

KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH THOMAS P. PUSATERI

CONDUCTED AND EDITED BY THOMAS A. SCOTT

for the

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Kennesaw State University Oral History Project  
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Interview with Thomas P. Pusateri  
Conducted, edited, and indexed by Thomas A. Scott  
Part I – Friday, 9 November 2012  
Location: CETL House, Kennesaw State University

TS: Today the interview is with Tom Pusateri who won an award from the Board of Regents in 2012 called the Felton Jenkins, Jr. Hall of Fame Faculty Award.

TP: Yes, for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning.

TS: Tom, why don't we begin by asking you to talk about your background, where you grew up, where you went to school, and a few things like that.

TP: Okay. I was born in Scranton, Pennsylvania in 1957. I attended Scranton Preparatory School and graduated in 1975. I decided I wanted to go into teaching—I loved the teachers there—so I attended Le Moyne College in Syracuse, New York, and graduated with a B.A. in Psychology in 1979. Then I went to Ohio State University and got my Ph.D. in Social Psychology with an emphasis in Cognitive Psychology in 1984.

TS: Why psychology?

TP: It was interesting. When I was in Scranton Prep in high school, I knew I wanted to be a teacher. I had a really good group of teachers. The one that really stood out was my history professor, Mr. Bergman, but for some reason I decided I wanted to teach something that I thought really interested me. I just went into the library one day, and looked at some psychology books on Developmental and Social Psychology, and fell in love with what I was reading. I never had a course in it until I went to college, but really fell in love with it.

TS: So you thought you were going to be a teacher, but you went the Ph.D. route instead of getting out into the public schools unless I missed something.

TP: Well, I knew I didn't want to teach at the high school level or the elementary school level. I wanted to teach college.

TS: You always knew that?

TP: Yes. I knew I wanted to work with younger adults and Psychology especially because it was of interest to me when I took my first course in Social Psychology from Bill [William H.] Holmes in Le Moyne College. He was the chair of the Psychology department at the time, and I loved the way he taught. I just decided, I'm going into Social Psychology. I asked Dr. Holmes which were the best places

for getting an education in Social Psych, and he mentioned Ohio State as among many of the places. I was also very fortunate when I went to Ohio State because my dissertation advisor, Tom [Thomas M.] Ostrom, was extremely supportive of people who came from small, liberal arts colleges, and understood the importance of teaching in the small liberal arts college. At the time he was the chair of the Social Psychology department at Ohio State.

TS: Why did you go to Le Moyne? That's a long way from Scranton.

TP: Oh, about two hours. I should mention that Scranton Prep was a Jesuit school, and before I went to that school I attended grade school at Saint Cabrini. It was actually founded by Sister [Frances Xavier] Cabrini in Scranton, and I continued my Catholic education at Scranton Prep. I could have gone to the University of Scranton, which is also a Jesuit institution, but I decided I wanted to leave home but be in a comfort zone, so I could get back and forth to see my parents. That's two hours north in Syracuse, New York, and that was Le Moyne College. I still have colleagues at Le Moyne that I've worked with over the years. In fact, one of them, (Father Vincent) Vinnie Hevern just visited a couple of weeks ago here. He met with Bill [G. William] Hill [IV] and me, so we had a little bit of a reunion.

TS: So Le Moyne is also Jesuit?

TP: It's a Jesuit school.

TS: So you weren't ever thinking about being a Jesuit priest were you?

TP: No, no, I just liked the Jesuit tradition of education and the liberal arts. Then I also decided that that's the type of environment that I wanted to teach in. I wanted to look for a small liberal arts college. I did end up actually at a Catholic liberal arts college in Dubuque, Iowa, Loras College.

TS: I have never heard of Loras College.

TP: It's one of the few Catholic colleges—it's like Catholic University—which is not affiliated with an order. It's direct line, basically, to the Vatican. When I was there, there were a number of religious who were teaching, but that number declined over time.

TS: You mentioned a few names along the way, and I always like to ask about mentors. I suppose that Bill Holmes and Tom Ostrom were a couple of mentors, but would you talk about who your mentors were and what made them good mentors for you?

TP: Bill Holmes was probably the single most important influence in my life in terms of those strategies that I use for teaching. I was very impressed by his organization. He was the first teacher I ever had that started off every single

lesson putting an outline on the blackboard, telling us what we're going to be covering, using very compelling examples, and really involving the students in the classes. I took several courses from him. The Social Psych course was my first and my favorite, and so I really learned a lot from Bill. Another influence, Tom Ostrom, of course, really groomed me. When you go for a Ph.D at Ohio State University, the real expectation is you're going into research. Tom was at least very responsive to the fact that he knew I did not want to go in a direct discipline-based research career. That I was much more interested in the teaching of psychology. He supported me through that. Another faculty member at Ohio State in the cognitive area—he was basically my mentor for cognitive psychology—was Neil Johnson. He had some brilliant lectures. He would end a lecture one day, and come in and be right on target the next day following through with what the topic was. He was very well organized and very exciting and an interesting presenter, so again he was one of my role models.

TS: The Society for the Teaching of Psychology, if I recall correctly, was getting going about the early 1980s, about the time you were in graduate school maybe?

TP: Well, actually it was the second division of the American Psychological Association founded in the 1950s, but it began in earnest in the early 1980s. Around the mid-1990s it got the name Society for the Teaching of Psychology.

TS: Were you even aware of it when you were in graduate school at Ohio State?

TP: Not at all. The first time I became aware of the society—it was then just Division Two of APA—was when I went to my first conference, the Mid-American Conference for Teachers of Psychology, which was around 1988-1989. My first experience with that was really sort of kismet. I took a commuter plane from Dubuque to Chicago. When I got on the plane from Chicago to Evansville, Indiana, I was seated adjacent to a woman name Jane [S.] Halonen. You may have heard her name. She's a dear friend and professional colleague of Randy [Randolph A.] Smith, Bill Hill, and me. What I found out a little bit later was that the coordinator of the Mid-American Conference had arranged for Jane and me to sit next to each other so that we could become aware of each other, and we've endured over the years. She's now the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of West Florida. Over the years we've had a great professional relationship and deep friendship. Now you have all these people coming together. Jane Halonen was there. That's the first time I met Randy Smith at this Mid-American Conference. The first time I met Bill Hill was at that conference. And there are a number of other individuals who ultimately became either presidents or other leaders within the Society for the Teaching of Psychology that I met while I was at that conference.

TS: You said this was in Indiana?

- TP: That was in Evansville, Indiana. Joe [Joseph J.] Palladino [Professor of Psychology, University of Southern Indiana] was the director of that. So he's an influence in my career as well because he was the one that brought us all together.
- TS: That's where Bill Hill really got his start going to Joe Palladino's conference.
- TP Bill's conference [the Southeastern Conference on the Teaching of Psychology], which is now in its twenty-fifth year here [in 2013], was modeled after Joe Palladino's conference. It was basically the second regional conference that was affiliated with the Society for the Teaching of Psychology. There's another conference in New York that is a little bit longer, but it was more grown locally. These were more of a regional flavor to begin with, and Bill got the idea from Joe, and it's endured.
- TS: It's a good thing that with you and Jane, at least one of you was not a shy person so that you actually spoke to one another on the plane.
- TP: She is not shy, and I am not shy, so it was delightful to meet her. As I said, our friendship has endured over the years.
- TS: Let's see, in '84 you got your doctorate.
- TP: Yes.
- TS: You started teaching immediately at Loras College in '84. So this would be after you've been there three or four years, probably still an assistant professor?
- TP: Yes. I knew I wasn't going to go into disciplinary research—that Loras was a teaching institution, but I wanted to find ways of developing my professional skills as a teacher. I think it was my department chair, Steve Milliser, at the time, who found out about this conference and suggested that I attend. I went for the very first time to meet the people that would have the most profound impact on my life.
- TS: I was going to ask whether you had support from your institution, but I guess if the department chair sent you, you had support. How did he know about it?
- TP: I think they were just mailing out to the local community. I don't know if Steve had ever attended before me, but when we found out about it, I attended it. And Steve actually ended up attending that conference and Bill's conference. He really was attracted to the Atlanta area, so he attended and presented several times at Bill's conference over the years.
- TS: Then you went on to be the chair eventually also, right?

TP: I was chair for three years. It was more of a model of rotating the responsibility, the service. so several of us had served as chair for maybe two or three year terms.

TS: How did you get involved with assessment? You became the assessment director at Loras.

TP: Yes. There are multiple avenues, I think, that really helped me. Tom Ostrom at Ohio State taught us attitude measurement, and those skills of understanding how to measure any type of concept through appropriate scaling procedures were very helpful for me. I learned about cognitive psychology, which is how human beings learn, retain, and use information. When I was at Loras, my first chair was a guy named Bruce Moore, and he was the industrial organizational psychologist at Loras. He decided to leave in the first couple of years of my tenure at Loras, so somebody needed to replace him in the teaching of Industrial Organizational Psychology. I stepped up and said let me take some courses at the University of Iowa, which is just an hour and a half away from Loras, to breeze up on what Industrial Psychology is. It's basically applied Social. It wasn't that difficult for me to learn it. So I have some background in assessment; I have some background in Industrial Organizational, which looks at training and development; and I have some background in Cognitive Psychology with learning. All of those things relate to assessment. When the institution needed to prepare its argument for the [North Central Association of Colleges and Schools] accreditation, they invited people to participate. I became one of the people who was on the first assessment committee for the college. I helped design training for our writing courses—how do you assess writing across the campus. We examined and selected some standardized exams, and I did the analyses of those exams and did the report for them. We designed some student surveys prior to the first month of a student entering Loras, and then looked at the senior year to see if their attitudes had changed, and did some analyses to look at whether Loras improved attitudes toward liberal arts education and compared that to transfer students. We found out that there were some advantages to being four years at Loras in terms of your outcomes, at least your perceived outcomes. I helped to write that up for the [accreditation process].

TS: How big of a college is Loras? It sounds like you had a number of disciplines covered with your psychology faculty.

TP: Yes. It was about 1,700. I think it still is 1,700 students. Approximately 120 to 150 faculty depending upon the year [13:1 student teacher ratio in 2012]. The assessment committee was about five individuals from various departments. We were also very fortunate in that we had one of the largest departments on campus. We had about nine faculty members in Psychology. That's huge [for a small college]. We started off with about four or five, and we gradually moved to about eight or nine, depending on how you count, because some of the people were part-time in the administration. It was just an amazing number of faculty.

- TS: I was going to say, until fifteen or twenty years ago, our Psychology department here was smaller than that.
- TP: Yes. We were blessed. We taught a lot of sections of Introductory Psychology. We taught Developmental Psychology for the Education program. So we could make the strong argument that we needed the staffing to provide not just the major, but also the support structure for the institution.
- TS: You were also involved in starting the Teaching of Psychology workshop for colleges in Iowa?
- TP: Yes. I got invited to participate in that. There were a group of high school faculty who wanted to get together with faculty in colleges and universities in the area. So I applied and was accepted to be on the steering committee for a one-day workshop that was offered every year. It's basically again sort of modeled on the Mid-American conference that Joe Palladino had developed. It's still successful. I was the first key note speaker there, and I was invited to return for the tenth anniversary and did that about two years ago now in November.
- TS: So it started around 2000 then?
- TP: In 2000, yes.
- TS: It seems to me that psychology certainly is way ahead of history in terms of having workshops on the teaching of the discipline. Do you think that would be a fair assessment to say that psychology is way ahead of everybody else?
- TP: I wouldn't say everybody else, but I think we're one of the largest leaders. Part of it is simply because a large amount of our discipline is focused on human behavior and human learning. If you look at Developmental Psychology, if you look at Human Learning and Cognition, if you look at Social Psychology—those areas lend themselves to discussions of the types of social interactions and retention of information that occurs in a classroom setting. I think it's a very natural fit. In some ways it's an even more natural fit, I believe, than in Education. Education is very focused on the developmental aspects, but they may not be as focused at least in terms of genuine interest on what's happening within the college level student as we are. I think it's just a natural fit. But Education obviously has a large amount of interest in learning and behavior. You see it also in some of the sciences where they're very concerned about the decline in performance in science and mathematics. Especially in physics and mathematics you see a very strong emphasis on developing better programs for learning.
- TS: That's probably true on our campus as well
- TP: Yes.

- TS: Looking at what mathematicians have done over the years—going back to Chris Schaufele and Nancy Zumoff and Mary Garner.
- TP: So when you look at people who are serving in assessment roles across campuses, you'll oftentimes see their training is in Psychology or it may be in one of the STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) areas. Sometimes you'll see it in English and the humanities, but it's less common. I think another thing that helps Psychology is that we're very much trained in the scientific method, which helps with the assessment of learning.
- TS: So you spent nineteen years at Loras College. Why not make it a lifetime career?
- TP: It was going to be. I really had in my mind to retire at Loras, but then some things changed. Well, I'll reveal. I'm pretty up and out here at Kennesaw. I'm gay. I was living in Dubuque, Iowa, for twenty years in a Catholic University and just could not feel that I could be openly out in that environment. So although I was very happy with my career, and that was a very powerful incentive for me to stay there, over the years it was distressing not to have a personal relationship. I developed good friendships. I felt connected in the community, but I really wanted to have a personal relationship. So that was part of the motivation. And then in the late 1990s, the state of higher education, especially for small liberal arts colleges, was a concern. Iowa has a large number of small liberal arts colleges, and Loras was starting to decline in terms of its student population. The morale of faculty was declining. Many of my dear friends either left the institution or were very unhappy because they felt stuck there, and they could not see their own careers developing. That low morale among the people that I cherished, along with my own personal needs, made me want to start looking at other options. I knew it would be very hard for me to get into a research-based institution. There were very few liberal arts colleges that were hiring psychology faculty. I had already been tenured. I was a full professor at Loras. But I didn't have the type of scholarship record—I had a lot of presentations, but very few publications to make the argument for my application.
- TS: Did Loras understand scholarship of teaching and learning?
- TP: They understood it and accepted it, but they didn't require journal articles in the way that other institutions did. Now I do have a couple of publications even at Loras, but the track record wasn't as high as it would need to be in another venue. I had a great number of presentations. So what I decided was my best shot at another job was not in the discipline of Psychology, but it was in some type of administrative capacity, and assessment was a natural fit. I applied for positions that had an assessment focus.
- TS: So you ended up at Florida Atlantic University because they offered you a job.



- TP: Yes. I applied for positions at four different institutions, some at the associate dean level, some as assessment director. Florida Atlantic University was hiring an assessment director. I applied for it, and I got the position in 2003. I loved it down there.
- TS: It was the first time that you'd been out of the cold climate it looks like.
- TP: Yes. I grew up in Pennsylvania, went to New York, went over to Ohio, to Iowa, and now I'm down in Boca Raton, Florida, basking in the sun and experiencing for the first time in my life four hurricanes. In eighteen months we had four hurricanes come through.
- TS: That's where the last [2012] presidential debate took place was at Lynn University in Boca Raton.
- TP: Yes, and in fact when George Bush was president, at Florida Atlantic he had made a presentation. I was there from 2003 to 2006, so it was probably the election in 2004, and traffic was backed up for an hour or so before we were allowed to get off campus, because he was coming on campus. That was sort of interesting. The other thing that was important about Florida Atlantic—it was a wonderful place to work—I also met my life partner there within a month.
- TS: That's good. Now Florida Atlantic, how large was it in 2003?
- TP: It's about the size that Kennesaw is right now. It was around 25,000 students, and now it's growing. Some interesting things, both my position at Florida Atlantic and my position at Kennesaw, I came in with a new president. Florida Atlantic had just hired a new president—Frank [T.] Brogan—who was lieutenant governor down there. When I came to Kennesaw Dan Papp was hired the same year that I was. [Brogan] was lieutenant governor of Florida, and he took the position of president of FAU.
- TS: Florida has had a way of bringing politicians in as presidents of universities.
- TP: Yes. There were some interesting controversies around there, but to be honest I thought he did a very good job of directing the institution at that time. Although the faculty was not happy about the selection and the way that he was elected, I thought he was a good leader for the institution. Another important thing, when I got there Florida Atlantic University did not have a football team, and now they do. It's pretty good.
- TS: They've played some good teams.
- TP: Yes. So my guess is they will grow over time. It's a relatively new team. I just got to visit down there. I've done some consulting for them for their Quality Enhancement Plan recently. So I got to see the growth of the institution and their

new football stadium and new residence halls, new buildings. It's a vibrant place. I think they've grown about 10,000 since I've left [30,038 in Fall Semester 2012]. I'm guessing the same trajectory for Kennesaw at some point.

TS: Any lessons for Kennesaw from your experiences there?

TP: Well, I'm happier that I'm here now. Things sort of soured at FAU over the last few years with the state of the economy in Florida. I think we're in a better position economically than the state of Florida.

TS: Georgia's better off than Florida?

TP: I think so. But also I think the administration here is just incredible. There was an administrative change at Florida where a large number of the people that I worked with were no longer there when the new president and provost were hired. So I doubt that I would have been there after seeing all the individuals whom I worked with and collaborated with also leaving.

TS: So Brogan didn't last long?

TP: Well, he lasted [six] years [2003-2009, resigning to become Chancellor of the State University System of Florida]. But there was a recent change in the president, and the president and the new provost cleaned house. The people I worked with I thought were high quality, so I'm surprised that they are no longer working there.

TS: Was the provost selection political also?

TP: I'm not certain about that. I just know that the place has changed. It was interesting to see the change in the leadership since I left.

TS: I wanted to ask you, even while you were still at Loras, you became the executive director for the Society for the Teaching of Psychology. So that obviously wasn't a full-time job, but had to be time consuming. So how did you manage your two jobs, and how much time did you spend as executive director as opposed to teaching?

TP: Let me step back because I think it's important to know a little bit about the history of how I got to be executive director. I went to the Mid-American Conference, and another conference started to emerge as a result of that in Chicago. Pat [Patricia] Puccio wanted to start a similar conference in Chicago that drew not just college faculty but also high school faculty who teach psychology. She designed it around their free day where they're supposed to do professional development. It was offered on that day every March or February depending on when it happened. While I was there, a gentleman named Wayne Weiten—he is a past president of STP, and he is a very successful book author for

psychology. Wayne Weiten was there, and he said, “Why don’t you come to dinner with me?” He paid for my dinner, and he said, “Tom we need a membership director for the Society. Would you put your name in for that?” I said, “I live in Iowa. I really don’t know how I can help out.” He said, “Just do it.” So I spent the first three years as a membership director, and that gave me a lot of skills in terms of what the Society needed. I would go to the executive committee meetings and learn a little bit about that. I knew they were growing, and they asked me to serve on the committee as a chair to design a position of executive director. I helped to write the job description for the job that I applied for. This is about the same time that Dick Cheney was running for vice president. He did the same thing. I kept on saying I’m the Dick Cheney of Psychology. I put in my offer. They accepted it, and I served the executive director position from 2000 to 2007. So that does span Loras, FAU and Kennesaw.

At Loras it was really not that difficult. I would spend a large amount of my weekends and evenings doing the work of the executive director, which is basically very heavily intense during the end of the year when you’re accepting a lot of the applications for membership. There are reports to be done, but most of my work was really concentrated in September, October, and November. Then it lightened up, and then it expanded again near the middle of the summer, and then lightened up. So I was able to work out pretty well at Loras. At FAU I asked my boss, Sharron Ronco—she was the associate provost for Institutional Effectiveness—I asked her, “if I move to Florida would you want me to give up this position? I know it takes time.” She said, “No, we want you to do that. That’s an important professional developmental part of this position, so please do.” So I was able to work out the work, again mostly working on weekends and evenings as executive director. That was more of a nine to five job at Florida, so it wasn’t too bad. When I came here it was much more difficult. The challenges at Kennesaw were much larger. Bill Hill—who was the director of CETL at the time—and I talked about it. He suggested, and I agreed with him, that I needed to step down from the position. They hired their next executive director afterwards.

TS: So in 2006, if I remember correctly, Lynn [Lendley C.] Black, who was our provost was looking for somebody to do assessment, and Bill [Hill] is the one that said, “Well, we could get somebody to do assessment and scholarship of teaching and learning, and so let’s create an associate director position in CETL and scholarship and teaching of learning, that would include institutional assessment.”

TP: Yes. Here’s another interesting piece about that. Bill contacted me the summer of 2005 and asked me, “Tom, I want to design a position like yours. Could you help me write the job description for it?”

TS: So again, you wrote the job description.

TP: Yes. “Bill, yes, I think I will.” And I knew I was writing my job description, basically. So I sent him my recommendations. I applied for the position. My

- dear professional and personal friendship with Bill was a real draw to apply to Kennesaw. At that time we had just had the four hurricanes come through. So it was a real push to say, “I don’t know if I want to live in Florida!” Although I loved Florida Atlantic, and I would have stayed there if I did not apply. It was the only job I had applied for.
- TS: But you said things were getting dicey.
- TP: Not at the time, it wasn’t at the time. So basically I think about it this way, I dodged a bullet. I’m very hopeful for the institution. As I said I did some consulting this year. Although I may personally disagree with some of the decisions they’re making, it’s their institution, and they may be making some decisions that I’m not aware of. You can obviously see the growth, so they’re doing some exciting things down there. It’s just surprising that a lot of the people that I found strong professionals are no longer working at that institution.
- TS: So it’s personal relationships that pulled you to Kennesaw?
- TP: Yes. And also I knew that this place was growing. I loved being in Florida, and Georgia didn’t sound too unappealing in terms of the similarity in climate—it is a little bit colder here. We have ice storms, which we don’t down in Florida—but we don’t have hurricanes here.
- TS: Just every now and then a tornado comes through.
- TP: Yes. In fact, we had one in Woodstock. It missed our house, but we did have hail damage, so all the roofs had to get replaced.
- TS: In 2006, did Dan Papp sign off on you coming? Was he here already?
- TP: He started in July, the same day I did.
- TS: What was your impression of Kennesaw when you came here in 2006?
- TP: Well, one of the things that I think was very helpful—Bill really deliberately designed the position in a way that helped both me and Kennesaw in terms of my interaction here. When I got hired, Bill arranged for me to consult at Kennesaw for three months before I took the position. I got approval from my boss down in Florida Atlantic to do this, so I would come up during January through April of 2006. I attended the meetings of the steering committee for our Quality Enhancement Plan. They were still thinking about global learning as the focus, and so I gave them consultation as to how to design the Quality Enhancement Plan. Bill also arranged while I was visiting to have the Assurance of Learning Council meetings happening then, and that’s when the set up was that programs came in and discussed their Assurance of Learning plans with the entire committee. I attended all of those. I got some good insight into the operation of

- Kennesaw even before I stepped on the ground. I made a report to Bill that basically was a part of our assessment plan for the Quality Enhancement Plan and for the Assurance of Learning in the future.
- TS: Were you involved in making the decision to go with global learning?
- TP: The decision was ultimately made by the steering committee, but at one meeting they were wondering if enough of the programs would be able to contribute in certain ways. I suggested, “I think this is a real stretch goal for the institution, and they have a good history of doing international education already. So I would say go for it.” I at least gave them consulting suggestions that it was important. I think they had already made a decision, but they just needed to validate.
- TS: That was my impression that it was in the works, although Dan Papp I think was excited that, obviously, it was his field, international politics.
- TP: And it started right when he began, so it was a good match for the new administration, and I think it’s been very successful. We’re now in the process of writing our impact report. The five year plan is ending. The work continues; the Global Learning Coordinating Council is now an official committee of the Faculty Senate. I’ve served on it from being a consultant now through the five years. We just had our meeting today, and it’s been a really exciting time to see that type of growth happening at this institution.
- TS: The reports have been glowing from the outside reviewers.
- TP: We were very fortunate, I was the principal editor of a successful application for the [Senator] Paul Simon Award that NAFSA gives for campus internationalization, and it was easy to write that because of all of the good work that the institution—the programs and the units—have done on global learning.
- TS: What does NAFSA stand for?
- TP: It doesn’t any more. It used to stand for [National Association of Foreign Students Advisers when it was founded in 1948]. They just kept the name NAFSA [when the membership officially changed the name to NAFSA: Association of International Educators in May 1990]. It’s basically an acronym that they didn’t want to get rid of. But they developed a [Senator] Paul Simon Award for Campus Internationalization, and we won it in 2011.
- TS: Okay, they must have been very supportive at Florida Atlantic if they were letting you do all that consulting work when you were getting ready to leave them.
- TP: I had a wonderful boss, and she was very supportive of professional development. When I did tell her about my decision to leave, she said she was not that surprised because her position was, “We’re here to develop our professional staff, and we

want to see people succeed.” She said that I had succeeded. In fact, the year that I left, I also received an award from [FAU], the President’s Leadership Award, for my initiatives in moving the institution forward with its own assessment plan. At that time the State of Florida was developing what they referred to as Academic Learning Compacts. The State Board of Governors wanted to see every program identify learning outcomes in content knowledge, communication skills, and critical thinking skills, and to annually assess those and provide data that the students were achieving those. I was charged with leading that since I was the assessment director. We navigated some very tough territory, but we were able to get all of our work done based on the timeline. Some of the other institutions—there were eleven institutions in Florida—were not as successful as we were. In fact, two of the institutions used ours as a model for their own plan, so that was pretty exciting.

TS: When you came here I guess Linda Noble was a CETL associate director?

TP: Yes.

TS: She was working with new faculty and people going up for tenure, those kinds of things. What was your job description? I guess you wrote it.

TP: Yes, I should step back and say Linda Noble was also someone that I had met through the Society for the Teaching of Psychology. She’s a past president. Bill Hill is a past president. Randy Smith was the editor of our journal, *Teaching of Psychology*; and Maureen [A.] McCarthy who is now the liaison for the faculty to the President [Faculty Executive Assistant to the President] was a past president and a leader. So Kennesaw has attracted a large number of quality Psychology faculty here. Linda was focusing more on faculty development. My position was called the Associate Director for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. My job responsibilities were to support faculty who were conducting scholarship of teaching and learning, but also to oversee the Assurance of Learning Council, which is the main committee that examines the assessment plans for the entire institution. To support assessment more broadly, I was also appointed ex officio to the Global Learning Coordinating Council, so I could provide some insight into institutional assessment for our Quality Enhancement Plan. Over the years my position has expanded to also include comprehensive program review. The University System [of Georgia, USG], a couple of years after I started, redesigned its requirements for program review for all the academic degree programs. So Linda Noble, Bill Hill, and I designed the process for conducting future comprehensive program reviews.

TS: For our institution or the whole system?

TP: For Kennesaw. The University System requires all institutions to have a way of evaluating the quality, productivity, and viability of its programs, and I and Bill and Linda helped to design Kennesaw’s process. The accredited programs have

- site visits. We wanted to see the same thing happen with the non-accredited programs, so we could get some feedback from discipline-based [faculty at other] institutions.
- TS: Non-accredited meaning, of course we're all accredited through SACS [Southern Association of Colleges and Schools] but non-accredited meaning . . .
- TP: No disciplinary.
- TS: It doesn't really have a professional organization that accredits—like history.
- TP: Yes, exactly.
- TS: So you're doing something similar to that where departments have to do something like a self-study or whatever?
- TP: Yes. We oversee that process and provide feedback to the programs. After they bring in the external consultant, the Comprehensive Program Review Council reviews all the materials and provides a report to the provost and the deans.
- TS: How frequently do the departments have to do the assessment?
- TP: USG mandates seven years for undergraduate programs, every ten years for graduate programs. We've tried to cycle at seven years. We may need to modify that. The USG is now reconsidering its strategy. There seems to be a misalignment between what the USG initially required and what SACS is now requiring. So my guess is we'll see a shift in Comprehensive Program Review in the next couple of years to make a better alignment between the state system and the accrediting system.
- TS: Is that going to mean more frequent assessments?
- TP: It may mean that there will be more reporting, maybe on an annual or bi-annual basis. I would hope that we don't get rid of the external review process, which you obviously can't do on an annual basis, but we do need to find some strategies that will help to provide more timely information. Also, we want this ultimately to be helpful for the deans in making decision about faculty hires, resource allocation. Right now our system is designed in a way that makes it a little less useful than I think it could be.
- TS: What primarily are you looking for in a program review? How effectively they teach or how much scholarship they're doing or what exactly are you trying to measure?
- TP: Assurance of Learning is essential to that, so there is going to be an important part for those annual or biennial reports for the Assessment of Student Learning

- outcomes. So that's going to be part of it. But Comprehensive Program Review is broader. We want to look at the demographics of the faculty, the demographics including not just their diversity, but also their scholarship and representation of the discipline. Do they have sufficient faculty to cover what is reasonable for a curriculum? We look at the student demographics, the quality of the students entering and how long it takes them to exit. Are there any bottlenecks? What types of resources might help students matriculate more readily through the program and achieve the learning outcomes? So you want to balance the quality but also the productivity of the program. So those are the two major things.
- TS: So you're primarily making recommendations for self-improvement, I guess, but also I assume that if you find a program that has a lot of faculty and not a lot of students, you may want to make some recommendations about getting rid of deadwood or whatever.
- TP: Or, there may be a situation where the program is doing other things like focusing on General Education. They may not be degree productive, but they are productive when it comes to the support for the institution. So you need to factor in multiple issues. Ultimately, what this really needs to be is a decision-making tool for the deans and the provost in terms of allocating the scarce resources that we have most effectively and efficiently. It may mean growing programs; it may mean maintaining programs; it may mean reallocating resources like we did several years ago with the Foreign Languages programs, which were individual majors, but then they consolidated into a single major with concentrations. That seems to be pretty effective for the way that they're working right now. It doesn't necessarily mean reduction or elimination, although that is a possibility.
- TS: I assume in this that instead of reporting to the director of CETL you were reporting to the provost?
- TP: The Comprehensive Program Review Council does an annual report to the provost on the programs that are being reviewed, and that report also goes to the deans of any programs that are undergoing review that year.
- TS: So in your position you're still I guess evaluated annually by the director of CETL and not anybody else?
- TP: The director of CETL, yes. It's interesting. I'm sort of an outlier at CETL because most of us are focused on faculty development, and I consider myself focused on faculty development as well, but I also have this accountability hat that I wear. I see my role as primarily helping faculty in the programs design more effective curriculum- and course-level assessment, so that they can document the improvement of learning. There's where my faculty development hat is. I also need to make sure that they're doing that work and designing the reporting that we can use for our accreditation documentation.



- TS: I wanted to ask you about the scholarship of teaching and learning in just a minute, but first of all, why don't we get the Assessment of Learning completed. I guess you oversee the Assurance of Learning Council?
- TP: I chair that committee.
- TS: And that's campus wide? How do people get on the Assurance of Learning Council?
- TP: It's a council rather than a committee, I should say. We do appoint people. We ask for recommendations from the dean. We found over the years that it's difficult when you have junior faculty who serve on that committee because of two things. First of all, they are providing feedback to other programs, and so they may not be as familiar with what we need for this. Also, it's difficult when they provide feedback, we ask them to go to the director or coordinator or the individual who wrote the report. Their credibility may be questioned if they don't have some sort of higher level responsibility.
- TS: You want senior faculty.
- TP: We want senior faculty, and we have several associate deans or assistant deans who serve on the committee. We're currently re-evaluating the model for the Assurance of Learning Council and we're re-evaluating the Comprehensive Program Review. We're in our fifth-year reporting process right now, and so I'm working with [M.] Leigh Funk [Special Assistant to the President for Accreditation] and Michele DiPietro, our [CETL] executive director. Leigh Funk is the SACS coordinator, liaison for the institution, and Leigh and I both made the recommendation that we needed an Institutional Effectiveness officer on campus. That's why Kennesaw now has Susan Paraska serving in that role. Several of us are going to be getting together, in fact, next week to discuss strategies for the future of Assurance of Learning and Comprehensive Program Review. I'm hoping we'll find a way to align these better, so there are less numerous reports, more concentrated reporting structure because right now programs are often being asked to do more and more reports. We hit these moving targets, and it's just overwhelming. So we need to find a way of reducing that burden.
- TS: How is Kennesaw doing as a teaching institution? How effective is Kennesaw compared to other institutions in teaching?
- TP: I don't know if I would have a good metric for that. I can tell you a little bit about Assurance of Learning reports, the quality of the reports. The quality of the reports, I think—some good examples of this—we put our Assurance of Learning model up for a national award, and we received that award in 2008.
- TS: I wanted to ask you about that.

- TP: That's the Council of Higher Education and Accreditation, a national organization based out of Washington, D.C., that basically coordinates the work of all the accrediting associations. It makes recommendations to the Department of Education concerning the status of accreditation and accountability in institutions. They have an annual competition for institutional effectiveness in assessing student learning outcomes.
- TS: The award was for Institutional Progress in Student Learning Outcomes.
- TP: Yes, and we received that award in 2007. Again I made the application for that based upon the work that we were doing.
- TS: I've got 2008.
- TP: Yes. January of 2008 was when the award was bestowed. We got the announcement of that in 2007.
- TS: I see. So we're making progress as an institution in measuring learning outcomes?
- TP: Yes. They do a handful every year, so we were one of the first institutions to receive that award in a four or five year period.
- TS: When the students do an evaluation, they're measuring teaching, but we're looking for something that measures learning.
- TP: This is student learning. This is the student assessment that happens within the program, so that you're looking at "to what extent do you have evidence that students have attained the content knowledge or the critical thinking skills or the communication skills relevant for the program." We examine the assessment reports that faculty are providing that help us to understand where programs are. The idea here is it may be that a report shows deficiencies in students. That's not a problem. That suggests a strategy for redesigning a course or a curriculum to improve that in the future. One of the big issues about assessment is that faculty are very concerned about airing their dirty laundry, where, in fact, unless you can know where your students are deficient, it's very difficult to see how you might improve your curriculum over the years. That's why they're talking about an institution making progress and not demonstrates.
- TS: This is not the easiest thing in the world to measure, so it's a lot of work it sounds like.
- TP: A lot of work. Every program really has to do it on its own. I facilitate that in terms of providing workshops. For example, recently, the reports we received in the beginning of this year in January, we started to notice that some of the graduate programs in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences were

established well, but they just had not yet gotten the idea of how to do graduate level assessment. They're relatively new programs. It was the first time we were really designing graduate level education. So we decided that instead of giving them immediate feedback, we would have some sort of workshops to explore better strategies for moving forward. We just had our first workshop in October, and I've been interacting with some of the programs in terms of improving the quality of how they go about assessing the graduate education.

TS: Let me ask you now about the scholarship of teaching and learning. Why don't you talk just a little bit about exactly what you've done since you've come to Kennesaw in the last six years in encouraging, facilitating, improving scholarship of teaching and learning on our campus?

TP: Okay. The major initiatives that we do are, we originally called it the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Team Funding, where we invited faculty who are involved with the scholarship of teaching and learning to apply for funding awards where they will meet on a regular basis once a month during the semester, share what their work is. Some programs do this as a writing team. We were doing it more as the design and implementation of your scholarship. So it was not just the writing. You can be at any stage of your scholarship. They interact on a monthly basis and provide feedback and support for each other. What's nice about that is you get faculty from multiple disciplines who may never have interacted before listening to each other, finding that there are some commonalities, oftentimes learning from each other. You improve the quality and product because you start seeing your project from a different lens. Originally, all of those faculty were required to make a presentation at the Georgia Conference [on College and University Teaching], which is one of the conferences that CETL offers on an annual basis. That's still an option. They would make a poster presentation there. We've opened it up a bit now. We do want them to present, and we encourage them because it's local, but they can present anywhere that they want, and we do provide them funding for professional travel to present their work at either disciplinary or inter-disciplinary conferences.

TS: How do people become part of these teams?

TP: We have an open invitation application process once a year.

TS: So you apply and then a committee decides or do you decide?

TP: I decide and Michele DiPietro looks over the applications to make sure. We get about five to seven faculty a year that we fund.

TS: About how many apply?

TP: We basically accept almost everyone who applies. Every now and then we get one that we feel is not appropriate, and we might direct them to one of our

other—we really rarely have had to reject an application. We tend to find ways of providing support for the faculty in other venues. Some of them may apply for my award, but really it should have been a Faculty Learning Community. So we invite them to do that and vice versa. We've been pretty successful. If people submit, they oftentimes find some way of getting funding from us. Recently, we've designed a two-day workshop. Our first workshop was offered in May where we again made invitations to faculty who wanted to devote a two-day intensive experience to designing some part of their scholarship. There were seven faculty that we accepted for that. Again, those were the only ones who applied, and we felt that they were all strong candidates. We went to a retreat north of Kennesaw, and we had seven consultants. Several of them were from the CETL, but also Catherine Lewis joined us because she's very much involved in the scholarship of teaching and learning. There were a couple of faculty members who were interested in doing publications similar to hers on teaching pedagogy. Twelve to fourteen of us got together for two days and had some general meetings, but then everyone broke out and could interact with any of the consultants that they wanted to work on their project and report back out, work again, report back out for the two days. I think it was very successful. The people who went through it felt that it helped to focus their work for the future. What we decided to do this year for the first time is to change the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning team into a Faculty Learning Community, so it looks more like a Faculty Learning Community. It doesn't meet as intensively as the previous one did. It meets once a month for two hours instead of four hours, and again, the applications that came in—we did reject a couple of people this time. But again we directed them; we thought, okay, this project could be useful, but not in this venue. Look for another venue at CETL. We really are trying to help faculty develop. I hate rejecting someone who may not really know how to do an application. I think what we need to do is find ways of helping them to professionally develop.

TS: Faculty Learning Community—will you define that a little bit?

TP: Yes. A Faculty Learning Community, the way we defined it, is this is oftentimes helpful for faculty who are first learning about some strategies for redesigning their courses or their curriculum. For example, Lynn Boettler [Faculty Fellow for] Community Engagement, designed a Faculty Learning Community for faculty who may not know what community engagement means. To come together to get some support, what we do is we provide books or other resources for the individuals who are in the team. They meet regularly to discuss the materials and to find strategies for incorporating some of that material into their own teaching or perhaps into the redesigning of their curriculum.

We had several Faculty Learning Communities that came out of the College of Education that were looking at a changing of the standards for math or English or other areas of study. It provided a nice venue for them to do their work. They also get some funding. If you participate in the Faculty Learning Community

during the year, you get professional travel funding for the next year that you can use for any professional travel. We decided to do the same thing with the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. What we're doing also is adding one incentive that the other programs don't have that if you participate this year and you have a verification of publication—it doesn't have to be actually published, but a verification that will be published by May of 2014—we'll give you an additional stipend for the publication. It's a small incentive to try and generate scholarship as a result of your participation.

TS: Why don't you talk a little bit about the award that you won this year? First of all, who's Felton Jenkins, Jr., and what's the Hall of Fame Faculty Award? How did all of that get into the title?

TP: This is the first year that the award was named for Felton Jenkins, Jr. I'm not as familiar with him personally. He was [a former Vice Chairman of] the Board of Regents [who died on 1 January 2011]. They decided this year for the first time to honor his contributions to Georgia education by naming [several of] the awards after him. I think there are one or two awards that have a different name after them, but mine is the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. There's also the Teacher of the Year Award, which is also a Felton Jenkins, Jr. Hall of Fame award. Mine, they usually give out two awards a year. It's focused on leadership and service and publication records related to the scholarship of teaching and learning. So some of the things that I talked about already, my work in the Society for the Teaching of Psychology, my design of the assessments at Florida Atlantic, my work on the Global Learning Council and getting the awards, the CHEA award and the NAFSA award here at Kennesaw were helpful in supporting that.

TS: The CHEA award?

TP: Yes, the Council for Higher Education Accreditation, that's CHEA. It's the [award for] institutional learning outcomes assessment. The one thing we didn't talk about is the fact of how I've leveraged all of this work into a stronger publication record. Like I said, when I was at Loras, publications really did not matter that much, but now that I'm at Kennesaw, and even when I was at Florida Atlantic, I felt the need to ramp up my scholarship. So over the years I published research on how we designed the assessments at Florida Atlantic, how Psychology faculty should contribute to assessment for their own discipline, but also for institutional effectiveness, the ethics of teaching. I have publications on designing a course in Industrial Organizational Psychology that meet the learning outcomes for the American Psychological Association. Many of the publications that I have done over the years have been focused on the natural work that I do in my role as assessment and as a faculty member in the department of Psychology.

TS: What are some of the major professional journals in the field?

- TP: Well, the major journal is the *Teaching of Psychology*. I do have an article in the *Teaching of Psychology*, but most of my publications are actually edited book chapters where I got invited by some of my colleagues to write a book chapter. They do a peer review editing of it, and they will not accept things if they are not successful.
- TS: So this is like a conference where they decide to take the best papers and put them together in a book?
- TP: A few of them are that way. There were a couple of proceedings. The Society for the Teaching of Psychology had a best practices conference every year, and the focus of that conference changes. The very first conference was on assessment, and I presented there. They thought that our presentation—it was actually a joint presentation among four faculty at different institutions on designing program review for Psychology departments—and they felt it was a strong enough presentation that they invited us to write a book chapter, and I was the first author of that, and it got published in that proceeding. Similarly, about seven years later there was another assessment version of that conference. The title had changed over the years, but they wanted to return to assessment. I made a presentation there with Randy Smith, in fact, and that's where I got the invitation to do a publication on how Psychology should contribute to institutional outcomes effectiveness as well as to assessment of its own program. But others were just invited. Sometimes someone says we want to write a book on assessment, will you participate?
- TS: You say the Regents give two a year? Do they have different awards for research universities and for state colleges and universities?
- TP: The teaching award is different levels, so there'll be a single award for the R-1s and the regionals and the four year institutions.
- TS: Junior college?
- TP: They may have one for the two years. I can't recall the number of awards, but that's the teaching award.
- TS: So the teaching awards are by type of institution?
- TP: Yes. The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning award is open to any, and they'll award two at maximum a year.
- TS: So from our thirty-five years or what was thirty-five before we started consolidating, they take a maximum of two a year?
- TP: Maximum of two a year. We've been very fortunate now, if you combine those awards together. I was awarded that in a string of six years of us receiving

awards. Some faculty member or some program—there's also a program-based award, they look at program. First-year programs won it a couple of years ago here at Kennesaw, but I believe it was six years running that we have won either the teaching award or the scholarship of teaching and learning award. A previous scholarship of teaching and learning award recipient at Kennesaw was Randy Smith a couple of years ago before he resigned and moved to Lamar University. Matt [Matthew] Laposata [Professor of Environmental Science also received the award.]

TS: We've had a number of people who have first won our Distinguished Teaching Award and then won the system-wide award.

TP: Sabine Smith [Professor of German], I'm blanking on some of the names.

TS: Karen Robinson I believe.

TP: Karen Robinson [Professor of Theatre & Performance Studies], yes.

TS: Mary Garner?

TP: Mary Garner [Professor of Mathematics], yes. We all took a photo together, except that Randy couldn't be here because he'd already left, but I've never seen where the photo is.

TS: I just wanted to ask, I think I know the answer, but I can't imagine us winning all these awards if CETL hadn't been here.

TSP: Yes. Bill has been very, very strategic about grooming people for writing these awards. He's no longer here so Michele is doing it more, but I think Bill still provides some leadership in that. He does meet with people. He's still part-time working for us. Michele has been here for two years now, but there's so much that CETL has grown that's it's helpful to have support from the previous director. I think part of our success has been leadership that helps us to put together our best application. I've been pretty successful myself in doing the applications for the CHEA award and the NAFSA award, so it's an important thing. You really have to know what the criteria are and directly respond to the criteria in an order that your reviewer can read and say yes, you meet this, you meet this, you meet this.

TS: Well, I know Dan Papp's excited about all the awards that we've won at the Regents level because he mentions them just about every time he makes a speech.

TP: Yes. I've been asked to stand up a couple of times. It makes you feel proud, but also a little bit awkward.

- TS: Let me ask you just a few general assessment questions about the institution. What do you see in the way of the intellectual climate at Kennesaw? You've been at different types of institution and at an institution that is maybe a decade ahead of us as well. What's your impression of the intellectual climate at Kennesaw during the six years that you've been here?
- TP: It's always been exciting. It's probably been one of the most stressful but positive experiences I've ever had. Kennesaw tends to do a lot with limited resources, and that's a credit to the faculty. It's interesting that I now have seen perspectives from three different types of models. Loras College is a teaching-focused institution. Although they want you to be scholars, there's no pressure for publication. Presenting is fine, but focus on your teaching, and that's how you will get tenured. Florida Atlantic started off as a reverse two-year college. They offered the third and fourth year and graduate programs, and only after about twenty years of being in existence did they start offering their first-year and sophomore classes. They were primarily a transfer institution for the community college system in Florida. So the core faculty there had in mind the emphasis on research and less emphasis on undergraduate teaching. It was a struggle to bring up issues of assessment in some of the programs. Not all programs, but many of the programs the faculty were much more interested in research productivity than they were in teaching. I come to Kennesaw, and it's the reverse. At least the history at Kennesaw having been a two-year college before a four-year college and then ultimately a regional university, the emphasis of the core faculty has been on teaching effectiveness. It's only gradually that we are now—now that we are poised to be a more national and perhaps even international presence. I think we are. To some extent we already are a national presence in certain areas, but I think we're going to be even more of that in the future. The importance of scholarship, not necessarily disciplined-based research, but ultimate scholarship productivity, whether it is in teaching, service, research and creative activity, I think is what's really driving the institution at this point in addition to maintaining its quality teaching.
- TS: So the broader definition of scholarship still prevails? Are we still under a Boyer model or have we moved beyond that or where are we?
- TP: I am hoping that we will maintain the Boyer model. I don't see anything to prevent us from moving in that direction. Really, what you need to do is look at the faculty handbook. You have to look at the department level promotion and tenure guidelines, see that it's codified, and see that that's followed through in terms of the individuals who are awarded promotion and tenure as part of that. That's why Meghan Burke [Associate CETL Director for Mentoring for Faculty & Student Success] I think has been a very strong advocate for maintaining the Boyer model. She serves on those types of committees.
- TS: Well, I've always thought that you were going to have a very frustrated faculty if they wanted to be Emory or any of the research universities because we're never



- going to get the grants that they get and we're never going to have the resources. There certainly is a niche there to be out doing very practical scholarship that improves teaching and serves community needs.
- TP: I agree with you that we may not in the near future be there in terms of grants and scholarships, but if you look over the past seven years the growth of grants and contracts on this campus is phenomenal.
- TS: Astronomical.
- TP: The growth of MOUs [Memorandums of Understanding] with other countries is phenomenal through our global learning. I think if you look at it from the long term, think about us forty years ago when we were first emerging to where we are right now. Even if you think about us for the past six years, the incredible growth—I started here when Kennesaw had 17,000. It's grown about a thousand students a year. We're over 25,000 now.
- TS: A little bit under 25,000.
- TP: So we're just there. When I started we had only a handful of graduate programs, if that. We now have an incredible number of graduate programs. We began offering our first doctoral program since I've been here and our first Ph.D. So, long term, I think you're going to see this institution continuing to emerge and evolve.
- TS: So with the new Lab Science building and Prillaman Hall and what-have-you and a growing number of doctoral programs?
- TP: Yes. And I really do not believe we're going to lose the teaching emphasis. What I also like about Kennesaw is it really does take seriously its regional university status—that we are doing great things in a wide variety of disciplines. I'm a very strong advocate of theater and our Theatre & Performance Studies program and dance program that emerged from that are phenomenal as is our music program and our visual arts program. They do have an MAT of teaching, but I'm not certain to what extent or when and how they may be offering more graduate levels. But for the undergraduate they're doing a phenomenal job here. The Coles College of Business is nationally recognized for the quality of the Assurance of Learning by its accrediting association, quality programs in its master's offerings. You look at every single one of our programs . . . and in education we're the leader in the state, so we're doing what a good regional university should be doing.
- TS: Well, who knows where we're going to be in thirty or forty years.
- TP: Yes. Every now and then you hear people talk about us possibly turning into an R-1. Whether or not that happens, if it does, so be it. But I think we're up to

- whatever challenges, whatever direction our administration and our leadership take us. I think we're going to be successful.
- TS: I guess R-1 is old terminology now anyway. It's not going to be long before we're going to be handing out more than fifty doctoral degrees a year. I guess that's what puts you in that . . .
- TP: The research extensive, research intensive categories are the ones they're calling them now.
- TS: So it's an exciting place to be.
- TP: It is, it is. Sometimes it's frustrating just because there are so many good things going on, and you just get exhausted because all these things crash together at once, and it's very difficult to try to keep all those balls in the air, but I'm happy here. I see no reason, like I was at Loras, I see no reason to ever consider looking elsewhere. And, CETL is such a strong presence on this campus.
- TS: It's phenomenal what CETL has accomplished in the last ten years.
- TP: Yes. Bill has been wonderful, and we have a very strong executive director who is expanding our opportunities. We've offered the International Institute for New Faculty Developers for the first time a year ago, and we just got the contract this year to offer it again in 2013, so we're on the map. At least in terms of faculty development centers, Kennesaw is there. In global learning we're there. In some of our programs we're there. I think you're going to see Kennesaw becoming even more and more visible nationally and internationally in a lot of our programs.
- TS: I'm about out of questions. Do you think of anything we should have talked about that we haven't?
- TP: I'll be interested to see how all this comes out. I tend to have sentences that end abruptly and move around but . . .
- TS: No, you've done great.
- TP: Okay.
- TS: Well, I think we'll end it on a positive note, so why don't we just call it quits right here, and thank you very much for the interview.
- TP: Thank you for the opportunity.

Kennesaw State University Oral History Project  
KSU Oral History Series, No. 113  
Interview with Thomas P. Pusateri  
Conducted, edited, and indexed by Thomas A. Scott  
Part II - Thursday, 28 May 2015  
Location: CETL House, Kennesaw State University

TS: The interview today is an update from the previous interview of November 2012. Since then, Tom has received the 2014 KSU Distinguished Service Award. Tom, when we did the interview before, you had been here six years. You're about nine years at this point. I believe that the award that you received last fall was for what you have accomplished in those nine years plus the consulting work you did for KSU before you came here.

TP: Yes.

TS: As you mentioned in the earlier interview, you pretty much wrote your job description. So I guess that was part of your service before you came here. But when the award was announced, the university said that it was "in recognition of a decade long record of institutional service at the departmental, college, and institutional levels as well as disciplinary service and leadership at the national level." Before, we talked about how you were executive director of the Society for the Teaching of Psychology from 2000 to 2007, which overlapped with your coming here, and how the job description got a little heavy here, I guess, and you decided not to do that any longer. I know you're still involved in the national organization, and you've won a ton of awards, a number of which we talked about in the previous interview, but I think probably the last one covered in the previous interview was NAFSA's Senator Paul Simon Award for Campus Internationalization in 2011 where you were the major editor of the report.

TP: Yes. I'll comment on the things that you mentioned in the order that you talked about them. Since the last time we spoke, I have continued my service to the Society for the Teaching of Psychology. I've worked on task forces to help the society archive the data that we've collected over the years. Actually [G, William] Bill Hill [IV] was hired as the archivist for the society at least for a temporary period until we could get the material all together. I worked on the task force to help Bill make some decisions on what materials should be and should not be archived. And since that point, as well, I ran for and was elected to become the secretary for the society. So I'm serving on the executive committee starting January 2015 for the next three years, and that's been a very exciting experience. I am continuing service to the society.

TS: Is secretary something that leads up to eventually president or is this a job unto itself in the three years?

- TP: I've not yet decided. I don't know if I want to go to the level of president. I see my skill set as predominately stewardship. Right now we're having some very important conversations about how we maintain a historical record for the society with the archiving. Also now we're doing so much of our work electronically. Yet we don't keep minutes of electronic discussions. So I'm trying to figure out as a secretary, what does it mean to maintain a historical record of the discussions that the executive committee for the society has if they're not in a formal face-to-face meeting?
- TS: So you've been saving printed minutes officially approved, that kind of thing?
- TP: Well, we do everything on electronic discussion boards. So it is available, but it's just not easily accessible. We need to figure out a strategy for keeping that going. That's one of the projects I'm working on right now. The president and I have talked about, what are some strategies that we should use?
- TS: What kind of records do you have other than minutes of meetings?
- TP: Well, the things that I might predominately do are minutes for two annual meetings, and I maintain a newsletter that used to be print, but now it's all electronic. There are additional archives in terms of task force reports. Those are things that Bill Hill is doing to collate and maintain, but as secretary I would probably support those types of work.
- TS: How far back do your records go?
- TP: Oh, well, we've been in operation since [1946]. So we're attempting as much as possible to get records of presidential addresses at major meetings, task force reports, decisions by those task forces, how we maintain information about our social networks, how we have different discussion lists on line, Facebook, Twitter accounts, things like that.
- TS: It sounds like you've got a pretty big job in front of you.
- TP: The whole organization does. The second thing that you mentioned was the campus internationalization award in 2011. Since that time I've also contributed to some other initiatives on campus. I provided some writing for our recent application for the classification as an engaged university from the Carnegie Foundation [for the Advancement of Teaching]. Brian [M.] Wooten [executive director of Community Engagement] was the principal writer of that, but he contacted me to work on a committee that worked on different parts of the application. I helped with making a case that we were doing a reasonable job of assessing community engagement on campus. In my previous role as the chair of the Assurance of Learning Council I was helping with writing that particular section of the application. We received [the classification], I believe, sometime late last year. I also was the principal editor—other individuals provided me a lot

of the writing—for our Quality Enhancement Plan report as part of our fifth year mid-term accreditation review by SACS [Southern Association of Colleges & Schools].

- TS: The Quality Enhancement Plan is about the internationalization of campus programs we've done for the last ten years?
- TP: Yes. Global Learning for Engaged Citizenship was the title of our report. I edited the ten-page document that we submitted to SACS as evidence that we met the objectives that we had set in that five-year plan.
- TS: I know when I was writing my book, I guess you had just recently written the five-year report and had received glowing reviews from SACS. Have you gotten any feedback yet on the ten-year plan?
- TP: SACS doesn't give specific feedback. They just give us the approval. We had gotten no recommendation from SACS concerning that report, which is the positive. They don't tell you that you're doing a glowing job. They tell you that you're doing what is necessary. But the Division of Global Affairs was formed as a result of this. We now have about \$140,000.00 worth of grants to support strategic initiatives in the teaching of global learning, developing the courses and curriculum, the service component for global learning, the internationalization of programs, and the scholarship. The global engagement scholarship process—it's called the strategic initiative grant award—that process has been in place for the last two years, led by Lance [R.] Askildson, our vice-provost [and chief international officer], the head of the Division of Global Affairs. It's just been an incredibly successful process. I was part of the committee that reviewed grant applications. We met for a full week, two hours a day, to listen to presentations from all of the applicants. Then we had multiple meetings to make decisions about those awards. And those awards, I believe, have just recently been announced for the 2015-2016 academic year.
- TS: Great, fantastic. And I guess a lot of our folks are going to be going over to Italy next month isn't it?
- TP: Yes. Montepulciano is going to be one of our campuses.
- TS: It's going to be the first international place that, at least, we're leasing, and we've renovated [the 18<sup>th</sup>-century Fortezza Poliziana].
- TP: I think [the study abroad programs in Montepulciano] have been in place over a decade if not longer, but it is now a formally identified component.
- TS: Well, the trips have been going on for a long, long time. [Former chair of KSU's Department of History & Philosophy, E.] Howard Shealy [Jr.], did research on Montepulciano for some NEH [National Endowment for the Humanities]

seminars in the 1980s. But in terms of actually leasing that building, I guess we're just now being able to get into it with it renovated and what-have-you. It's exciting. Have you been involved at all in determining what the new Quality Enhancement Plan will be?

TP: Not at this point. I am hoping that I will be invited to the table. The Quality Enhancement Plan process for the next plan will be part of our ten-year reaffirmation, and that won't occur for the next year or two, I think. Probably, the vice-provost [for institutional effectiveness] Jorge Perez, will convene that task force to develop the Quality Enhancement Plan. I have not yet heard word about that. And by the way, I should mention that's another thing that has changed over the past couple of years. I used to chair the Assurance of Learning Council and the Comprehensive Program Review Council, but we had grown so large that the administration felt that it needed to combine those processes into a larger unit, which is no longer part of CETL. It's its own Office of Institutional Effectiveness. It is staffed currently by four individuals, one of whom will be overseeing our redesigned assessment plan [Dr. Sarah Holliday, interim director of assessment], and another will be providing the support for program review [Dr. Kevin Gwaltney, director of program quality and accreditation].

TS: So does that mean you worked your way out of Assurance of Learning?

TP: Yes. I will still play a supportive role. I will still be consulting with chairs and program coordinators and faculty to suggest strategies for developing their assessment plans. But the oversight of that now is in a separate office, a director of assessment that is part of that larger Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

TS: I guess the latest thing in 2012 that you had taken on was comprehensive program reviews. Are you still doing that?

TP: No, that has moved also to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. I again will play some support role to provide some consultation as requested with programs. I see some collaborations between myself and the director of assessment, but the oversight will now occur in that particular office.

TS: So then does that mean that your focus is almost entirely on scholarship of teaching and learning?

TP: Yes. What we have done now is reconfigured my position, so that I'm doing more support for scholarship of teaching and learning initiatives. That includes overseeing the faculty learning communities on the campus. Although Dr. [Michele] DiPietro [executive director of CETL] is still the supervisor for the faculty fellows, I'm now mentoring the faculty fellows to facilitate their work.

TS: Oh. The faculty fellows in CETL?

TP: In CETL. Previous faculty fellows felt that they were just not getting sufficient training to help them do their job well, so we reconfigured some of the faculty fellow positions, so that there's at least some informal and somewhat formal mentoring for them. We have just completed last week our fourth annual SOTL [Scholarship of Teaching & Learning] Writing Retreat with nine participants, and it was very successful for them. Many of them had said that they have drafts of articles that they are going to be submitting shortly.

TS: So the SOTL Writing Retreat is to help them write scholarly articles on scholarship of teaching and learning?

TP: Yes. It's a three day, intensive, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. workshop. We met at Lake Allatoona Inn, which is just about ten miles north of the university's Kennesaw campus. It's a time for them to sit down and work on their projects and get consultation from me. Michele DiPietro was there and two instructional designers, Josie Baudier and Traci Stromie. Amy Buddie [CETL associate director for graduate student support and undergraduate research] just happened to be there because she wanted to work on her own project and took advantage of it. But she also gave some amount of consultation to the participants. Last year we had a total of ten projects, one of which was a three-person team. So twelve faculty members were there, and of those ten projects, five have published their articles within the first year of participating in the retreat. So we're very pleased by that progress.

The other part that I have assumed that was previously the responsibility of Michele DiPietro and Amy Buddie is I've taken more of a role in helping to coordinate the two major SOTL conferences that CETL offers. I'm a co-coordinator with both Amy and with Michele on the Southeastern Conference on the Teaching of Psychology and on the Research on Teaching and Learning Summit. So that transition from chairing the Assurance of Learning Council and comprehensive program review council has allowed me more freedom to do SOTL-based work. That's one of the other reasons that I applied to be the secretary of the society. I knew that I would have more time to devote to pursuits that focus on scholarship of teaching and learning.

TS: Right. So the psychology teaching conference has been going on twenty-odd years now.

TP: Right. Over twenty-five years. The last one [in 2015] was the twenty-seventh year.

TS: What about the other one?

TP: The Research on Teaching and Learning Summit was originally the Georgia Conference for College Teaching and Learning. We renamed it because people not just from the region, but from the nation, and sometimes internationally,

- would attend. We also regularly held that conference in February, but the last couple of years with the changes in the weather, we've had to cancel the conference midway. People were there for the first day, but the second day was cancelled. So we made a strategic decision to move the conference this year to October of 2015. We're actually offering two versions of it this year. The February [2015] conference [was] the last February conference. Now, it is moving to October. We're just reviewing applications for proposals. We've got a lot of proposals for the October conference. I think it will be a lot more successful, and we'll be less concerned about the weather.
- TS: Yes. I think just this last year wasn't there that Saturday morning in February we closed the campus?
- TP: We closed the campus, and that was the same day as the Saturday sessions. So we made arrangements for anyone who was presenting on that Saturday to get free registration and to re-present their work that they could not present. That was our move to help them be able to present their work.
- TS: Our Georgia Association of Historians was meeting at the same time down in Statesboro. Fortunately we came out okay in Statesboro, since it is south of here.
- TP: Yes. It was threatening enough that we wanted to make sure people were safe. I don't think we'll have the same problems in October unless hurricanes happen.
- TS: So you're putting on three conferences, I guess, a year.
- TP: Only this year. We'll start offering the Research on Teaching and Learning Summit only in October. That will also help my role because now that I'm overseeing both of those conferences, one will be in February/March, and the other one will be in October. That enables me to devote more attention to calling for proposals, reviewing materials, and getting keynote speakers and invited speakers. It will also help to free up Amy. She's been heavily invested in the undergraduate research symposium [Symposium of Scholars and Undergraduate Research]. Undergraduate research is ramping up on this campus. So she needed some relief from having to oversee SETOP, the Southeastern Conference [on the Teaching of Psychology]. And Michele also needed some relief from the Research on Teaching and Learning Summit, so it's working out well.
- TS: Great. You've been working with the Society for the Teaching of Psychology. Any other service on a national level?
- TP: Yes. First of all, let me talk about regionally. I have been invited to present workshops on scholarship of teaching and learning and on assessing and grading student work at two of the campuses in the University System of Georgia. The campuses were Bainbridge State College—I made presentations at each of their two campuses—and Georgia Gwinnett [College] on the scholarship of teaching



- and learning for their opening series. They're ramping up the expectation of faculty scholarship, and they felt it was a natural for their faculty to get involved in scholarship of teaching and learning. So I did a workshop.
- TS: You actually talked about two things: the scholarship of teaching and learning and the assessment of student work.
- TP: Effective grading. Yes. The Bainbridge campus wanted a workshop on effective grading. So I provided them some suggestions for that. Not only did I do those two regional workshops, but I was invited last year to present a Magna online seminar. Magna Publications is a noted organization that does The Teaching Professor, which is a very popular blog. It provides resources for effective teaching. They invited me to present a webinar. It got pretty good reviews from the participants. The coordinator of the webinars sent me the reviews, and they thought it was very good. That was on classroom assessment techniques, by the way. I was recently invited also to serve as an external consultant for Florida Atlantic University. They had previously asked me to help them develop their Quality Enhancement Plan. They're now in the mid-term of their five year plan. So I attended a two-day set of meetings earlier this month and am in the process now of writing them a report on where I see their progress, what progress they've made, and what recommendations I would suggest for them for the future.
- TS: What is their QEP?
- TP: Theirs is on undergraduate research. They started off as offering predominately graduate offering and upper-level (third and fourth year) baccalaureate programs. They started about the same time that Kennesaw State did in the early 1960s. Over the years they added the first two years for the baccalaureate degree. They used to be a community college feeder. What they want to do now is to ramp up the extent of undergraduate research. Their faculty have heavily invested in graduate education. So how could they provide some support for undergraduates, not just for [first-time] students who are entering FAU, but there are also a lot of transfer students. So while they set up mechanisms, so that individuals are aware of those opportunities, I'm going to give them suggestions on what progress they've made, but also future directions for them.
- TS: Any resistance from the faculty into doing more with undergraduates?
- TP: No. What I really liked about their Quality Enhancement Plan was very similar to what happened at Kennesaw State. There are some individuals who are not as interested in the specific topic, but it generally energizes a core group of faculty and really does transform the institution. Our Division of Global Affairs may not have existed in the capacity that it is without the Quality Enhancement Plan. I think it's very much invested; it's part of our fabric right now. I see the same thing happening down at FAU. All of the faculty that I interacted with there were excited about the process. They realize that it is labor intensive, but they see the

value, and they're really seeking advice for moving that institution to that next level.

TS: If you were able to choose our next QEP, or make a suggestion as to what it should be, what area maybe is underdeveloped here that might benefit from a QEP?

TP: Well, I'm not certain I'd go for an underdeveloped one. I think what happened with the Quality Enhancement Plan that made it so successful for global engagement was that we already had a track record of global learning, but we wanted to move it to the next level. So maybe not underdeveloped, but something that I think needs more support and that's already ongoing. There are a couple of opportunities here. The one that I hear frequently is community engagement. I'm very much of an advocate of that. Even though we are doing community engagement, and we are now classified as an engaged university, it doesn't mean that we have met a plateau. I think we can move up to another level in community engagement.

The other area that I think is a potential topic would be undergraduate research. There may be a time at which we need to reconfigure, just like we reconfigured my office into an office of institutional effectiveness. The diversity office started off as a faculty fellowship. The distant learning center started off as first a faculty fellow, but then an associate director for technology enhanced learning at CETL. I'm imaging that at some point we may need an office of undergraduate research to support the extent of undergraduate research opportunities on the campus. Not that Amy's not doing a smashing job. It's just that it's growing, and someone needs additional support to enable that to occur. Those are the two that come to my mind. There may be some others. Even though we have a distance learning center, there's a brave new world now with online education and access for students. So there may be some needs to consider, how do we enhance the quality of educational opportunities that are provided to students? With the consolidation there may be some concern about enhancing STEM [Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics] education. Even though we have great programs, maybe there's some need to consider how we might move those to a new plateau.

TS: How else is consolidation going to affect CETL? Southern Poly used to have something similar to CETL, but on a much smaller scale, as I understand it.

TP: They used to have the Center for Teaching Excellence, which now is absorbed into CETL. We are maintaining their space. We have both a room for workshops and an office down on the Marietta campus. We have developed programming, and we are going to offer series on both campuses. What's exciting for me from the scholarship of teaching and learning perspective is the Marietta campus has a Research on Teaching and Learning Community that meets every other week. It's an open meeting, which we haven't done here on [the Kennesaw] campus, but the faculty get together and talk about developing research that they will do in

- their classes on the same topic with the goal of presenting and publishing their research in the future. I'm going to be helping to facilitate that. I still want them to coordinate it. The faculty know what they're doing. But I'm going to be observing them for the next year and figuring out how and if we should offer some similar type of structure on the Kennesaw campus.
- TS: That is great!
- TP: Yes. I'm hoping also to have two scholarship of teaching and learning faculty communities, one that would be offered at the Marietta campus, and one that would be offered at the Kennesaw campus, so that individuals that want to do their SOTL work will have support. This Research on Teaching and Learning Community is really a group project. So I think that's exciting to see that we're expanding the opportunities for the scholarship of teaching and learning on the campus.
- TS: Fantastic. Anything else on regional and national service that we didn't talk about?
- TP: I think I've hit the major ones that have happened since the time that we spoke last. I should mention also that I did do some additional service for the Psychology Department. Since the [first interview], I was elected to the faculty senate and served also on the faculty senate executive committee. The new rules that have been in place, the by-laws, now restrict individuals like me who have administrative positions from serving on the faculty senate, so I've had to step down from that.
- TS: Oh. You mean rules with the consolidation? And why was that if the department elected you?
- TP: Well, there were concerns that individuals who have administrative positions might be more responsive to the administration than to the faculty. So the faculty said it made a decision that it wanted to restrict membership to individuals who had limited administrative support. I may disagree with that, but that is the ruling.
- TS: It sounds to me that if the department wants to elect you, it ought to be a department decision.
- TP: That was one of the arguments that I presented to the faculty senate, but the vote still went as it did. So that's the reality
- TS: Right. Any accomplishments of note while you were on the faculty senate?
- TP: Well, it was primarily the consolidation issues. I should mention that we did have a lot of conversations about the consolidation, of course, developing the bylaws for the new senate, and such. I served as one of the members of the operational

working task force on the implementation of course reviews. I was originally tasked with helping to initiate implementation of digital measures and the online student ratings. It appears that that will now be a part of my future—to facilitate the data collection and also the interpretation and provide faculty support for reviewing student evaluations of teaching. So that also now is part of my new role responsibility. I'm hoping at some point we'll have conversations about designing more effective metrics for assessing teaching effectiveness—not just on student ratings, although they are an important part, but what other types of strategies should faculty be using to help them document and improve their teaching.

TS: And to measure what students have actually learned?

TP: Yes, student learning should be involved in that, but also faculty professional development. Sometimes you may be very effective teaching in the classroom, but there may be some need for a faculty member to branch out, whether its study abroad or online education. So there's a continuing need for professional development for effective faculty.

TS: Get those twenty-year-old notes up to date.

TP: Yes, and I think that's where centers like our center are very important. We are continuously professionally developing as faculty. And that's not just in our scholarship; that's in our teaching.

TS: One would hope. Great. So you're doing a ton of service on campus. Are there any other major areas on campus that we haven't talked about?

TP: I mentioned the global engagement committee has been the most dramatic part. I did also get invited to participate last year with the University College's learning community's program to attend the Evergreen State [College] workshop. They do a summer workshop on promoting first-year learning communities. They're in [Olympia], Washington State. A wonderful campus! [Catherine] Cathy Bradford [director of learning communities, Department of First-Year and Transition Studies] sent six or seven of us, including a representative from the Marietta campus—because we knew the consolidation was occurring—that worked on developing some strategies on enhancing the learning communities.

There was also the task force on the high impact practices. I am a participant of that. The Association of American Colleges and Universities has identified ten high impact practices, which include things like undergraduate research, education abroad, diversity in global education, and writing across the curriculum. We recently hired a faculty fellow at CETL [Stephanie Foote] who will help oversee high impact practices. That's another possibility for a Quality Enhancement Plan, although I think it may be overly broad because there are ten

different high impact practices. Undergraduate research falls under that, as does global learning.

TS: Everything you've mentioned sounds like things we've been doing for years here.

TP: Yes. Now the idea is, how do you coordinate the efforts of all of those so that students will have those experiences frequently during their four years of undergraduate education? It's focused on undergraduate education. It has implication for graduate education as well. The first-year seminars are involved in that. The University College has been doing first-year seminars in a dramatic way, receiving awards, being a national leader of that. But again trying to figure out a coordinated structure for all ten high impact practices, some of which we are doing well, but could be doing even better. I'm thinking, for example, of the writing across the curriculum movement, it's very strong in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. I'm not certain it's replicated as well in the other colleges. So, how do you make an institution-wide commitment to writing in the disciplines and writing across the curriculum? I think that's where this new faculty fellow will play a very strong role.

There was a national task force on the review of the first-year programs—[the Foundations of Excellence First Year Task Force of] the John N. Gardner [Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education]. We volunteered to do a self-study. It was a large group of faculty who were involved in that, but I was involved in helping put together our report to that organization to get some feedback about our strategies.

TS: It sounds like you've been staying busy.

TP: It's fun.

TS: So you're still happy at Kennesaw State?

TP: Yes. I should mention though that there have been some personal struggles that I've been dealing with. My partner, my husband, was diagnosed with leukemia last year. This hit us out of the blue, and I do want to mention that the support I received from my colleagues at Kennesaw State was phenomenal. They allowed me to do a lot of my work from his hospital bed while he was hospitalized and from home when he was an out-patient. He's been in remission since February, so that's been a very positive outcome for this. But it was seven months of intensive therapy, and he's recovering well. The other thing that I wanted to mention was I was very impressed by the outpouring of support for donations of platelets. When a person has leukemia, their immune system is compromised. One of the things that they need is infusions of blood products, primarily red blood cells, but also platelets. It's a different process to collect platelets. *The Sentinel* interviewed me in October [2014] and made a really nice full-page article

about his disease. That ended up getting a lot of donations. So I was very pleased with the support I received from Kennesaw.

TS: Great. Well, anything else you want to add?

TP: I think that's it.

TS: All right. We said thirty minutes, and we went over.

TP: I've talked too much!

TS: No, that's great; this is wonderful. Thank you very much.

TP: Well, thank you Tom.

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