year institution we were going to be.

TS: So what were the conclusions of the Needs Assessment Committee?

ER: Well, one of them that is obvious is that over half of the students wanted to major in some of our weakest suits: business and education.

TS: So that's when we started hiring the education and business faculty?

ER: Well, in the spring of '83 several things coalesced around this issue of okay, where do we move next, having looked at Needs and having looked at View of the Future. Frankly, I said to Betty, "Number one, you've got a junior college organizational structure here, divisions and no departments, no schools, no deans. You've been at this [senior-college] business for four years. The past president didn't want to move in this territory because the new president was supposed to define it. You've been here a year or more, and it's not defined yet. If you're going to really evolve, you've got to start thinking about what that structure is going to look like."

TS: So that's your suggestion, to create the departments?

ER: Yes, and the schools. Now, we were under the gun from the Regents to do it without any new resource.

TS: So you're not going to do national searches for department chairs?

ER: Well, no, if you remember, we orchestrated surveys of the faculty and the different disciplinary groups and asked them who amongst you could be called upon to take on these administrative responsibilities of department chair. In most cases there were natural choices that surfaced beautifully, no questions asked; in a couple of cases it might have been a toss-up; in some cases, and this was true in the business areas, if there were five faculty, we had five different votes and then there was no clear direction! When I say weakest suits, in the business school, we had fewer faculty than we had in the whole department of English and only one of them had a doctorate.

TS: Sure. And someone had to teach all those English 101 classes.

ER: Right. But only one had the doctorate and the division head was out of business education and was heavy into areas of pursuit that were not as popular as management or marketing demands.

TS: That's Bill [William P.] Thompson in business education?

ER: Right. And he was retiring, so it was an opportune time to rethink that, but I recall one meeting—number one, we realized that we had to consolidate. We couldn't do five schools; we had to go to four. Humanities and Social Sciences were merged, and Beggs was appointed to head it and John [C. Greider] stepped aside.

TS: Right. He became English department chair, I believe.

ER: Right, from that role, anyway, of division head [of the Humanities Division]. But we all agreed. I remember the meeting we had after most of the players were identified that we weren't going to be much of a four-year college if we didn't have a strong business school and, frankly, if we didn't have a strong education school. When you look at the numbers, frankly, in most colleges of our type, education leads business, but because we're connected so tightly with the metropolitan area, there was even greater interest here in business than there was in Teacher Ed. But it was no accident that our first masters' were in business and education and our first doctorates are in business and education, and some of our largest programs, if you look at them in a big picture level, are in business and education because that's the nature of the demand in this area and the nature of a contemporary institution of our type.

TS: I was surprised, I think, this year we've got more graduates in the college of Humanities and Social Sciences than we do in the Coles College of Business.

ER: Right.

TS: And I don't think it's always been that way.

ER: It has not been that way at all. That's another point of choice, if you will. I think early on we all agreed that we had to build business, and I remember one decision that was made that spring which I was amazed at, but it happened, and that is several of the former division heads, now school heads, gave back positions that had been allocated to them, so that we could feed the building of a business school because we didn't have . . .

TS: They did that voluntarily?

ER: Well, you know . . . [laughter]

TS: They fell on their swords for the good of the institution.

ER: I guess. One of the interesting things about this administration at that point is that it was much more democratic early on, at least in appearance, than was probably true later on.

TS: Are you talking about the faculty being involved or democratic among administrators?

ER: Well, the faculty were very involved in the View of the Future; the faculty were involved to a fault. When I came in and realized that this report had been developed by the faculty, and all the administrators had been left out, we went 180; whereas Sturgis probably would have called the division heads together and said, this is how we're going to do it, Betty's calling all the faculty together and saying, "Okay, all you administrators butt out, you don't have a voice." The reality of it is, we're all supposed to be partners, and that's where the mixed bag comes in. You had to re-engage the people in administration to buy into any kind of plan that was developed without their involvement,

not by the faculty per se, but without their involvement. If there was a flaw in the View of the Future, in my book, that was it.

TS: It was leaving the administrators out?

ER: Yes. It's either we're all in this boat together, working together or we're not; but to have only the administration in charge is a flawed system; to have only the faculty in charge is a flawed system.

TS: Right. Well, I know from the interview we've got with Helen Ridley, the reason why the administrators were left out is that so many faculty were so paranoid about what the administrators might do in retaliation.

ER: Right. And you have to ask the fundamental question, was it fair to pull the intimidation lever with this new president; did you not trust her enough to prevent that from happening?

TS: Well, obviously some people didn't.

ER: Or some people were interested in total control. I mean, there's always a good excuse for why we're not going to partner with one another.

TS: Right.

ER: In my book, and I've been on SACS teams where I've told this to warring parties where boards have been against faculty or administration against faculty. And when they wanted us as a committee to choose sides, I said, "We're not choosing sides; the policy for accreditation says there's collaborative work. You're all in this thing together. You've got to figure out a way to work together. Faculty, you can't survive without the administrators, and administration, you can't survive without faculty, so figure it out. But the reality is you're all on the hook. It's not one over the other, and one doesn't win over the other."

TS: So you see a very democratic administration when you arrived here and then the trend going the opposite direction?

ER: Well, I don't know about the opposite direction, but over time things, administrative philosophies, tend to change.

TS: I guess my question is, was it moving toward a proper balance or are you saying it was going too far the other way?

ER: No, no. I'm just commenting on the View of the Future as a product; I think what I said about the View of the Future is we can't implement everything in this plan because the players who have to pull it off didn't have any kind of administrative role, haven't been engaged.

TS: So they haven't bought into it.

ER: They hadn't bought into it, so we have to find a middle road.

TS: Can you think of some specific things that the View of the Future called for?

ER: I can't think of specifics other than there might have been some program directions that people wanted to go in that had a particular vested interest that didn't match with either the Needs Assessment or these other issues.

TS: Right. So when you get to Needs Assessment, it's more administrators or at least collaboration?

ER: Yes. Well, I think, no. I think what came out of both of those products was the need for better collaboration. I think when we asked faculty to identify who amongst you would be your chair, we began moving toward the notion that we want someone who has the faith and confidence of the majority of their colleagues. It might not be consensus, but it's awfully hard for it to be a minority opinion. And certainly where there's no consensus or even joint opinion, as there were in some places, we had to go outside; we just, there was no choice. But we also needed to beef up certain faculties. I guess what was nice about the Kennesaw situation is that because we didn't have any history, we could choose to shape the nature of the institution in a contemporary setting and with frankly fresh ideas. A lot of institutions had these huge arts and sciences colleges, and they had these very lean and mean disciplinary colleges. Business was much more focused. Sometimes education, nursing—pick an area, any of them. Arts and sciences, tended to be this behemoth, and it's very bureaucratic because, you know, at Georgia State, they had one college, but they have four or five associate deans who are tantamount to our deans of independent colleges. In my view, there was a lot of power to what was coming out of a more focused leadership. The arts always suffered under the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences umbrella because rarely would one of their discipline specialists surface to lead the charge for the whole college. As a result, they didn't always get the attention they needed in the concentrated effort they needed. I don't think there's any question that under Joe [Joseph D.] Meeks, especially, that the College of the Arts has just blossomed, but it's because we've got concentrated, dedicated focus, and we're not sharing the time and energy and effort with half a dozen other disciplines to get there. And there's power in that. If you can somehow maintain the interdisciplinary commitments and cross-linkages, that's wonderful because you need to do that because that's the downside of breaking them out. But the reality is then the bureaucratic structures. You think you have them together, so you can foster that, but you usually don't. I mean, even within the Humanities and Social Sciences now we have two different tenure and promotion committees because the college as a whole can't agree on the philosophy of what's important.

TS: Or what they're evaluating.

ER: Right. So it speaks to the need to have more focused ways of organizing ourselves to advance ourselves more efficiently and more effectively. Again, that was one of the new ideas that we came up with to say that we don't have to do this in the traditional way; we haven't set anything in concrete; if we're going to break it up, let's break it up this way. And over time that evolved. Many of our departments were too small to be separate. Management and marketing were together originally; math and computer science were together originally.

TS: Right. And then we have Liberal Studies.

ER: Right. Liberal Studies was a whole . . .

TS: Foreign language, philosophy . . .

ER: That was the incubator department until we had a program and enough faculty that were there sharing resources. But unlike the incubator where everybody realized they were there temporarily, you know, management and marketing were too different to be together long and math and computer science certainly were. We've had those struggles. The disciplines, social work and sociology don't always get along. I mean, just pick, it's amazing how we can have . . .

TS: Those are in different colleges now, those two.

ER: I know. But it's amazing how we talk about the academy in certain ways, but we live it in other ways sometimes in terms of the divisions that seem to crop up among kin. At any rate, there were many changes. It was fun to be part of an institution that could cut a new path and frame some directions, and many of those turned out to be pretty successful decisions. If we had to change them, again, we changed them. Pairing programs up initially to get past the critical mass issue, we got past it.

TS: So what are you the proudest of of the things that we achieved back then?

ER: Well probably the one that sticks out in my mind the most was our diversity efforts that kicked off about that time, at least in that genre of time.

TS: What's the impetus for that?

ER: Well, you know, we were still under court order to do a lot of things in minority recruitment and other things; we also frankly had . . .

TS: When you say we do you mean the Board of Regents?

ER: The Board of Regents and the State of Georgia, yes. Public institutions. So there were mandates coming down at that level. This was a community where minority representation was very small on the faculty, on the staff . . .

TS: And in the population at large too.

ER: The population at large was also.

TS: At that time. Four percent in Cobb County was African American in 1980.

ER: But it was still an issue. To be honest with you, one of the things that occurred is that some of the leadership from our minority faculty ranks in particular basically broached the issue with Betty: “You’ve been here two years; you’ve talked about inclusiveness and the importance of engaging all; and we’re not seeing the connection with the minority community. We’re not seeing much progress; we’re not seeing much focus here. We’re seeing a lot of good things happening, but we don’t see this particular agenda being addressed yet. What are we going to do differently in that area? Is it really an institution that serves the broader community?”

TS: What did she say?

ER: She said they were right, that she hadn’t put the energy behind that that she had put behind other things. Out of it came the appointment of [Joseph H.] Pete Silver to become her coordinator of minority affairs—not just her EEO officer or certainly not her minority recruiter. You know, we needed a minority recruiter in the Admissions office too.

TS: Right. And Pete had to be convinced that she was sincere before he was going to take the job.

ER: That’s right, he did. I think one of the things that came out of that, of course, was the advisory committee that was pulled together with the local church leaders in particular, Reverend [Robert L.] Johnson and others.

TS: Reverend Johnson at Zion Baptist?

ER: Zion Baptist. It was kind of the heart of the black community. When he and a number of other players in the black community came up to the campus, I remember some of those early sessions. It was striking. They had all kinds of visions of Kennesaw. Of course, they remember the town of Kennesaw, and they remember our history in this area with the gun law and J. B. Stoner.

TS: You’re talking about stereotypical visions.

ER: Stereotypical vision of anything with a Kennesaw name attached to it. Within the black community of Marietta, which was only seven miles down the road, the vision was that they weren’t welcome. This wasn’t their campus. We weren’t here to serve them. Nobody had issued an invitation, and nobody had taken it upon themselves to invite themselves up. So there was this separation that occurred because there was no bridge. Betty, as you know, is very talented interpersonally and had her own story of personal discrimination experiences being the first woman of this, that and whatever.

TS: But she was very proud in one of the interviews that Dede Yow actually did with her about writing or chairing the committee that wrote the University of Florida's first affirmative action report.

ER: Right. So they could believe her more when she said she wanted this to happen because of her personal experience on that road. Pete believed it too enough to take the job and run with the ball and to be in her face and my face and everybody else's face if we weren't staying true to the course. As you know, we both even got arrested together [Pete Silver and me] over an incident of trying to protect the Nigerian students who had been falsely accused of problems.

TS: Yes, [Theodore J.] Ted Cochran has a different interpretation of that.

ER: Ted wasn't the guy. Ted replaced the guy who got us hauled off.

TS: I know, but you all got fingerprinted down at the Cobb County jail.

ER: Yes. Basically we had a chief of police, Kennesaw's first. We moved from the rent-a-cop to our own force, and we hired a fellow who was a wannabe chief of police and had some academic background, but not a lot of practical experience and was very gung ho and had attended these monthly meetings in Atlanta about the latest crime wave and discovered a credit card ring involving Nigerians in Atlanta and Texas, I believe. He was convinced that all six of our Nigerian students must be in that ring.

TS: Is that what happened?

ER: From our vantage point. I think what triggered it for Pete was that a couple of these students were patted down for no cause one evening in the halls because of the suspicions, and we called the police on the carpet for it. There was a whole raft of other things going around about whether they were or were not involved in some kind of illegal activity. To my knowledge nothing ever came of that; it was actually false accusations.

TS: The charges against the Nigerian students?

ER: Right.

TS: They arrested you two for interfering with police officers.

ER: Two different charges. Pete had allowed them to come and take their final exams in his office. So what happened was when this whole thing blew up on the chief of police—our chief of police was basically let go, and his last day on the job he walked into a magistrate court judge's office and got warrants for our arrest.

TS: Is that what happened?

ER: Sheriff [Bill M.] Hutson called Betty up that night and said, “I’ve got these two warrants I’ve got to serve. I know Pete. I’ve taken classes with him. I know this is outside the bounds of fairness and even appropriateness, but he exercised his right as a sworn officer of the court; the court issued the warrant, and so . . . Rather than me serve those, why don’t you do two things: get yourself a lawyer from the Square”—and we went to [Roy] Barnes; it was his partner who worked with us; his name has escaped me at the moment.

TS: Tom [Thomas J.] Browning?

ER: Tom Browning. We had to turn ourselves in; we got released on our own recognizance. My charge was a misdemeanor for interfering with the duty of a police officer: Pete’s was a felony charge for harboring criminals. That was the more hurtful one because you can’t be a state employee with a felony record. Of course, there was no chance of it becoming a felony record, but it was a threatening thing for a black man in Cobb County to be charged that way. It was pretty unnerving.

TS: I guess so.

ER: Fortunately Hutson walked Pete personally through the booking process and again out on his own recognizance. It took two or three years to get the records expunged in part because Pete didn’t want to sign a covenant not to sue. He wasn’t going to sue, but he didn’t want to sign a covenant not to sue, due to the treatment he had been experiencing.

TS: Who would he have sued? The county or the state?

ER: State or whatever. He wasn’t going to sue anybody, but he didn’t think his right should be removed for something that was untrue from day one.

TS: It might have been a case against the former police chief.

ER: It could have been. The bottom line is that we had a whole series of dominoes connected there; the Solicitor [General of Cobb’s State Court] was a Democrat running again, Herb Rivers. He was looking for a law and order case. This looked like a good one. He was in the *MDJ* [*Marietta Daily Journal*] every day talking about what bad guys Pete Silver and Ed Rugg were for defending these students who shouldn’t even be in Cobb County. I was confronted by colleagues at the Kiwanis Club saying, “What are you doing defending these guys? These folks don’t belong here.” So yes, but then that was the solicitor. Who was the fellow who was a Republican [Attorney General of Cobb’s Superior Court?

TS: Tom Charron?

ER: Yes, it was Tom Charron. He was ready to drop the case against Pete, but he’s a Republican, and you can’t do that with the Democrat Solicitor claiming this is a law and order issue, so he waited on Herb to do something, and Herb was already banking on this being a way back into elected office. Well, as the story unraveled over time with the

local law community and everybody else, they realized that Herb was—we were told that Herb hadn't been quite right since the accident. He was a good fellow, we got along with Herb, but he lost faith in the community, and he actually tried to get the judge in the case to *nol pros* [*nolle prosequi*—we shall no longer prosecute] these warrants, and the judge said, “I'm up for reelection and weren't you in the newspaper for two weeks running saying these guys are bad guys? I can't *nol pros* this under these circumstances.” So everybody was stalemated until after the election. Herb lost the election. Everything got dismissed immediately. Then it took a couple of years to get the records fully expunged. It was an interesting lesson in the law, how the law sometimes can be manipulated, and how politics can play havoc. So much for Perry Mason, truth and justice, and all that other stuff.

TS: So diversity is one of these areas that our administration concentrated on?

ER: Right. And I'll give you a concrete remembrance that it was really powerful. We called all the deans together and department heads, and we were looking over progress being made on some new hires, minority faculty, and I remember getting from Harry [J.] Lasher, who was our new dean of business who had only been on the job for six months or eight months or so, the usual: here are the stats; there just aren't that many blacks with Ph.D.s in this, and so forth, the usual reasons why we can't do it. I remember in that meeting saying to Harry, “Harry, let's look at it another way; you've been here six months; who would have believed that you would have hired in six months terminally degreed faculty in business? Who would have believed if this is a national problem, and it is, can't we turn our competitive advantages into something for us? We're in the hub of black professional Atlanta. Isn't this a better place to recruit a black faculty member to than Valdosta?”

TS: If you can sell metro Atlanta as opposed to lily-white Cobb County at that time.

ER: Right. And you've got a gang buster business operation here and a new wave of opportunity. Isn't there some advantage to joining something that's taking off as opposed to something that's traditional and well-established in a certain way. There are just so many things going for us, and you're coming in as such a hard charger; can't you make this happen in some creative way? The following year we had twelve black faculty—four more in business. I bet there were more in that college than any other college, and they got very creative; they went to the Gate City Bar. They found black lawyers with business law experience to come in and join the ranks here and so forth and so on. I guess what it said was that where there's a will there's a way, where there's no will, there's usually no way. And if we have excuses for why we're not going to do something, we're not going to do it, but if we're trying to do something and be creative about selling it, we can probably do it, and we did. We had a critical mass issue for a long time in terms of numbers, but Pete's philosophy was, and I agree completely because I was experiencing it, when I would call a black colleague and they'd say, “Well, I just didn't feel comfortable,” it wasn't a matter of salary, it wasn't a matter of an institution without opportunities, it was a matter of fit and feeling. Was I going to be accepted? Was I going to be supported? The issue is how can we have created a culture

of being engaged and being supportive? And recruitment takes care of itself once all the variables are right. We can hire all the admissions recruiters in the world. We can put all kinds of money on salaries. But if you don't have the right culture, people aren't going to stay. They're not going to be a part of the community. They're not going to get engaged. You're probably just dealing with the symptoms of—you're taking a very shallow approach to solving the problem. I do think that as we grew in numbers [we also grew] in the ability for people to get tenured and promoted and appreciated. It was a hard road in some departments, and there are still plenty of feelings about that in some cases. I remember poor Pete Silver, I mean, he's done all kinds of things worthy of note, but his department didn't support him for promotion during this period when he had just accepted this role. Part of the reason was they saw him spending too much time working on things beyond the department, so there was a lack of perspective on what was important to the institution as a whole or to the faculty as a whole because of the parochial view of colleagues. Obviously, there was due process in that, and he had support at other levels, the college level and dean, my level, the president's level, so it happened.

TS: So the dean and the VP overruled the department?

ER: And the faculty committees at [the college and university levels]. This wasn't so autocratic that we didn't hear—we had faculty voices at other levels that had broader views. To get elected to a college committee meant you had to have typically much more seniority and experience and perspective and certainly at the university level too. Those in many ways were committees with richer perspective and deeper experience than departments that were so new sometimes there was hardly anybody tenured around the table, trying to make tenure decisions.

TS: Who was more supportive of diversity on our campus—obviously, Pete and the black faculty, but in terms of the administration?

ER: Well, you know, obviously George Beggs was one of the pioneers in it; we wouldn't have had Pete Silver if he hadn't stepped forward pretty early. Business made that first really good run; I don't know that they sustained it over time in terms of increased diversity.

TS: It seems like it was about 1997 that we finally reached 1,000 black students, somewhere in that area, and that was a big celebration as I recall. Could you talk a little bit about, as time goes on, does diversity remain a commitment to Kennesaw, or to what degree does diversity remain a commitment?

ER: Well, there's no question if you look at today's priorities of the current administration, it's clearly one of their strategic priorities. We wouldn't have a diversity officer if it weren't, and we wouldn't have had that year-long study that Sarah [R.] Robbins chaired as [Faculty] Executive Assistant to the President from the faculty ranks. As far as I know, it's very high still on the agenda. I think the momentum that was built from those early days has continued mightily, and when you look at the percentage change of

minority student population compared to the majority population, it just blows the majority growth out of the water. It's in the hundreds of percentage increases in any area, whether you're talking black or Hispanic or Asian, it doesn't matter. [According to the *Kennesaw State University Fact Book*, between 1993 and 2008, black enrollment grew by 209 percent, Asian by 216 percent, Hispanic by 402 percent, and white by only 42 percent].

Part of that is the increasing diversity of communities we serve which have also exploded compared to where they were twenty years ago. Part of it is having a place that's comfortable. As I said before, one of our strategies on recruitment for students was we couldn't recruit students here if we didn't have role models in the classroom because students needed to see people like them to feel comfortable and they needed to have perspectives that were more familiar with their perspectives to relate to. They needed to see that not only in the chair next to them in the classroom, but also at the head of the room where the faculty member was. So building that was key; diversity could begin to feed itself, and the growth of diversity could feed itself once you established what I call critical mass both of faculty and of students. So I think the student number was important, and I think the faculty number was important. Some programs, like education have become so embedded in what they're about, their national standards require it, minority become majority schools are all over the place; you've got diversity issues that cross U.S. multi-culturalism into intercultural concerns over immigration of students from other lands right here in Kennesaw and Cobb County and everywhere else. So they have such a commitment to diversity that they have probably one of the most diverse faculties of all today in part because that's the way you have to do business to be a teacher in today's schools. [According to the *2008-2009 Fact Book*, minorities made up 38 percent of the faculty in the Bagwell College of Education, with Science and Mathematics second at 31 percent, and a campus average of 23 percent]. It was ironic that the last dean [Yiping Wan] got charged with some kind of discrimination complaint, but he probably had the most diverse faculty of all the deans.

TS: And was diverse himself.

ER: And was diverse himself. But that gets back to that issue of some people just have to pull a lever, even if it makes no sense on the face of it to get attention. There were other issues that were really at the heart of that matter, and diversity probably wasn't one, but it's a good way to get attention. I recall, in recent years, and this was probably while I was still active as vice president, but I remember going to one of our student organizations, an African American group, where the energy of the president of that organization was so strong, and they had built traditions around graduation, of recognition, they were not only building an environment that was more conducive to being friendly and supportive and welcoming, but he was right there with us at Zion Baptist, and he wanted to tell others that this is not only a good place to be, but you need to come! Getting that kind of energy going, many people in business say word of mouth is sometimes you're best way to market. We needed good word of mouth and we didn't have it in the early 1980s.

TS: Right. And you mentioned the Zion days started very early I guess.

ER: Very early. And the fact that we stayed with it and still have it, you know.

TS: Used to be just about all the faculty would go it seems like, and now it's a handful of administrators that are there.

ER: Yes. It doesn't have the same impact it once had, but the fact is that we're still doing it and that church committee still feels good about it. It just reminds us all when there was a time when this didn't happen.

TS: Right. I know as we got into the 1990s there was at least one nasty lawsuit involving some black athletes that got kicked out of their housing.

ER: That one I wasn't involved in, so I don't even recall the details of it.

TS: Okay.

ER: I really can't shed a whole lot of light on it. We had our fair share of academic lawsuits, but I didn't want to get into everybody's lawsuits!

TS: Right. So you're saying that kind of goes with the territory?

ER: These days. I think litigiousness of our society has gotten to the point where it's almost inescapable. Whether the claims are valid or not, it's just too easy to file a suit, and there are too many folks who can do that for you.

TS: There were some programs to bring more blacks into administration, weren't there, Regent-wise that brought some people to Kennesaw, like Deborah [S.] Wallace?

ER: And Flora.

TS: And Flora [B.] Devine [University Attorney and Special Assistant to the President for Legal Affairs] and, oh, the woman who headed CETL for a while a few years ago, I can't think of her name.

ER: Janis [C.] Epps.

TS: Yes Janis Epps. Were you involved with any of those?

ER: Yes. I usually got involved working with them when they were at Kennesaw because while they generally get mentored by the president in those ACE [American Council on Education] fellowships, they engage a lot of the other key cabinet people quite regularly, especially if they were interested in seeing internal workings of the institution. I've worked with all of them; as you know, Deborah became my Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs and later became the Dean of College of Education. Janis was a

natural for us to have in CETL [Center for Excellence in Teaching & Learning], and CETL was one of those units that we created at Kennesaw. It was near and dear to our academic heart. Flora, of course, came in with a different interest outside of academic affairs with her legal background, but she was also a key player who was one of the early advocates for the diversity, the continued diversity interests and push and diversity training and a variety of other things that were of general interest. Those were good programs for helping elevate potential administrators, minority administrators, pulling them typically out of faculty ranks and giving them some opportunities to get some experience, which then led to further opportunities in administration elsewhere. Janis went on as academic VP at Atlanta Metro [Atlanta Metropolitan College], I believe; so clearly it worked for her. Pete Silver went down, actually, to the Regents on a Regents Fellowship, and then he ended up staying as an assistant academic vice chancellor position down there before being asked to become academic VP at Savannah State. There is some truth to the fact that if those opportunities are provided, people benefit, and the whole organization benefits from having a bigger talent pool available.

TS: Okay. Why don't we wind it up at this point today? It seems like we've just gotten to the tip of the iceberg of things going on during your tenure as executive assistant and then academic VP, and we haven't even talked about how you got into that position yet or what you're doing today. We'll leave those things for a second interview.

Part 1B: Friday, 7 November 2008

TS: We're picking up again on Friday afternoon, November 7, and Ed, why don't we start back up by letting me ask you how you perceived Kennesaw, what kind of an institution were we when you got here in 1982, and how did we evolve into a more metropolitan university like we are today?

ER: Well, picking up on some of those comments we had from last time, having come from a traditional residential campus, I saw this as an opportune place where you really could capture some of the students that those other institutions were unable to capture, the non-traditional students in particular. We had this great commitment to them. We had this extremely strong dedication to the evening program. When I came the faculty were extremely proud to say the first-tier faculty teach at night too, and we don't bring in the second string for the evening program.

TS: The first-tier faculty?

ER: Yes, the first string faculty. There was a real commitment to serving older adults as well as younger adults here, day and night. We could get to them because we were right in the middle of the path of this wonderful demographic development—a lot of growth in this area. The area we were serving was growing like Topsy. So there were opportunities that we had here that Ole Miss didn't have and that Peabody didn't have. Peabody was in an urban area, but being private, charging private tuitions, it ruled them out, especially in competition with the public sector, which was a fraction of the cost. Here was an opportunity to actually do things that other institutions were drooling over. And because

it was a brand new institution largely, a four-year institution only four year into the business, and hadn't really formed up its departments, its colleges, its programs, its policies, procedures, whatever, it was an opportunity to shape.

TS: Right. We were still a junior college administrative structure at that time.

ER: Right. And in function because I remember how faculty just yearned to teach an upper division course. It's a rare thing.

TS: Right. We didn't have enough [upper level] students.

ER: That's right. And it was a chicken or egg thing really because we didn't have enough students because we didn't have anything on the books for them, so they were still transferring out of there.

TS: I can remember when we first started doing upper level classes that first quarter, students were shocked. They had seen us teach so well on the general education classes that we'd done over and over and over again. Our first time through on upper level classes, it was like being a first-year faculty member. At any rate, we got over that in a hurry, but it took a while, I think.

ER: Right. Again, I was struck by the opportunity here, not just to grow, but also to shape something new. As I said last time, these other two institutions I had been associated with had over one hundred years of history that held them back. History is a very wonderful thing, but it's awfully hard to turn over that kind of history.

TS: Right. "We've never done it that way before."

ER: Right. Or it's been in concrete for fifty years, and we can't change it. While here, there was nothing in concrete; everything was new, fresh, people were willing to think. It was a young faculty.

TS: That's come through interview after interview with people, particularly the old-timers that I've interviewed, that that's what they appreciated about Kennesaw that things weren't set in stone, and you could develop something brand new and take that ownership of developing a new program.

ER: Right. See, most of us in this business, especially with doctorates, we're schooled in the value of creating things—creating knowledge, creating solutions, new ideas—and sharing those with people. It was such a freeing experience to come to a place where you could actually do that at the institutional level. You weren't held back by particular structures of history. It was all fresh. It was all new. You could go in any direction you chose.

TS: You were talking about when you first drove up, your first view of the campus, you said, "Honey, I don't think we're going to stay here." Then you said it was when you met the

people . . . so did you instantly get a sense of Kennesaw as a place on the move that attracted you?

ER: Definitely. I mean, I was offered the job that day, and I was very favorably disposed to take it. I just basically said to Sharon, “I think we really need to look at this seriously.” Because it was an opportunity that I hadn’t seen in my career come along. To have an institution that would actually be growing—back then in the 1980s we were talking about a third of the institutions going out of business, and here’s one that’s got all this future ahead of it. Already in the non-traditional student market in spades and getting richer by the day and being able to—and this was the hardest thing, and the older institutions I was with, they had to shift resources and redirect and retrench—those are tough things to do, very tough. When you actually have to go out of business and merge and let big chunks of your enterprise go, that’s devastating. So to be at a place that you didn’t have to do any of that—this place had growing pains; growing pains are so much healthier than the pains of retrenchment and merger.

TS: So when you came in ’82, who would we be comparable to, or were we unique?

ER: We were pretty unique. Kennesaw has a number of peers that were birthed in the 1960s and 1950s that have done quite well, mainly in the South, but also in California and elsewhere. Some of them are much larger than we are and even more developed than we are, in part, I think, because they were the only game in town—you know, [the University of] Central Florida, founded about the same year as we are [1963], and for a while we considered them our peer [classes began at UCF in 1968 with 1948 students; by the time of this interview UCF’s enrollment had increased to about 50,000].

TS: And I guess there’s not a major college in Orlando to compete with UCF?

ER: That’s it. We had Georgia State and Georgia Tech, and we’ve got sister institutions in the area like Southern Tech and two-year schools, et cetera, and on top of that Athens likes to think of itself in metro Atlanta. So we’re not the first one to the trough in Atlanta, but Central Florida is in Orlando, so we had that as a disadvantage for our growth. It’s not as much of a disadvantage today as it was the first year or earlier.

TS: Were you already thinking of Central Florida as a comparable institution?

ER: No. Back then I wasn’t. Back then I was just seeing this as a wonderful opportunity to start a new college. We were started already, you know, but at a four-year level we had been at it for four years. When you’re still largely teaching lower division

TS: Well, there weren’t any graduate programs.

ER: No graduate programs, everybody’s still in junior college division structure.

TS: And two-thirds of our courses at least were general education.

- ER: Absolutely. It was a creative opportunity. It was just exciting. It had its attractions because of family being closer. That too was an attraction. We had two children, and having grandparents an hour up the road was great. Atlanta is a wonderful place to raise kids and enjoy life. In fact, we thought this area of Marietta reminded us a lot of Nashville, which we enjoyed; the feel of the place was very comfortable and familiar. There were a lot of things that were attractive, but for me though it was these great opportunities to do great things and do them in a very progressive and contemporary way.
- TS: Right. Okay, you've got the View of the Future, and it's a guidepost in lots of ways. How long does it really take to conceptualize what we wanted to be as an institution beyond the detail of we're going to focus on non-traditional students, and we're going to have a night program, and we're going to go more into professional programs? We're going to have more business faculty and education and nursing. If you think of those as the details, how long does it take to conceptualize that there's a new kind of university that's developing in the world, and we want to be part of it?
- ER: I really think that that's been an evolutionary thing at Kennesaw. If there's been one thing that's been probably always on the table from the day I got here and probably the year before I got here, it was that this was an institution that was going to grow. Nobody had any questions about its growth potential. Growing into what was the question. We had established a very fine general education program built largely on the back of liberal arts and sciences. We naturally assumed that we would just grow into those at the upper division. When I got here we had more programs in those areas than we had in what are called the professional areas like business and education. They had the weaker faculties, fewer programs.
- TS: Business and education were part of the Social Sciences Division when I got here.
- ER: Right. Very few people employed in those areas, and they didn't have their own identity or home, weren't close to becoming even departments in some ways compared to the established groups in English and history and the other core areas. I think the shift to realizing that we ought to listen to where our market is, what areas they really want us to educate them in, listen to those things, which the Needs Assessment did nicely for us, and say, okay, if we really are going to be a strong four-year program, we've got to have a strong business school, and we've got a very weak business program and a weak business faculty. So that strategic decision was made the first year I came, and I think I was one of the players who helped formulate it. It was bought into by Betty Siegel and the entire team, and it was bought into even by our colleagues in the new structure. One of the early things I said last time was we have to get departments and schools here. If we're going to be a four-year, we've got to organize ourselves right now. People need the advocacy of their disciplinary homes and their school homes, et cetera. The deviation we made there was I still think very strategic and important, and that is we didn't follow a traditional model of everybody in arts and sciences under one umbrella. We did realize that you're more mobile and more powerful if you can break that group down into smaller groups.

- TS: So that was the motive and not that we had these administrators who were already division heads?
- ER: No. That wasn't the motive. It was that we really need to think—ideally, if we had not been hamstrung by the Regents that said we couldn't exceed our allocation of time and effort toward administration and forced us to collapse five divisions to four—in order to create some more departments and give some department heads some release time. If we hadn't been so restricted, we probably would have separated out Humanities from Social Sciences back then, which as we look at it now probably would have been a good thing.
- TS: Could have been, yes.
- ER: That's a college that still has two tenure and promotion committees and two streams of interest.
- TS: Being in history we're always debating which one we should be in.
- ER: Exactly, I know, I know. I've heard that argument, and that's why you guys are on the fence sometimes.
- TS: Well, in terms of the division, we're really in with the humanities because they do all this weird stuff with quantitative in the social sciences, and we don't understand them and they don't necessarily understand us.
- ER: And to be honest with you, there's nothing wrong with that. In fact, one could argue that, even though the Regents put you in the social sciences from a core perspective, there's always a good story and good rationale that can be made for going the other way. If you look at literature, you look at even art, it's about understanding humanity and our place in the world, and that's what history's about. So in some ways it's a different kind of science. It still requires a lot of systematic exploration of the world view and the data, if you will, that you're going to be looking at and analyzing. But you're right, your tools and your interests are more aligned with the humanities than with the social sciences.
- TS: And then of course, we did eventually cut the arts off to be a separate college.
- ER: Right. And as I said before, that was, I think, another great example of how powerful they can be. They have taken off. They have done all kinds of incredible things. All three units [the visual arts, music, and theatre] are accredited now by the professional associations. We're having this whole Steinway celebration [KSU designated in 2008 as an "All-Steinway School] coming down the road; we finally have our concert hall in place [Dr. Bobbie Bailey & Family Performance Center opened in 2007]. We're doing some really incredible work in the arts. I'll have to be honest with you; I was more skeptical about the arts as a potential here having seen them struggle at Peabody. But again, that's a private institution, tougher to pull off, and also not being a big player even at Ole Miss

TS: Really?

ER: Well, they had a museum. But, to be honest with you, what I underestimated was the power of the arts community in a metropolitan area. Even though Cobb hasn't always been a great hub of the arts, there was a very large following with the symphony and the arts community here and, of course, the Atlanta community.

TS: It's a natural for them to go out and raise money and get somebody to contribute to a musical program.

ER: Right. So once we moved in that direction, the visual arts program was a great example of just how much progress could be made. Another point of pride for me was actually getting that Visual Arts building in the hopper. We had opportunities, periodically, to throw five million dollar projects—minor projects, they called them—into the priority list, and we had to be creative in the way that we presented it because they were only funding classroom buildings. I remember us really building the rationale for a new home for the visual arts on the back of the notion that we had this tremendous interest in graphic design and commercial applications as well as studio art. There was a lot of buzz around that concept of feeding corporate interests and business interest and graphic design, et cetera, with new technologies. That made a lot of sense, got us off the traditional dime of having to argue on the backs of the studio art program, the traditional studio art program. But we did get in the hopper—the really funny thing about it is in our original proposal we actually called these spaces that we needed studios and they said, “We don't know what studios are; we're only building classrooms.” I told Pat [Patrick L.] Taylor [chair of the Visual Arts Department], “We've got to change this program; we have to call all these rooms classrooms; this one is going to be the pottery classroom; this is going to be the painting classroom. It sounds weird, but that's what they're doing, and this one's the sculpture classroom.” Welcome to Georgia! It was a bit backwards, but we got the building [opened in 2002] and the key was incredibly a big shot in the arms for the arts here, really. Opportunities occasionally like that came along where we were quick on the draw in capturing opportunity. Another program that I want to mention is the College of Health and Human Services, which was also a new brainchild.

TS: Two combined together, what we combined together?

ER: Right—to bring nursing together with the wellness people and also the social work.

TS: Whose brainchild was it?

ER: Mine.

TS: Okay.

ER: I mean, we had warring parties on many of those. PE [Physical Education] was never really part of the [College of Education]. They had their own admissions standards, and they were going off in these non-Teacher Ed directions. They had this big commitment

up at the core level of wellness, which frankly we almost had to drag them into, but I think the faculty at large wanted something more than activity courses, especially for the older adult population. The concept of wellness just rang so much truer, and it was and still is a real accomplishment to be doing that. Wellness and health go hand in hand in the real world as does human services in so many ways: your nurses, your social workers are hand in glove everyday out in the community. So why aren't we looking at them together as we can?

TS: Does anybody else in the country have these areas combined together?

ER: Yes. I'm chairing the SACS review of Troy University. I noticed when I looked at their organizational chart yesterday, they have Health and Human Services. I don't know if they stole that from us or what. Where I got it from was the federal government. We talked about it at the federal level. We just don't think about it on the academic level. The feds see it that way; the community sees it that way; why aren't we as academics seeing it that way?

TS: Well, it used to be the Department of Health, Education and Welfare and then Education pulled out so Health and Human Services—is that what it's called today?

ER: Yes. So I guess that was one of the exciting things, and still is one of the exciting things about Kennesaw. If you have a fresh idea, it actually might be adopted. There might be enough power to it. People will say that's not a bad idea; we're going to try it. If I were at Ole Miss or Peabody, "Oh, no, we can't do that. That's way too out of the box." But at any rate, a lot of things like that, I think Kennesaw established a reputation of being a very creative place. If you think about it, once we did get in the graduate programs, we did get it in traditional areas like business and education, although we got in there because those were the most important ones for the non-traditional student population. We were limited, and this gets at that issue of did we know what we want to be when we grow up. We were restricted, if you will, by the Board's decision that in this state there weren't going to be more than four doctoral granting institutions for a long time, and that the rest of us needed to focus on high-demand programs, which often were in the professional areas. At the graduate level we were often restricted in our thinking to professionally oriented programs. A great example was the MAPW—it took three years to get that proposal approved because initially it went down as an MA in English or in literature with a concentration in writing. It just looked too much like a traditional English master's to them. We went back and forth with them over a period of years until we finally heard what they were saying, and it was to give us some kind of cross-disciplinary program with identity that's professionally oriented, and it brings these talents together out of English. In this case we included others as well, like Communication and the arts I believe, to talk about a new area of student need and service. The MAPW was born.

TS: Master of Arts in Professional Writing. You got the professional in there.

ER: We got the professional in there. We got writing, which, ironically, in many English departments is second-tier to literary criticism. So we moved beyond the traditional bent on literary criticism into writing. We had to actually hire more writers on the faculty. We hired one faculty member who has an MFA in writing and had to make sure that we could document for the record that in his area, that's considered a terminal degree, not just because MFAs are in the arts fields, but in the writing field it's also honored that way. We had to be thoughtful about those things and the struggles with how you bring a new specialization, if you will, into the mix. Stat [statistics] has done the same thing in math; they have a master's in applied statistics. We don't have it in math, but bringing in statisticians because statisticians frequently are second-class citizens to pure mathematicians.

TS: I wonder sometimes what other kind of statistics are there other than applied statistics that anybody would care about anyway.

ER: Right. But I think that also speaks to the degree to which in the academy we sometimes are seen as very academic and very unworldly.

TS: So if you're in the field of statistics, you're goal is to be, I guess, theoretical and removed from

ER: Right. And in fact, if you look at what has happened in the social sciences and in business—and I saw this evolution here, when I came here—the Math department had the franchise on stat, and the business faculty were extremely upset because they could never get the mathematics faculty to put any real world problems into the mix of those courses. It took a migration of one of the mathematicians to move out of the Math Department to in essence break that franchise and to begin building a brand of stat that was actually customized around the needs of the applied disciplines in business. The same thing happened in Psychology and social sciences. They went off and developed their own stat programs as well. We have them now in Education, and that's typical because people really do want to see an application of that skill set to their discipline, and there's such a vast difference. Having been a Sociology and a Psych undergraduate major, I understood a huge difference between the stats of the sociologist versus the stats of a psychologist.

TS: I had to learn a little bit of that for my dissertation. I did a quantitative study for my dissertation with lots of census data and tax digest data, and so I had to learn enough statistics to get by for what I needed.

ER: And you swore it off after that!

TS: Exactly right. Well, one of the things, and let me just test this out and see your reaction, but one of the things that always impressed me about Betty Siegel was that she was so much interested in bringing in speakers to campus like Parker Palmer or introduced Ernest Boyer's concepts on Scholarship to the campus. So it was some high level intellectual activity, I thought, and bringing new ideas to the campus. Certainly, Boyer played an important role, I think, in shaping where we were going as an institution.

ER: I agree. That was one of Betty's strengths, and it helped to build this new kind of institution. What she was trying to do was broaden our worldview as much as possible if we were going to be doing things differently. We had all this potential to be a different kind of place, so we needed to start experiencing and seeing things differently and at least being challenged. Frankly, in the previous administration's history, there wasn't as much focus on faculty development or travel or support for professional presentations. Our sense was that everybody hunkered down in the local community to do largely teaching. There wasn't even a big push for service commitments or extension in the community. It was largely just teach, teach, teach. Research wasn't on the table, and service was not deep, and faculty development wasn't on the table. We were lucky, frankly, to have folks who were doing as many progressive things as we did in that environment. The Steve Scherer's who were actually at the forefront of bringing computers on this campus did it despite this environment that said, well, this is not really. . . .

TS: Well, faculty development was getting your doctorate.

ER: Right that's true. I forgot that. Yes, we had so many masters old folks initially stay on, and the four-year arena required elevation. It was a rule around here that if you didn't get it within a certain period you were released. There was still that rule after we crossed critical mass in many departments because we had done it for so many years. It was assumed to be the given as opposed to what we did in a certain point in our development.

TS: At least you weren't going to get promoted or were limited to how far you could go.

ER: Yes, that was an interesting transition to have to make to realize that when you're at 80 percent terminally degreed, it's okay to have a few master's level folks around.

TS: I think you could afford to pay the terminal degreed people more if you hired more [lower-paid faculty] at the master's level.

ER: Right. And they can carry some of the loads that we needed [so that others could] be reassigned to do other things.

TS: I remember when we used to compare the statistics of what proportion of our faculty had doctorates compared to Georgia Tech or University of Georgia or Georgia State.

ER: We fared pretty well. And we were usually one of the leaders in all of the institutions at our level. In fact, sometimes, the fact that our student-faculty ratio was higher here was due to two things: one, we didn't invest in as many master's level people as Georgia Southern and Valdosta and others did, which meant our dollars didn't go as far to buy faculty; and then the other reality is they didn't have these schools as big as ours. Some of these rural business schools were so small that when it was time to come around for AACSB [the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business] accreditation, they shut their master's down; they didn't want to be held to that standard. There were only out thirty students, so it didn't matter. We're looking at one thousand MBAs [at KSU]

that we would not shut it down, but it requires a lot more high priced talent to support such a business school. If we had had engineering, it would have been high priced; law would have been high priced; med school would have blown us away.

TS: So they just told the master's people to take a quarter off?

ER: Yes. Well, they've done all kinds of interesting things. I remember one story on the school of business that I am proud of because it speaks to the kind of institution we're trying to be, and that is early on when we were looking at AACSB. We did the usual thing. We brought in a consultant from an accredited school who happened to be the dean at Florida State to look at our readiness to apply. Back then this was before the Burruss building was built, so they were still operating largely out of what now is Willingham Hall. They had a big program, good faculty, doing great things in the community, and the consultant basically said, "You've got a great program, great relationship with your students, your business community, but you guys just aren't cranking out enough publications. You need to cut back on these community ties, cut back on your commitment to your students, and start working on your pubs." I remember turning to Harry Lasher and saying, "We seem to be doing quite well without that." That seems to be calling for us to be something that we are not supposed to be right now, which is a research university; it's a research university model. Fortunately around the nation, a second competing accrediting body grew up because that was too rigid a standard and was controlled largely by the research universities. So a competing accreditor actually came about which fundamentally changed AACSB. They got on board with a mission-driven set of standards and became more flexible in how they would evaluate you according to those standards. The moment they did that, we did apply and immediately got accredited.

TS: We were one of the first on the new standards.

ER: That's right. But we didn't play to a standard that wasn't in keeping with our mission and our values.

TS: I've got interviews with Harry Lasher and also [Timothy S.] Tim Mescon, and they both talked about that.

ER: Those were powerful decisions. In fairness to us, we did sacrifice some because while there had always been a commitment to transfer a credit among university system institutions at the core level, that didn't play at the graduate level. Georgia State would refuse to accept our graduate work in the MBA because we weren't accredited. It was their way of keeping us down on the farm, restricting our evolution. That was a feature that forced us to really figure out how to get accredited, but we wanted to do it the right way. We didn't want to sacrifice our souls for something that didn't make any sense to us. To come back to the fundamental question, I don't know if the identity of a metropolitan university has emerged. I know it hasn't emerged across the administration on the campus until very recently.

- TS: The book that you recommended, Daniel M. Johnson and David A. Bell, eds., *Metropolitan Universities: An Emerging Model in American Higher Education* (Denton: University of North Texas Press, 1995) came out in 1995, and all these guys that have chapters in that book have been saying it for some time, but in terms of really getting out to the broader academic culture, basically, we've got a thirteen year history since 1995.
- ER: Right. I think what was also happening is the growth notion was out there constantly. The president, Betty Siegel, was big in AASCU [American Association of State Colleges and Universities], so this notion of being part of an AASCU group
- TS: State and regional universities.
- ER: Yes, state and regional universities, different from the nostalgic group which is the land grant types and the more traditional research universities—so her notion was parallel to metropolitan, but slightly different bent because it was this AASCU model. Unfortunately, the AASCU membership includes institutions that are not operating in a metropolitan area with non-traditional students, but they are state universities with regional draws. That's where this confusion sometimes comes in and the push to grow and be an AASCU institution we sometimes thought of ourselves as being like institutions that we really weren't like.
- TS: Right. There's a huge difference between us and Georgia Southern.
- ER: Right. Beautiful example. Another state university, regional draw, a lot like us in a lot of ways, size and everything else, except they're not in a metropolitan area. They don't have this non-traditional student body. They don't have a community nipping at their heels for services all the time. They don't have the same mix of programs that we have. So, yes, both AASCU institutions, but very different missions, and that's why I like what we've just done these past few months of revisiting our peer comparator list as required by the Board of Regents and responding this time to that in this clear context of the metropolitan university.
- TS: Why don't you—and I know because you sent me a memo about it the other day—but why don't you explain what happened in August and September and October this year to maybe get Kennesaw, if I understand it correctly, probably for the first time, to have the president and the provost and all the top administrators to buy into this metropolitan university model.
- ER: Right. Ten years ago the university system hired some consultants to come in and in essence produce peer comparator lists for the university system units. They did an individualized and customized list for [University of] Georgia and Georgia State and Georgia Tech and the Medical College [of Georgia]. They pooled fifteen of us at the state university college level into one pool and made one pool of peers for all of us. So we had historical black institutions, we had Southern Poly, we had really small four-year schools in rural settings mixed with fairly large urban schools like us. We're all in the

same pool. Because we were so diverse, the pool was very diverse. Somehow we're supposed to benchmark against this pool of institutions that is so unlike us.

TS: So broad that it's meaningless?

ER: That's right, so broad that it's meaningless. So we played the good soldier, and we accepted the report. We didn't give it much credit on campus. If the chancellor in the central office can do something with it, more power to him, but it made no sense to us. It had little value for us. We never owned that list as a comparator list. Periodically, the president would say something about comparators or when we did annual salary studies we might pick institutions from the southern region that looked more like us, but there was no buy-in to any single list. Well, ten years later the Regents started this summer asking for an update of those lists, and rather than use the consultants, they were going to use the tools that the consultants used, but do it differently. This time one of the mistakes they were going to correct was building customized lists for each of us because they did realize that was foolhardy to have this extremely broad pool that didn't really reflect peers.

TS: So they don't want an extremely broad pool, but they don't want it too individualized either.

ER: Right. So what they did was they said they were going to guarantee each institution its own peer list, but we're going to restrict who is on that list through a mathematical cluster analysis based on a variety of variables that we think are important: classification, size, and a variety of other factors, a mix of graduates according to discipline mix, et cetera. Once we create that pool from that cluster analysis we'll give that pool to campuses to add a qualitative measure or assessment of that pool to see if from that pool [they can produce an] array of peers.

TS: So quantitatively they pulled out everybody that has between twenty thousand and forty thousand students?

ER: It wasn't even that systematic. It was a cluster analysis, so the variables that you put into a cluster analysis will determine its accuracy or its value. For instance, we said, we think it's important—they gave us a week's opportunity to share reactions to the model.

TS: Okay, they gave you a week to give your input on the model.

ER: Right. And there were variables that we felt needed to be in the mix that weren't. They didn't want to put race distributions in there, and we thought it was important to avoid the problem we had before of having historically black institutions in our pool or institutions whose racial makeup was very different from ours. One way to avoid that is to have that variable in there. But no, we found out later, they didn't because they wanted to benchmark us on that one. In other words, they wanted to figure out why we didn't have more diversity. Well, they must not understand higher education.

- TS: It doesn't sound like it.
- ER: Institutions in our business are serving regions that have certain demographic characteristics. We're not liberal arts institutions that draw from a national pool and decide where to put our scholarships.
- TS: Actually I would think nowadays we would probably be pretty typical with our diversity on campus.
- ER: Right, but the point I'm making is that they left out variables that could have helped narrow the field so much better. One of the fields that they left out was this non-traditional age field. The IPEDS [Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System] data includes a percentage of students, undergraduates, who are over twenty-four years of age.
- TS: What's IPEDS?
- ER: IPEDS is the national report we have to submit every year to the federal government on enrollment and graduates. They were drawing the data from the IPEDS database, and one of the elements they could have used was this non-traditional pool, but they didn't want to do that. We used it in our qualitative analysis because we thought it was important.
- TS: Why don't they think it's important?
- ER: Because everybody's still thinking in very traditional ways. This is about eighteen-year-olds who have to graduate in four to six years. Eighteen-year-olds who only go to one college, and if they left you, they must have dropped out.
- TS: So there must be something wrong with you if everybody doesn't graduate in five years.
- ER: That's right. The beauty of this is that the variables that they did pick gave us a reasonable pool, but half of the pool really weren't comparables for us.
- TS: Right. Everybody that's comparable is in the pool, but so are five other places.
- ER: A lot of institutions that aren't. And some of them are ranked pretty high. According to the statistics, they are supposed to be more like us than not, but as we looked at the residence properties, the non-traditional student properties, their location—are they in a metro area or not—and even the mix of their graduate programs, we said, this isn't it. The analysis we did was we took the variables we tried to get them to employ, and we went ahead and employed ourselves. We went to the IPEDS's data; we went to the Carnegie website; we pulled down all of these sub-categories of Carnegie—Carnegie has sub-categories as to whether you're selective or inclusive on admissions; whether you're fully rated at the graduate level or just
- TS: What are we called, selective or inclusive?

ER: Right. We're selective. Inclusive means you're open door.

TS: Anybody that eliminates anybody is selective?

ER: Well, it's not quite that bad, but you're above a certain critical threshold.

TS: If you reject a certain percentage of applicants?

ER: Right.

TS: I got you. What percentage do we reject?

ER: Well, you can look it up on the website. I think it's somewhere in the neighborhood of twenty-five or thirty. [According to the *Fact Book*, in fall 2008, 63 percent of new freshmen applicants and 74 percent of transfer applicants were accepted].

TS: Has that changed over your time?

ER: Oh, yes. We've raised admission standards; we were open door when I came. We rejected one student a year if we were lucky.

TS: Right. So we took everybody we could get.

ER: Right. In the early days we did. That's the two-year college model; it's an opportunity for

TS: We used to have the admissions deadline go until after Georgia State; if students went down there and couldn't get classes, they came to us.

ER: Right, to go pick them up. In fact, that's one of the things we did to slow growth down. We would intentionally raise our own admissions standards even before the Regents finally got around to mandating some changes.

TS: I heard Dan [Daniel S.] Papp say the other day that raising admissions standards actually increased our enrollment.

ER: Right, it actually did because people couldn't believe that it was hard to get into this place. We suddenly became more valued in the communities we were serving whereas previously we were always the fallback. Well, if I can't get into Georgia or Georgia State, I can always go to Kennesaw. Well, guess what? Couldn't do that any more.

TS: So twenty-five to thirty or more are getting rejected now, percent?

ER: Right.

TS: That's become an evolutionary change?

ER: Absolutely.

TS: That's what we mean by selective.

ER: My point is we took those variables. We systematically pulled that data. I was the principal data juggler for that. The president basically appointed us all, [Provost Lendley C.] Lynn Black and [Associate Provost] Teresa [M.] Joyce and [CETL director George W.] Bill Hill, and I and Sarah Robbins were the principals who sat down at the table and looked at the data. Sarah and Lynn thought it was also important, and I agreed, that we should go and look at their websites, look at their mission statements, try to pull down their strategic plans, see if they shared some similar characteristics that way.

TS: So that would be the qualitative?

ER: Additional qualitative. They're all qualitative in the sense that we're systematically looking at things, but the data aren't all numbers. In my book, that's good qualitative research.

TS: Sure, especially when you look at mission statements.

ER: Right. So we were able to pull that information together and make choices about who needed to be in the pool. We actually started before we got the pool from the Regents, looking at possible aspirational peers, aspirational institutions, comparators, because the Regents didn't have a pool for them, and that was up to us because they weren't going to look at it.

TS: They weren't interested?

ER: No, they said, "You go ahead and set them up, but we want to look at just your peers. We don't want to look at the people you want to be like."

TS: The comparators, what do they want to see? If we have larger class sizes than our comparators or pay higher salaries?

ER: Who knows? The sad thing about this is that a lot of people in the business world talk about benchmarking, why aren't we benchmarking? Now when you ask the next question, what do you want to benchmark, we don't always get real clear answers.

TS: So they may say why aren't you doing what one of the comparable institutions is doing? You mentioned it with regard to race earlier: why don't you have a higher percentage of black students?

ER: They could do that. We'd love to be benchmarked on budget size or cost per student.

- TS: We'd win on those.
- ER: That's right. And tuition. I think Georgia is dirt cheap compared to the nation. Our productivity just leads the troops. There are a lot of things that we could be benchmarked on that would give us added ammunition to be better funded and better supported and everything else.
- TS: So that's their motive, and then our motive is well, we aspire to be more than we are now, so who are our role models?
- ER: I think the real question will be, how can we now use this? If we believe these are the best peers that we've had ever, maybe there's instruction for us. I was struck by just how many of these peers had certain disciplines in play at the doctoral level and how much broader they were in the health services area, for example. There's a lot of, if these really are more like us than unlike us. There are lessons to be learned about what we might evolve into, if we take a look at their patterns. In some ways it could be a richer experience for us than it would be for the central office.
- TS: It was interesting, looking at your list.¹ Some of ["KSU's Peer Metropolitan University Comparators"] are probably a whole lot better known than we are maybe because of, like Cal State Fullerton [California State University, Fullerton], they've got a championship baseball team every year or [California State University,] Fresno has got a football team.
- ER: Right.
- TS: It's really interesting to see that and see us aspiring to be a George Mason University, for instance, or a University of North Carolina—Greensboro.
- ER: Yes. George Mason's a great example—it truly is metropolitan in so many ways and so much more like us. JMU [James Madison University] was mentioned early on when we looked at the data, but they were so traditionally oriented that it didn't fit us, and yet JMU we could argue by size and AASCU reputation and everything else would be up here. But they're in a rural area [Harrisonburg, Virginia], largely residential, much more traditional.
- TS: Oh, so they're not on our list.
- ER: They're not on our list. They didn't make it on the list because even the mathematical formula didn't put them there.
- TS: Right. We're not James Madison, but we might be George Mason.

¹ The 27 October 2008 report is entitled *Kennesaw State University's Peer & Aspirational Comparator Universities* http://ir.kennesaw.edu/EIMWebApps/vic/analytic_studies/documents/pdf/KSU_comparators_2008.pdf.

- ER: We might be George Mason down the road. The other thing about the California institutions is that some of this is a historical situation. The Cal State system only recently was given the green light to add doctoral programs, in the last two years.
- TS: Right. That was their big division between the university system
- ER: The University of California system is all the doctoral research granting institutions.
- TS: And there are a bunch of them.
- ER: There are a bunch of them, all well-healed; the Cal State system is well-healed and the California system is well-healed, but they are now in this pool because they're all Master's/Large by Carnegie Classification.
- TS: I see at least one University of California on the aspirational list with University of California—Riverside.
- ER: That's right. We were wanting to have at least somebody from California from that list, but we had to go to the U Cal system to get them because nobody is generating enough graduates at the doctorate level yet at the Cal State system level to go there. Part of it was that we also wanted to see some kind of distribution across the nation. Some of the institutions on that list are borderline for us, but we wanted somebody from the midwestern states of X.
- TS: University of Missouri—St. Louis. I don't know if I saw anything from Colorado on our list.
- ER: No, the reality is that there are very few institutions in what's called the doctoral research university pool because you're only there for a short time. You have to generate at least twenty graduates a year on a sustained basis before you can go to the next higher level where most of the institutions are. There are two higher levels at the doctoral level: the research university with high research activity and then the very high research activity. We have high research activity groups in the aspirational pool, and we have these doctoral research university folks like us who are just getting started in that business, or your Master's/Large, which may or may not have doctoral students.
- TS: Master's/Large means lots of students?
- ER: No, it means that you have not crossed the twenty graduates a year yet to go to the doctoral.
- TS: What does large mean in that?
- ER: Over ten thousand.
- TS: So it does mean large in size.

ER: Yes, large in size. Lots of master's degrees annually.

TS: But you're not doing doctoral.

ER: The sad thing is that there are a lot of institutions that by Carnegie's are large, but I don't consider twelve thousand large anymore. It's awfully hard to put some of those that are twelve thousand and thirteen thousand on our peer list.

TS: It wouldn't be for us.

ER: But they're in our pool.

TS: In the doctoral, there's no distinction between Ph.D., M.D., Ed.D., whatever?

ER: No. It's all about, it's rough-cut.

TS: It looks as though we may get an international studies Ph.D., but for the most part our doctoral programs are continuation of the professional emphasis.

ER: Right. And even in our peers, those have much more established doctoral programming. You look at the patterns of graduates and what fields they're in; they tend to be professional dominant. You get many more out of business and education and engineering and health services and health professions.

TS: Okay, so you wrote this report, and this is brand new last month, and your committee of six or so got together and everybody said, "Yeah, this is exactly what we want to be; we are a metropolitan university." So this is the first time . . .

ER: Right. That's probably the first time that that word has been used.

TS: In 2008 it's the first time. That is a new direction for us then?

ER: Well, it's a clearer direction. We've been this kind of institution, probably, since we were a junior college, but we haven't owned that identity because we had these other identities of AASCU institution or regional university.

TS: Right. The report has gone to the Board of Regents, and you're still waiting for feedback from them on this report?

ER: Right.

TS: They may come back and say, "No, you're not a metropolitan university"?

ER: I don't think they can say that, but they can try.

- TS: But even if they try, that's still what we think we are.
- ER: Right. And the reality is they said. "You define within the pool which ones." We'll take them at their word; we're surely not going to second guess their decisions.
- TS: Right. I mean, this is extremely relevant to me in trying to write a history of Kennesaw State to know how to conceptualize what are we. Until you understand what we are, it's hard to write about us in any meaningful way.
- ER: Right. And like I said, we've had different strategic priorities over the years. Becoming a regional university was one and being this player in the northwest quadrant. To really be a player in the whole northwest quadrant we would have had to be a very different kind of institution with residence halls and a lot of other things going on. We're not members of the Chamber beyond Cobb and maybe the Canton area.
- TS: So you're saying that by defining ourselves as a metropolitan university we're changing somewhat our conception of our service areas?
- ER: No, I think we're just being more honest about what we are.
- TS: We don't get that many students from the mountain counties.
- ER: We don't, and we don't play in those communities the way we play in these local communities. An honest assessment of it, yes, now that we have housing, we probably draw from out of state; we have international students. But that doesn't make us the traditional diverse residential campus.
- TS: After a short break we're starting back up. So maybe a transitional subject would be the growth of technology on our campus. We talked earlier about Steve Scherer doing a few things and Jim Woods in the old days having the one computer for years and years. Certainly, from faculty and student perspective it's a phenomenal change with the growth of technology and teaching and research and whatever, so why don't you talk about how all that came about.
- ER: Of course, one of my responsibilities when I came initially was to be in charge of everything computing. As I said last time, we had some leadership issues that we had to work through initially with Jim Woods in particular. Once we were past that, we had Randy Goltz and his team working on the administrative side, we had Steve Scherer and an increasing number of colleagues interested in expanding the academic side. The challenge became how do we get the ball rolling? Because we rarely had two nickels to rub together back then on the whole campus, these were very challenging times.
- TS: It seems like we've always had a shortage of money.
- ER: We did. Steve would pull his own wire and fix his own machines.

- TS: I just did an interview with him and got some good stories about all the tunnels under campus.
- ER: Incredible stuff, but we got it done because it was important to do with or without resources. That's one of the beauties of Kennesaw's whole story; you can't look at the size of our budget or the size of our faculty and explain how we did all this stuff because it doesn't add up, but when you get people who are really excited about doing something and willing to put the sweat equity into getting it done, one way or the other it gets done. Very powerful story of organizational development! One of the things that we did just as an example—we weren't into word processors back then, and word processors just came into being, and they were proprietary machines, initially. They weren't general purpose computers as they are now. Lanier had a contract with Georgia Tech. Of course, Georgia Tech was always ahead of the game anyway, so they were going to be spending a million dollars a year on Lanier.
- TS: If a technology school isn't ahead of the game, who is going to be?
- ER: That's right. They were buying all these Lanier Easy-One stand-alone word processor machines. It occurred to me that we couldn't afford to spend \$7,000 or \$8,000 a pop for those, but I got a hold of one of my colleagues at Tech and asked, "What are you doing with your used machines after a couple of years?" He said, "We surplus them." I said, "Would you sell them to us?" For at least two years Tech was selling us two-year-old Easy-One's, and we were paying about \$3,000. When I first came, the only microcomputer on the campus was an Apple IIe in the media center, so these Easy-One's were part of that early array of new computers coming to campus. Steve was still working with dumb terminals hooked up to a Cyber in Athens.
- TS: The media center didn't mean the library at Kennesaw.
- ER: No.
- TS: [Charlene H.] Char Pattishall [Audio-Visual Coordinator] and AV and all that kind of stuff.
- ER: Right. At any rate, for two years we brought those in in a series and gave them to various administrative offices and got folks started on that. Then within a very short time, for \$3,000 you could buy a new stand-alone microcomputer, desktop. Back then we were using Word Perfect. Right now we're into Word.
- TS: I think the first program I learned was EasyWriter.
- ER: The bottom line is we had to be very creative to get the ball rolling in those early days. I remember even with microcomputers our plan was to give everyone on the faculty one, but it was going to take three to four years. We had to stage our expenditures over a four-year period, and people would get into those various queues depending on their need and their willingness to use the machines. There were times when we were giving people

machines that stayed unused in those early days. That wouldn't happen today, perhaps, but it did happen back then.

TS: No, not with the new faculty.

ER: Then, of course, we did see a big expansion of Steve's shop and Randy's shop over time. We were really, finally, moving with microcomputer capabilities. I remember, and again this is a sad commentary, but one of the other big initiatives was we got to add more multimedia to the classroom. One of the initiatives was to put an overhead projector and screen in every room. We didn't have that! We really have come a long way on technology to the point where we're now committed to true multimedia presentation capabilities and making them all Smart classrooms. I think we're further along than many institutions. I think one of the key points along the way that really leapfrogged us ahead was when Tina Straley and I—and, I forget, it was over ten years ago—we sat down and looked at what we're going to do about technology. It's just not moving along as fast. We don't have the resources we need. Tina did some research on technology fees and discovered that was a new wave of interest brewing around the country. We lucked out and in essence got approval for one of the first technology fees in the system, \$25.00 a semester per student, which threw another million dollars into the hopper for technology expansion for student support. That was a huge shot in the arm for Steve's attempts to bring labs up to speed, add more labs, add more capabilities, expand network capabilities, et cetera.

It wasn't long after that, like within a year or so, that we said this thing is getting bigger and more diverse every day, and we need a CIO. We in essence drafted a CIO job description and got the president's approval for that. The library in our view increasingly became an information technology resource. It was always ahead of the game. We also brought in [Robert B.] Bob Williams and turned it from an archival library of print materials to an electronic library that became accessible beyond the building. That was Bob's claim to fame, and he's done a fabulous job of it. It was natural for him to be tied in with the CIO as well and give them that history, that presence. We brought Randy [C.] Hinds in. He took that ball and ran with it. I think we've done great things. I think it's like an exponential curve, you know, we've got the ball rolling.

TS: I was trying to remember the other day how long Randy Hinds had been here.

ER: It's about ten years [1998].

TS: When you think about it, the worldwide web's just less than fifteen years old now.

ER: That's right. Especially it's utility, it's only a modest five to ten that people really grabbed it and have done so many creative things with it.

TS: Oh yes, it's remarkable how much it's changed over time.

ER: That was an example where we knew we needed to be up to speed. It was important for most of our programs to have this type of capability. We didn't know how we'd get there. We had to be very creative early on in our financing and our can-do attitudes and then to actually be ahead of many with the establishment of CIO, getting a fee in place, making that work.

TS: So it's a matter of establishing it as a conscious priority.

ER: Right, and having leadership to keep it rolling, effective leadership. I think Steve Scherer was extremely effective in his roles at his stages of this development. So was Randy Goltz.

TS: Who did Steve Scherer report to?

ER: Me.

TS: And Randy Goltz also?

ER: Initially.

TS: What about Randy Hinds when he came over?

ER: Then I moved them over to—we brought Randy Hinds as CIO; he was reporting to the president.

TS: You say that you moved them over . . .

ER: To Tina Straley.

TS: She was the Dean of the Graduate School?

ER: No, well, she was the Dean of the Graduate School, but also Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs.

TS: Basically, they reported indirectly to you.

ER: Right. They were part of our Academic Affairs team, but they took their direction from Tina, and I worked with the deans.

TS: Right.

ER: We're particularly proud of where we've been with technology. And even the messy data, there are very few areas where our students say we've had a bigger impact than peer institutions that we compare ourselves with, but one of them is technology. Our students say we have had a bigger impact on more of them in technology than is true in other places

TS: This doesn't sound like something that would be a total natural for Betty Siegel. Was she a leader on this? Obviously it took presidential direction, but like she brings Parker Palmer ideas to campus and so on, but technology she has to listen to other people.

ER: She understood its importance and supported it. I mean, the fact that we created the CIO position reporting to her, I think, indicated that she was supportive. But I agree with you; it wasn't her strong suit of interest.

TS: Well, everything can't be your strong suit.

ER: Right, but she was supportive. It did take a while for Randy's position to elevate to the vice presidential level, but even that happened under her watch, so she valued his contributions and leadership finally to the point that . . .

TS: So she grasped the importance of all this and pushed it.

ER: Right. I wish I could say it was as strong as her interests in other things, but it wasn't. It wasn't her primary interest; that's all. But she wasn't a roadblock to it. Otherwise, I wouldn't have done any of this. It wouldn't have even hit the fan.

TS: Right. And given the field that you were in, you must have been using a lot of statistical packages very early, graduate school on.

ER: Most of it was homegrown.

TS: They were homegrown?

ER: Well, back then we didn't have SAS packages or SPSS. When I went to grad school we were lucky to have homegrown programs in the computer center, probably written in Fortran.

TS: I was just thinking, I had SPSS [Statistical Package for the Social Sciences] when I finished my doctorate in '78, but I guess it was brand new back then.

ER: It must have been. I mean, my doctorate was in '75, and we didn't have SPSS.

TS: Wow. I guess it was brand new.

ER: We had things like it, but we didn't have it at Peabody. Some institutions were further along than others. Clearly, Peabody wasn't on the resource side. But in fairness we were using Vandy's hardware too back then.

TS: Okay, we had a big crisis fifteen or sixteen years ago now when we lost NCATE accreditation—National Council for. . .

ER: The Accreditation for Teacher Education.

TS: Right. We went on probation.

ER: Actually, yes, well, they removed us from membership.

TS: Certainly heads rolled and changes took place.

ER: We did have a change in deans.

TS: Do you think it was his fault?

ER: It was everybody's fault. Kennesaw from day one had been taking a great deal of pride in our strength of our teacher preparation programs.

TS: Everybody thought it was a great program.

ER: And our students always did exceptionally well on the exams and in getting certified. We felt like they were well grounded with their academic backgrounds. The beauty of our program was that we never sacrificed the teaching field for pedagogy. It was really a dual major. You had to have just as much of depth in the teaching field as you did in the pedagogical tool sets, which was not typically the case.

TS: Right. We were making them take almost five years to get through, weren't we?

ER: Right, very rigorous programs. But they delivered, and the students did well and were highly valued in the community, the education community at large. We took for granted a lot of things.

TS: Right. And we had master's programs at this time in Education.

ER: We did. We had had them for about ten years. They were one of the first; they followed business by a year; it was one of the first programs to move to the graduate level. So we had a lot of things going for us. But, if you know anything about accreditation, you can slip easily by not taking the requirements seriously, being a little bit lackadaisical in your preparation. I can say with fairly good assurance that we got written up on so many things because we had not done a good job of demonstrating compliance with the requirements.

TS: We may have been doing a good job, but we didn't

ER: Exactly right. We didn't tell the story. We didn't document it. That's one factor. The other factor that was a flaw is that we had evolved increasingly into a very traditional model of teacher preparation. In the early days everybody collaborated across the disciplines to get this job done [with faculty members in the content areas and in the School of Education] working hand in glove together to mentor these students and to get

them through the pipeline. Over time, as we were evolving and as different programs were evolving, we were starting to hire more and more discipline specialists in the School of Ed as opposed to relying on our discipline colleagues in the teaching fields to help out. So there was increasing division to the point where we didn't have the depth that we once had and a college-wide commitment to teach preparation. It was the College of Ed's problem. Unfortunately, because we were always strapped for resources, we had a tendency to hire generalists in the College of Ed rather than specialists, so we might hire curriculum instruction specialists who were broad field, and they were supervising student teachers who might have been math educators or English educators or social studies educators. They were doctorally qualified with a related degree, but they might not have been deep in those fields. From the standpoint of program quality we probably did have some weaknesses on the staffing side that we hadn't really aligned the right players together. But for a whole raft of reasons, I think two-thirds of the requirements we failed. That suggested to me that we really didn't have our act together when we prepared that [report]. Unfortunately, the third thing that was bad about that was that we actually had colleagues inside the tent who were not happy with the things that were going on, and they pulled the committee aside at the hotel and fed them an earfull. All that did was just pile more wood on the fire. We came out of that experience having lost accreditation. Unlike SACS [Southern Association of Colleges and Schools], which gives you plenty of due process and time to work through any deficiencies, NCATE was at a stage in their history where they were trying to prove to the federal government that they were tough. And they were willing to sacrifice their own if they had too. Back then, I think they were only accrediting 40 or 50 percent of the Teacher Ed programs. In this state, Emory wasn't accredited. I don't think it still is. I mean, it's a choice. Some states have ended NCATE years ago.

TS: A number of institutions were on probation at one time or another that were reputable institutions.

ER: Right. Because trying to understand their standards and meet their expectations has been challenging.

TS: I guess, probably, the general public doesn't understand that these accrediting agencies are not the government, but, as I understand it, the colleges decided to evaluate ourselves as a profession to keep the federal government off our backs.

ER: Well, what we did on that—it was crisis time because we had to have NCATE accreditation, at least in our state, to have our teachers be certified. We were given some leeway to get it fixed; in other words, the Board of Regents gave us about a year, and the PSC [Georgia Professional Standards Commission], the certification body, gave us some time.

TS: It had to be extremely embarrassing to Betty Siegel and everybody that was involved.

ER: Everybody. How can an institution with this kind of reputation fall so flat and for all those reasons? What was going on with the politics that caused people to shoot

themselves in the foot? What was wrong with our ability to prepare appropriately and tell the story persuasively and appropriately? There are just a lot of things that fell down.

TS: Was Deborah Wallace in your office before she became the dean?

ER: Yes.

TS: So she moved from assistant VP

ER: AA [of Academic Affairs]. I asked her to become the dean. She was out of education, Special Ed at Georgia State, had a lot of good administrative talents and skills, and she was working with me as my assistant VP.

TS: So I guess that's step number one to ask her to become dean.

ER: It was one of the steps; that's right. One of the fixes was we needed to change leadership; she was a logical person to turn to. The other big variable for us, frankly, is that we were not as diverse in our faculty back then. Diversity was really critical in NCATE terms because the student bodies that we're all teaching are extremely diverse K-12 levels.

TS: And we didn't have a diversity or multicultural course.

ER: We didn't have a commitment to it. We didn't have the representation on the faculty that we could have or should have had. Deborah's leadership was critical in that round too because she could walk that talk and she could lead that charge on top of leading the administrative fix. She was good with detail. She would follow up, and under her leadership we did pass the next time with hardly any

TS: So we created five million committees of these PTEU's [Professional Teacher Education Units]?

ER: Well, the PTEU was more my brainchild. I came in as VPAA and said, "We're all in this together. Whatever the divisions are, whether it's within the College of Ed or across the College of Ed or any other college, we're all in trouble here. This is a mainstream interest of this institution of long standing repute, and we can't let this thing go down. We've got too much at stake here." I remember having a weekend retreat that started on Saturday in December, and I wore my white Texas ten-gallon hat from Arizona to basically say, we're all good guys here. We've got to come together and make this thing work. But in my book one of the things that was breaking down was the fact that the responsibility for Teacher Ed had drifted from a collaborative ownership to the solitary silo ownership in the College of Ed, and that wasn't particularly healthy. Not only was the PTEU birthed, but what makes up the PTEU was the bigger hurdle, and that is could we actually take the responsibility for some of these Teacher Ed programs and move those out of the College of Ed and have them reside in three other colleges. That's what we did. We said, it works for Art, it works for Music, it works for PE; why wouldn't it work with English, and why wouldn't it work with Science and Math and Social Studies?

TS: And History. I think we've got at least half a dozen people in the History & Philosophy Department whose primary responsibility is Teacher Education.

ER: Exactly. And if it is truly a dual major, and if it is truly a tightly connected partnership, then why isn't anyone willing to walk the talk? That was an extremely important strategic move. It was very different. It still is very different because many Colleges of Ed still control all of the Education programs. But it's always difficult to do because they always literally have to have some bridge with the teaching field. The downside is that the teaching field folks are relieved of having to own these students and care for them and be concerned with courses work for them because that's the College of Ed's problem. But if it's now the Math's department problem or the English department's problem, then colleagues inside the tent—and we wanted colleagues who were deep enough in English to be of value and deep enough in professional English Education to be valued. So we got the Sarah Robbinses of the world, people who had deep experience. Some of the people we had been hiring were in and out of the schools after two or three years. That's not a depth that we got out of the Sarah Robbinses or the Marian Foxes [Marian Fox, Professor of Mathematics & Mathematics Education] or the others. We enriched the pool of talent that we had to serve these students that became focused around their area of specialization. These were role models. These were people that had been in the trenches for a long time, had done great work in the vineyard, so to speak, and now were coming to this level. They were bridge builders with their disciplinary colleagues, you know. Sarah got the English department to change some of their requirements—got some new courses built. The Math department did the same thing because the kinds of math courses that elementary teachers need are not the kinds that you give to college students or even middle and secondary students. We really evolved beautifully by rethinking our structure, creating this redistribution of responsibility for Teacher Ed, and then meeting some kind of structure or venue to bring these people together, and that's what the PTEU was. The PTEU was a venue. We have colleges that meet; we have departments that meet; but if we're moving from all the College of Ed being in charge to five different colleges, twelve different departments being in charge, how do we create a venue for them? Well, that's the PTEU.

TS: Right. And that's Professional Teacher Education Unit.

ER: Right. Which is an NCATE term.

TS: Is it?

ER: Yes. That's their term. How does the Professional Teacher Education Unit at the institution operate because they had the opportunity to go beyond Colleges of Ed. They had an opportunity to not even have a College of Ed. Your PTEU unit might be in Arts and Sciences with a pedagogy plug in, which is what some people did, or even MAT on top of a standard liberal arts degree. We capitalized on a model that was very powerful. By pulling program coordinators together, too, saying we have a program coordinator in English Ed who is out of the English Department who is an English educator would write

appropriate credentials to lead the charge on the curriculum, work with their colleagues. But then those coordinators come together and work with the dean at the coordinators' level too. So the [Education] dean meets with all program coordinators. The PTEU really is literally the faculty who are involved in Teacher Ed. It can be those who are directly involved in the program and the pedagogy side in particular or those who are allied with it in a tight way.

TS: So as quick as we could, we got our accreditation re-established. It took a year I guess, didn't it?

ER: We did. It took a year. We did a heck of a lot of work. I would say Deborah and her team and all of us did three years of work in one year. We came through with flying colors. We had our act together. We knew what we were doing. I think it was the strength of the model. We actually had a model, and we actually walked this talk that it was a college-wide, university-wide commitment. We had collaboration in that theme, and it was clearly evident much more in this new structure. So we could make it work and did. That still, to this day is a strong point.

TS: But we've gone through several NCATE re-accreditations since then, at least two, I guess.

ER: Right.

TS: That might be a good transition to when we have SACS accreditations or all the accreditations that take place, it seems like each time we do it, it's become more an administrative responsibility. I'm trying to think back in the 1980s, the first one that you did, I think, I edited that one and Paula [H.] Morris [an assistant professor of Accounting] was the chair. Nowadays it would be unthinkable probably for a full-time faculty member to be the chair of the committee.

ER: That's true.

TS: I mean, non-administrative.

ER: You're right. We moved from that period in the mid-1980s to two administrators being released: [Julia L.] Judy Perkins, the [Chair of the Nursing Department]—we made her dean later in that new configuration—but she was pulled out because she had been through so many nursing accreditations, and they really know how

TS: Released means released time to work on this.

ER: Right. And Ralph [W.] Frey had just helped us get AACSB accredited—he had been the department chair of Accounting working with the president in another role. So we had two administrators almost full time committed to it with [Michael T.] Mike Tierce, the editor, out of the English department, spending a lot of time on it.

TS: So this would have been in the mid-1990s by this time.

ER: Mid-1990s. Then this past time I had it full time as a coordinator. Part of the way that worked, well, number one, the whole game has changed in the way SACS organizes the reviews and requires the reports to be done, et cetera. So because I had as VPAA been heavily involved with SACS—I've been doing SACS reviews for twenty years, usually one a year, usually serving on the committee and in more recent years chairing the committee, so about a third of those I've actually chaired.

TS: To go into some other institutions.

ER: Other institutions and evaluate their compliance with the requirements. I would be part of the visiting peer review committee. I was also asked because of that experience by SACS to serve at the next level which is the C&R committee where the reports of these committees—it stands, under the old criteria it's the Criteria and Reports committee, now it's the Compliance and Reports committee—but the group that looks at the reports that the visiting teams turn in and then the institutions respond to—there's a tier of usually presidents and others who look at those responses to see if, in fact, the institution has made sufficient progress to warrant compliance and be reaffirmed. I had three or four opportunities to serve at that level and read these appeals, if you will. With that background it was a natural for me, especially when I stepped out of the academic vice president's office, to bring with me the responsibility for what turned out, under the new standards, to be the accreditation liaison function. In 2004 SACS changed the rule and the structure. No more self-studies into compliance audit level.

TS: No more self-studies?

ER: We don't have the word self-study anywhere. It's a compliance report.

TS: This last one, there wasn't a self-study.

ER: There was no self-study; it was a compliance audit, basically. We had a quality enhancement plan which is a five-year plan from the college in a particular domain, but the old notion of having hundreds of people working on a study of the institution and identify areas where you might improve had disappeared because the federal government over those years had increasingly called us to be more accountable and had demanded more of an audit type function and then basically wanted everybody to be in compliance with their requirements and not just thinking about what it would be like if one day we were there, or pledging to be there some day with good faith efforts. So SACS moved into a totally new realm. Not only did the reports change, but the review shifted, and an off-site review committee was to review the first report whereas in the past the committee would get the report, study it before coming to the campus, and then dialog with everybody and engage one another. Now we have to submit an electronic report with all of its supporting documentation electronically to a committee that sits in Atlanta with a bunch of other committees and reviews our reports and makes those decisions without talking or going to us.

- TS: No visits to campus any more?
- ER: Well, there is a visit, but not at that level. The initial cut on compliance is done by an off-site committee, and you have to have . . .
- TS: So it's a blind review.
- ER: It's not a blind review. And they're reviewing your institution and one or two others at the same time.
- TS: Supposedly comparable institutions.
- ER: Comparable institutions usually, but they have a heck of a lot of work because they've got these electronic documents from three institutions they have to set aside time in the four to six weeks before they're gathering in Atlanta to do their homework and discuss it online and over the phone, what's working and what's not working, come to Atlanta, come to an agreement on how to report on that. Then whatever's left over that's not in compliance at that point gets moved forward to the visiting committee. There still is a visiting committee, but they review the results of the off-site review, the institution's response to that and this new entity called the QEP, Quality Enhancement Plan.
- TS: And we've developed that with Global . . .
- ER: Global Learning for Engaged Citizenship. That's a five-year plan to improve student learning around something that's really important to the institution. We've been in the business of internationalizing everything for twenty years, but we had gotten audited, if you will, by colleagues in international fields from other campuses, and they gave us great praise for many of the things we were doing—the Year Of programming and the spirit of the campus around international initiatives, et cetera, but they said that it's still not global learning for all in the sense that's its goal oriented for some. Your participation is pretty low, your opportunities for students to see curriculum that addresses global perspectives, global understandings are sometimes restricted, and we still had plenty of work to do if we were really going to move to the next level and make this as central as technology or writing skills or problem solving, critical thinking, quantitative skill sets; global learning is not in that pool yet. We saw this as an opportunity to build on something that was strong, but still had plenty of room to grow, and we put together over a two-year period that Global Learning for All initiative. It was initially approved and proposed to the president as Global Learning for All, and she shifted it slightly to say make it “all for something.” So she asked us to make it for Engaged Citizenship. So it's global learning, so that we can be more engaged in the global community, if you will.
- TS: Right. Did this new student activities fee to support scholarship for study abroad come out of that?

ER: That was one of the proposals and part of the plan and had the president's commitment from day one. In fact, when the visiting team was here, it's hard to get those kinds of fees, and most institutions in this nation don't have those fees, and if they do they're much smaller. They said, "What are you going to do if you don't get it?" Dan Papp said, "Well, we'll come back at it and get it next year." It got pulled out from under us; we got surprised by the Chancellor who turned it down the first year. It was to be supported, but he was fairly new and wasn't sure he wanted to support that. It took Dan Papp and others another year to get him to understand why this was important. We went in with a twenty dollar proposal, but only got fourteen, but fourteen generates a lot of money.

TS: With 21,000 students that's a lot of money.

ER: Yes, that's about \$800,000 a year at this point. We actually took the technology initiative and said to ourselves, how can we learn from the successes there? One of the things that technology did was it started with a fee; well, we have to have a resource generator. One of the things that technology did was distribute resources. We put technologists in every college rather than relying on the central unit to serve everybody. Well, why don't we have coordinators for global learning in every college? That's where we have this council now, the Global Learning Coordinators Council, an extremely powerful group. Dan Papp came in and said, "Why don't we have . . ."—he helped beautifully to clarify the goals for that whole project and said, "I want every member of my cabinet to be responsible for at least one of these goals." So he engaged what we call cabinet-led leadership on this project. Not only was he at the top—he's an international [affairs scholar]; so it was a natural thing for him. But he got in the game deep, and he got in strong, and he said we're going to do this. He walks the talk and his colleagues are expected to walk the talk. We have leadership from the top; we've got the frontline leadership with these coordinators going; we've got lots of new designs in play—the certification plan that's about to get unfolded where we formally recognize the achievements of students in global engagement—and it's not just the completion of course work; it's the accumulation of experiences and even the ability to reflect on awareness of one's cultural place in the world, co-curricular involvements, to what degree are you engaged in community service that serves others from other nations and cultures, whether it's locally or off-shore, to what degree are you in essence walking this total talk of not just knowledge of global perspectives and not just intercultural skills, which go beyond multiculturalism, but across nations, sometimes inside and outside the U.S. And then where is this commitment to a certain attitude or value of citizenship, global citizenship.

TS: Did the switch from International Center to Institute for Global Initiatives come out of all this?

ER: It actually preceded it. During our program review process, soon after Lynn [Black] arrived, we did the graduate program reviews, and I was still coordinating the program review process. We not only reviewed programs, we reviewed all the centers in academic affairs, and it became quite apparent that we had five or six international centers, and they all were not talking together, and they were crossing lines, and they

weren't really coordinated. Lynn said, "We really need a more consolidated and uniform approach to this and somebody who can coordinate it all, and we might even have to move it out from under the deanship of one college to my level"—meaning his level to make it work even more effectively. He actually was the prime mover behind that one. It was certainly the Institute for Global Initiatives who has been a major player in helping get this thing rolling on the QEP. The QEP was a joint venture by Val [Valerie] Whittlesey [Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs], who was co-chairing it. I was a key player, and I'm the author of the QEP; I mean, I had to write it up for SACS purposes. Of course, we had two different committees along the way that helped build the ideas and concepts. Then Dan Papp came along with the whole cabinet, and he bought into certain things and not into other things. So we shaped it according to his interests and priorities, and we got rave reviews in the SACS onsite review.

TS: Fantastic. Say something about Continuing Education and how that's evolved since you got here.

ER: On many campuses it's a minor player, and in some of the community colleges it's a big player because they're very committed to work force development and other things, non-credit activities largely. It's hard for them to get the kind of space and air and attention at our level, although if you look at the University of Georgia, they have an extremely large Continuing Ed outfit, even headed by a vice presidential level person.

TS: Wasn't Betty Siegel at the University of Florida as the Academic Dean for Continuing Education?

ER: Right. She had an affinity for it. When I came initially, a year after I came, it was still a very small operation working under Cullene [Morgan] Harper. I mean, it was part-time thing.

TS: Cullene was really a PR person.

ER: And our Foundation liaison, fund-raiser [Director of Development and Public Services]. I mean, Cullene worked many hats, as many people did back then. But we moved it to Academic Affairs and struggled, frankly. We went through two or three leadership changes there before we found somebody who could really do the job. The person who is that person is still there right now, and she is Barbara [S.] Calhoun. Although she doesn't have a terminal degree, she runs circles around the three people we brought in with terminal degrees to try to do that job. She really had a deep history in this field, a lot of experience, and has a very good business sense of how to make things work and be profitable and how to organize things properly. I was extremely pleased to move Barbara into that role. In fact, she was an internal candidate whose previous director had failed, and she seemed to be a natural person to appoint from within instead of trying, yet again, to find somebody from outside. It was an extremely good hire in that sense and decision; she has been stellar.

The part of it that I'm particularly pleased with is that because we had a vision for what it could do, and she was able to pull it off, it became a six million dollar a year operation with lots and lots of programs. She was a real leader in technology, especially, because we were offering all kinds of certification in the technology field when companies could afford it. This was before the dot-com bust. We elevated her to dean's level title. We put her on the dean's council reporting to the VP on that council because we felt like this was another instructional unit. In fact, in the budget Continuing Ed is an instructional unit, but in the organizational charts and most institutions it's a community service wing that is sometimes associated with Public Relations or University Relations rather than the instructional unit. In our book we wanted to move away from—not totally away from the personal enrichment—but we wanted more professional development to be in play along with personal enrichment. We wanted a greater tie to faculty where we could get it, and we wanted the commitments of the international, which we did in spades with Ken [Kehua] Jin's assistance, and she did personally in Eastern Europe. So she was the total package, and I'm still pleased that we have one of the larger units in the state. It's actually headed by an academic dean, and it actually makes its own way. It doesn't have to be subsidized as some do. It's a very powerful group, and that's one of those other special things. It was near and dear to Betty's heart. Many things that were near to the president's heart fell to me to implement!

TS: I can believe that.

ER: Part of what we were able to do was where we were in sync—and we were often in sync on many of these priorities—it was a natural for me to want to find a way to do it. But, knowing Betty, her strong suits were not in the details of these kinds of things. That's why she had Ed Rugg and others to get the job done.

TS: Just a few quick questions I wanted to ask you. First of all, you came here as executive assistant to the president, and then how did it come about that you moved into VP for academic affairs?

ER: Well, soon after I arrived we reassigned [Eugene R.] Gene Huck; he went back to the classroom and [James W.] Jim Kolka was hired to become academic dean at that point—I don't know that we had vice president titles back then. I don't know when that change occurred—but that was another one of those things that was hard to come by from the Regents for a while. At any rate, he moved into the chief academic officer's role, and Jim was a fine fellow, very intellectually engaging, had a lot of fine qualities, but his weak suits were pretty substantial when it came to making decisions and getting things done and organizing or leading the deans in the charge. After about three years, it became pretty apparent that we weren't going to be able to move very far, very fast under Jim's leadership. Betty, I forget the whole scenario of how that transpired, but basically his contract was not renewed. And I was asked to step in and cover that position on an acting basis.

TS: My feeling is that it was never easy for Betty Siegel to tell somebody they had to go.

ER: No, extremely difficult. Sometimes we picked people whose strong suits were things that would have gotten her attention. But they weren't able to overshadow some really serious weaknesses. My policy is it's a lot easier to make hard decisions early in the search process and find the right people and make the right calls on hiring people than to try to fix it after the fact.

TS: Did you step in on an interim basis, and then they did a national search?

ER: I did. I was in that role for two years. In fact, I was in that role during the SACS visit. Six weeks before the SACS visit I was the—

TS: In 1986.

ER: Yes. I was the chief academic officer. We were doing a lot of scrambling; we had a lot to do. It did take us two years before there was a finalization of the national search, and I was in the pool for that and got the job. From there it was sixteen years of service in that position.

TS: Was that '87?

ER: In '88.

TS: So '88 to 2004 would be your sixteen years?

ER: I'm trying to remember, I don't remember exactly.

TS: Lynn Black's been here quite a while [2002].

ER: Yes, it's 2002. So it would have been '86 to 2002.

TS: So '86 is when you became interim, right?

ER: Right. Sixteen years in the role of chief academic officer, fourteen as a permanent, right. Carrying the water for eighteen, actually, with the title for fourteen.

TS: I've heard about the Newt Gingrich fiasco from lots of people, but do you have any insider's insights on what happened on that?

ER: Well, the prime mover on that was Tim Mescon who wanted to take advantage of Newt's rising stardom as Speaker [of the U.S. House of Representatives]. There was a lot of energy behind that, and Betty was interested in that energy. I think we were collectively naive about the politics of all that. George Beggs described Newt as the Tar Baby, and I think hindsight says there's probably more truth to that.

TS: You get stuck and you can't get away?

ER: Yes, extremely difficult. The difficulties that arose early on in that: Number one, Tim basically was the instructor of record on those courses that Newt was supposedly teaching; so it was a partnership in that sense. We had a legitimate person in play. It was an interesting topic. Newt had his book, and had been an academic from [University of] West Georgia. Even Chancellor [H. Dean] Propst, who probably paid the heaviest penalty of anybody, basically, backed the decision to—

TS: Propst did?

ER: Yes. He lost his job over it too.

TS: That's what he lost his job over?

ER: I don't know if he lost it over that, but that was one of the factors. I mean, we went down and talked to Propst about the whole situation, and he couldn't argue against letting him go forward and teach the course.

TS: Did you think it was a good idea at the start?

ER: I was okay with it. I didn't say no to it, and I was, basically, hearing my dean and president say they wanted to go forward with it, and I was supportive.

TS: Then it blew up [on us]—I mean, he did do the lectures; he just didn't grade any papers or anything like that.

ER: Right. And that was supposed to be Tim's job since he was the instructor of record and co-teacher. That wasn't the issue that was messy of this, it was all these PACs [Political Action Committees] and

TS: Foundation receiving money [from Gingrich's political allies].

ER: Yes, the fact that the Foundation's non-profit status was challenged, and they had to spend lots of money to defend themselves on that. We got out from under it, but it cost the institution and the Foundation a lot. That was regrettable. My disappointment was that there were times, and I think it was Betty and I together, I remember going down and trying to talk to Newt when smoke was rising pretty fast. Again, it's a good lesson in politics, but there are political decisions that are made that he wanted to capitalize on here, and being an instructor of record for this course with his book, et cetera, were important for his plans to become Speaker. Frankly, you hear the word "handlers" a lot when you're in election cycles, and we got to meet some of Newt's handlers. As much as Newt might have wanted to bail or do something different or maybe save the institution from some of the hardship and embarrassment, it wasn't in his collective best interest, especially from the viewpoint of those around him, or his advisors. We were stuck with some of that for at least the short term.

TS: Okay. So what happens in 2002 that you moved to the Center for Institutional Effectiveness?

ER: Well, probably, I can't totally explain it other than the fact that after fourteen, sixteen years, you do get some warts and enemies. As you know, I went through several lawsuits, and you're always named as a defendant whether you're a party to it or not. So you have that track record and baggage and other disappointments along the way that come into play. My sense was that there were certain individuals within the Foundation that had an interest in seeing me move on.

TS: In the Foundation?

ER: I think there were some influential voices there.

TS: Michael Coles?

ER: I don't know.

TS: I'm trying to think who was here in 2002. Tommy Holder.

ER: It wasn't Tommy Holder. It was before Tommy's leadership.

TS: Okay.

ER: The bottom line on it is that Betty's and my relationship was increasingly getting strained in the 2000s.

TS: That was my sense.

ER: Yes. In the early days we balanced each other with complementary skill sets and sometimes entertained tolerance for different points of view, being willing to entertain new ways of thinking about things. Later, there seemed to be less of that.

TS: Less tolerance?

ER: Yes. I was often finding myself being a nay-sayer among the cabinet, saying we really do need to attend to "x" or "y". One of the biggest disappointments for me was this. When I had, frankly, allies around the table like Roger Hopkins, we were able to fund the academic side a little better: we had gains in faculty which were essential for growing the institution. If you look at the trend lines for numbers of full time faculty, there was a period, four or five years, where we didn't grow very much in faculty. Part of that was other members of the cabinet said, after Roger left, especially, it was time to feed other players.

TS: So Roger was strong on the academics then?

ER: Roger was strong on his area first. I mean, he took care of his area. But you've got to give Roger credit; his next institutional priority was the academic mission. He and I both could work budgets. We worked arm in arm on building budgets in the early days because I knew my numbers, and he knew numbers, and we could get things done. He had the institution's best interests at heart. He was a man of integrity. He was going to call it pretty straight, and he was going to be upfront and honest with you. There was a time where there were plenty of other people around the table who could voice a different opinion, and Roger was good at that.

TS: So some key retirements . . .

ER: Contributed. Frankly, [James A.] Fleming was probably one of my nemeses; if you read his book I get killed in his book!

TS: Are you talking about *None Without Sin: [A Novel]*? [Written under the pseudonym of Nat W. Clerk; published in 2006 by iUniverse].

ER: Yes.

TS: Yes, I read that. I doubt if Betty Siegel is real happy about it either.

ER: Well, that's Jim. You just have to say that's Jim, and let it go. Anyway, Jim was constantly trying to elevate his status, and he basically took over the Foundation, rewrote the by-laws, made himself CEO and everything in the Foundation But, anyway, his mantra with Betty was that all the vice presidents needed to have equal voices and equal weight, so the concept of having any kind of number two or even a provost or whatever never could come to pass with that kind of culture.

TS: Did we have the provost before Dan Papp got here?

ER: He put it in.

TS: So it would be fair to say that he sees this tension when he gets here and resolves it by creating the provost?

ER: Well, Dan was smart. I mean, I had given Betty an analysis of AASCU institutions ten years earlier. Most of them had elevated their number two person to provost. Dan knew that and thought we were behind the times. I'm not even sure it was a tension issue. He was wanting to make sure—well, he may have been smart enough to know that being number two and having number two recognition are two different things. In function, I was number two, but I wasn't given the credit for that around the table or with . . .

TS: So other vice presidents wanted equal time.

- ER: Right. They wanted equal time, and Jim wanted his equal share of fame and time and energy and prestige and influence. It was Madame President this and that and whatever, and he was basically undercutting me regularly. I think, frankly, a big part of our growth was that, for whatever reason, if it was a honeymoon with Lynn [Black] or whatever, we did start to get rolling again with faculty lines. Even though that occasionally gets some push back from others who need help too, it's in the strategic plan with Dan. He's trying to get the student-faculty ratio down. He's realizing just how challenging that is because we're at a critical mass point where it takes a lot of faculty investment to move that needle. As you know, we've had this long history of doing everything out of our hip pocket and moving ahead without the money, hoping money will follow as opposed to asking for money before moving. So we did grow; whether we could afford to or not, we grew without faculty sometimes, and I was hearing more of those tensions and trying to voice them more, but that wasn't always . . .
- TS: I hadn't heard the Foundation might have wanted a new VP, but I heard loud and clear that some of them wanted a new president.
- ER: Right.
- TS: I did hear that. I'm just wondering if the two might have been related? I mean, I guess, well, you might want to edit some of this later on.
- ER: Well, you know, the bottom line is that for a long time we were a very effective team, and I had history, as did she. I think I was easier to pick off!
- TS: I understand. Fire the assistant coach first. Well, I'm just wondering, as a general rule, twenty-five years is a long time to be president of an institution; does your effectiveness at a certain point become less?
- ER: It does. I would think Betty would own up to that. It was a badge of honor for her to get the twenty-five, and it's great that she was able to do that; it was a rare [achievement]. When we look around the state, you probably remember Noah Langdale [president of Georgia State University, 1957-1988]. He was there a long time. He stayed well beyond the time [when he should have retired]. You can stay too long, and it really goes downhill fast.
- TS: I just wonder how many academic vice presidents last sixteen years?
- ER: Not many. Five to seven is the average for presidents and vice presidents. Some of that is because people use it as a stepping stone; people kept saying, why don't you go on to a presidency somewhere?
- TS: I know you applied at Clayton State.

ER: Occasionally, I was interested in leaving, and I would do these little forays, but the reality is there would be very few places I would rather be, to be honest with you. Having been at several other places, I said this regularly, the grass might look greener, but it's different grass!

TS: I've always agreed with what Betty Siegel said about we've been several different institutions over these years.

ER: There's always something exciting to do here. There really was, so that kept your interest.

TS: I've always felt that way.

ER: I'm still here because the new role I have was a new opportunity.

TS: Let me just ask you, with Center for Institutional Effectiveness, but you've got a different name on the door now [Enterprise Information Management].

ER: Right.

TS: Is that a change in substance as well as title?

ER: It is. Basically, when I left the vice president's job, I brought with me the Center for Institutional Effectiveness concept. We invented that to capture this SACS liaison and institutional effectiveness focus, which seemed to be dogging institutions for the last twenty years. That came with me. Part of getting ready for SACS required an information management talent like Eric [R.] Bowe. Eric left the head of academic computing and was about to go to Georgia State and take a job similar to the one we hired him to in the Center. So we hired Eric to—he's our guru of, an architect of, our database structures and our technology over here—very smart fellow and does incredible things. To move into this electronic area with SACS, we needed someone with his talents to make this all come to pass because we needed systems for faulty tracking and credentials. We had seven gigabytes of supporting documentation that had to come up like this and had to be reliable and had to be backed up. He figured out how to do all that and get it done effectively. We got high marks from the visiting team on that too. We had an information management function, an IE function, and then Debbie Head's unit, IR, reported to me.

TS: Institutional Research.

ER: Right.

TS: Does it still report to you?

ER: Well, we've merged. Debbie retired, and upon her retirement we merged the IR, IM and IE functions together under me. So all of Debbie's team became my team with Eric, and

we made it Enterprise Information Management. I still wear the SACS hat, and we're still supporting the SACS website because that's an ongoing kind of thing, but

TS: I guess I didn't understand the Enterprise in the title.

ER: Well, we're trying to talk about institution-wide, that's what enterprise means in technology terms. So when you see Enterprise Software, its software that covers the whole institution. We wanted Enterprise Information Management. Basically, we are trying to move IR from just this status reporting and analysis function to some kind of self-service enterprise-wide information management system—to use another business term, business intelligence platform. These are systems that go beyond the typical operational routines you have. We've got Banner and PeopleSoft doing operational things. They register students; they make payroll; they keep books. They're not smart systems. You can't ask an ad hoc question and get anything out of them, usually. If you want them to run class rolls, we can do that; if you want to run payroll, we can do that. You want to know some fact about something that's in your database, you can't get there easily. Technically, you can, but the systems are so complex, and they require so many exotic tools to access, that we call them data jails—lock those in, but unless it's part of the routine function, you can't get it out. We're in the business of institutional research and need access to data, and more and more people need access to data for decision-making. In the business world, people have access at their desktop, sometimes with dashboards, customized to do the things they need to look at every day. What are we going to need to do to get there? I had helped Debbie to think differently about IR for the last five or six years, saying we need more and more technology people in here, fewer and fewer academics who did research, because this is moving more and more to a technology arena where we're not the keeper of the key anymore on doing research. We're facilitating everybody doing their own research, covering their own data. So we were given an opportunity to buy this Business Intelligence platform called SAS—SAS Enterprise Intelligence Suite.

TS: What's that?

ER: It was originally a statistical package, but it's now an information management business intelligence system as well. But unlike Banner and PeopleSoft that specialize in getting certain jobs done, this system doesn't get any job done in terms of an operation. It's a platform that sits on top of whatever databases you're running, including Excel or whatever, and you can interface with it. It tries to integrate data in a metadata structure and it also allows end users, once it's been translated in the metadata, to get access to it in plain English. In other words you don't have to know sequel programming or any kind of exotic BI tool to extract data from an Oracle-based product. You don't have to be a computer jock to get the data out. We're giving various power users around campus now who are going to be our allies in this effort, data cubes we call them, and it allows them to go in and build their own customized reports and keep track of the data they need for their reporting functions from their own desktops, and they don't have to go through us anymore. They can have elements added if they need more elements added, and it's all done in a drag and drop arena and in plain English format. The bottom line is that in our

book, it's a really powerful tool for getting out of this bog we're in. We're trying to make systems smart and be intelligent and be self-service oriented, but they weren't designed to do that. These were services designed to do functions. In the old days, we built Cobalt programs to do these functions, and later we would buy these packages off the shelf for Banner and PeopleSoft to do these functions, but they weren't designed to be smart systems that could give you information you need on an ad hoc basis, and they weren't designed to build you a warehouse that you could snapshot. These are whole live databases. The data changed every second, so how do you build a census pool of data and store it in a warehouse, so you can look across time and have a static set of numbers, the official numbers for the fall that you can get to easily. In my book this was an exciting opportunity that everybody was struggling with—how to get where we are to there. Here's a new tool set, Randy [Hinds]'s willing to invest in it. I've got the best player in architecture on my team in Eric Bowe. He can help make this thing go. We've got this commitment in IR to be more and more oriented toward self-service and advancing this, and almost everybody has got a degree in technology now except me. We just hired [M.] Leigh Funk in from the School of Ed who was their data manager, and she's actually going to be our Data Quality Initiatives director. We have Eric working on warehouse. We've got Donna [R. Hutcheson] as Director of Enterprise Information Reporting and we're going to have Leigh work on data quality initiatives because one of the problems we have, as you probably know, is the systems are not only data jails, but they capture dirty data. People put it in, they check it, it's not right, and so when you do get access to it, you wish you hadn't seen it because it's not viable and valid data. That's because we haven't spent enough time talking about what should be the business practice—how do we define these elements; how do we make sure that we have a process for checking our work so that the data that one person puts in is valid from another set of eyes. None of that is in play.

TS: Sounds complicated to me.

ER: Well, it's interesting. I still get to do lots of institutional research, activities and analytic studies. This thing with peer comparators is one, we did. I'm really proud of the forty year history of our enrollment that I did last year for the cabinet. I ended up getting best paper award at SAIR [Southern Association of Institutional Research] for a retention analysis involving alternatives to six-year degree completion.

TS: Forty year enrollment?

ER: It's an enrollment projection based on forty years of history. I'll have to send you a copy.

TS: Yes, I'd like to see that, I really would. I love the *Fact Book* but you make it sound like the *Fact Book* may be antiquated now.

ER: Well, the whole site—we created the site and called it VIC, Virtual Information Center. The *Fact Book* is just one part. There are so many other elements of VIC that are interactive. You can get all kinds of drill downs and detail data that wouldn't be suitable for a *Fact Book*, but are very suitable if you want to get deep into trends within a

particular field or whatever. So we're trying to make it a much richer array of resources. In addition, [we are] trying to give people an opportunity to build their own data sources through this SAS platform.

TS: All right.

ER: Anyway, Leigh Funk has also agreed to take over as SACS liaison so she's in training with me for the next couple of years.

TS: You've still got a few years, I guess.

ER: A couple. I'm basically telling everybody 2011.

TS: As your last year?

ER: It could be. It depends on how bad this economy really is!

TS: Right. Might have to work forever.

ER: I don't know. I'm on TRS, so I don't have to worry too much compared to my TIAA-CREF account from my Vandy days. It has gone down the tubes, but TRS is hanging tough.

TS: Let's hope it continues to do so.

ER: That's right.

TS: Well, I've taken more time than we had allotted, I believe, today, but . . .

ER: I appreciate the opportunity, Tom, to share the story. It's a good story, I think. I mean, Kennesaw's a good story. I've just been pleased to have been part of it. Part of the reason that I'm still here is that there was always more here than there were opportunities elsewhere that were attractive. My kids grew up here; my wife has her connections professionally; my daughter is still here with her venture. It's a hard place to beat. The campus and the university, and the whole community—I'm glad I found Kennesaw.

TS: Well, I'm glad you did too. Thank you.

KSU Oral History Series, No. 100
Interview with Edwin A. Rugg
Conducted, edited, and indexed by Thomas A. Scott
Part 2: Tuesday, 17 November 2015
Location: Dr. Rugg's residence, near Gainesville, Georgia

Part 2: Tuesday, 17 November 2015

TS: The interview today is on Dr. Rugg's work for the University System of Georgia helping newly consolidated institutions gain SACS accreditation.

Ed, I want to get your reflections on a lot of things. First, I was reading what Chancellor Hank Huckaby said back in 2011 when the consolidations all started. We were right in the middle of the Great Recession at that time. I thought his speech to the Board of Regents was really, really interesting because he talked about how there was an age after World War II where the emphasis was all on growth. Everybody was building new colleges and expanding their campuses, lots of buildings going up, lots of faculty being hired, and everything was about growth. Then he said the times have changed. We're not in that era anymore. We're in an era where we've got to watch our pennies, basically he was saying, because we're not growing like that anymore. We have to emphasize efficiency, and consolidation is one aspect of emphasizing efficiency. I thought that was really very interesting making that comparison to the way things were and the way things are today. But also in looking around the country, I don't see anybody else that has consolidated the way Georgia has. We started out with four announced in 2011, and then Kennesaw and Southern Poly in 2013. That was the fifth. Then in January 2015 the sixth was Georgia State and Georgia Perimeter College, and now they've announced Albany State and Darton with our old friend [Arthur N.] Art Dunning as the president. So that's seven. Fourteen institutions involved in seven consolidations. I don't see anybody else in the country who is doing things the way Georgia is at this point. I wanted to ask you about that. Do you know anybody else that is doing as much consolidating as Georgia? And how do you see the role of Chancellor Huckaby as a leader of higher education? Whether he's going in the right direction or not, he's certainly leading somewhere. But how do you assess what's been going on with consolidations in Georgia in general and the Chancellor's role in it all?

ER: Well, let me answer a couple of different ways.

TS: Yes, please.

ER: Reflecting back to your comment about the growth or lack of growth statement that Huckaby initially launched this initiative with, there's actually another side to that, and that is that there is increasing growth and demand for higher education, but there's not an increasing revenue stream to meet the needs of that demand.

- TS: Right.
- ER: So the fundamental issue that Huckaby and others in this state were facing is, how do we try to satisfy this increasing need for higher education opportunities throughout the state when we're short of funds? That was really one of the key variables that forced them to look at, how can we be more efficient? I think the fact that Georgia is doing it and others aren't is tied probably to the history of the state and how this state responded to the post-World War II Baby Boom era and the GI bill era.
- TS: It seems like we were typical of other underserved areas in the Sun Belt.
- ER: Yes, but we were atypical in the sense that we took a strategy in the 1950s and 1960s of planting something within thirty miles of everybody's door.
- TS: Oh, and nobody else was doing that?
- ER: No. If you look at Florida for example, when they built that second tier of universities, where did they put them? In urban areas.
- TS: Orlando . . .
- ER: Orlando, down in the Miami area, Tallahassee and Jacksonville. So they built where the people lived and worked.
- TS: So they don't have . . . but they do have some junior colleges.
- ER: They do have a community college system, yes. Georgia never really built one. We saw a migration from the technical school era into technical colleges. But that's part of the community college equation, typically, the other half being transfer programs. This state decided to divide the turf with transfers going to the Regents and letting the technical schools have their own separate administrative stream. And frankly we have to remember that I think it was eleven technical schools that merged a few years earlier than we did. In fact there was a triple merger in Cobb—Chattahoochee Tech, North Metro and one other.
- TS: That's right, in 2009. North Metro College and Appalachian Technical College merged with Chattahoochee Tech to form Chattahoochee Technical College.
- ER: So there had already been in this state some move by one of our governing bodies [the Technical College System of Georgia] to consolidate and save in ways that proved successful enough for the Regents [of the University System of Georgia] to be motivated especially during these times when there was an increasing demand for service, but no resource to fulfill that demand short of this concept of possibly consolidating where we could. This is the beauty of our model versus what the other one did. The other one [the technical college system] actually did cut budgets and saved money and sent it back to the treasury. In our case in the university system we were promised that the resources

saved from administrative consolidation would be reinvested into the instructional side of the house, the faculty side of the house, so that this demand for more service could be met with hopefully a streamlined administrative structure in these revised institutions. I think that was one of the variables that was working for us.

I think the other reality is in our system alone we had thirty-five units. I came in 1982 from Mississippi where we had eight. Georgia didn't have that much larger population. Mississippi had its own problems and still does, but the reality is that we built a lot of institutions conveniently located somewhere. Some of them were two-year colleges, a good number of them were two-year colleges. Over the years they elevated themselves [by becoming four-year schools].

TS: Very few of the two-year schools are left.

ER: Yes. Once the technical colleges became colleges and started offering associate degrees, even though they were AAS degrees as opposed to AS or AA degrees, the lines were blurring over higher education's definition of the associate degree, in particular, and transferability, and everything else. Then they started offering bachelor's degrees not only in our state but in other states, the BAT degrees, Bachelor of Arts in Technology, so they were beginning to creep into in essence our business.

TS: Right. Chattahoochee Tech doesn't have BAT degrees do they?

ER: I'm not sure, they might. We'd have to look that up.

TS: I'll check that and see; I wasn't aware of that. [Editor's note: According to the 2015-2016 updated general catalog, Chattahoochee Technical College is authorized to offer Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degrees, diplomas, and technical certificates of credit (TCC)., but not BAT degrees]

ER: The reason I say they might is that I think that particular technical college has been the head of their pack. They were ahead in getting SACS accreditation. There was a time when their board was discouraging SACS accreditation of their members.

TS: Really?

ER: Yes, and the Regents were too. It was part of differentiating the two systems, but it was silly because we were being asked to do seamless work together. It would have been more seamless had we both been operating under SACS and insuring that the same standards were being taught in both places. But now I think they've finally realized that it is of value to their students and to the system for all of them to be SACS-accredited. I think they've moved now in that direction. [Editor's note: Chattahoochee Tech is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) to award associate degrees].

There's a history here that gets in the way of some of these advances. The fact that Georgia can do it and other states can't do it is also probably linked to our government structure. It's very unusual for states to have one governing board for the four-year system. You have Tennessee, you've got the UT system and Tennessee Board of Regents system. You have one in Mississippi but that's only eight universities.

TS: That was something that attracted me to Kennesaw Junior College in 1968 that we were under the same Board of Regents as UGA, Georgia Tech, and everybody else.

ER: The beauty of that is that it's so much easier under one governing board to pull off these consolidations because we've got one government structure. They set the tuitions, they set the budgets, and they have constitutional authority to determine how many institutions we will have and in what configuration. Other states don't have that, especially when you have to cross boundaries of a community colleges system and a four-year system. It would be harder if you were in Tallahassee wanting to merge a four-year college with a two-year college because they're two separate governing systems.

TS: Two separate systems, so no Georgia State University/Georgia Perimeter College merger.

ER: No, no, and ours would have been more complicated too because many of the early ones, especially, were two-year schools really that had been elevated recently to a four-year [status]. They were really in their infancy as four-year institutions.

TS: Right, right. Gainesville [State College] would be a good example. [Editor's note: Gainesville and North Georgia College & State University completed a consolidation in 2013 into the new University of North Georgia. Gainesville College was a two-year school until 2005 when the Board of Regents expanded its admission, authorizing a limited number of baccalaureate programs].

ER: Yes, Gainesville is an example of that. So there are a lot of things that worked in our favor. Some of it was the fact that we had distributed our units in such a way that we had a lot of outlets for higher education out in the middle of nowhere. So we had sometimes fewer than a thousand students at an institution. Or we had maybe a couple of thousand within spitting distance of the next college.

TS: So you're saying I shouldn't overemphasize the importance of Chancellor Huckaby in all of this because he's working in a system that makes it possible.

ER: Well, it makes it possible, but we do have to give Huckaby a lot of credit. We have to remember that historically some efforts to consolidate were launched by the Regents twenty-five to thirty years ago [1986-1990]—the Savannah mergers, the Albany mergers, which involved HBCUs [Historically Black Colleges and Universities]—which made them sensitive. There was enough backlash that the leadership backed off.

TS: Right. There was an attempt with Armstrong and Savannah State, and they almost did it at one point didn't they?

ER: Yes. But it became a problem of who was in control and if you lose your HBCU . . .

TS: Right.

ER: Which is another reason why you've got to give the chancellor credit for not dealing with an HBCU merger until now.

TS: Until this year?

ER: Yes, how do you say we're not playing when some of the other institutions at so many different levels have already consolidated?

TS: I did an interview with [Joseph H.] Pete Silver [Sr.] about a month ago. This was one of the things that we talked about. He was wondering how the merger of Albany State and Darton would go over locally. Would there be resistance based on race to that merger? I guess it gets back to why did they create Darton (Albany Junior College) to begin with when they already had a four-year school. Albany is not that big of a community. What other reason than race is there?

ER: Right. But again you look at the chancellor's playing of his political cards here. You put a black president [Dr. Paul Jones], as interim president of Darton State College [since October 2013]. So we already had a black CEO at Darton. We have Art Dunning [interim president of Albany State University, November 2013-November 2015; permanent president of the new Albany State University as of November 2015] who has been given the lead in this consolidation with Albany State. So Albany State is seen as the institution that is preserving its HBCU identity and history but expanding its mission to include the Darton students.

TS: Right. Actually, you're saying the president of Darton is now going to be . . .

ER: He has just been named by the Board of Regents [on November 6, 2015] to be the president of Fort Valley [State University].

TS: But he was just interim at Darton?

ER: Yes.

TS: How about that? So that made it easy. You don't have to eliminate a president that way.

ER: Yes. There have only been two [consolidations] where we have had permanent presidents at both institutions. In most cases there's been a vacancy that permitted an easier consolidation at the top. Let me give the chancellor credit too. Politically, very few chancellors would have done what this one's done. This fellow has been in Georgia a long time, been well connected to the legislature for a long time, and he had the political connections. He also had nothing to lose at this stage of his career. He could

have retired years ago, literally [and officially retired from the University of Georgia, where he was senior vice president for finance and administration, on June 30, 2006]. But he is doing this job because he thinks it's really important for the state and for the system. So there aren't many people in his position. Previous chancellors haven't had the political will or even the political connections to pull something like this off. It's also quite obvious to me that none of these consolidations happened until the groundwork politically had been laid. In other words, he was touching all the bases.

TS: Well, let me ask about Governor Nathan Deal. He was behind the appointment of Huckaby, wasn't he?

ER: Yes, I think so.

TS: And of course, they're both from this part of the state, the Gainesville area.

ER: That's right.

TS: I guess my question is, do you have some insight of how big a role the governor played in these consolidations?

ER: Well, it's been more behind the scenes than it has been overt, but I'm sure that this would not have happened without the governor's blessing. It's interesting that Deal, coming from the Gainesville area, has had his home institutions, Dahlonega and Gainesville, in the first round.

TS: Yes, it is.

ER: And that they've benefitted from the first rounds.

TS: They have benefitted?

ER: I think so. If you talk to the folks at North Georgia, they are still concerned that they gave up their selectivity to take on an access mission. See, they were riding a very high four-year retention rate, four-year graduation rate, and six-year graduation rate, so they were more selective.

TS: So consolidating . . .

ER: Once they had to bring in all these freshmen that were in an access door, it disturbed them, and they were trying to figure out, how do we not count them? They were basically told, "You will count them. You are a new institution, you have a new mission, and you will [count them]. You're already down in Gainesville offering graduate and some upper division undergraduate work. You need the Gainesville [campus]."

TS: So they're not keeping statistics on the two separate campuses.

ER: No, they're not.

TS: Well, that's the same thing that Georgia State's going to see after their merger.

ER: They're going to have a change too. So far, now, they're going to deal with it a little differently. They're going to have two separate admission standards: one, what they have now for all the colleges, save one, and the Perimeter College will retain the access mission. So you'll have to perform at a certain level to transfer into one of the other colleges at a later point in time. But each of those [consolidations] has had to struggle with some issues like that. Coming back to the chancellor, he's had the political will, and he's had the political know-how, and he's laid the right groundwork because there's been no backlash, politically.

TS: Right, as far as I can tell.

ER: And if I had to guess, I think they've had to rethink some things too along the way, although I've not been privy to any of their consolidations until it has been announced. I was at one point earlier in the game privy to the notion that there might be a multiple consolidation in the near term, i.e., not two but maybe three or four.

TS: Like in South Georgia?

ER: That was everybody's guess. It could have been in other places.

TS: It could have been Highlands along with Kennesaw and another.

ER: Or it could have been anything on the coast. It could have been any number of things, and it still may be in the works. But if it was South Georgia that's been rethought because now two of the equation have been identified for a single consolidation [Waycross College and South Georgia College in 2013 into the new South Georgia State College], which may mean a different configuration for the West Georgia side of the state, going north and south, who knows? And there still might be multiple consolidation [along the coast] with a different configuration.

TS: The University of West Georgia has not been involved in any of the consolidations.

ER: Not yet.

TS: Or Valdosta for that matter, or Georgia Southern.

ER: Not yet. It will be interesting to see. The Savannah thing is so complex. There's the unfortunate situation where half of the four-year curriculum belongs to one and the other half belongs to the other. The business school is at Savannah State [University], and the teacher education college is at Armstrong [State University]. So if you're crossing those lines you have to transfer institutions. Then you have Georgia Southern which is not that far away carrying the whole ball of wax.

TS: They might consolidate those three.

ER: It's possible.

TS: But then you've got the question of history where you have three historical campuses, including one HBCU.

ER: Yes, yes. Well, there's a lot of history. The Medical College of Georgia and Augusta State University had a lot of history! (laughter)

TS: That's probably been the toughest of the consolidations from what I hear from folks that were associated with August State.

ER: Yes, yes. It was not tough in terms of the function; it was tough in terms of the name.

TS: It is now called Augusta University.

ER: Yes. And the reality is the Regents learned their lesson on that one. After round one they said, "Things we're not going to do again: we're not going to leave it up to the institutions to decide what their name is going to be" (laughter). "Or their colors or who the president is going to be. We're going to make it crystal clear from day one." They've spent too much time worrying about those issues, and it delayed their progress on being prepared to function as one because they took so much time. In the case of the Augusta situation it was pretty messy. And it resulted in a name change shortly after the first name was resolved.

TS: No one seemed to like Georgia Regents University.

ER: Yes.

TS: Well, I mean, it was very difficult to merge a medical school with a liberal arts state university. They are so different.

ER: Well, we call them liberal arts universities, but the reality is the majority of their programs are professionally aimed. Teacher education, computer science, etc. True liberal arts institutions barely exist anymore. Milledgeville attempts to be one, but when you look at the curriculum and the student mix, they still have a lot of business majors and minors and nursing students and other folk.

TS: It's actually more the medical college as a research institution, an R-I, whereas Augusta was a long way from being an R-I.

ER: I think what's really interesting about the medical college situation is that they had already given up some of their name or identity as the Medical College of Georgia [its name from 1833 to 2011] when they shifted [in February 2011] to Georgia Health

Sciences University. They went through some flap with their constituencies over that, but then when they went to Georgia Regents University [in January 2013] they gave up total identity with their primary historic mission in medicine. You have one institution waiting in the wings to be the second med college, Athens. You already had a deal where they were training doctors in Athens, and they had just acquired some new facilities—a naval base facility—that was going to be their health sciences center. When there was no Medical College of Georgia by name and no Health Sciences University by name, I think, it opened the door even wider for UGA to move into medicine and perhaps become or at least move toward the status as maybe the first-year medical services or medical science institution in the state. There is a little bit of an anomaly because most of their peers [other flagship state universities] have one in the southeast region. They have engineering also, and now they have some engineering programs.

TS: They're very imperialistic in Athens.

ER: Well, yes.

TS: If you look back fifty or sixty years ago they were saying we didn't need all these junior colleges in Georgia. You could just keep the off-campus centers of UGA, and UGA would spread all over the state.

ER: That's true.

TS: And obviously the state of Georgia went in a different direction.

ER: Right. And you could say the same about Georgia State. Had they adopted the mission it now has where it has multiple suburban campuses as well as the downtown campus, if it had done that comprehensively in [metro] Atlanta, now Kennesaw would not be independent, nor would Clayton State.

TS: Well, we had to fight to get four-year status because of Georgia State. Chancellor [George] Simpson said we were going to be a feeder institution forever.

ER: That's right. So coming back to the question, I don't think any of this could have happened without a Hank Huckaby. He had all the right connections and he had the history and he was in the right place in terms of his career. These were gutsy moves. These take a lot of time and energy out of everybody's lives, the central office especially. You have to do a lot of political leg work to make it happen effectively and smoothly. He could do that. Very few people in his position could do that.

I give him a lot of credit for this. His ability to do it. Frankly, I think he and the Regents thought it was going to be a much faster process initially. When the first four consolidations were announced in January they thought they could take effect in July of the same year. Our colleague Linda [M.] Noble [vice chancellor for academic affairs] who was down at central office may have been the person who asked the question around the table, "Has anyone talked to Belle Wheelan [president of the Southern Association of

Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges] down at SACS about all this?" (laughter) And they had not. When they got with Belle they discovered that it was not as easy a process or as quick a process. In fact she basically said, "SACS is the gatekeeper for DOE [US Department of Education] recognition, which means all your financial aid, all your grants and contracts. They have rules and regs for how mergers and consolidations are supposed to be handled by the accreditation gatekeepers, and there were six regionals, SACS being one, that serve as the federal gatekeepers on this kind of stuff. So they had an eye-opening experience with Belle.

I think they came back from that and said, "Who can we get to help us with this?" I think Linda piped up and said, "I think you ought to talk to Ed Rugg. He was pretty deep in SACS when he was at Kennesaw before he retired, and he might be able to help us." I had an interview with Shelley [C.] Nickel [vice chancellor for planning and implementation] shortly after that, leading the charge on this. I'd done some homework on what it really would take in terms of the two levels of review. There's a prospectus review that basically permits the institution to officially consolidate. Then there's a site visit committee to see if after consolidation you're still in compliance with the requirements. Then they turn right around within three or four years, and you're having another what's equivalent to a ten-year review as a new institution. So it's a lot more complicated than just saying January it's going to happen and in June it's effective. This pushed the whole timetable back substantially because they had to submit that first review report for the prospectus on October 15, the deadline for that first year, and then they wouldn't hear until December from the SACS review committees process as to whether they were going to permit it to move forward. If they did permit it to move forward, within thirty days they had to officially make it happen. Then they had to schedule the committee, which in almost all cases has been the following fall, which then usually gets set by the following December again. So it's a two-year process just to get through this, and that's assuming you don't have any snags.

TS: Right. In terms of your background on all of this, you've done a lot of work with SACS where you say this was volunteer work up to this time, like being on visiting committees?

ER: Yes, yes, I have chaired or served on over thirty committees in a twenty-year period, and I also sat on the C&R committee, which is compliance and reports or the next level up.

TS: Right. So after you were vice president for academic affairs, you were doing institutional research for ten years?

ER: And I was doing SACS work.

TS: But your work for SACS was professional service?

ER: All volunteer. That's right.

TS: So this is the first paid assignment for them?

ER: Well, when I left the vice president's position, I created the Center for Institutional Effectiveness in preparation for our 2007 reaffirmation for SACS. My team, which was virtually Erik [R.] Bowe, myself, and Luan [Sheehan], steered us through the reaffirmation. So I had that background, which was very recent, but I also played on—my very first job at Peabody [College] was helping Peabody get SACS reaffirmed and NCATE [National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education] re-accredited. At [the University of] Mississippi I was working on Mississippi's re-affirmation. And I had two previous Kennesaw reaffirmations, so that history plus serving on these committees gave me some pretty deep knowledge of what SACS wanted and how the requirements had evolved.

TS: This is the first time you had gone to work for SACS at this point?

ER: Well, I wasn't working for SACS; I was working for the Regents.

TS: Oh.

ER: Yes, see the Regents needed to get somebody in the central office who knew something about SACS to facilitate the SACS approval process. At the same time the central office team was working with the campus teams to actually facilitate the consolidation planning and implementation work. Initially, I was doing some 49 percent work under Randy [C.] Hinds [KSU's vice president for operations, chief business officer, and chief information officer] soon after I retired. Then this happened within a year, and they came in and said, "Can we buy some of Ed's time?" So they bought half of that. Then within frankly a couple of months I said to Shelley, "This is not fair to Kennesaw, me, or anyone else. It's more than 49 percent with four consolidations, and Kennesaw is paying at least half of this freight, so you need to pick up all of it come July 1," which they did. But I've been with them pretty much ever since.

TS: Well, it doesn't look like it's going to stop anytime soon.

ER: There's plenty to do. When you look around the state and realize how many more opportunities there are with the same rationale, the same principles that the Regents are operating under. You just have to wonder whether the chancellor is going to be around long enough to facilitate it all. We really do need to fix some situations. The Savannah situation needs some attention sooner or later. That's a big one.

TS: That really will be controversial.

ER: Well, it all depends on how it's pulled off. Albany State and Darton could have been, but it wasn't, the way they pulled it off, at least today. We'll see how they manage to deal with Savannah.

TS: Communities may have evolved to the degree that it's not the controversy over race that it once was.

ER: Yes, right. It means they can see the benefit of a full blown, integrated situation. It's like Kennesaw and Sothern Poly. As vice president I remember sitting in sessions with the administration of Southern Poly where we actually talked about consolidation.

TS: Really?

ER: Oh, yes, twenty years ago. So it was already in our thinking because our local community—if you may remember when Betty [Siegel] tried to do a capital campaign initially they said, “You’ve got to do it with Southern Poly because we’ve got too many people sharing interests in both campuses, and we don’t want to be competing with each other, with ourselves and our allegiances.” There was already a lot of community support for that one, but the two institutions weren’t ready, or at least Southern Poly wasn’t ready to consider it. To be honest with you, if it looked like Georgia Southern was going to get any kind of engineering nod, then they would have agreed to merge with us because they would have sought shelter under Kennesaw. But so long as that wasn’t going to happen or if they both got the green light on engineering, then they wanted to stay independent if they could.

TS: You’re talking twenty years ago.

ER: Yes, that was their thoughts twenty years ago.

TS: Yes, well, I’ve been doing a good deal on the history of Southern Poly, and I think the first of their true engineering programs was a master’s program about 1997, and it was 2009 before they got civil and electrical and mechanical engineering.

ER: Well, as you may remember Georgia Tech fended that off as best as they could for as long as they could. They had the sole franchise for a long time.

TS: Well, I’ve heard different stories. Maybe you’ve got an insight into just exactly how Southern Poly got engineering, the straight engineering.

ER: I don’t know all the details because I wasn’t close to it, but from my perspective Georgia Tech tried to delay that development by setting up satellite campuses in a lot of places around the state. I think they’ve got some down in the South Georgia areas still. They did a lot of two plus two work to facilitate transfer into Tech. The argument was, “How can you have a state this big with just one engineering school, especially one that is so selective. Georgia Tech has the most selective admissions standards of all the institutions in the system, including UGA, substantially higher. The dam finally broke, and it broke in a number of ways. And [the University of] Georgia wanted in on it too.

TS: Perhaps Georgia Tech thought, “Better Southern Poly than UGA.”

ER: Yes! (laughter) So you know, so many other states—in Mississippi, Mississippi State was the premier engineering school, and Oxford (the University of Mississippi in Oxford) had one too. So, you know, it’s just not uncommon, and both Mississippi State and the

University of Mississippi are in the subgroup, which is where UGA and Tech are, southern university groups. Again, when you're comparing yourself to peers in the southeast, and they've all got engineering schools and you don't, and they've all got medical colleges and you don't, it wears thin after a while.

TS: Yes, well the first four consolidations, you must have been working day and night with four going on at the same time.

ER: It was challenging because everything was new for the players in terms of process and procedure. We hadn't put templates together for how to get this job done building that prospectus. Frankly, I initially thought that it would be better to try to go—there were two windows of opportunity for SACS review of the prospectus. One is the October window, which resolves itself by December. The other is an April window that resolves itself by July, June basically, of that year. I thought initially that it would be better if we shot for the April window because it would give us a lot more time to get all our ducks lined up . . .

TS: April of the next year?

ER: Yes. And the effective date would have coincided with the fiscal year and all that. The downside once we got into it was that DOE (Department of Education) doesn't always work efficiently or quickly. If we stuck with the April window, it looked like there was a good chance that the new institution would not have their financial aid [procedures] sufficiently approved to have aid available for the fall. So the only way to insure that financial aid was going to fall at the right time and in the right place was to back this whole thing up to the October window, get it reviewed [by SACS] in December, and approved [by the Board of Regents] come January, then spend the six months of January to June lining up your paperwork with DOE. They weren't going to change the fiscal year around. Even if we were consolidated, we were still operating on separate financial aid offices and budgets through July 1.

TS: So the federal money wasn't going to come in until the Department of Education gave its approval.

ER: Right, and it took six months to get that ironed out.

TS: I'd heard very little about that publicly.

ER: Well, it's gone fairly smoothly, but it took a lot of extra effort on the part of the central office. In fact, the rule of thumb was, if it (questions) went to the Atlanta office (of DOE) to get an answer, it was sometimes different from the answer they would get if they went to Washington. So they quickly began talking first with Washington to make sure they had the right messages and the right feedback and the right info because it was critical to them to get a smooth financial aid transition. This whole thing could have dissolved if the financial aid wasn't there for students come the first fall semester of a consolidated institution. It did mean we had these kinds of challenging things. SACS

was going to be reviewing in some cases while we still had separate budgets. One of the first four (consolidations) had their committee visit not the following fall after all this became effective, but in the spring, right after the December approval, the South Georgia group. That was really hard on the people of South Georgia to have to turn around after the December nod, January 1's start up being one, to turn right around and have their reports done by March, so the visiting team could come in April. They were still operating under separate budgets. They still had separate financial aid. They didn't have a new curriculum in play yet. They were still designing the new curriculum.

Fortunately, the rules of SACS said that you had to have your committee visits within six months of your consolidation, but that meant you had to have your committee visit by April because the only windows for the VPs at SACS to visit ended in April. They were too busy working up their materials for the June Commission meeting to do it after April. That pushed everybody into an almost insane situation in preparation. So we had since convinced them that even though fall is eight months after the January consolidation, that is the most appropriate time because the two institutions have a single budget, they have a new curriculum, it's going into place in the fall, and you're getting to see the consolidated institution in action, as opposed to a consolidated institution still preparing to be one, which is what happens if you come in the spring.

TS: Were there real issues about any of the first four not gaining SACS approval?

ER: No, the first four came through their prospectuses without question, no questions, and the visit with no questions. Now, during the visits there were questions that would come up and faculty credentials, which is a trip wire for institutions generally, because everybody is looking at individual teaching assignments for every faculty member. It's easy to see how they could find some questionable cases that would cause some concern, but the general understanding was that if there was a way to fix that while the visiting team was there, it was all hands on deck, the president, deans, whoever needed to be involved, fix it while they are there. If it's fixed before they leave campus and write their report, we're good to go. If they write their report with the recommendation, you've got to follow up. So far, we've had five completed prospectuses and five completed committee visits with no recommendations for any of them.

TS: Wow, that's amazing.

ER: I do credit part of that with something that I'm especially proud of that was a necessity. As you know, there's a lot of hoopla around the consolidation implementation committee, the CIC. They are the key group, usually half from one institution and half from the other, usually led by the designated president. They do all the planning for consolidation and the implementation kick-offs. We have a separate group that handles all the SACS stuff. We call it the "A" Team, the Accreditation Liaison Team. We operate in tandem with the CIC. They do some work that we have to have for SACS reports, but we do the SACS reporting that they (the CIC) don't have to get engaged with. We know what SACS wants and in what language. The beauty of it is that the "A" team initially—the Accreditation Liaison Team—would meet very regularly, hopefully over the phone. We

did conference calling every other week throughout the spring and summer. Most importantly we shared drafts. It was the first time in my experience with the University System where previously independent institutions of SACS actually collaborated with one another, shared their material with one another, and didn't reinvent the wheel four times for that first round. Then subsequently, that served as models for the next rounds.

Georgia State borrowed by and large from the Kennesaw prospectus. Every round of prospectuses is stronger because we have more time to fine tune them. We don't start from scratch any more when we've got a legacy that we can build on. Being in the same system, each pairing has its uniquenesses that have to be described for SACS—how the organization will be, what the college names are within the university, et cetera. But you've got the same governing board and you've got the same governing policies that are in place. There's a lot of stuff that's almost boiler plate that we bring forward. But then we have more time in rounds two and three. Especially, we have more time to make these prospectuses stronger. So far we've had a good batting record. Now in fairness, and we've said this, you come under more rigorous review when its reaffirmation—the ten-year review—than you would on a substantive change, especially a substantive change involving merger or consolidation. The reason for that is you're given a little bit more leeway in the latter. They're not here to see if you're in compliance because you can't be in total compliance with every requirement only having been consolidated for six months or less.

TS: Okay, so you are saying in the case of Kennesaw we're gearing up now for a ten-year review, and that's going to be the real test.

ER: That's right. We were told that was going to be a tough one. In fact, the IE representative on the committee indicated that, "You're on the right track with your institutional effectiveness team and how you've stepped up." In fact, they were impressed with how Jorge Perez [vice provost for institutional effectiveness and accreditation liaison] and the team was being formed and the coverage and the amount of resources being thrown at it. But they basically said, "If this was a reaffirmation review today, you would probably have some recommendations, but we think in fairness for the institution, you're on the right track and doing the right things."

TS: I assume that Jorge Perez and his committee have a pretty good idea of what's needed.

ER: Yes, and they are staffed up. [President] Dan [Papp] was real smart and wise to throw sufficient resources at Jorge, and they repositioned that lead role to a vice provost position, so it's high ranking now in the structure. So they are on the right track to be in a strong position for the tougher review that comes later on.

TS: Right. Well, you've talked about a number of things specifically with regard to Kennesaw and politically the fact that by the time they got to Kennesaw and Southern Poly, the chancellor knew that he was going to announce at the beginning who the new president was going to be and what the name was going to be.

ER: And two other things that stand out: one, he was going to give everybody in the state, the public, some advanced notice, more than twenty-four hours. The first four there was a twenty-four hour notice given to the presidents and the public about the mergers, private or public.

TS: Okay, so the first four, even the presidents didn't know until twenty-four ahead of time?

ER: Yes, that was the case in the first round. But that was not the case for the KSU-SPSU consolidation where they had, I think, a one or two week notice.

TS: I wanted to ask you about that because I'm getting conflicting information about who knew what and when.

ER: From the first four?

TS: No, for Kennesaw and Southern Poly.

ER: Well, Kennesaw and Southern Poly were operating under the lessons learned from round one.

TS: I think maybe that somebody's got a faulty memory, but Dan says he didn't know anything about it until October 31. Then the announcement was made on November 1, and then the Board of Regents voted to approve it on November 12.

ER: Right, so he had twelve days' notice.

TS: Before the Regents . . .

ER: His colleagues in round one had twenty-four hours' notice.

TS: Before the Regents voted it in?

ER: Yes.

TS: Oh. That's the twelve days.

ER: The first four (consolidations) weren't given public vetting beyond twenty-four hours.

TS: Okay, well, Dan checked his calendar, and he said it was the thirty-first. I guess my conflicting information is Lisa [A.] Rossbacher [the Southern Polytechnic president] saying that she knew ten or twelve days before the announcement on November 1. She said that she got a call to come down to the chancellor's office without an explanation as to why, and after one minute of chit-chat the chancellor said there's going to be another round of consolidations, it'll be Kennesaw and Southern Poly, Dan Papp's going to be the president, and the name's going to be Kennesaw State.

ER: Right.

TS: But then [President Papp] went down there at the same time as Lisa Rossbacher on October 31, and he said, “If she knew already, she was a mighty good actress.” So my information, it’s just the nature of oral history I guess but . . .

ER: Yes, and people remembering.

TS: So you don’t have any insight.

ER: The only insight I have is that one of the lessons learned was that twenty-four hours was too short a time to vet it publicly, and ever since there’s been at least a week or two weeks for prior notice.

TS: They get their two cents’ worth in even though it was pretty clear that it was a done deal before the Regents ever voted?

ER: Well, the reality is, and there again, the politics had been lined up. The presidents didn’t know, but there were political leaders who knew that this was being considered, and they were, frankly, mighty good at keeping it close to the vest.

TS: Yes, they were.

ER: If it was going to happen it had to have the blessings of local legislative leaders.

TS: They would have known before the presidents. Some of the Regents at least knew ahead of time.

ER: I would think so and it would have been the Regents especially associated with those campuses, those representative areas, but there’s also the Regents’ committee (on consolidation) that would have known. They’ve got a separate standing committee now (on consolidation).

TS: Right. I guess what I heard from Dan Papp and also [Provost W.] Ken Harmon is that they suspected it because of the kinds of questions that the Regents were asking them.

ER: Yes.

TS: “What programs do you have in common with Southern Poly,” which was next to nothing.

ER: Right, well, it wasn’t next to nothing, and that’s one of the things the Regents discovered if they didn’t know it already. I think they knew that. There had been mission creep at Southern. Southern Poly was flying on their own for years when it was just engineering, but they did what Georgia Tech did, and they expanded the curriculum.

TS: Well, that's true.

ER: Okay? And they got into business, and they got into teacher education. They weren't in it as deeply as Kennesaw, but they were rapidly encroaching on areas that had been Kennesaw's almost sole domain. So there was redundancy brewing, which was one of the very variables on the Regents' list of considerations. Not only was the number one transfer location for Southern Poly students Kennesaw, which indicated that when engineering didn't work, that's where they went (students transferring to KSU), but there was this mission creep going on causing redundancy.

TS: Oh, yes, they had a biology major, and they had a physics major, and we didn't.

ER: We didn't, that's right, but given an engineering background that made sense.

TS: Sure. They had a new media arts program, and their justification was that all these programs had a technological focus. They had a psychology major, but it was a technological focus, and technical communications and such as that.

ER: Well, and you know, there was even a lot of discussion over whether they could consolidate math and end up with two math majors.

TS: Yes, and computer science.

ER: Yes, so they were complementary, and there was redundancy operating at the same time, but it was more complementary than redundant because Kennesaw didn't have architecture, it didn't have building management, and it didn't have engineering, and those were the big pieces. The core was, of course, common, and you could see some of those core disciplines moving into baccalaureate level and graduate level interests.

TS: So how do you think Kennesaw has done on the consolidation?

ER: Personally, I think all of them have gone smoothly, relatively smoothly. There was more rumbling early in the game, especially in round one, when there was a twenty-four hour notice that was a shock for a lot of institutions that this was going to happen so quickly. It was challenging, but like I said, vetting these decisions with at least a week to two weeks' notice was important. The other thing that they learned from round one was that the Regents have to be a little stronger on the administrative savings. In round one there wasn't as much savings from administrative consolidation as there could have been. There was only one president and only one registrar, but there were suddenly associates of this or that that took positions. So there wasn't as much streamlining of the administration. The argument was, "Well, we were underfunded all along, including administrative, so this is permitted, and you surprised us with this, and everybody shouldn't be threatened to lose their jobs," and this and that, whatever. Dan was given a goal of, I think, it was three million [dollars], and he's gotten closer to five I'm pretty sure.

TS: That's what he said, about four to five million.

ER: I think Georgia State has been given a goal of ten million.

TS: Yes. He doesn't like the word savings.

ER: Well it's not.

TS: It's redirection.

ER: It is redirection, but it's administrative streamlining, and in that sense it's saved administrative costs that get redirected to instructional needs.

TS: Then this next year is going to determine just exactly where that money is going to go in our case.

ER: Right. The Regents, you know, are going to take that all into account when they do their annual divying up of the pot too. I don't think they're going to penalize a Kennesaw. I think they're playing it straight up. I think you're getting more money even after consolidation.

TS: Yes, if they took it away from us that would . . .

ER: Yes, that would undermine the whole rationale. So I think it's a win for everybody if they can streamline appropriately, and they can. There's a lot of turnover; there's a lot of retirement; you don't have to refill every position.

TS: Well, a lot of people left at Southern Poly.

ER: That's right. If you have the right understanding about the writing on the wall and everything else [laughs], then you start looking for other options, and a lot of people did. And frankly that was of benefit to all concerned.

TS: We lost some good talent out of Georgia. Lisa Rossbacher has gone to Humboldt State, and Zvi Szafran [the vice president for academic affairs] has gone to the State University of New York, Canton.

ER: Right. Well, these are not easy things to do, and there are very few situations where people actually lost their job. We had a couple presidents who did. They were pretty much told that they were gone. But in some cases, like Lisa, they landed on her feet.

TS: You are saying that in the first round . . .

ER: In the first round there were very few rifts [reductions-in-force].

TS: The presidents were either interim or they were about to retire anyway?

ER: That's right.

TS: I would have thought they'd wait until either Lisa found a job somewhere else because she was always applying or Dan retired before they would have done a consolidation, but to have somebody [Papp] who had been interim president at Southern Poly [1997-1998] and president at Kennesaw State—you couldn't ask for more than that.

ER: No, it was a good situation. So they've learned a lot of things along the way and they've built on it.

TS: What do you think they learned from the Kennesaw–Southern Poly consolidation?

ER: I can't really say because I haven't seen too much different since then. But the big lessons learned after round one were set the name, set the presidency, provide some vetting of the decision before the board vote, and make sure that there's an understanding about the administrative savings. Those are big, but I don't think there's been anything that big to evolve out of the other consolidations that have occurred since. The other things that have been more individualized like the sit down with North Georgia probably and saying, look you've got to change your mission, you've got to accept an access role here, and you can't run two institutions.

TS: It seems to me that as we've gone along the consolidations have made more and more sense. Kennesaw and Southern Poly—I feel for the people at Southern Poly who spent their whole lives working for an institution whose name has now gone away.

ER: Except it has been retained for the college.

TS: Right. The college of engineering.

ER: Yes.

TS: But it makes perfect sense that we're within ten miles of each other, and even though there was some overlapping, we had essentially different missions, plus Kennesaw was so much larger than Southern Poly. There's no question that if you're going to retain the name, it's going to be Georgia State, when you merge Georgia State with a junior college.

ER: To be honest with you, I think I've heard more positive feedback on that than negative in the sense that Perimeter College will retain its name as one of Georgia State's colleges. But there are a lot of faculty and staff over at Perimeter who now are happy to be identified as Georgia State faculty, in fact.

TS: Well, I think that proved true with Southern Poly too, particularly the younger ones that have come in that are ecstatic about being part of a comprehensive university. I mean, there were some questions at first about promotion and tenure. The promotion and tenure

guidelines now are just unreal. I'm glad I don't have to go through them. There are all these outside references that have got to evaluate your work and make sure that you've got more than a local reputation. I'm sure it's all going to work out and not going to be excessively burdensome. They've given them several years to get used to the new guidelines, but still, that was a concern I think at the beginning.

ER: Yes, and I think that's where Georgia State has been smart in that they, basically, have told the faculty at Perimeter, your standards and mission and everything else is going to remain basically the same. Administratively, they're going to have a different configuration, but when you reduce the personal threat to people, especially in the ranks of the faculty and support staff, then this goes a lot more smoothly. When you think about the private sector consolidations where there are major rifts, you know, lots of people lose their jobs.

TS: Oh, yes, oftentimes the purpose in the private sector is to eliminate employees.

ER: Yes, and that's really not been the case here at all. I think there has been a humane approach to it overall. But in terms of achieving some of the goals and objectives—more efficiency—I think the institution will be stronger. Like you said, you are more comprehensive in the KSU configuration, and Georgia State, frankly, is going to have a brighter future with all the suburban campuses. They will be over 54,000 students, I believe. They will be a major urban university or a metropolitan university, any way you want to cut it. There will be more baccalaureate and graduate work going on on suburban campuses sooner or later. They'll get to be healthier as an institution in Atlanta as a function of that. And Perimeter will be too. Perimeter went through some financial woes of recent vintage, and they're going to have a stronger financial oversight under the Georgia State model of administrative oversight.

TS: Right. I think there are a few areas where Kennesaw's administration was shocked at some things going on at Southern Poly they had to clean up.

ER: Yes. Well, you know, you're going to run into some of that in these kinds of activities because you go pretty deep with the consolidation here looking at all functions, trying to bring two different institutions' functions into alignment with one another even though we're part of the same system with the same accounting system and Banner [Student Information System]. At least there's more commonality in accounting, but each institution has jury-rigged Banner to operate differently. We have some things we can work from a common base with Banner, but there was a lot of work to be done.

TS: So what have we not talked about that I didn't know enough to ask the right questions?

ER: Well, I'm trying to think if there is anything really critical. Other than the fact that I do hope that there will be more time given. We're going with one consolidation a year now, so it could take a while to work through all the opportunities for consolidation in the state. I don't know whether we'll get to that point or not. We're banking on Huckaby's health and his sticking to the agenda. His support team seems to be now in gear. Just as

there's a campus CIC, there's a system office parallel. They're doing the same thing that we're doing with the "A" team and that is they've worked out all the contracts with the Oracle people and the Banner folks and everybody else that provides our software as to how to make this happen. They know better now what to do and what not to do, which kinds of solutions work and which ones don't. But it still involved them having to carve out a large segment of their time for, I think, they have bi-weekly meetings downtown. Then they have counterparts on the campus that they're working with—OWGs.

TS: Operational working groups?

ER: Operational working groups. It's a lot of time and a lot of effort on the part of a lot of people. But from the SACS visit perspective, that's been a plus. The visiting teams have been impressed by the extent of involvement across all different functions. They've been impressed by the involvement of the central office in facilitating this, not just at the governing board level, but at the administrative support level. We have frankly been blessed to have a good SACS track record where initially they couldn't promise as much because they didn't know if we could pull it off, but now we have a reputation in the SACS world any way as a system that seems to know what they're doing. I've even received a call from an institution in Florida. They were referred to me by Belle Wheelan. "You might want to talk to Ed Rugg about how this could work." But again, it comes back to the differences between the Florida system and the Georgia system. I sent them material explaining how complex and complicated this can be, but they were going to be faced with two different governing boards. It would have been challenging to say the least. There are a lot of states and a lot of institutions and a lot of individuals who just don't have the interest, the time, and the energy to engage in this. It takes a lot, but I think the rewards are beneficial too over the long haul.

TS: Great.

ER: I hope Georgia is going to be in a stronger position. I will be interested to see how some of the next rounds evolve. What will the solution be in Savannah, South Georgia, whether its east or west? Is [the University of] Georgia going to be involved in anything, or Tech, or are they going to be happy ruling the roost in their current configurations? I don't know. Fort Valley [State University] is an interesting question.

TS: Well, I was thinking that way when you were talking. You've already got the merger of Macon and Middle Georgia. Who would they merge with if they were involved in a consolidation?

ER: Well, you know, they're land grant. Georgia is land grant. You can argue that why would you have two land grants? But that would be a different mission. The reality is these are not easily solved. Each of them have taken a lot of thought and political will to pull off. I think what's really been important, again coming back to dealing with the HBCU piece of this, is that that was always going to be a sensitive issue, but when you've gotten all this precedence set, from the smallest to the research level to the large universities like the Kennesaws and Southern Polys and Georgia States, there's just so

much precedence at so many different dimensions that it's hard to argue that there shouldn't be the inclusion of the HBCUs in some way that's effective. They found apparently an effective way to deal with that in Albany, at least so far.

TS: Yes, Well, Albany was probably the easiest ones to deal with.

ER: Of the HBCUs, I think it will be, it will be. It may not be. It's complementary. Savannah's is complementary in the sense that you've got a split curriculum. It should be easier to pull off. It's just how it's going to happen.

TS: Is it going to be called Savannah State when it happens?

ER: Yes. Right.

TS: I would think that you're going to really have a controversy if it's not. But either way, well, I don't know how wedded they are to Armstrong. I guess they've dropped Atlantic out of their name now. So they're just Armstrong.

ER: Yes. A lot of things are factors here. Whether you have vacancies in presidencies as a facilitating piece, although not always. I've been surprised that some vacancies have occurred and they've been filled before consolidation was considered or maybe it was considered and it was simply put on the back burner for a while. So there's a lot going on, a lot to be done, but it is in the long run going to be a plus for Georgia if Georgia can be comprehensive about it.

TS: What do you mean by comprehensive?

ER: Get through a total agenda. If all the opportunities for this in the state are capitalized upon, then Georgia could be in a stronger position

TS: Nathan Deal's got about three years left.

ER: Which isn't a lot of time to do all that's left. And Huckaby may be on a similar situation, so we'll see where it goes. There could be enough positive momentum from all of this that the next governor and chancellor will continue it because it's working so well and it's proved to be the right move for so many institutions at all levels. If that's the lesson learned then the agenda will be continued.

TS: I was wondering if this was a pendulum going one way toward consolidation now, and then back later toward independent institutions like we had in the 1950s and 1960s. The consolidation movement grew out of a period when the economy of the nation was about as bad as it has been since the Great Depression. Assuming that we get out of that and get into a more prosperous age is there any possibility do you think that we'll start deconsolidating?

ER: I doubt it. I seriously doubt it.

- TS: Once it's done, it's done.
- ER: I think so. Plus, once the mission gets firmly cemented in the mind's eye of everyone—satellite campuses, that's just the way you do business. And online—that's the way you do business. You've got a main campus, but . . .
- TS: Well, that's the other thing though. The whole nature of higher education may be changing big time with online classes.
- ER: The other thing too is that when you don't have comprehensiveness you do work against yourself on some of these national standards. Your graduation rates, for example, your retention rates are going to be lower when students don't have a comprehensive choice at the home institution. It's like Southern Poly—if you don't make it in engineering, and you're interested in business or teacher education, you've got to leave.
- TS: Well, right, and so now with consolidation that should help our retention rate if they were being penalized when somebody left them for Kennesaw State.
- ER: Exactly.
- TS: Fortunately, they measure the graduation rate for people that transfer but stay in the system.
- ER: Yes, but that's not the way the Feds are looking at it. That's just something that the Regents do for themselves.
- TS: I see.
- ER: No, what gets put on the NCES (the National Center for Educational Statistics website) is the [retention rate of the individual institution].
- TS: So we should come out okay on retention because there wasn't that much difference between Kennesaw and Southern Poly anyway. The Kennesaw campus was a few percentage points higher than Southern Poly [in the six-year graduation rate], but it wasn't a tremendous difference, in part because the admission standards were so high at Southern Poly.
- ER: Well, the SAT scores were pretty comparable. Theirs might have been a little higher. The math performances were higher. Overall, I think it is a plus for the system. It will be interesting to see where we go from here.
- TS: Anything else I should ask you?
- ER: No, I think for me personally it's been a good experience. I've enjoyed working with the teams, and I'm especially proud of the fact that the system members are collaborating so

much and sharing materials with each other and not reinventing the wheel. I think that's critical. Each round does seem to be a stronger round, at least on the prospectus side, and the visits so far have gone well. There's been enough good, solid preparation. The downside for me is that as an editor and reader of their materials, come August, July, it's pretty heavy. Even though we try to work on drafts throughout the year, et cetera, they get deferred sometimes. There's a lot going on close to deadline. Again, the system is in a good place, and I think this is working reasonably well. We'll just continue to play. Shelley e-mailed soon after the board decision this past Thursday saying, "Are you up for another round?"

TS: You're going to be doing some travelling to Albany then.

ER: Yes. But if this had been too big a burden or too much of a questionable tradeoff, the central office team would not have stayed with it as long as they have either. It took a lot out of everybody's hides, especially the first four being all done at once. Maybe the one a year model is more manageable for everybody.

TS: Do you think that they just felt like they had to do the whole state that first round? Why didn't they just start with one piece consolidation?

ER: Well, I think they were trying to cover the full range—to go from the smallest institutions in the state to one of the research universities and to have players in the middle, like the North Georgia was fairly well established four-year with, I think, a doctorate program. In Macon where they were a little more development—Macon State especially was just getting to the baccalaureate realm.

TS: Well, they're getting university status out of all of this.

ER: Right. So I think they were just trying to cover the full range and test the waters on the full range, and they did that. Then they added a dimensionality to it when Kennesaw's came in and even more dimensionality with Georgia State. Now we have one of the HBCU's involved. So I think they're building a pretty solid foundation for moving forward, regardless of who's in charge. Maybe the once a year is part of what's keeping our heads above water. You still have to run a system and on and on. Four in one year was a lot, especially when you had the complexities of the naming issues and some of the presidency issues too that came along.

TS: Well, thank you.

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