RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH BARBARA LEE

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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TRANSCRIPT BY

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Kathryn Tracy Rizzi: This begins an oral history interview with Dr. Barbara Lee, on July 30, 2020. The interviewers are Kate Rizzi and Dr. Paul Clemens. Thank you so much, Dr. Lee, for doing this third interview session with us.

Barbara Lee: My pleasure.

KR: In 2014, you became the chair once again of the Human Resource Management Department. Why did you throw your hat in the ring to become Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs?

BL: Well, I actually didn't throw my hat in the ring. I saw the announcement in the fall of 2014 and decided that it was not something that I was interested in, so I did not apply for it. Chris Molloy, who is now the New Brunswick Chancellor, chaired that search, and a number of people, I understand, applied. For some reason, the president wasn't happy with the finalists that the search committee produced. I don't even know who they were.

Early in February, I got a call from the president's assistant, named Carol Koncsol. She's now retired. She said the president [Robert Barchi] wanted to see me tomorrow at his house, and I said, "Would you mind telling me what the subject of the meeting is?" She said, "He just said to say it's personal." So, I thought, "Well, I probably should go since he's the president," and so I did. I didn't have any real understanding of what he wanted, but I had a feeling because a number of my friends at Rutgers had been pressuring me to apply and I kept saying, "No, I love being a faculty member. I've done my bit. I've been a dean. I've done other administrative jobs. I just want to do my teaching and my research. Thank you. I'm very happy."

I went to his house and rang the bell. He opened the door and said, "Hello." He said, "Do you know why you're here?" I said, "Well, no. I think I might know, and I came to tell you no," which was rather cheeky. Fortunately, he laughed. He could've just shut the door in my face and my life would've been very different, but he said, "Well, why don't you come on in, and we'll talk about it." We went in and sat down in the living room. He did say that he was interested in me for this position, mainly because I had been a dean and I had some experience in administration and I'd been at Rutgers for some time and knew a lot of people and how it worked or didn't. So, he talked more about the job, and the more he talked about it, the more interesting it sounded. I had originally seen it as more of an academic support job because the offices that reported to that position were mainly--they were academic support--the libraries, institutional research, continuing education and other offices that do very, very important work but were support offices.

He said, "What I want is a partner. What I want is someone who's going to work closely with me on strategic academic issues. We have a lot going on university-wide, and I need someone like you to be my partner, to be my advisor, to work closely with me." I said something about, "Well, there's about twenty different offices reporting to this position." He said, "Yes, but the people who run those offices are really good people," which is true. They were, and they still are. They're fabulous. I knew a lot of them already because I had been around for so long. He said, "They do such a good job that you won't have to worry about any of them. In fact, your job might be a part-time job." I looked at him like, "You've got to be kidding me." [laughter] The

number two person at Rutgers' job is a part-time job? But I was too polite to say anything. I think I smiled. Fortunately, I don't think I laughed out loud.

I said, "Well, let me think about it over the weekend. I'm going to talk to my husband. Obviously, it's going to have an impact on our home life." I went home and talked to my family, and basically, they said, "If you want to do it, do it." I thought to myself, "Well, it sounds like an interesting position. It's only for three years." By the way, it was for five. But it was only supposed to be for three years, and I would have an opportunity to learn a lot about the university and about academic administration and to work with the president, who I thought was a very interesting and dynamic guy. So, I said, "Yes." Again, I kind of backed into--every piece of my career, I sort of walked into not intentionally, but these things kind of came my way.

KR: Why was the position going to be for three years originally?

BL: That's a good question. I think that he thought of his term as ending three years from then, and mine would be coterminous with his. Then, he decided to stay on for two more years. I was slated to go back to the faculty. He asked me please to stay until he stepped down, so I agreed to do that. [Editor's Note: Robert Barchi served as the President of Rutgers University from 2012 until June 30, 2020. Barbara Lee served as the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs (SVPAA) from 2015 until June 30, 2020.]

KR: Now, I want to ask you about what exactly the senior vice presidency entailed because, with the merger of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey and Rutgers and the establishment of Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences, there were some changes made in the administration at Rutgers. I was wondering if you could, in light of that, give us an overview of the position and what exactly the job did entail.

BL: Sure. Just a tiny bit of history. Up until I assumed this position, the New Brunswick Chancellor and the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs were the same person. The first thing I had to do was sit down with Dick Edwards, who was the New Brunswick Chancellor at the time, and figure out what was university-wide, which would be for my office, and which was specific to New Brunswick, which would be to his. That wasn't the easiest thing to do, actually, because some of the offices that should have been university-wide tended to focus primarily on New Brunswick, probably because of the dual nature of those two jobs. I made out a list, and we sat down, went through it. I took the offices that really were university-wide, and he kept all of the New Brunswick-specific responsibilities.

The job description for my position talked about coordinating academic programs across the university, and it was more aspirational than actual, because, for example, we have a law school in two locations that reports to two different chancellors and those two chancellors control the portion of the law school budget that is at their location. I didn't really coordinate the law school, even though it was a university-wide program. But that was the idea. We also had two business schools in three locations, and I got involved in issues that related to trying not to have competing programs, for example, to sharing of resources, that sort of thing, across all of the campuses.

Certainly, the Promotion Review Committee is one of the most important things that the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs does. I chaired that for five years, and that's a university-wide function. Institutional research, continuing education, and the libraries, they're all university-wide. Our disability services, it's university-wide, although there are offices on each campus, but the overall leadership is university-wide. Our services for student veterans, again, there are local offices on each campus, but the leadership really is university-wide. So, it was an interesting challenge to balance the concern to make sure that all of the university students and staff and faculty were served by my office, while respecting the fact that the chancellors really had almost total budget autonomy with respect to academic affairs.

KR: How much do you think your faculty experience and your academic expertise equipped you to be academic vice president? In other words, how did your background help you cope with the learning curve of the job?

BL: Well, I think my educational background helped a lot because I understood generally how universities work, particularly public universities. Again, I had been in a professional school and relatively isolated from the rest of the university up until I took this position. I knew very little about Newark and Camden, for example. But having been a faculty member--and I'm still a faculty member; you're always a faculty member--I appreciated and respected the need for collegiality and collaboration and the need to build relationships with people. That's the way you get things done in a university, not only Rutgers but any university or any organization in many ways, but universities are much more focused on relationships because the lines of authority are so blurred. So, I understood that from my studies, and then I also understood that from having been a faculty member, having been in a variety of leadership positions, several of which were not all that powerful. A department chair is not terribly powerful. A center director is not terribly powerful. A dean is much more so because of budget authority. So, I think it equipped me well. I think, given the fact that the integration legislation created very strong chancellor positions and strong provost positions at Newark and Camden and at RBHS [Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences] of course, I was not going to be able to get things done by telling people they had to do it. So, understanding collegiality and collaboration and the faculty's role in governance was absolutely critical to anyone's success in that position.

KR: Was your office in Old Queens?

BL: It started out in Old Queens, yes. When I assumed the role in March of 2015, I had an office on the first floor of Old Queens. Then, President Barchi decided that he needed to elevate the significance to the students of the New Brunswick Chancellor's Office. The New Brunswick students tended to look to the president for answers to New Brunswick issues. They went to the top, and so President Barchi felt that he and the university-wide staff needed to get out of Old Queens and move to a different building. So, Winants Hall was renovated to accommodate the ten senior vice presidents and the president, and we all moved over there in, I believe, 2017. I think it was 2017. It may have been 2018. But we'd been in Old Queens for a couple of years, and then we moved over to Winants Hall.

KR: You said that when Dr. Barchi approached you about taking on the senior vice presidency, he described it as a partnership. How closely did you work with Dr. Barchi?

BL: I worked with him very closely. It was interesting because the very first thing he asked me to do was chair a task force on the humanities. I think I had been in the job for ten minutes. That was a big challenge, but it was really interesting and exciting. There were also things that I wanted to do that I asked him if he would support me, not only in terms of his agreement but in terms of money. For example, I wanted to upgrade our ability to mentor faculty. We had some programs, but I thought it was really important that we expand that office and he allowed me to hire two additional staff to that. I was very concerned about how we were not--I didn't think--doing a particularly good job evaluating teaching, which I saw the results of at the PRC [Promotion Review Committee] level. But I also knew, as a former department chair and dean, that there were not strong incentives to take the evaluation of teaching really seriously, unless a particular individual department chair or graduate program director or someone like that did. So, I wanted to supplement the staff at our Center for Teaching Advancement [and Assessment] Research, CTAAR, and, again, he allocated me the funds to hire two more staff. That made all the difference. They've just done a wonderful job of helping faculty and deans and chairs and graduate directors and undergraduate directors think about peer observations of teaching. As Paul knows, the history department has done this for decades. They are a shining star and about the only shining star, or at that time, because they took teaching extremely seriously and were quite strict about evaluating it, but they were the exception. So, that's just an example of something that I wanted to do, that I thought was important, that the president supported me in. So, it was mutual. I mean, he had his concerns and priorities, which I totally supported, and I had mine, which he supported.

Paul Clemens: How often did you meet face to face with President Barchi?

BL: Usually once a week or once every couple of weeks or more often, depending on what was going on.

PC: Did you have private meetings, or were you saying once a week, where there were five people, ten people around the table?

BL: They were private meetings.

PC: How long did they last usually?

BL: Well, depending on how much we had to say, anywhere from fifteen minutes to an hour.

PC: Okay. Building off of that, and Kate, you can stop me here if I am going into things you wanted to talk about later, could you give us your own portrait of President Barchi's administrative style as you saw it in operation and what his strengths were as a president?

BL: Well, I think that I'll start with the last part of your question. I think President Barchi was very concerned when he got to Rutgers that the business side of the university didn't function as well as he thought it should, and I think he was right. So, he spent a lot of time, early in his presidency, when I wasn't involved--remember, I didn't start until 2015 and he had been there for a couple of years before that, three, I guess--he spent a lot of time thinking and working on

getting the business side of the university in better shape. For example, from what I understand, the university didn't have the kind of systems that would allow us to figure out how much money we had at the end of each month or even at the end of each year, in some cases, and that's not a way to run a business. So, he made sure that resources got allocated to make that happen. There were glitches obviously in the Cornerstone project. I don't know enough about it because I was only tangentially related to it, so I can't really answer questions about Cornerstone, but there were glitches in it, obviously.

President Barchi was a man in a hurry, is a man in a hurry. He wanted things done. He wanted them done correctly, but he wanted them done promptly and sometimes that got in the way of having things done perfectly. His leadership style was collaborative. I never felt talked down to, never felt he was exercising formal authority over me, or any of the other vice presidents, for that matter. So, he did treat me like a partner. But he has a management style that is more toward the corporate side, I would say, and is very decisive. I'm not sure how much more I can say, and I don't know even know whether I answered all the pieces of your question.

PC: I was just curious, since I know you read my book, one of the things I stressed was--I think, in a sense, I almost proved to myself, not to the readers, by the end of it, that the connection between the person who was usually something like or called an academic vice president, all the way back to Alec Pond and Ed Bloustein, but through Joe Seneca and Fran Lawrence, was one of the crucial factors in how the university operated. I have these models in my head of Dick McCormick and Phil Furmanski and those other connections. They are harder to get now because back then, you could tell how Bloustein and Pond got along together because it's in the archives. With McCormick, it's not in the archives, but Dick saved every email he had, and some of those emails are in the archives because he had somebody in his office who printed them all out. [laughter] Maybe it is happening still today, but I doubt it. That's one of the great losses for historians is that these things all disappear.

BL: Right.

PC: I know that there wasn't an exchange that went on between Joe Seneca and Fran Lawrence where they didn't talk about baseball. They had a friendly relationship, which went way beyond anything I expected to see there because that wasn't Dick. Phil and Dick talked about football occasionally. They both were football fans, even though they were both worried about the presence of big-time football in academics today. I just have these models in my head, which are really central to what life in the university is all about, which is where the question came from. I just want to get a sense of the relationship between you and Barchi. What did he turn to you for advice about? What sorts of things did you contribute by being either somebody who had a slightly different take on issues than he might have and slightly different perspective or because you actually saw ways to implement things he wanted to do? I don't know if that is a question. [laughter]

BL: Well, I didn't have a lot of back-and-forth interaction with him. He wasn't that kind of a leader. But, certainly, if any issues came up that I thought he either needed to be aware of or I needed help with or I thought he needed help with, I certainly spoke up. There was a situation where I thought an appointment he had made was very detrimental to the university. I made that

clear to him on a number of occasions, and he finally agreed. But that's probably the most important intervention, I guess, is the word I would use. I didn't feel the need to intervene for many other things. I mean, he and I were quite aligned on just about everything. We did not talk about sports. I am not a sports fan, so that wasn't an issue. He said on a number of occasions that he valued my friendship, which I was pleased about. I did not feel personally close to him. I think we had a very good business relationship, a good working relationship, but I never felt that, you know, to invite him to my home, for example, for a meal, I just would not have done that. I don't think he did a lot of socializing that was not related to his job. So, we weren't a Pond and Bloustein, definitely were not.

PC: Kate, I've got other questions, but let me go back to you. I don't want to get too far off track.

KR: That is okay, Paul. Go ahead. I am basically wanting to ask the same questions that you are asking. If you have anything, please go ahead.

PC: What would you say were, as you see it and especially those that you've had some involvement in over your five years here, the key policy decisions that got made in Old Queens and Winants that you had some hand in? Let's put it that way.

BL: Okay. Well, I think the evaluation of teaching issue. I'm really proud of that. It took longer than I would've liked to percolate into the departments, but I knew the only way that that would happen is if the departments embraced it and made it their own and I obviously could not dictate that. So, I'm really pleased with all of that. I also got involved--I won't say against my will because that's not right, I wouldn't have done it if it had been against my will--but I was not enthusiastic initially about thinking about something called publicly-engaged scholarship, that several of the faculty in Newark and Camden do and an increasing number of New Brunswick faculty and, actually, RBHS faculty to some degree as well, that we had no guidelines for evaluating because publicly-engaged scholarship often doesn't get published in refereed journals or books. It involves community partners who aren't considered appropriate for writing external letters for promotion and tenure, that sort of thing. So, I put together a task force of people who were engaged in this kind of scholarship but were very well-regarded scholars, full professors, distinguished professors, and we spent some time talking about and developing guidelines for evaluating publicly-engaged scholarship. They're actually being used now. So, I'm really pleased about that.

I was very concerned and spent some time talking to the president about the issue of unprofessional conduct by faculty members and whether that should be or could be taken into consideration during promotion and tenure decisions or other important personnel decisions. This is going to sound a little lawyerly [laughter] and I apologize, but I can't help it. I knew that we had to put something into the formal process to require departments and deans to take these issues of unprofessional conduct into consideration when developing recommendations on hiring, promotion and tenure. I knew that if we didn't have anything in writing that it would require negotiation with the faculty union, and that would be a long and arduous process and I would be dead before we got any resolution of it. [laughter] I remembered that our university policy on academic freedom contains the AAUP [American Association of University

Professors] policy on professional behavior. It's right in the university policy, and so I was able to get that incorporated into the promotion instructions so that departments and deans and A&P [appointments and promotions] committees would have to consider whether the faculty members treated their students and colleagues professionally and whether they had lived up to the "Statement on Professional Ethics" that the national AAUP promulgated in the 1960s. It's been in the Rutgers policy ever since the 1960s, but I don't think anybody ever looked at it until I raised the issue. The president was definitely supportive of that and happy to have me do it.

I was also concerned that department chairs, faculty and deans might not know of any kind of finding of misconduct against a faculty member that preceded or predated their knowledge. Maybe something happened five years ago, ten years ago, before the dean was there, that was documented and found to have occurred and was addressed, hopefully, but the dean wouldn't know about it because the dean only had the promotion packet in front of her. Again, the promotion instructions, which I'm not sure anybody reads, said that the official personnel file should be used as part of the promotion and tenure process. So, we now have a checkbox on the dean's form, on the promotion and tenure dossier, that the dean has reviewed the personnel file. That may sound minor, but if the dean finds out that this individual has been found to have violated our sexual harassment policy or some other important policy or has abused students or has abused colleagues or has been dishonest or has been found to have violated academic integrity policies, the dean should know that. Again, if the dean is new, there's no particular reason why the dean would know that unless they've reviewed that file. That was something I thought was very important.

I used to kid everybody that my job was trying to make people behave. Obviously, that's not what my job was, but I guess I've always been very concerned all my career about if there are rules there and they're reasonable rules, they should be followed. Being a faculty member is a privilege, and you should behave as though you are privileged and professional and that students are not supposed to be there for your pleasure and your amusement. I know that's very straightlaced sounding, but I spent a lot of time on those issues, and then, of course, the statement on the prohibition of consensual relationships, which finally got approved just before I left office. I'm really happy that that's in place now because the policy that we had before that was completely toothless. [Editor's Note: The Policy on Consensual Relationships in Academic Settings went into effect on June 2, 2020. The policy prohibits an "academic supervisor" from engaging in a consensual relationship with an undergraduate or graduate student and establishes a reporting structure for violations and mitigation.]

PC: Those are three areas you say that you were particularly engaged in. Were there any others? I may go back and ask you some questions about these, but were there any others? Obviously, the sexual harassment policy would be one.

BL: Right. There are. There was a lot going on. Those are the ones that are most prominent in my mind because I was so passionate about them. I was involved in--actually, this is ongoing--something called badging. These are digital credentials that students can build. It can be called scaffolding. It's almost like merit badges for a Boy Scout or Girl Scout, although you don't have them sewn on a sash like I did when I was in school. You can get a badge in, say, you're proficient in Microsoft products, you get a badge for that. You're proficient in some kind of

statistical programming, you get a badge for that. It's a credential that you can present to employers that's backed by some authority. In our case, it would be a faculty member or someone at Rutgers who says, "Yes, you are proficient in X, and you are entitled to add this badge to your resume, to your transcript, to whatever," and you present to prospective employers the skillset you have. I created a committee. The [University] Senate had actually been looking at that, and I created a committee that is still working on that. The pandemic made it a little bit more difficult for people to get together, but Anne Gould [Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs] and Gary Gigliotti [Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, Teaching and Assessment Research] are working on that. I expect that we will have some sort of policy put together by fall or winter because, as you can imagine at Rutgers when we don't have a university-wide policy or office or something, people just do it on their own, which is good. I mean, entrepreneurial spirit is important, but then we have forty-seven different versions of badging, and nobody really knows who the authority is or whether there's a central approval authority or whether even there's some kind of visual identity for the badge and what it means. It's kind of like having fifteen or twenty different capital red R's. Which one is the official symbol for Rutgers? That's important, and that's still going on.

Another thing that I was very much involved with that I sort of forget about because the pain went away--well, I shouldn't say the pain--but the day that I took over my position in 2015, I had to start preparing for the Middle States reaccreditation visit. That took two years. It was a huge job. We were very successful. Roberta Leslie [Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs] was really the driving force behind that. She has retired now; to her credit, she deserved to. But we had a university-wide committee that worked on the self-study. I think the committee did a fabulous job on the self-study and the associated requirements. Middle States has a lot of requirements that you have to go through in order to be accredited.

The team came in March of 2018, I think it was. I believe it was 2018. We had one of the worst blizzards of that winter. The team was all there, and we had to manage their visit when you could not get through the streets. Fortunately, we had reserved them hotel rooms, but I couldn't get home, for example. I got the last hotel room in New Brunswick for those two nights. It was quite a challenge. The meetings they were supposed to have with people from Newark and Camden, obviously, they couldn't get out for those, but we managed it. My team in the academic affairs office were absolutely fabulous at dealing with anything that might come along, did a great job, and we were reaccredited with absolutely no recommendations or no criticisms. It was a totally clean slate. So, that was quite an achievement. Did I think that we would not be accredited? No, I knew we would be. We follow the rules. We do a great job. But you can't just say that; you have to prove it and so we proved it.

KR: I have some follow-up questions on the university's sexual harassment policy. I know Paul probably does as well, as he said yesterday. The first thing I want to ask you about is the consensual relationships policy.

PC: Can I break in just for one second because of the order that Barbara talked about these? You mentioned coming up with a statement about unprofessional faculty conduct that now at least involves a checkoff that they've looked in the personnel file at the department level and

maybe the dean's level. What does unprofessional conduct mean, other than sexual harassment? What sort of things are covered in that conception as the university has now worked it out?

BL: Okay. Well, the AAUP Statement on Professional Ethics is the guideline and that is in Rutgers's policy, and now it's also in the promotion instructions. They talk about treatment of peers, that you're expected to treat your fellow faculty and I would say staff--I'm not sure the word was used in there, but I think that it should be--with respect, that faculty have a right to their own views and opinions, but they should treat their colleagues with respect, that they should not harass their colleagues or their students, that they should remember at all times that if they're speaking as an individual, that they must say they're not speaking for the university. It's a pretty comprehensive policy.

PC: That is actually interesting. Could you explain what it means to be in a situation where you're talking about your research, let's say, but your research has implications that are publicly controversial? At that point, are you speaking for yourself or for the university? What does it mean to be speaking for yourself when you are in your capacity as a research scholar? I am not talking about getting up and making a speech in favor of President Trump or whatever. But if you are talking about a controversial issue as a scholar in that field, is that an individual statement or something that you're doing in your capacity as a university professor?

BL: Well, that depends. If you're speaking as a scholar, then that's part of your job, and the language that talks about not speaking on behalf of the university is about your role as a private citizen. If you're speaking as a private citizen about something political, for example, then you can identify yourself as a Rutgers faculty member, but you're supposed to say you're not speaking on behalf of the university because that may not be the university's position on that issue, or the university may not wish to take a position on that issue, particularly a public university often does not want to take a position on certain political issues, for example. But if you're speaking as a scholar, you have academic freedom to do so, and you certainly may and probably should identify yourself as a professor at whatever university you're at. The statement really makes it clear that your role as a teacher, your role as a scholar and your role as a private citizen are in separate paragraphs, and they have separate requirements.

PC: Let me ask you one other follow-up question on this policy in particular to draw on my personal history here. I must have been an associate professor, and it must have been shortly after we combined our departments, probably in the late '80s or sometime after that. I remember a faculty member getting up in a department meeting. We were debating whether or not to bring a member from another department, who may or may not have had line weight in the history department. The hiring practices then were a little bit looser than they are today. It was not clear exactly where this person resided his full line weight. One of my senior colleagues, who was known to be a figure of authority, got up and asked what was essentially a legal question--did we have a right to vote that we didn't want him in the department simply because we didn't like him? He was capable of being an incredibly disruptive element, and the department's sanity is fragile. Frankly, unless he was told he couldn't use that as a yardstick, he was going to vote against this person. Is that the sort of thing that comes under professional ethics?

BL: That certainly isn't addressed directly in the statement, but I can give you a legal answer to that. It's perfectly legal to say no if you just don't like the person as long as the reason you don't like the person isn't the person's race or gender or national origin or some other protected characteristic. There have been a number of--you pushed a button here, Paul, this might take longer than you planned--there are a number of lawsuits where faculty were denied tenure because their colleagues couldn't stand them and it went to court and the judge says, "Hey, it wasn't the person's race or sex or gender," because that's obviously what the allegation was. There's no law against not liking somebody because they're a jerk, and that's basically what the judges said, that this individual was non-collegial, created havoc in the department, nobody liked this person, and even if the person was a good scholar and a decent teacher, there's no law that says you have to put up with somebody who was unbelievably disruptive. It's just not illegal.

PC: The other connected question, you said there's now a system where you check off that people have read the personnel file. As long as answering this question does not mean there has only been one such case and you don't even want to mention it indirectly, in your time on the Promotion Review Committee, once this policy was in place, did this sort of issue ever come up? Did it work in a sense that it did flag something that you at least had to talk about? It may not have been the decisive factor. Did you see this new policy flag something in a personnel file?

BL: Well, by the time we got the checkbox on the form that the dean signs, that was my last semester in the job, so, no, I did not personally see it. I will say that one of the reasons--and I'm going to answer a question that you didn't ask, so you can edit it out if you'd like--one of the reasons I wanted this statement on professional ethics clearly in the promotion instructions and right in front of the faces of the department faculty and the chair and the dean is that we had two cases before the PRC, one last year and one the year before, where the faculty member had committed fraud and claimed things in the packet that were not true. In one case, the dean told the chair that they couldn't consider that because not being fraudulent was not one of the criteria for promotion or tenure. I hit the ceiling. Fortunately, I found out about it before it got to the PRC and was able to--I followed the rules, I didn't do anything wrong--but I was able to get an investigation done by a neutral person within the university and that corroborated the fraud and confronted the individual with it and the individual withdrew and left the university. The second one was caught by a dean, who contacted me about the situation, and I was able to persuade the dean to persuade the faculty member to withdraw the fraudulent packet and wait a year and submit one that was honest. So, I really mean it when I say my job was trying to make people behave. [laughter] That kind of thing just infuriated me because you and I and everybody else who has tenure and has been promoted at Rutgers did it honestly. We never took credit for things we didn't do. It just infuriates me that people try to get around the system, and I did everything I could to prevent it.

PC: Well, I came out of a department where we had at least two significant cases of what I would call academic fraud, one before I got here--I got here in '74--and one which was explosive afterward. Actually, I'm willing to talk about them, but I think Rudy Bell, probably when he did his interviews, talked about both of them. He was involved indirectly in both of them. But they're so rare, and yet today you hear of so many people who doctor their vitae, not Rutgers people, but it's become such a common problem. They create these professional lives or academic degrees.

BL: Yes.

PC: Yes, I guess it's something people do. We don't think about it a lot. Let's go back to the sexual harassment topic that Kate raised. I will come back to a couple of other things after that. Kate, do you want to restate your question?

KR: Paul, do you want to go ahead with your follow ups about the sexual harassment policy? Go ahead.

PC: Okay. First of all, how did it come about that this report was done at all?

BL: In the summer of 2018, I believe, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine issued a report about sexual harassment in the STEM fields, the sexual harassment of women faculty and students in the STEM fields. It was probably one of the best done and best-researched reports I'd ever seen, and it was devastating with respect to the extent of the sexual harassment of women and the impact on their careers, many of whom, particularly in medicine and science, left those fields because of it. I've always been interested in the subject. As I said yesterday, I've done a lot of training about sexual harassment and have been on a lot of university committees about it. I thought that many of their recommendations were applicable to Rutgers and that we should attempt at least to up our game. I talked to the president about it and I asked him if he would support my convening a committee to look at the report and to make recommendations about which of their recommendations, if any, we should adopt and implement, and he agreed. He's very much supportive of anti-harassment policies and practices. He's very good about that.

As you can imagine, there was a lot of interest in this topic across the university. I contacted the chancellors, because I knew it should be and wanted it to be a university-wide committee, to have them recommend people to serve on it. Well, I got lots and lots of emails from people who wanted to be on it, and we ended up with forty-five people on the Committee [on Sexual Harassment Prevention and Culture Change]. Anybody who's ever chaired a committee of forty-five knows that that's almost impossible to get anything done. So, I went through the recommendations that had been made by the National Academies report, and we broke the committee up into six subcommittees, which were a much more manageable size. There were about five or six people on each committee. I said to them--this was in, I guess, October [2018]--I said, "We have to have a report done by April of next spring if we're going to make any meaningful change before the end of the academic year, which means that you have to have your preliminary recommendations into me by the first of December." That was six weeks. "Then, we'll meet, go through the preliminary recommendations, you can regroup and modify your recommendations based on the feedback you get from the whole committee, and then you'll have to have your final recommendations to me by March 1," and that's what happened.

They worked really hard. They did a great job. We had the final recommendations of the committee in by March 1. Karen Stubaus [Vice President for Academic Affairs] and I wrote the report and, in about two weeks, sent the draft back to the committee members, gave them an April 1 deadline, or it may have been even sooner than that, I can't remember, but they had their

comments back by then, and the report was released sometime in April [2019]. The president was very pleased with it. He posted it on his website, and I posted it on mine. Then, we started implementation of those recommendations. They haven't all been implemented, but several of them have, including the consensual relationship policy, which I thought was the one to get done just as soon as possible. [Editor's Note: The Committee on Sexual Harassment Prevention and Culture Change convened in the fall of 2018. The Report of the Rutgers University Committee on Sexual Harassment Prevention and Culture Change was completed in the spring of 2019, with details of the report and availability of the website disseminated through email to members of the university on May 14, 2019.]

PC: One of the things that has to pre-date the report, that I've done as a faculty member over the last four years, is two or maybe three times I have been required by the university to go online and listen to videos and then be tested on what I heard in the videos. Did that come out of this committee, or was that independent? Is there a connection between the two?

BL: No, there's no connection. We've had mandatory sexual harassment training at Rutgers for more than a decade, long before I took this role on, and that came out of Human Resources and Vivian Fernández. It was mandatory, but the mandatory part wasn't enforced. So, we've had a couple of professors accused of harassment, and we check and they never took the training, not that that might have made any difference, but if it had been enforced, at least there would have been maybe a little bit more awareness of what we expected of our faculty. Then, independent of the report and I think before the National Academies' report ever came out, Vivian started planning for enhanced sexual harassment training for faculty and staff. I had to take it twice because I was both a supervisor and a faculty member. You're right; they were videos. But, no, it was completely independent of the report. It was okay, but it's not enough. The training is helpful. It reminds people of what we expect of them. I think it encourages staff to feel that they'll be supported if they want to report harassment. In and of itself, it's not enough. It has to be reinforced at the department level. It has to be reinforced by the chairs and the deans and the provosts, or no one's going to believe that we take it seriously.

PC: In fairness, I found those videos useful. Every one of them reminded me of certain protocols that, as a faculty member, I had to be aware of. I had no problems taking it. I did think they were redundant in the sense that you take them twice and basically go over the same thing.

BL: Exactly.

PC: The thing that bothered me was that they seemed to be very conscious of the liability issues of the university and less conscious of some of the human dimensions of what was going on. I can come up with some good reasons for why that should be the case because when you go into the human dimensions, you often get to these situations where people use that as an excuse for not reporting things. I think things ought to be reported. People in my department and other faculty I talked to didn't seem like they were taking the victims seriously in those things we took. So, I wondered where they came from. One of the things I didn't have anything to say about in my book, but I discovered was that there are marketing companies out there who sell these things, which is also why, at the end of it, I realized that the videos had very little to do with Rutgers, and maybe it shouldn't. I mean, maybe they are generalized rules, but it really was not a

Rutgers-centered sort of thing. I don't know what that would look like if it were Rutgers, but it was clearly not something we had produced. Somebody may have produced it for us. It looked like it was generic.

BL: I agree. It was corporate. It was designed for a corporate audience by corporate people. It would've been much more effective for faculty at least if the scenarios had been academic scenarios, but they weren't. They were in business offices with businesspeople, and it was not geared toward the audience that was being asked to watch it. I agree with you completely. It's very interesting, given the fact that--and I'm not necessarily talking about myself--but we have a number of very distinguished faculty who are experts in this area, and none of them were consulted about this.

PC: Okay. I think that one of the driving reasons behind this was liability concern.

BL: Yes, I'm sure it was.

PC: That's one of the bees in my bonnet about modern universities, to what extent liability concerns have taken over other issues. In fairness, in this particular area, there is a reason to have liability and, also on a university's part, to be worried about it because that's one way you control human behavior. Liability became a huge issue, let's say, in publication of scholarly work, and we really looked over our shoulder every single time somebody published something to see whether it was honest, like we were talking about before. That might actually stifle scholarship. I can't see a bad thing about liability in this area. So, it's not quite the same sort of thing. Who is going to run with this? Who is going to run with this going forward, in terms of getting the results of your report implemented more firmly in the university?

BL: Well, I hope my successor will, and Karen Stubaus and I worked very closely on all of this. There are at least a couple of recommendations that we are completely reliant on University Human Resources to implement. One is adding a question on the background check form that now everybody has to fill out when they're hired as to whether or not you were found responsible for a policy violation at any of your previous positions, and the individual has to attest to the fact that they either weren't, which is almost always the case, or if they were, they have to confess that they were. So, that's something that, because of the pandemic, I believe background checks were halted temporarily because the courts were closed and they couldn't do them. There was nobody to do the checking. When things open up again, that should be included, and I'm going to, from the sidelines, make sure that they remember to do that.

PC: I have to tell you a quick story. I remember when we were on the verge of closing down brick-and-mortar teaching and a hiring freeze was right around the bend, which I think these things were layered, but there was a SAS [School of Arts and Sciences] component to that. That became a major issue--could we make an offer and accept it before the hiring freeze to somebody who hadn't had the background check? Things just frazzled around everything at that point. It was unique. It was a situation the university had never faced before. I'm stretching my memory, but there was a high-profile case in the newspapers of a professor who was hired from the Midwest in philosophy maybe who had sexual harassment, or something even worse than that,

charges against him at Northwestern maybe. We hired him and then didn't hire him. Does this ring a bell with you?

BL: Yes. I wasn't involved in that. I think that happened before I took my position. It was a couple of years ago. But, yes, I recall hearing about that. I don't know any of the details.

PC: To follow up briefly, what it means in a university context is a hire, no matter what we sign, isn't complete until the Board of Governors signs off on it?

BL: Only if the person holds tenure.

PC: Yes. This was an internationally-known scholar, so it clearly involved tenure and maybe even more than that, a chair of something.

BL: Yes.

PC: Okay, that's how the university would have been involved in something like this.

BL: Yes, if it's an untenured person, the dean would have final authority, I believe.

PC: Yes. It had gone through several steps, and it did not go through the final one because all this became, all of a sudden, public information, and we started talking about it.

BL: That's what we're trying to avoid is having that problem in the first place. One other thing, one other recommendation that we have implemented that I'm very pleased with is a public report from our Office of Employment Equity on the number and nature of harassment complaints each year. You might want to take a look at our new website that we put together on sexual harassment resources at the university, and it has that report on it, who the alleged--not who, we don't mention names--whether it was a faculty member or a staff member who was the person that was accused of harassment, whether or not there was a finding of a violation of the policy, and the school that the person is in. They originally did it at the department level, and I said, no, I think that's probably a privacy issue. We're not trying to embarrass people. We're trying to show that we're responding to complaints and that some of these complaints are found to be valid. So, anyway, that report is now public. We'd never done that before, and it took a little bit of persuasion, but I was able to get people to agree that transparency was really important. That is now on a website.

KR: I want to jump in here.

PC: Okay, go ahead.

KR: On the topic of the sexual harassment website, which I have looked at, and I have read all of your emails as they came out over the years about this topic and then have revisited them in preparation for this interview, what you have emphasized is a shift to prevention and culture change. The big picture question I have is--there are two parts to this--how can culture change

be effected at an institution as big as Rutgers? Secondly, how have your unique credentials and the Me Too Movement afforded this opportunity to affect culture change?

BL: Okay, those are good questions. Let me start with the second half first. Well, I mean, as I said, I've been writing and teaching about this subject for a long, long time, and it's been a priority of mine to try to make things better in a lot of ways, not just sexual harassment. I've already talked about the other things that I tried to do in my role as senior vice president. The Me Too Movement was a big help because it's shining a national spotlight on an issue that at least some people might feel is exaggerated or only applies to a few people or something like that. So, I think the Me Too Movement has been very helpful. It's somewhat coincidental that the National Academies' report came out at about the same time the Me Too Movement was crescendo-ing, but the configuration of all of those things made it easier for me to be persuasive. Remember, it's all about relationships--it's not about dictating--to be persuasive that this was a subject that people needed to take seriously. The only way you can change the culture is to start from the ground up. I mean, obviously, the tone at the top is important, and the president has been very clear and very strong about the need for culture change and prevention. He's been a terrific advocate and a very, very good help, but it has to start at the department level.

I had meetings with department chairs in SEBS [School of Environmental and Biological Sciences], with all of the SAS department chairs--Karen and I were invited to talk with them about it--with the School of Engineering, [and] the whole faculty. I was invited by the dean to talk about the report with all the faculty. I think Karen worked with Camden and Newark faculty. One of the vice provosts at RBHS has been working with RBHS faculty on this issue. So, it's not something that you can dictate from the top, but you have to show people how to respond. The department chairs kept saying, "I don't know what to do. When somebody comes to me and complains, I don't know what to do. Do I have to tell anybody? What do I say to these people? How do I protect them from retaliation? What do I say to the person who's being complained about?" Now, all of these questions are good appropriate questions, and you can't just go read a policy and get an answer to that. You have to give them what I call the toolkit to know how to respond and not only when somebody complains but to keep your eyes open and see what may be going on, even if people don't feel comfortable complaining and that happens a fair amount, too.

KR: I want to ask you about campus initiatives to combat sexual violence, but before I go into that, Paul, do you have anything else about the topic of sexual harassment?

PC: No, I'm okay. I want to come back to some of the other policy things, but let's work through this first.

KR: On the topic of sexual violence on campus, in 2014-2015, there was the iSPEAK Campus Climate Survey. Why was that survey important? How did it lay the groundwork for what came next under your vice presidency?

PC: Okay, a little bit of background on the iSPEAK. In 2014, the White House asked Rutgers to be a pilot institution for a survey that they had developed on sexual violence on college campuses, because Rutgers has a very visible presence nationally. Our student affairs people and

also many of our scholars are very interested in that. But that really didn't have very much to do with my office. The interesting thing about student affairs at Rutgers is there is no university-wide student affairs person. Student affairs is completely campus-based. We used to have a vice president for student affairs, but that position was eliminated a couple of years before I took my position, and student affairs is not part of my job, although I intervened from time to time in issues because I thought that it was important. So, I didn't really have any formal relationship with the iSPEAK Survey. I certainly was briefed when the other senior leaders were briefed and worked, when I was asked to, with Felicia McGinty and her team. [Editor's Note: Felicia McGinty served as the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, before becoming the Executive Vice Chancellor of Administration and Planning in 2018.]

Sexual violence and sexual harassment, they're related, but they're different. Sexual harassment is more of a power issue, particularly regarding faculty and students or faculty and post-docs or graduate students and undergraduate students. It's really about a conflict of interest and an inappropriate power relationship. Sexual violence, to me anyway, is a completely different issue. It's not so much about power as maybe a lack of judgment or incapacity. That is the way much of what we think about at Rutgers in the student affairs area deals with the victimization of students in terms of sexual violence.

I will say, however, that the iSPEAK Survey and the attention that Rutgers got led to us getting a grant from the Attorney General's Office of New Jersey to enhance our victim services offices. Newark and Camden had very scalable victim services offices; they just didn't have the resources. Now, this grant has enabled us to hire people on all of the campuses and beef up the numbers of people in New Brunswick, where we had victim services for quite some time. Ruth Anne Koenick has been working in this area for twenty years or more. Sarah McMahon, who is the PI [principal investigator] on that grant, is very much involved with violence awareness and victim assistance, and she has worked closely with Karen and me on the implementation of our sexual harassment and prevention report recommendations. We do have a relationship with her. In fact, she has a dotted line to me or to my successor as an advisor on sexual violence issues, but if you look at an org [organizational] chart, my office does not have any formal relationship with the student affairs staff and leaders who are dealing with the sexual violence issues. It's a good question about whether it should, but it doesn't. [Editor's Note: Ruth Anne Koenick served as the director of Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance at Rutgers University from 1991 until her retirement in 2016. Koenick's two-part oral history resides in the collection of the Rutgers Oral History Archives. Sarah McMahon is an Associate Professor and Director of the Center on Violence Against Women and Children at the Rutgers School of Social Work. In 2019, she was appointed as the Special Advisor for Campus Climate, reporting to the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs. McMahon served as the lead researcher on the iSPEAK campus survey and currently leads the Victims of Crimes Act (VOCA) grant.]

KR: Paul, you can go ahead with your follow ups.

PC: Okay. I want to go back first to the publicly-engaged scholarship, that you created a task force to talk about. I wondered, just to flush it out a bit, this is what people are doing. I think of the efforts down in Camden to set up a working partnership with one of the charter schools down in Camden and things of that sort as very publicly-engaged scholarship. Can you give us some

examples of what these new formations of publicly-engaged scholarship are and where you see the critical issues about evaluating them for promotion purposes?

BL: Okay, I'm just trying to think back about the work that the people on that task force did. Well, I'll give you an example of a promotion case that made me start thinking about this. There was, on one of the campuses, a faculty member who was working with first-generation college students and immigrant college students on the challenges they faced and created a lot of videos that were then put on a website. So, it was sort of a balance between a sociological approach and a media project. It was difficult to find scholars to review that work. He had not published a book. I think he might have had an article or two, but it was not a typical promotion packet, not that there's any typical promotion packet, with all the different disciplines we have. But it was very hard for people to understand what he did, the value of what he did, the external appreciation or not for what he did.

It started me thinking, and I know because I had spoken with Nancy Cantor about this and, to a lesser degree, Phoebe Haddon--Nancy Cantor, the Chancellor of Newark, and Phoebe Haddon, the Chancellor of Camden. They were deliberately hiring faculty members who engaged in this kind of scholarship. They were concerned that the traditional ways of evaluating faculty might not appreciate the quality of the work these people were doing. I had hoped that the leaders who hired these scholars would then think about how to evaluate them, but that didn't happen. So, I thought, "Well, then I'm going to need to figure out how to do it." Obviously, I wasn't going to figure it out all on my own, and I don't do that kind of scholarship, so what did I know? I put together a group of people from all across the university, including RBHS, a faculty member in the Family Medicine, I believe, Department, who does a lot of outreach--she works [on] inequalities in medical care for poor and minority communities, for example, that sort of thing. There were a couple of people from the humanities because there are people who engage in and work in the public humanities and a couple of people from the School of Communication and Information, who are interested in the impact of media on various groups and various groups' access to information in the media.

It was a really interesting conversation that we had, and we did a lot of reading. Ernest Boyer, a name from the past, had written a book called *Scholarship Reconsidered*, and we looked at that. Purdue had put together a committee a couple of years ahead of us and had issued a report on their approach to evaluating publicly-engaged scholarship. So, we put together a series of guidelines. They're on the website from my office. I don't know whether they're still there. I hope they will be. Again, because of my concern about whether or not we would need to negotiate these with the union, we called them guidelines rather than mandatory requirements, but they have made their way into the promotion instructions, just like the statement on professional ethics, with a link to where they are on the SVPAA website. Several of the deans have been very excited about them and have told their Big Ten counterparts about these guidelines, and I've been asked if I could share them and I said, "Absolutely. I'm proud of them."

It's going to take a while, I think--talk about culture change--for a real appreciation of publicly-engaged scholarship to emerge. It's still viewed as perhaps not real scholarship. It is real scholarship, but it's much more difficult to evaluate and it requires a little bit more creative thinking about how to get people who are respected folks to evaluate this scholarship. For

example, if you've got someone in the creative arts, maybe we need a museum director rather than a professor of art to evaluate the work of an individual who was engaged in almost more like extension work in a way, outreach to the community. Where is the scholarship piece of that? How much of it is service? How much of it is teaching? How much of it is research? They all kind of blend together sometimes in these areas. So, we're not there yet at all, but I think we've made a start. To the degree that young faculty are very interested in doing this kind of scholarship, we have a responsibility to make sure that they're treated fairly and that their scholarship is evaluated appropriately.

PC: Those are interesting comments. I can't remember whether this was under your tenure or someone preceding you. We had one senior faculty member in our department who thought of himself as a publicly-engaged scholar. It led us to have, when we talked about his work, incredibly complicated and maddening discussion about how we go about evaluating this because we don't have real standards. On the other hand, virtually every history department in the country is now clipping on to their want ads something about somebody with a public history orientation, meaning that they're going to be doing things as a scholar, which would produce things which aren't traditional scholarship. There's no question about that. So, we've got to catch up. [laughter] It's the only way to put it because we're hiring people exactly because they have these skills. Good, I'm glad. I have not seen the statement. It's the sort of thing I'm sure my chair has seen, but I'll go take a look at it. In a certain sense, you've circled back to that question that you had very early on about how in your own program you thought about the extension people, right? In some ways, it's got the elements of the same sort of thing involved in it.

BL: Yes, it does. It does. It's interesting because a couple of the humanities folks on the task force said, "The only way I was certain that I would get tenure is to do double the work. I had to do enough traditional scholarship to meet all the criteria for a traditional scholar and then I did what I loved, which was the publicly-engaged scholarship, and I did that too." So, they felt that they were penalized because we had no organized way of evaluating the work that they really were passionate about.

PC: Let me go back to the evaluation of teaching issue, which you also listed as one of the things you took very seriously and worked closely with Gary on developing, pressing on the faculty the need to do this better. Over the time you've been here, has your sense of the value of the teaching evaluations themselves changed in any way? Do you find them more useful, less useful, more accurate, less accurate?

BL: Are you talking about the student course evaluations?

PC: Which is one of the systems we use, along with peer review.

BL: Unfortunately, the response rates are very low. When you serve on the PRC, and you're looking at the Form 1-a and the teaching grid, and you see that twenty percent or twenty-five percent, if you're lucky, of the students responded, what use are the results? I mean, they're very misleading. The reason that that has happened is that we've moved to an online system. In the good old days, when everybody was in the classroom and we used paper and the faculty behaved

the way they were supposed to, which didn't always happen, the response rates were much higher because the faculty member said, "Here, fill this out," picked a student to take them back to the department and give them to the department, who then sent them to CTAAR for processing, and we had much higher response rates. I do think there are ways, I know that there are ways, that we can raise those response rates. Whether the faculty collectively are willing to do that--again, I keep saying this all the time--it has to start at the department level. The department chair has to make an issue of it. The graduate director and undergraduate director have to monitor it. There are apps on the kids' phones that can be used. There is an app for the student course evaluation form. The faculty member only needs to give them ten minutes, step out of the classroom, "Get out your phones. Do the course evaluation." But that's not going to happen automatically. It's going to have to be enforced, and that's one more thing that the chair and the program directors really need to pay attention to.

PC: Let me ask you a somewhat different question. I know this goes on in graduate schools of education and other places, but has the university ever seriously thought about taking that form that they've got and doing a pretty careful statistical evaluation of its accuracy? What do I mean by that? A more general question is an internal check of what that form is telling us. One way you would do that is as a statistician, an area that, like myself, you have some experience with in the past, would be to say, for example, that the student response to a question about the difficulty of the grading or the fairness of the grading and the class size and maybe one other variable correlates to an extent that maybe it explains seventy percent of the outcome. So, we really knew what we were getting when we got those results. Have they ever done that? I don't know how that would come out, but have they ever thought about doing some sort of internal evaluation of where the results are coming from to be sure that they're accurate or to be sure we know what they are telling us?

BL: I don't know the answer to that, Paul. It would be great if CTAAR did that. They've been chronically understaffed and have to focus on just getting the job done. I don't know, I'm not enough of a statistician to be able to give an intelligent answer to that. If you're looking for correlations, I know there are correlations between the grade the student expects and their rating of the faculty member. Everybody knows that, right? But they're doing the evaluation before they get their grade, so they may be expecting a grade, but that doesn't mean it's the grade they got. So, I don't know how you could possibly know that they are correct because they're subjective. They're very subjective. I mean, look at the range of responses sometimes. In my class, I get really, really good student evaluations almost always, but from time to time, there's somebody who either thought that one was a five or the five was a one and got confused or just thought I was awful. Who's right? Who's right? I mean, that's a pretty unscientific answer, but I'm not having a very easy time answering it. [laughter]

PC: I talked to Gary about this fifteen years ago, and my question has always been, "Could you do an analysis of this that would at least lay out what you're getting out of this?" Because these were things that were created literally by the undergraduates and then they morphed into something that the faculty was using and then they became a part of the form. Numbers have this quality or attribute that they look convincing. So, it's always been a big issue for me. I don't get up and make speeches about it at department meetings, but it is interesting that among a

group of academics who take things seriously that we've never sat down and analyzed what this is producing.

BL: Yes.

PC: I've always worried about that. When you talked about evaluating this, I was wondering whether the evaluation went to the point of asking, "Are these forms actually giving us information that is worth knowing about when we say a person should or should not be given tenure?"

BL: Well, that's why I push so hard on peer observation because given the very low response rates, even if the process were perfect and the answers were reliable, when you only have fewer than twenty percent of the students answering, how can you judge whether they're representative? Certainly, the PRC does not base its evaluation of teaching solely on those numbers simply because they're not comfortable doing that, and, fortunately, they're not comfortable doing that.

PC: Can you talk a little bit more about what the accreditation process means? What did they do? I've sat on a couple of the committees that produced some lower-level reports at various points in my career, and I actually met with some of the people who were doing the accreditation, as most faculty members have. Can you tell us--what does it mean to have an outside group come in and recertify that Rutgers is an accredited institution?

BL: Well, from a very business-oriented standpoint, the regional accrediting associations, and Middle States is the one that we are subject to, stand in place of the federal government in deciding whether our institution should be eligible for federal student financial aid and for federal research funds. If we lost our accreditation, we would lose all of our federal student aid and very likely all of our federal research funding. So, it's a big, big deal, and that's why we worked so hard to make sure that we did a thorough job, addressed possible weak areas, tried to anticipate questions that would come up. No institution is perfect and Rutgers is not perfect, but the approach of the accrediting associations, at least the regionals--I can talk about specialized in a minute if you'd like--is, "Are you doing what you say you're doing? And prove it. What's the evidence that you're doing what you say you're doing? If you are working hard to encourage first generation and underrepresented students, what are you doing? How are you supporting them, not only financially but in terms of their educational attainment, their persistence, their graduation rates, that sort of thing?" It's almost like a physical exam, going to a doctor, and making sure that all the parts are running correctly and, if they're not, figuring out how you're going to address those. The punishment for not being able to convince the regional accreditor that you are doing a good job is the threatened loss of all federal money, and that would be devastating. We couldn't function. Our students couldn't function without that. Our faculty couldn't either.

Many disciplines also have something called specialized accreditation, particularly those that have licensing requirements, like law, medicine, clinical psychology, public health, nursing, other disciplines, engineering, that prepares students for occupations that require a particular license. So, there are specialized accrediting associations that come in and do the same kind of

evaluation that Middle States does, just on a smaller scale. They tend to be very prescriptive. The American Bar Association is a good example of that. They are very prescriptive about the proportion of tenure-track faculty that should be teaching students. At least they used to be very prescriptive about the library holdings; I don't know now that everything's on the web that they are so much anymore. But the budget of a law school was often predicated on what the American Bar Association said you had to do. That is probably also the case for similar medically-related healthcare programs as well. Did that answer your question? You're on mute, Paul.

PC: Yes, it does. Two follow ups. First, in this particular round of accreditation--and I have not read any of the reports, if they were released to the faculty, I haven't seen them--were there one or two things in particular that Rutgers emphasized that they wanted the accreditation to circle around?

BL: Well, access was certainly one of them. We work very hard to help students--as I said, first generation, underrepresented minority students, low-income students, to be successful at Rutgers, and so we spent a lot of time talking about that. There was less emphasis this time on faculty quality, which may be why you and a lot of other faculty probably didn't read the report. [laughter] But Middle States has its own agenda, and they had a number of--they call them requirements, I think, I don't remember what the term is, but we had to have a chapter on each of their priorities. I'll call them priorities; that's the easiest word to use. Their priorities were mostly about financial stability and student access and success. I think it's understandable. For example, one of the state universities in New Jersey that had very serious governance problems--their faculty and the president were always at each other's throats--almost was not reaccredited because of these very serious governance problems. You have to pay attention to what Middle States thinks is important when you're doing the self-study document and when you're preparing for their visit, so that's what we did.

PC: Now, I remember the accreditation that raised the most faculty anger--anger is perhaps the wrong word--the one that came up with all these standards for assessment. When they come back as they do, do they go back and look at what they had said five or ten years ago and ask you if you're making progress on these things?

BL: Well, yes. Also, we have to send in an annual report, or I think it used to be a midterm report. The cycle used to be every ten years. It's now every eight years. So, the accreditation visit was in 2010 and then again in 2018. We have to report back, particularly if there were issues raised. We have to show that we've addressed those issues. The assessment is very, very important. That's one of the areas that's very, very important in Middle States. We not only had to have a chapter about that, but we felt we had to address assessment in every chapter because that's a big priority of Middle States. So, I know the faculty find it annoying, but if we don't do it, they'll be more annoyed.

PC: Okay. Kate, I am willing to turn back to you now.

KR: What were some crises that you had to deal with--not COVID though, because we will talk about that separately?

BL: Well, we had several cases of faculty--and I didn't have to deal with this directly, but I was involved in the discussions--faculty who said what some people thought were outrageous things publicly. We had four cases that I can think of in my five years there. Depending on which faculty member it was and what they said, members of the state legislature, members of the general public, members of the Board of Governors wanted us to fire the person. They had tenure and they're at a public institution, so they have First Amendment protection and they have academic freedom. In all four of the cases, the president and the rest of the team felt personally that the statements were terrible, offensive, had no basis in--I was going to say in reality, [laughter] but had no credible basis--let me put it that way--but were not able to take the action that people were demanding. We didn't want to, but we could not say anything really, except that, number one, we don't agree with what this person said, we're very uncomfortable with what the person said, and if students feel that they cannot take a class with this faculty member, we will make sure that they don't have to. We looked at whether there were any complaints against any of these faculty members. We talked to their deans and their chairs; there had not been. With one exception, they had made the statements on social media--just love that social media--on their own time and, with one exception, had not identified themselves, they did not say they were speaking for the university, to go back to something that Paul and I were talking about before, and had not directly identified themselves as a faculty member at Rutgers. The fourth one was a little different. She was giving a talk at another institution. Of course, it was advertised, and so everybody knew that she was connected with Rutgers and she said some very unpleasant things that a large number of our students and faculty were offended by and a number of our state legislators were offended by. I would say that the things that were the hardest to deal with in my five years there were situations that arose where a member of the community did or said something that was embarrassing to us, was completely against our values as an institution, but that we could not stop or address in a way that the outside world wished we would.

KR: How much did public relations come into play with combating a situation like that?

BL: Well, Pete McDonough, who is our senior vice president for external relations, was extremely helpful in talking us through the options that we had. He works very closely with the legislature, and he has good relationships with, I think, probably all of the people in the legislature and also with the governor's office. Interestingly enough, it didn't seem to matter which political party was in power. We had good relationships when Governor [Chris] Christie was the governor and also now with Governor [Phil] Murphy. That was, I think, in large part because Pete is so well known and respected in Trenton. So, public relations was a big part of the discussion. It's a tricky line to walk, saying, "I hate this. I don't believe it. I think it's horrible, but we're not going to do anything about it." [laughter] People don't understand that. Obviously, the people that were talking to us, most of them were corporate people, people who knew that if they had ever done or said anything like this, they would have been out in a heartbeat and why are you so spineless as to not take the action we think you should take? Public relations was a big part.

Actually, public relations was involved in a lot of the things that went on at Rutgers. We talked a lot about messaging, not only to the outside community but to the inside community as well. The emails that I sent out--I know that you're not asking about COVID--but trying to keep

people informed about what was going on and what we're thinking about and what we could or couldn't do was very important to all of us, and we tried to communicate. I mean, when people would meet me, they'd say, "Oh, yes, I get all your emails." I thought to myself, "Oh, I'm sending an awful lot of emails." This was before COVID. I did send a lot of emails about faculty awards mainly. So, we tried to communicate a lot, and we were careful in how we said things and what we said. You have to be. It's so easy to be misunderstood. Some faculty are inherently suspicious of administrators anyway, so we certainly don't want to do or say anything that makes us look any worse than we are already viewed. [laughter]

KR: You mentioned the state administrations. Once the presidential administration shifted in January 2017, what kind of impact did that have on your job in terms of policy and general sentiments? What type of impact did the shift from Obama to Trump have?

BL: It was mainly in the Title IX area. We knew that there would be some changes in the way that the Office for Civil Rights enforced Title IX. They released some draft regulations after about a year, which we worked very hard to respond to, the university as a whole and also the attorney general's office. The public is allowed to comment on proposed regulations. I worked very hard with our general counsel's office and our Title IX people to go through the proposed regulations and to explain why we thought some of them were inappropriate, that were not only bad for the institution but bad for students. So, that was the major one. [Editor's Note: Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, including sexual harassment and sexual violence, in educational programs or activities that receive federal financial assistance. The Office for Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education issued its final rule on how colleges and universities must handle allegations of sexual assault and harassment to take effect on August 14, 2020.]

I'm trying to think--oh, well, with international students, of course, the dispute between President Trump and China has affected Rutgers very strongly. The largest number of our international students is from China, and the Muslim ban--they're not from China, but the Muslim ban was a real problem for a number of our international students. If they had gone home for family reasons or they were traveling, they couldn't get back. It was very, very difficult. I will say that our Rutgers Global Office is fabulous. They work twenty-four/seven. They work on weekends. They work at night. They work personally and individually with individual students, no matter where in the world they are. They send them money. They send them airline tickets. They've just been tremendously supportive in a situation that, in my personal opinion, never had to happen. International students were not the threat that the Muslim ban suggested they were, and it was personally and professionally very, very difficult for me to have to deal with that. So, I think those two things, in particular, made my job much more difficult. [Editor's Note: The Muslim ban refers to an executive order signed by President Donald Trump on January 27, 2017 that banned foreign nationals from seven predominantly Muslim countries from visiting the U.S. for ninety days, suspended entry to the country of all Syrian refugees indefinitely, and prohibited any other refugees from coming into the U.S. for 120 days. On March 6, 2017, Trump issued another executive order that granted exemptions for those with visas and green cards and removed Iraq from the banned countries. In January 2020, Trump added six nations to the ban.]

KR: The final rules for Title IX on college campuses just came out. Referring back to when you worked to give your feedback on the proposed rules that you thought would be bad for the institution, have any of those rules that you thought would negatively impact Rutgers been included in the final rules?

BL: Yes.

KR: Which ones?

BL: Well, the cross-examination requirement, although that also is happening in the federal courts, so even if the Title IX regulations didn't require it, depending on what federal circuit you're in, the Sixth Circuit, for example, which is Michigan and Ohio, Indiana, I think, requires cross-examination if there's a formal hearing on a sexual harassment complaint or sexual assault complaint. It's kind of funny; many of the proposed regulations that now are in effect actually made it easier for colleges and universities to comply with Title IX. For example, anything that happens off campus that's not connected to an educational program doesn't come under Title IX anymore. So, if there's a sexual assault in an off-campus apartment between two students, Title IX doesn't cover it. That doesn't mean that we can't deal with it, and we do. In an odd sort of way--well, it's not odd--some of the lawyers--not the ones at Rutgers, they are very committed to social justice and to student safety--but some lawyers welcomed the new regulations because they felt that the new regulations decreased potential liability for colleges and universities, and I think that's probably true. If there is an assault or some other problem that occurs off campus and it's not connected to the educational program, the student can't sue the university under Title IX. They may be able to use some other legal theory, but the new regulations should reduce legal liability for universities. When we were talking about the proposed regulations, some of the folks who work with students who have been assaulted or harassed were very unhappy with the proposed regulations because they believed fewer student-victims would come forward with complaints, and universities would be less willing to provide resources for these victims. Interestingly, not the lawyers, but some others said, "Well, why are you trying to tighten things up for universities? You can continue to do what you've been doing," with the exception of the cross-examination requirement, which we had not been required to do, but now we must, "but you won't be required to do it. You can do it because you think it's right, not because you have to." Some advocates understood, and some didn't. [Editor's Note: The cross-examination requirement refers to Section 106.45(b)(6) of the final rule, which changes how colleges and universities that receive federal funds must handle allegations of sexual assault and harassment under Title IX. The section states that the institutional "grievance process must provide for a live hearing" where "the decision-maker(s) must permit each party's advisor to ask the other party and any witnesses all relevant questions and follow-up questions, including those challenging credibility."]

KR: Paul, go ahead with your question.

PC: Well, this is the same sort of issue but slightly different. I remember quite a long time ago when the affirmative action cases first were coming down from the Supreme Court. Universities made it clear that they were going to go one way or another with affirmative action, but they each came up with the Harvard model and the various strategies, which would be affirmative

action under a slightly different name, slightly different sort of parameters, but with hopefully roughly the same results. In the time you were in the senior vice president's office, were there times where you sat down and strategized what might be done at Rutgers if there is, as most people expect there to be, some sort of very negative affirmative action decision by the Supreme Court? Is that something that people are talking about consciously in the upper administration at Rutgers?

BL: Not specifically, no. When the chancellor's office and my office were divided, the enrollment management operational part, with the exception of financial aid, but the admissions and enrollment management pieces went to the various campuses. So, Newark and Camden and New Brunswick and RBHS, to a lesser [extent] because they don't have very many undergraduates, pretty much do their own discussions and planning. No, my office was not particularly involved. My office oversees university-wide financial aid, the registrar's office, those two in particular because, again, certainly financial aid is bound by federal regulation, and so we have to make sure--I mean, we only have one federal ID for the whole university--so as a compliance issue, we have to make sure we are correctly packaging financial aid for all of our students. But the strategy for enrollment rests with the campuses. No, I didn't really get involved in that. I have been told, particularly in New Brunswick, that they don't do race-conscious admissions. We don't need to. Our applicant pool is so diverse, to begin with, that there was never a strategy that required us to explicitly take race or ethnicity into consideration. I really don't know the degree to which that's true, but that's what I was told.

KR: I am going to go off in a different direction. What was it like being part of Rutgers' 250th anniversary celebration?

BL: It was great, particularly meeting President Obama. I have a picture of him and me. I didn't realize this--I knew some of the big shots were going to get a chance to meet him, but I wasn't sure if I was a big enough shot to have that honor. So, I didn't ask. I just waited, and sure enough, the day of commencement, they herded us all down in the bowels of the stadium where he was waiting. I think he had to bring his own sandwich because the Secret Service didn't trust us to give him food that wasn't poisoned. [laughter] So, he was there, getting ready for his address and for the ceremony. We all lined up, and we were told, "Just shake his hand and move on. You can say one thing and then turn around. They'll take a picture, and then you're done." Because I didn't think I would have a chance to meet him and I knew that it's always hot under those academic robes and of course it was outdoors, I wore just a plain blouse and pants with pockets so I could carry my car keys and my driver's license. We weren't allowed to take a purse in; it was whatever was in your pockets. So, I'm not exactly dressed to meet a President of the United States in the picture, but it was fabulous. [Editor's Note: In 2016, Rutgers University commemorated the 250th anniversary of Rutgers' founding with a year-long celebration. President Barack Obama delivered the commencement address on Sunday, May 15, 2016.]

The whole year was terrific. The university relations folks did a wonderful job of planning the celebratory part, and then my office did three academic symposia to celebrate the 250th, one on the humanities, one on the sciences, and then one on public higher education in general. The president came to all of them and spoke at them. They were really well attended and well

received. So, it was just a fabulous year. I was so pleased to be a part of it. It was exciting, very exciting.

KR: I understand that you got to travel overseas to the Netherlands.

BL: [laughter] Yes, I had been in the job for about three or four weeks. We have a sister university, the University of Utrecht, which, actually, Rutgers, when it was founded, borrowed our crest from the University of Utrecht and our motto. So, this had been planned for quite a while, and Joanna Regulska was then the vice president for global, Rutgers Global. They had made this enormous brass plaque, I guess you could call it, to give to the president of the University of Utrecht to hang on the wall. Well, the thing must have weighed fifty pounds, and poor Joanna had to lug it through the airport because she didn't want to check it because she was afraid it might not make it. I didn't pull rank. I mean, she said she would carry it, so I didn't have to say [laughter], "You're going to carry it because I'm the vice president." It was a wonderful trip. We stayed in Amsterdam. There was a concert; the Rutgers Glee Club sang. There was a man sitting behind me and I turned around just to say hello and he turned out to be a Rutgers alum, who had sung in the Glee Club. He was just lovely, a lovely guy, and just so excited about seeing the Glee Club. They were in their tuxedos with the tails, and it was great.

One funny thing I remember about that trip was I had said to Joanna, "Look," I was brand new, "I don't want to spend a lot of money on a hotel or meals or anything. Rutgers is perpetually scrambling for funds, so just try to find a hotel that is reasonably priced, that's safe, but reasonable." Her assistant found us a hotel, and it was a former prison, which I didn't know until I got there. It had been renovated, but the shower was in the middle of the bedroom and the drain was in the middle of the floor. Do you know what a squeegee is? The thing that you clean off a windshield with. There was a huge squeegee, about, I don't know, three feet long, and the floor was tile. In order to keep from falling, especially when you're taking a shower, you're not wearing a whole lot, I had to make sure that I cleaned the floor after my shower, so that I didn't fall down and hit my head. So, anyway, it was a very funny situation. I've never been--well, actually, I have been a visitor in prison once, but I've never actually slept in a prison. It was quite a trip.

KR: I just want to check in with you about time for today. It is twelve o'clock. We have been going for almost two hours. What is your hard stop time so that you can get lunch and prepare before your next meeting?

BL: Okay, I have a meeting with the president at two. It'd be good if I had lunch before that.

KR: Yes.

BL: Is one-thirty okay?

KR: Yes, sure. That is fine. Paul, is that okay for you?

BL: He's on mute, I think.

KR: Paul, we can't hear you.

PC: I can't go until one-thirty. I've got other things on my plate for today. I don't have a real sense of how much more there is to do, but there is a lot we haven't covered on the pandemic. I'd like to talk a little bit more substantively about the time you spent on the PRC, not about specific individual cases but maybe about types of cases and how you see the PRC functioning. I don't know how deeply involved you were, Barbara, in the negotiations with the union. I know, in the past, vice presidents have been very involved. I wanted to find out what your involvement was and what your take is on a field that you obviously know as a scholar as much as anybody at Rutgers.

BL: That won't take long, Paul. I was not on the bargaining committee, fortunately for me.

PC: Okay, that's one area out. I'm actually really surprised. I guess these things are now all bureaucratized in a way and there are people who are designated to be on that, but given your background, you seem to be the perfect person to put on that sort of committee. Depending on how much more you've got to do, Kate, the answer is, we should go on today for another hour or an hour and a half, because you can go on without me, if that's going to finish things off. If it's going to take another meeting, then I would suggest we just have another meeting. It's up to the two of you.

KR: Sure. That sounds good to me. I don't have too many more questions. I do want to talk about the Promotion Review Committee and I want to talk about the faculty diversity hiring initiative and then just a few general questions. Then, the rest of my questions are really COVID-related. Does it sound good, Barbara, if we go for a little bit more today, and then we do a session tomorrow and we can focus specifically on the COVID response?

BL: Yes, just let me check my calendar, okay?

KR: Sure.

BL: Tomorrow, I've got a meeting from eight to nine-ish and then another one at eleven. I don't know how much time you need or whether you want to do it in the afternoon.

KR: Okay. The afternoon works for me. Paul, does that work for you?

PC: I'm clear until five o'clock on Friday afternoon, yes.

KR: Okay, great. Barbara, what time would you prefer in the afternoon for a start time?

BL: Let's say one o'clock. Would that be okay?

KR: Sure, that sounds great. Paul, go ahead with your questions about the Promotion Review Committee.

PC: Okay. Well, I'd like to hear a little bit about what it meant to you to chair the committee, how they operated, if there are generic ways, without mentioning individuals, that you could tell us about what a difficult case was and how the various members of the committee would interact with each other. I guess also, this is, frankly, because I don't know off the top of my head and I think it ought to be in the interview, not who the members are necessarily as individuals but what positions each of them has. I think I know the answer, but I think it ought to be in our discussion.

BL: Okay, well, I think that part of my job was the most important thing I did. I think the president felt the same way. It was a wonderful experience for me. I had been a dean and I had been called before the PRC once to defend a decision I made--or a recommendation. It's not a decision until it gets to the board. I lost, [laughter] but the guy was promoted the following year. It was a distinguished professor case. I didn't really know a whole lot of what to expect, and it was a little bit like the *Wizard of Oz*, what went on behind the curtain. There was no information. In fact, until a few years ago, we didn't even know who was on the Promotion Review Committee. I remember insisting that the names of the Promotion Review Committee members be on the SVPAA website. If the member didn't want that to happen, then they couldn't serve because I felt that transparency was really important and these folks were collectively deciding somebody's career and they needed to be identified.

Fortunately for me, I started, informally, this job in March of 2015 when the PRC was halfway through its work--they start actually the last week in January--so Dick Edwards, who chaired the PRC at the time, invited me to a couple of meetings, just so I could see what happened at the meetings since I had to take over the following year. That was really very helpful in a number of ways to see how the committee would meet and operated and then also showing me a couple of things that I thought were problematic that I changed when I became chair. One important part of that was selecting the members of the Promotion Review Committee. By university policy, the four provosts are on the PRC and the Senior Vice President for Research and Academic Development, so five of the twelve members are already preordained by policy. That left seven faculty members to be selected, and they have four-year terms. All but a few of them were in the middle of their terms, so there were only, I think, two or three each year that we had to replace when they cycled off the PRC.

It was important to me, and I think probably historically was also important, that we have representation from all of the campuses, including RBHS, which was a new addition for us and that we have some kind of distribution by discipline, so that we had people who understood the scientists, people who understood the humanists, people who understood the social scientists, people who understood the artists and creative people. I was concerned with gender and racial representation. That was important. There were a lot of things to take into consideration in making recommendations to the president about who would serve on the committee. I took my recommendations to the president and explained why I thought these folks should be on it, and he always agreed with me. I never had an issue with him disagreeing with the people that I thought should be on the committee.

The committee, in my time there, was extremely collegial, very, very warm. Jude McLane and Linda Schulze were the two staff members who reported to me who supported the PRC. Linda

Schulze took notes and drafted the documents that were necessary to go to the board about both negative and positive recommendations, and Jude made all the arrangements for the meeting and the food and making sure that all the members got their copies of the promotion packets. By the time I was there, I think everybody--there might have been a couple of holdouts--but I think everybody was just reading them online. We were not killing trees. Those packets are over a hundred pages long, so we were reading them online pretty much.

The process was that we would get roughly 150 packets a year. Depending on the time of year and how well the deans complied with the deadlines, and some were very good and some were terrible at complying with the deadlines and sending the packets into our office because then they had to be reviewed, corrected, sent back sometimes a couple of times. For example, the committee wanted to know how many pages an article was and some faculty left that off, and nobody noticed until it got to my office. So, there was some back and forth of that, which is why we really needed the packets by Thanksgiving, even though the committee didn't start meeting until January. We had to have the tenure decisions made by late February because they had to go to the April Board [of Governors] meeting by contract, and before going to the board, they had to go to the Board Committee on Academic and Student Affairs, which met in March. Then, you had to backtrack a couple of weeks for mailing the information to that committee, so they'd have time to review it.

We basically had five weeks to review all of the tenure decisions, and that's about half, roughly. We had between 150 and 175 cases a year, so that was seventy-five that had to be done by the end of February. If you do the math, in five weeks, that's a lot of reading each week. The way we did it was every committee member was expected to read every packet, and it was quite clear to me that they did because they had notes. They talked about specific issues in the packets. They talked about things a particular letter writer said or a particular department narrative said. What we did is--and I don't know how far back this went, but certainly when Dick Edwards was in that role, they did it this way--one committee member would be assigned one or two packets to be the expert on and to summarize. We would start the meeting. I would go down the list of candidates. For example, Barry Qualls was on the committee the first year I chaired it. Barry would be responsible for summarizing the packet of a particular candidate for promotion or tenure. He would go through it, talk about the teaching, talk about the scholarship, talk about the research, summarize the gist of the external letters, summarize the gist of the department and A&P and deans' narratives, before there was a general discussion. Actually, even before the expert spoke, we would take a straw vote. We would go around the--we were at a big, long conference table until this spring when we were on Zoom or WebEx--we would go around the table, and each person had to publicly say yes or no. They were not allowed to abstain and I can tell you the reason for that later on, but they had to say either yes or no and their vote was recorded. Then, the committee member would summarize the packet, and then the discussion would open up. People would say what they thought about whether the person's scholarship, service and teaching met the standards that Rutgers used for promotion or tenure or both. [Editor's Note: Barry Qualls, Professor Emeritus of English, served as the Vice President of Undergraduate Education and as the Dean of Humanities in the School of Arts and Sciences.]

The standards are the same for Camden and Newark, and we had some interesting discussions about that from time to time, when occasionally somebody, usually from New Brunswick, would

say, "Well, but you have to remember this is Camden." And Camden members would bristle and say, "The standards are the same, right, Barbara?" I'd say, "Absolutely, the standards are the same, no matter where you are in geography. We're not doing anything different for any particular campus. The standards are the standards." That didn't happen very often.

Then, after everyone had a chance to weigh in if they wished--and almost always everybody did and there were often disagreements about whether the person met the standard or not--then, when they finally finished talking or when I said, "So-and-so, you've said the same thing three times now. Do you have anything new to add, or can we move on to the vote?" I said it more nicely than that. Then, they would take a vote the same way, go around the table, saying yes or no, and that would be recorded. Why the powers that be decided there would be twelve members, I don't know, because, obviously, there could've been a tie. I was the tiebreaker, but in five years, I think I voted either one or two times. There was great consensus, not always perfect consensus. It wasn't always unanimous, but it was never really, really close that I recall.

The group, not only were they collegial and enjoyed each other's company, but they pretty much had the same value system, which made it more pleasant to deal with than it would be frankly if they'd been arguing with each other, which happened occasionally. We had a couple of people who thought what they thought and tried to persuade everybody else to agree with them and just kept right on doing it for quite a long time, at which point, I would say, "I don't think you've changed anybody's mind. I think we should move on." That was my role, basically, to be an umpire and to remind people what the standards were and that they were the same across the university and to make sure that--though it was never a problem--every candidate got a fair hearing. There were occasions where the straw vote was a unanimous yes. The summarizing person did their summarizing, and then everybody just sat there and said, "We don't really need to discuss this. This is such an obvious, wonderful case that let's just vote and move on." There were a few like that.

The best part about this committee, and I'm not the only one who feels this way, is I didn't know very much about disciplines other than my own. I didn't know very many faculty beyond my school, and the quality of the faculty that we have is just outstanding. It just practically made me choke up with pride when I would be, on the weekend--this is how I spent my weekends from January through May--reading promotion packets because I had other things to do during the day during the week. The pride I felt in our ability to attract these faculty to Rutgers is just unbelievable, absolutely unbelievable, and I still feel that way. I'm sure I missed a few things.

PC: A couple of quick things, you took a straw poll, and then you went through a summary and then a discussion and then a final vote. Did the straw poll vote change often?

BL: Probably between a third and half the time, yes, because people were persuaded by their colleagues on the committee about things they hadn't thought about or arguments that were made that they hadn't addressed really. Sometimes, they were more positive and sometimes they were more negative, and I would say it was about fifty-fifty.

PC: My closest thing I have to any experience with this would be on an A&P committee in the brief time I was in the provost's office. In both of those cases, it's always been the humanities,

although humanities include linguistics, which is hard for most historians to read. Still, I was reading within my confidence. How good were people--let's say a physicist--in explaining in a report that goes up to the PRC in language that somebody who is in a completely different, non-scientific field can understand? What's your sense of writing these reports?

BL: Actually, they were pretty good. I think the A&P committee chairs and deans were writing for the PRC--if they weren't, they should have been--and understood that they needed to explain why this person was on the top of her field. I'll tell you some of the external letters were tough because these were [laughter] mathematicians and physicists and astronomers and engineers, saying why this discovery or this theorem or this idea was world changing, and I had to look up a lot of words. Sometimes, when we had folks from Mason Gross, we looked them up on the web. We had a sculptor. We had visual artists. We had photographers, and it was fascinating to see their work because there weren't any pictures in the promotion packets. Most of the time, the narratives were reasonably clear.

The ones that we had problems with were not because they used language we didn't understand, but because they would use these vast generalizations without any support or very much support. That's sometimes when we called a dean in to say, "Well, okay, I understand that you think this person is very worthy. Could you tell us what the evidence is for that?" It didn't take long before the deans did a better job, frankly. Sometimes, they brought their chairs with them because it was the chair that was the problem in terms of writing the narrative. Frankly, Paul, most of the time--and they weren't talking down to us either--but the explanations made sense. The mathematicians, if they think something is really outstanding, they call it beautiful. The first couple of times I read it, I thought, "Huh?" But that is a mathematical word for outstanding, world shaking, elegant--I suppose elegant is a synonym for beautiful. If you're ever reading a mathematical promotion packet and somebody says it's beautiful, that's a really good thing to be.

PC: Another connected question and this reflects my experience, I may have been chair at this time, but I went to some meeting, a public meeting, and Phil Furmanski was there and he was saying to a general audience--I probably was a chair and it was probably chairs or something like that--"What do we learn from this? What do we take away from this? How should you change the way that you're operating?" In doing that, one of the things he said was, "You have to remember that what we do is we take the departmental reports and even sometimes the dean's reports as advocacy." We just assume, right off the bat, their advocacy, and what they should include is particularly looking at weaknesses in the packet and explaining them. Of course, the typical faculty member or chair response would be, "Well, if you point to a weakness, you've got a chance of killing the case by doing so." That sort of tension has always been there. But it was really interesting to hear Phil say that because I've gone back and I still have notes from the Corson Report of many years ago ... [Editor's Note: Convened by Rutgers President Edward Bloustein in 1986 and chaired by President Emeritus of Cornell Dale Corson, the Corson Committee undertook an external review of the promotion process at Rutgers, recommending the streamlining of bureaucratic processes that were in place. At the time, Rutgers was trying to become a member of the Association of American Universities (AAU), which it succeeded in joining in 1989.]

BL: Oh, yes.

PC: … Which said, "We want to move decision making down to department levels and we want to encourage them to tell 'the truth' about candidates." Phil was saying that we start with the assumption, not that you're lying to us, but that you're basically building a case for promotion, except in very unusual situations, and that we've gone too far in the other direction. Do you have a sense overall of where things stand today? Are the reports that are coming in doing the job that they're supposed to be doing?

BL: Well, that depends on the school. Some are doing a very good job, and others are not doing as good a job. When the committee felt that the department, and there are some departments that every year were more enthusiastic than they should have been, let me put it that way, about the candidate's qualifications, then the committee relied more on the external letters. That was helpful, although the degree to which the candidate has an impact on who writes those external letters is also a problem, and we talked about that a lot in committee meetings.

My approach was a little different from Phil's, although I think we came out of the same place. I don't know if you recall or participated, but the AAUP has a program, I think every other year, for faculty who want to be promoted and they invite a chair, a dean, an A&P committee chair, me, and others to give advice to the people in the audience, who are all terrified. My explanation was, "The PRC is looking for a reason to say yes. It's not looking for a reason to say no. But you have to give us something to work with. You have to give us the evidence that will allow us to say yes, that you have met the standard." It's not a problem for the PRC, in fact, it's helpful, if the department points out a weakness or, very importantly, responds to a criticism in an external letter. Twenty years ago or fifteen years ago, departments just didn't mention any negative things in external letters. It just didn't appear. The letter was there with no pushback from the department, and that left the PRC not really knowing, "Well, do you agree with this person? Do they disagree? If they disagree, why didn't they say so? What's the importance or the significance of this criticism?" My approach was, "Give us some ammunition so that we can say yes. We're perfectly happy to agree with you, but give us evidence. We're a jury. We're not arguing. You may be arguing for a particular side, but we're the jury and we have to figure out who's credible and what evidence backs up what you're saying. That's the way you need to look at it."

PC: Okay. A connected question about the standards, I've never talked about specific cases with any member of the PRC, although I've known quite a few of them. Over a period of time, I did talk to Barry Qualls about his concerns of teaching being taken more seriously in the whole promotion process. Barry went out of his way to tell people that one of the reasons he was going to be on the PRC was to make sure of his voice for teaching. I wondered to what extent you thought that the discussions that you were in charge of--I guess you said you overlapped one year with Barry--how substantive is the discussion about teaching that goes on?

BL: It's very substantive. It's the thing we start with because that's the first section of the Form 1a, and I will tell you that several faculty members were not promoted in the past few years because they were not good teachers. The committee also did not approve a tenure decision for someone who was not a good teacher. So, I hope that that message came back. Certainly, the

dean found out about it. When we had a candidate who was not a good teacher and the dean and/or the department recommended positively, we called the dean in.

We had a case recently where the candidate had terrible student course evaluation scores, just the worse I've ever seen, in the ones, and I've never seen student evaluation scores in the ones before. Also, the comments from the students were quite negative, most of them. But the chair of the department, the A&P and the dean all recommended promotion. This was a promotion to full. We called the dean in, and he brought in the chair. The chair tried to explain why the department recommended this person for promotion. The evidence was very clear that this person was not a good teacher. The committee didn't buy it, so they recommended against promotion and the person was not promoted.

PC: What the PRC is still doing, unless things have changed, is they're making a recommendation to the president, who actually could change that recommendation.

BL: That's right.

PC: In turn, he is making recommendation to the Board [of Governors], which could actually change that recommendation. He, in this case Barchi, is making a recommendation, President Barchi to the board, which could actually change that recommendation.

BL: That's correct.

PC: Yes.

BL: It did not happen in my five years.

PC: Neither of those did?

BL: No.

PC: Okay. I don't want to press you if you don't want to talk about it.

BL: No, no, they didn't. [laughter] My first year in the role--actually, it was when Dick was still in the role--but I was going to the Committee on Academic and Student Affairs, one member of that committee, who was a trustee--because you know, at that point, I think it was the April board meeting or just before the April board meeting, so there would've been about seventy-five--he said, "Well, I don't have time to review all of these. I mean, I just got these two weeks ago. I don't have time to read all these packets." Bless Dick's heart, he said, "That's not your job. Your job is to make sure that we're doing our job. Your job is not to make individual judgments about who deserves tenure and who doesn't." I thought to myself, "Oh, man, I'm so glad I didn't have to answer that question." [laughter] The board knows extremely well that their role is not to second guess the recommendations, although, yes, they absolutely have the power to do that.

PC: Okay, Kate, those are my questions about the PRC. I would just note that my memory of the PRC is that, at one point, it was only six people. It was three provosts or whatever they were

at that point and three faculty members, plus the vice president, who was, like you, a non-voting member unless there was a tie. So, it's actually expanded quite a bit. I wasn't aware of that. Again, I've never gone around to look and see who's on it or not on it.

BL: Well, Paul, you should spend more time on the SVPAA website.

PC: Okay. [laughter] Okay, Kate, back to you.

KR: I have a related question, and this is a two-part question. How did you work across the university to implement the faculty diversity hiring initiative? Then, along with that, how did the PRC come into play?

BL: Well, the PRC was not really involved with the faculty diversity initiative. I mean, their job is to review the recommendations for promotion and tenure or hiring with tenure that come before them. So, as a committee, they weren't involved at all.

The faculty diversity initiative President Barchi started, and that's again, ten minutes into the new job, he said, "I want to do this. I want you to tell me how to do it. Write up a memo. Suggest how to go about it in a way that's legal," because he knows that there are ways that you can do this legally and there are ways that are not. I put together a program that included funding for diversity hires, and we defined diversity very, very broadly. I don't have the language in front of me, but I can send it to you if you'd like. It wasn't just race and ethnicity. It was a number of different characteristics that were not present or were not well represented in the particular department or academic unit. [Editor's Note: In the fall of 2015, Rutgers launched a University-wide faculty diversity hiring initiative that articulated diversity as including but not limited to "gender, ethnicity, race, culture, national origin, or other personal or professional characteristics that are either unrepresented or underrepresented in the particular department or unit of intended hire." (Robert Barchi, "University-wide Faculty Diversity Hiring Initiative," email to all staff, September 30, 2015)]

We ended up, frankly, hiring some white women for math because there were very few women in the math department. I say we, meaning the university. I didn't do the hiring. We hired a gay man to be the dean of our School of Public Health because there were no gays represented, as far as we knew, in that school. So, it was a very, very broad definition of diversity, which was intentional, so that we would not have legal pushback with respect to violations of the 14th Amendment or Title VI or Title VII, actually.

The program was that the president set aside several million dollars a year, and it was divided among the chancellors by headcount enrollment. So, obviously, New Brunswick got the lion's share and then Newark and then Camden. It was undergraduate enrollment, so RBHS got a small amount because they don't have a lot of undergraduate students. Actually, they don't have a lot of students period. It's a much smaller academic organization. They have a lot of clinical faculty but not a lot of students. The university would support half of the individual's salary for three years.

Then, we also had a pot of money for mentoring. That was really important to me. We were losing faculty of color to Ivy League schools and other schools because of two reasons, prestige and also salary, but there was no organized effort to retain them, really. So, part of the money had to be used for retention of faculty, and we had to be careful. We couldn't just say faculty of color, again, for legal reasons. So, we put together--I think I mentioned earlier--an extended faculty mentoring program that all of the faculty on all of the campuses were eligible to participate in. We did not have enough slots for all of them who wanted to participate, but we made sure that more than half were diverse faculty. I think we are having some success in retention as a result of that. I think all of the faculty in the program, whether they're diverse faculty or not, feel that they're welcome at Rutgers and we value them and we will support them. That's what's absolutely necessary to keep any faculty member but particularly diverse faculty members, who tend sometimes to be isolated and not feel as connected to the community as we would like them to.

KR: I have a question on a different topic. This is a Rutgers-wide question. How would you characterize the relationship between the New Brunswick Campus to Newark and to Camden?

BL: Well, when I first came into the role, I don't think there was much of a relationship among those campuses and RBHS as well. They were siloed in many ways. The faculty and the chairs and the deans reported to the chancellor, and some faculty had individual relationships with faculty on other campuses. For example, some Newark faculty were on the graduate programs for some New Brunswick graduate programs. I think some of the science faculty in Newark, for example, were involved with New Brunswick graduate programs. I know a couple of Camden faculty were involved with New Brunswick graduate programs because Camden only has one PhD program. So, there were these individual relationships, but there were no real organizational relationships among these campuses.

One of my roles was to coordinate with the provosts of the campuses and I did that from time to time the first couple of years, but as I became more experienced in the role and as the issues that I was interested in and that were important to the university became more relevant to all of the campuses, I got the provosts together more and more often. When COVID hit, it was really important to me to have the provosts talking to each other, not necessarily because they all had to do the same thing, but because they were all facing the same problems of how to deliver, how to pivot on a dime from in-person instruction to remote instruction, what to do about summer school, what to do about fall, how to deal with students who didn't have access to the Internet or to a computer, how to deal with the libraries. I mean, there were all kinds of issues that we had to deal with that the provosts, I thought, needed to have conversations with each other and not just try to figure all this out on their own. So, we started meeting every week, every Monday afternoon, to share problems, ideas, solutions, and it was wonderful to see the integration of ideas. For example, it wasn't New Brunswick telling Camden and Newark what the big kahuna thought should happen. In many cases, it was quite the opposite. They were collegial. They were mutually supportive. I think it was really, really important. I don't know if that would've happened if COVID hadn't happened. Clearly, we got together from time to time; they were all on the PRC. So, they saw each other and knew that piece of their jobs, but I think now they're sort of joined at the hip and they certainly weren't before that.

KR: Before March 2020, would you do much traveling?

BL: Not really. I did travel a little bit for my own scholarly interests once a year, a big deal. [laughter] I expected to have to do more with regard to fundraising, frankly, but I was not asked to do that until the fall of 2019, when I was asked to go to Paris, a terribly hard duty, for one night to speak to an alumni group. The foundation was trying to get--there were a number of alumni in and around Paris who were working there, living there--Americans. There were a few French people who had spent their junior year abroad at Rutgers in New Brunswick, but most of the people were Americans who were now ex-pats in France. So, I got to go meet with them and talk with them about what was going on at Rutgers and that sort of thing. But, no, I really didn't travel very much.

KR: You talked about reading the promotion packets on the weekends. Was your job as senior vice president a seven-day-a-week, twelve-to-fourteen-hour-a-day job?

BL: Yes, definitely. I mean, there were times of the year, the summer was a little slower, but during promotion season, it was constant. Of course, when COVID hit, it was twenty-four/seven. I was working all weekend and every single day. There was always a lot going on. I had a lot of meetings that I had to go to, some to represent the president, some because of initiatives that I had started, and others just because of my job. So, I spent a lot of time in meetings during the day. I was teaching. I taught at night, every fall. I didn't teach in the spring because of the PRC. I just could not do the teaching and the PRC in the same semester. It was just too much. So, yes, it was relentless.

KR: You mentioned this fundraising trip to Paris. How much of your job became focused on either indirect or direct fundraising? How much did you work with the foundation?

BL: Very little of my job was related to fundraising. I would have been happy to--in fact, I did, any time the foundation asked me to go to events, for example, I would go and talk with donors and alums. I remember, on several occasions, going to Nicholas Music Center, where there were programs. I was asked to go to the Rutgers African American Alumni Association banquet each year, and I did that and talked a little bit about what was going on at Rutgers. But, certainly, it was much less than I expected. I expected to be asked to do a lot of evening events and, except for the ones I just mentioned, really did not have to very much. I was given football tickets to go to the football games, but it didn't seem to matter whether I went or not. The president was not heavily involved in fundraising, and he didn't expect the rest of us to be. So, I didn't.

KR: Where did your allegiance lie when you went to the Rutgers-Ohio State games?

BL: [laughter] Oh, definitely with Rutgers.

KR: I have reached the end of my non-COVID-related questions. Paul, at this point, do you have any follow ups that you want to ask?

PC: I'll ask you one. Barbara, you said you were not in any way involved in collective bargaining. My memory is of senior vice presidents being involved, in some way, in the past. Do you know if this was a policy change? I should know, but I don't.

BL: I'm not sure I know either, Paul. Certainly, I was involved with helping shape the university's offers, what the university said to the union, and responding to the union's requests and that sort of thing, I was involved that way, but I was not on the bargaining team. I think there was a decision, and I don't know who made it, that bargaining should be left to the professional labor relations people. So, we had somebody from the general counsel's office. Vivian Fernández was involved. One of her staff members was involved. The head of the Office of Academic Labor Relations, Lisa Bonick, was involved, and now Lisa has retired. They wore her out, I think. Now, Paula Hak, who took over for Lisa, is involved with bargaining with other unions. I was involved sort of at the policy level but not in the day-to-day negotiations.

PC: I guess one other thing to touch on briefly, because it's been such a concern to the faculty, Infosilem, this new scheduling program, did that flow into your office in any way?

BL: Well, partially. That really started in New Brunswick. The person in charge of that, Paul Hammond, was a New Brunswick staff member. He worked closely with deans, and I know he had a faculty advisory committee. Faculty don't think he did, but he did. President Barchi was very interested in that. So, Paul would brief the president and me about what was going on with it, but I was not in what I would call a decision-making role and I did not get involved in the day-to-day operational issues of that.

PC: I could ask you one follow up on it. My sense of this, like many things that happen in higher education more generally, is that what each university does and may or may not look somewhat unique and new is actually, in some ways, a copy of what other universities, peer institutions, are doing. My sense of Infosilem was that, for better or for worse, it was something that was now becoming part of the way in which you organize large corporate bodies like universities, bureaucracies like universities, when it comes to something that is so massively complicated as scheduling. Is that the way it was talked about? I don't have any idea of specific universities, but is it geared to what other universities are doing?

BL: Yes. We were way behind most of our Big Ten peers in the way we did scheduling. I was going to say we had terrible information. We had no information about who was teaching what, what course loads were. I mean, I assume departments knew, but nobody else did, whether classrooms were being used appropriately in terms of space allocation, things that a well-managed university ought to be able to know without having to ask every department chair's administrative assistant to answer the question. [laughter] Institutional research tried to get this information, and compliance in submitting it was abysmal. So, it was decided that we needed to enter the twentieth century, not the twenty-first, and do this from a centralized perspective. That's what the decision was made to do.

PC: Kate, I am going to have to sign off at one o'clock. If you decide that you want to go on, that's fine.

KR: I think this is a good place to stop for today. Does that sound okay, Barbara?

BL: Yes, that's fine.

KR: Okay, great. Dr. Lee, I want to thank you so much for being so generous with your time. This has been absolutely fascinating today, and we will continue tomorrow.

BL: Okay, see you then.

PC: I would like to say the same thing. This has really been a wonderful, wonderful conversation. Thank you very much.

BL: You're asking very good questions, and they're not always easy. [laughter]

KR: Bye-bye, everyone.

BL: Goodbye.

----------END OF TRANSCRIPT----------

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