

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH JOSEPH J. SENECA

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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and

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TRANSCRIPT BY

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Shaun Illingworth: This begins our third interview with Dr. Joseph Seneca on December 11, 2012, with Shaun Illingworth and ...

Paul Clemens: Paul Clemens.

SI: Thank you very much for coming back. Last time, we left off discussing how you came into the position of vice president for academic affairs, the chief academic officer of Rutgers, which was a newly created position. Can you tell us about some of your early priorities when you took the job? What was expressed to you as an early priority?

Joseph Seneca: Yes, I think one of the key parts of the new administration as seen by the Board of Governors in its appointment of President Lawrence was a need for what they saw at the time of a rebalancing with graduate and undergraduate education, an emphasis on teaching excellence, and an emphasis on continuing the movement that was begun under President Bloustein and Dr. Pond into the elites of the academic research universities of the nation. [Editor's Note: Edward J. Bloustein served as the president of Rutgers University from 1971 until his death in 1989. From 1982 to 1997, T. Alexander Pond, known as Alec, served at Rutgers as executive vice president and chief academic officer, professor of physics, and acting president (1989-1990). Francis L. Lawrence served as president of Rutgers University from 1990 to 2002.]

There came other issues from that broad charge and one became a key issue that attracted a great deal of attention and some significant disagreement on campus. In several American institutions at that time similar to Rutgers, there was a movement towards merit pay for the faculty. I find it interesting because those issues are still being played out in the public sector today, not necessarily in higher education. There was a desire, I think, to move towards a faculty-rewards system that was geared towards what it thrives on, peer review. That became a theme for the first several years in the administration, one that was ultimately successful and is part of the pay structure now at Rutgers as it is at many, many other universities across the country. The issue at Rutgers that made it more of a challenge was the obvious presence of a faculty union. Very few American universities have faculty unions. [Editor's Note: In 1970, the Rutgers Council of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) Chapters became the exclusive labor representative of the faculty (and graduate student employees in 1972). In 2005, the Rutgers AAUP began a joint affiliation with the American Federation of Teachers (AFT).]

SI: Over how many years did that occur?

JS: It was several years, because it revolved around contract negotiations. Obviously, everything had to be negotiated and properly so in the contract, and it was disputed by the AAUP. We were past the expiration of the existing contract and into, I think, the second year of a three-year contract before it was resolved. I think it was resolved in a constructive way. There's faculty voice in the process. The initial shock of doing it wore off, I think, relatively quickly. Individual departments, there was a broad structure agreed upon, but individual departments and units had a large degree of flexibility in how they implemented it. It was confined to be applied to about fifty percent of whatever the total package negotiated in terms of dollars would be awarded through this peer-review, merit process that began with, I think it's literally called, a departmental peer review committee. It's interesting I'm on the other side

of this now in the unit, and the way I see it there, at least in the unit that I'm with, it works, works very well and, I think, has become part of the culture.

PC: If I recall, was Richard Norman the person?

JS: He was. Richard Norman was the bargainer for the university, and there was a team, a university administration team meeting with the AAUP team, again, over a long period of time. It went through the various stages of impasse and arbitration. I participated in those hearings and that process. Looking back on it, it was, at the time, it was tense and full of, again, some antagonism, but I think it's certainly, in my opinion, worked well and is the way to go. Different departments have interpreted it differently. I think Paul's department is on one side of the distribution, as I recall. I don't know if that's changed. Other departments use it very forcefully. People sort themselves out. It was good. I think it gives emphasis to the process of peer review. It's totally fitting and symmetric to what we do as professionals with our academic work. [Editor's Note: Paul Clemens has served as a history professor at Rutgers since 1974.]

PC: Do you remember in the bargaining itself, the two issues that were brought up repeatedly, as I recall, were one, outside of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, there was a sense that across-the-board salary increases made more sense and it was sort of always a traditional labor union position, as opposed to merit increases. There was also an issue, on the part of some people and, again, not something I remember a lot of in FAS, about distrust of the sort of hierarchical structure that might change the priorities. Which of those issues was the bigger problem in the bargaining?

JS: I think it was the idea that somehow as the recommendations would move to the decanal and above levels, the wishes of the department and/or the money would be not allocated in the way that the original departmental recommendations were made and that people would be rewarded beyond the departmental assessments and it would be used not for the way it was intended.

PC: Is it your sense that over the time President Lawrence was here that that issue, the issue of distrust between people who were bargaining for the union and the administrators who were bargaining with them, that distrust increased after this, got better after this, or stayed about the same? Was there any change?

JS: I think by the end of the administration that process became much less of a flashpoint, that there was a sense that it worked, and there was, I guess, with experience after several rounds. It was accompanied, if you recall, by also the parallel issue of post-tenure review, which was, again, a merit idea, and as the departments developed their own approaches to both of those, as well as that annual review of faculty, which sort of was always occurring, I think the departments began, because they were in control of it and you can't, in a huge place like this, there's very little an individual administrator could do. The process was well set, and I think that's important. It came out of the bargaining and the negotiation, a very clear process that was contentious to get to, but once it was agreed upon, the departments developed their own approaches. In your department, Paul, as I recall, it was a different, more across-the-board philosophy. Other departments used it in a much more, very much directed towards as they interpreted merit pay and assessing all the accomplishments of individual faculty. It became

more routine within each unit that the overall "us versus them" and the fear of the unknown dissipated pretty readily.

[TAPE PAUSED]

PC: I have sort of a follow-up question on union-university relations. I know that at some time during the Lawrence administration, there was a contested election within the union, at least in New Brunswick, that involved people who probably wanted to see the union move in a somewhat different direction in its posturing during labor negotiations. What was the administration's sense of what was going on there?

JS: I know what you're talking of, and I certainly had colleagues on the faculty that were a part of that. It was a sense that, in my interpretation, Paul, that the union efforts were not in the best interest of the academic enterprise of faculty. I think there was some, frankly, at least there was expressed to me, some concern about the amount of money that was coming out of faculty paychecks for union dues and the use of that money particularly with respect to the very elaborate, intensive and adversarial grievance procedure that often pitted faculty against faculty. There was a genuine idea to go in a more academic direction, a less confrontational maybe and less us versus them, but it foundered, as I recall, and it foundered because of, I think, the other group in control was able to muster the votes to keep themselves in office and to keep in the direction of this confrontational style of negotiation.

PC: Okay.

SI: Early on in the Lawrence administration, there was an effort to do a strategic plan. Can you talk about the planning that went into that and the process of developing the "A New Vision for Excellence?"

JS: Yes. It's interesting. It's being repeated again now and is cited as a need because the university has not done a strategic plan since the one you referred to. Again, it was a sense from the president in his discussions with the Board of Governors that we needed to engage the community as a collective group and to talk about where we'd been and where we wanted to go and how we're going to get there and what are going to be the areas of emphasis and to get each unit thinking about a self-definition of what they see themselves focusing upon. It was a healthy effort, very labor intensive. It became part of the reaccreditation process, which was going on at the same time. A lot of the documentation for reaccreditation was coterminous with what we had to do for the plan. I found it a very interesting process, as an administrator, because the units came forth with their own documents and they were very enlightening and they were thought through in terms of their strengths, their needs, all the units produced needs obviously, and their aspirations and how they were going to bridge the gap. It was an opportunity for the administration to ask them, "How are you going to participate in doing this with the university?" There wasn't a financial component of it, but there was a resource understanding that we had to have the resources behind it.

Ultimately, that led to the capital campaign, too. It was part of the documentation and the material used in the capital campaign in terms of aspirational goals with specific academic

content. It was a very labor intensive enterprise by large numbers of people, but I think it was good for the institution to do and I'm pleased to see it being done again, given all the changes at the university that have already occurred, as well as the ones that are forthcoming with the structural changes with UMDNJ and Rutgers. [Editor's Note: During the Lawrence administration, Rutgers carried out a 500-million-dollar fundraising campaign called "Creating the Future Today." In 2010, Rutgers began its capital campaign "Our Rutgers, Our Future," which seeks to raise one billion dollars for the university. In 2013, all units of the University of Medicine and Dentistry, except University Hospital and the School of Osteopathic Medicine, were integrated into Rutgers University.]

SI: With the way these things are set up, it was the units and departments setting their own goals. Did the administration try to influence the direction?

JS: Well, we would be part of that in terms of the structure of what had to be accomplished in terms of the vision statement and the planning process and what documents would come out at the end. Then, there were some broad choices being made in what was included in the plan, but most every unit was represented in the plan. It was an opportunity for collective support of the units and to say that each one was important to the university, "Here's how it's going to fit in, and now, basically, let's go forth and do it." Then, it evolved into the capital campaign.

PC: When you say something like, "Let's go forth and do it," one of the questions I have in terms of how the administration of a university works, clearly there are multiple people who make those choices, but is that primarily something that comes out of your office? Is that something in which the president is deeply engaged? Is it a Board of Governors decision? What is the structure of authority during your time as vice president on something of this nature?

JS: Yes, it would be my office, vice president for academic affairs, and the office of institutional research under Dr. Christine Haska that would be shaping those plans and formulating them so that they're consistent, so that they speak in a similar voice, that they are aspirational and then ultimately when it would come to resources to support it, it would be the president, the financial officers and us. Then, the Board would be, obviously, informed all along, and the plan would be brought to them. They would be engaged in reviewing it, but the content would be the administration's and the academic and institutional research offices.

PC: If I could pursue that in an off-tangent direction, when we talked with Richard L. McCormick about his presidency, one of the things we asked him was how would he characterize his role as president. What did he spend his time on? What did he do, and maybe in his case, since he is a historian, how did he reflect on his role compared to a president of forty years ago? Since you knew Fran Lawrence very well, how would you characterize the things he did as president? What were the things that the president had to do at that point? What were his primary responsibilities?

JS: He worked a lot with the Board. The Board was a very, very critical component of his work. He [was] dealing with Board issues and Board priorities and Board reactions on a routine basis. He spent a lot of time with the state budget. That's always been an issue and will remain. He spent a lot of time externally in state relations.

PC: Did Lawrence or you testify more down in Trenton?

JS: He would do so on the strategic planning and the academic side, and I would do the financial things with Nancy S. Winterbauer, the vice president for budgeting, the tuition hearings, the tuition, the budget status, the budget requests. That was usually the division of labor. He was a detail person. He wanted to know what was going on in the university all the time. We would have weekly cabinet meetings. Everything was reviewed. He was aware. He was a very, very hand-on manager, very much involved in the day-to-day operations and what was going on. He had an enormous appetite for work. His wife worked with him deep into the night all the time on correspondence, on external relations. He had an incredible work ethic. He was in the office at 7:30 or earlier and never out before the evening.

PC: Did he do a lot of fundraising?

JS: At the end, yes. In the capital campaign, he became very engaged in that and, in part, I think, and this is an experience at least from my knowledge of Dr. Bloustein when I was in the faculty and now and then involved in some initiatives that he asked me to be in, a parallel thing, as new presidents look to the state to support the university in a very, very supportive and significant way, became disillusioned over time with that and then realized, in Ed's case, we had to do it through tuition.

PC: Yes.

JS: In Fran's case, we had to do it through being aggressive externally, and he became deeply involved in that. One of the things I wanted to talk about, and related to the strategic plan, one element was, to, again, to make the university computer system state of the art. That was a huge initiative with an enormous bill for it, and the president and Dr. Haska and I were deeply involved in doing that, what had to be done, the technical issues, where were we, with our sprawled-out campus, the choice of technology, all the technical issues, what to do first, became a very huge problem. We put an enormous effort into it. There was significant fundraising. There was some federal support for it that the president worked on and got through our congressional delegation and several rounds of federal funding. Piecing and patching put the university into first-grade facilities and a first-rate computer system, which is no end to the process. It's an endless, huge, open-ended cost.

We're proud of what happened with the library and the digitization of the collection, the electronic collections, the electronic journals, the difficult decisions we made on allocation of moneys within the library budgets and additional resources for the library, so that we have access to the library at our desk. It's fabulous. So, that was a big part of, again, the strategic plan, that need, not necessarily an academic initiative per se, but none of the academic work could go on without doing that. We were backwards for a variety of reasons. So, that was, I think, a significant accomplishment on the academic side and the student service side of it, with the computer labs, the computer equipment, the replacement of those things every three to five years, all the issues involved in security, a huge effort and a successful one, I think. That need

continues to evolve and needs support. How did we work before? I always think, “How did we work before?”

PC: How did we do it before?

JS: How did we do it? Right, Paul. How’d we do it? The answer is, I thought about it a lot, the answer is very inefficiently, very inefficiently. In other words, it’s an enormous productivity raiser for everybody, for the administrative side, for the staff side, for the students, for us as faculty. It’s great.

PC: When the computer infrastructure initiative RUNet 2000 went forward, where did Camden and Newark fit in this?

JS: Well, I think, they were obviously in on all the planning for the net and the upgrades and the computerization, but their provosts were the ones that, they were responsible for implementing it on their campuses.

SI: It is interesting that you described it as backwards. My impression was that this was new technology.

JS: Because of the nature of what we have this sprawled-out campus, you had a lot of initiatives at individual units doing computers at different degrees with different equipment with different technologies with different support mechanisms. It was how to think of it as a university need with a support structure that was universal at least campus-wide that everybody was doing the similar thing with the same systems, with the same goals, same type of support, and that was what we needed to do, pull it together. It was a typical Rutgers problem; we had previously a very, very horizontal type of approach to technology that really that invites enormous inefficiencies and inequalities between the ability to have support and have the technological capacity to work. So, that was the thing, to make it a university-wide standard. Working out the financing and what to do, I remember our discussions, “Should we have wireless?” the pros of fiber optics, these fundamental decisions. They were interesting times.

You’re right, Shaun, it was new. All the universities were doing it and getting engaged in it and not realizing, I think, a lot of us, with what was the full potential. One of the initiatives that I liked that I did in my office was to challenge the departments and ultimately providing some resource support, to develop courses around the new technology, using the technology. I did it in a way that while individual courses and faculty were doing that on their own, I just told the departments, through the deans, “Come with a proposal, a significant proposal, e.g., how you’re going to change the teaching of the ‘Introduction to Psychology,’ the whole thing, not a section.” “How’re you going to change the teaching of art history?” I wanted to change the whole way the discipline was taught at the beginning level or at the intermediate level. That was neat. We had some terrific things done by the units.

For example, we had electrical and computing engineering as a major. You could become an electrical or computer engineer. At the peak of the boom, I remember recruiters coming into recruit students and saying, “Here we’ll pay you a bonus. Leave school, and we’ll hire you.”

It's hard to imagine, but, "We will give you ten thousand dollars, and if you want to go back to school in a couple of years and finish your degree, we'll pay tuition, but leave." They were taking kids out of [college] in their junior year and their senior year, and they were leaving. It's a totally different world.

That major was highly technical and very rigorous, but what I wanted to do was, "Well, what about for all the other students that are not in electrical and computing engineering?" So, I challenged the School of Communication, Information and Library Science [now called the School of Communication and Information (SC&I)] to develop an IT [information technology] major that was not electrical and computing engineering, but you would have expertise in the software and its applications, how systems were structured, and that's been a very successful major. They came forth with a proposal. I supported it. There was some faculty support as well. It was that type of innovation on how computer technology's penetrating the academic curriculum. So, that was a whole new major.

SI: I saw that there were about two dozen new undergraduate majors and two dozen new graduate programs created. Do you remember any outside of the technical areas?

JS: Sure, yes.

SI: What were some new programs?

JS: Biomedical engineering was another one that we put significant effort and resources into. That would be one. The Department of Chemistry, changing its name to Chemistry and Chemical Biology, expanding its scope. Some social policy and environmental issues at what was then Cook College, now SEBS, the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences, a whole range of those. Exercise science. Some new minors. It was good.

SI: You said that one of the main things that President Lawrence had to do with his time was deal with state administrators and elected officials. Would you characterize that as a strength of his? How would you characterize it?

JS: Everybody begins with good aspirations there. There were tough budget years. He came into office, I think it was in six months, and there was a very significant budget cut followed by another budget cut, hard times. He put a lot of effort into it. The budget conditions were bleak, got bleaker. The university went through several rounds of deep budget reductions. It was a hard thing to get across and remains a hard thing to get across. You see institutions all across the country struggling with it and more and more going towards higher tuitions and more externally supported programs. I was very much involved in a lot of that with Dr. Winterbauer on the tuition side. A couple of budget years, I remember the worst of both worlds, where they cut the budget and they capped tuition. Then, you're caught between not being able to do much, and your costs are rising contractually, with contracts. They were difficult times.

PC: Just to make sure I understand. The state cannot cap tuition, right? They give you penalties.

JS: Right.

PC: Everybody talks about it, but my understanding is that Rutgers legally has the right to raise tuition ...

JS: Yes. However, they can take more than a dollar away from you for every dollar that you might add in tuition. Then, you have the political dimension of the governor asking you to do something.

PC: My sense is that under the McCormick administration, there were a lot of university staff people who did backdoor work with Trenton, that the job of these people was state relations. Was that true during the Lawrence administration?

JS: I don't know the extent in Dick's administration, but it was a relatively small operation. We had a state relations person. We had a federal and overall relations person and had Don Edwards as the vice president. [Editor's Note: Richard "Dick" L. McCormick succeeded Fran Lawrence as the president of Rutgers University and held the post from 2002 until 2012.]

PC: Right.

JS: Don did a yeoman job. One of the issues, of course, is to make sure that everybody's speaking with the same voice in Trenton, particularly in the budget process. I think many times you would have individual units or individuals per se going looking for an appropriation without the administration or the university knowing. That's not a good situation, so there was an attempt to make sure that didn't occur anymore, that there was a priority set and a plan developed on what the university's priorities were at the state budget process and at the federal budget process, so that you then had a coordinated request. President Lawrence frequently met with the congressional delegation. He had good relations with some of the congressional delegation and pretty good results from the federal process. We haven't had what you would call a governor that really was a champion for higher education, in my opinion, since Governor Kean, and whatever the other priorities were and the budget constraints. [Editor's Note: Thomas Kean served as the governor of New Jersey from 1982 to 1990.]

We haven't had a bond issue or capital improvements since the end of the Whitman administration, and that wasn't in Fran's terms. We worked hard for that and worked with the Whitman administration. So, all this construction that is going on and all the buildings; it's been bootstrapped. We did it from F and A returns on grants and we did it through some federal moneys and we did it through piecing and patching, all the new buildings, the life science buildings, biomedical engineering, the transportation building. [Editor's Note: Christine "Christie" Todd Whitman served as the governor of New Jersey from 1994 to 2001.]

Let me turn the tables. I wanted to ask you, as part of your oral history and you might consider it if you haven't, is there a physical history of the campus, at some point, someone to speak before the World War II veterans go, how this place evolved spatially? Marv Greenberg might be a person. Do you remember Marv?

PC: Absolutely. I saw him at Katheryne McCormick's funeral and actually mentioned to him that we might get together and talk. [Editor's Note: Katheryne Levis McCormick, wife of Richard P. McCormick and mother of Richard L. McCormick, served as an administrator at Rutgers University.]

JS: He has also, obviously, the financial part of it. The spacial thing is an interesting topic.

SI: That is something we ask people is how they remember the campus changing and evolving.

JS: Yes. The decision-making, sort of the idea of the Livingston Campus, where that came with an academic vision, but it had a spacial dimension to it. [Editor's Note: Opened in 1969 as Rutgers-New Brunswick's first coeducational undergraduate institution, Livingston College's original campus design sought to connect academics and community living and embrace the socio-cultural egalitarianism of the era. Rutgers University has reshaped Livingston Campus into a center of business and professional studies with a focus on sustainable community development.]

PC: The person, in fact, who knows that story far better than I ever will is the art historian Carla Yanni, who has run more than one class on the physical history of Rutgers. She is writing a book right now on the history of dormitories. I do not know whether Rutgers is in it.

JS: Neat.

PC: She studies the architectural part of art history.

SI: What were the building priorities during your years in office?

JS: Life sciences buildings. A number of the academic initiatives involved the recruitment of very, very accomplished, distinguished and entrepreneurial senior science faculty. Wise Young with the spinal cord research, Jay Tischfield with his DNA and genetics data bank, Joachim Kohn in biomaterials, Martin Yarmush in biomedical engineering. There were retention issues with people like Kathryn Uhrich, who is very entrepreneurial with some patents. Those recruitments and retentions, those faculty have very large research operations, they support enormous numbers of students, they have big aspirations. There were space implications to make that availability for them to grow, for their units to grow, for their departments to grow, and that involved a lot of the life sciences areas.

In addition, we had a big initiative with the Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum, which was housing incredible new collections. We had, rest his soul, Joe Whiteside, senior vice president and treasurer, with deferred maintenance, an aging physical plant and an enormous infrastructure that was aging and deteriorating, and we were assembling resources to do things on an aggressive basis.

The computer initiatives led to the need for computer labs, student labs, faculty space. The library was an initiative, a new addition to the library. We started the building of the College of Nursing and the Institute for Health, Health Care Policy and Aging Research on Paterson Street.

PC: Was the CoRE building, Computing Research and Education Building, on Busch Campus constructed then?

JS: That was up.

PC: It went up during ...

JS: Yes. It was coming out of the Commission on Science and Technology initiatives.

PC: Okay, yes.

JS: The new ARC Building, Allison Road Classroom Building, on Busch Campus was our initiative.

SI: You mentioned in the last interview that you were often called in on other issues outside of your actual job description, [laughter] like athletics and that sort of thing. What about the expansion of the athletics program under President Lawrence? What parts of that were you involved in?

JS: Well, there was some discussion academically on, the role of academic support and helping particularly the student-athletes, and I was involved a bit in that. I tried to stay out of it, the whole thing. The academic support for student athletes was something that I became involved in. [Editor's Note: Under the leadership of President Fran Lawrence, Rutgers-New Brunswick joined the NCAA Division I Big East Conference in football in 1991 and all sports in 1995.]

SI: What was the state of that when you started?

JS: Well, there were problems. The NCAA, National Collegiate Athletic Association, is a world unto itself, and the university had some compliance issues, as I recall it. Joe Whiteside was involved, because the athletics line went up through Joe. There was eligibility and the determination of eligibility from semester to semester, and we were found by the NCAA to not be in compliance. Then, we had to have a plan to become in compliance and what were the academic support structures that would do that. I was involved in determining that, and it had resource implications. It was very, very difficult.

I think President McCormick has said it well about the emphasis on athletics, particularly football, in universities, because he had experience at Washington, that you can't go back. "The bell has been rung," I think is his expression. It is what it is. I think the change now to the Big Ten can work, and I think the academic support structure now is a good one. I think the graduation rate record and the fact that, as I understand it, very few athletes are academically ineligible anymore is good. The university ranks among the top in these graduation rates that they compute, the six-year graduation rates. [Editor's Note: Before becoming president of Rutgers University, Richard L. McCormick served as the president of the University of Washington from 1995 to 2002. The University of Washington is a member of the Pacific-12 Conference. In 2012, Rutgers announced that it would join the Big Ten Conference, a Division I

collegiate athletic conference whose members are primarily public research institutions located in the Midwest.]

PC: Did you go to football games yourself?

JS: I did. I had to go, and I spent many a Saturday. It was part of your work, because there would be donors, there would be alums, there would be state people, there would be business done, to talk about, so it was expected that you would be there. It meant for very long weeks. You had a tough Monday through Friday, and then you were there Saturday morning or Saturday afternoon. You didn't watch the game. You were interacting with people, and there would be lists of who was coming and who would do this and who would do that and what to do. All the universities do it, all of them. It's a part of the university outreach.

PC: Another area of the university that I would like to hear your comment about during your years as vice president, how did the Mason Gross School of the Arts change during that time?

JS: Yes, thanks for asking. I did so many things. There was a new building there, Civic Square building, too. That was part of the building program, yes. Well, you may recall, Paul, I don't know, the issue in the reorganization, the original reorganization, was to, with the music faculty, which had performing faculty and had scholars, music scholars, part of the distribution of that was who would go to Mason Gross and what would Mason Gross be in terms of its mission. [Editor's Note: In 1981, the faculties of Rutgers-New Brunswick's undergraduate colleges merged into a single entity, the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS). Established in 1975 and named in honor of Rutgers President Mason W. Gross in 1979, the Mason Gross School of the Arts absorbed the fine arts departments of Douglass, Livingston and Rutgers colleges during the university's reorganization.]

It's evolved to be, and I think under two really great deans, Dean Marilyn Somville and then George Stauffer, whom I appointed and worked closely with Marilyn to build Mason Gross as a performing arts school with both resources and the development of curricula, graduate programs in dance, music performance, opera, the creative arts departments. They march to their own drummer and have fantastically interesting faculty and arts space. Both deans, I was involved in supporting their programs, supporting the faculty and developing new academic content. It was a terrific experience to get to know that part of the university. There were issues with respect to emphasis, but the deans had good initiatives. Dean Stauffer developed an extensive summer session program, an extensive continuing education program, which, in the spirit of raising your own boat, generates significant resources, and doing it with high standards of scholarship. That's a great asset for the university. It's got great support from its alums, and it's generated some very, very distinguished graduates. I think it's a gem. I certainly worked to support it consistently. It was a treasure.

PC: Marilyn Somville once told me she was particularly appreciative that you were, among all the administrators, the one who most often showed up at the actual performances at the Mason Gross School. [laughter]

JS: Yes, in addition to the football games. These, I choose to go to. [laughter] For Marilyn, she was a wonderful, wonderful dean. It's a gem. It was intellectually interesting. They did interesting stuff. You look at those promotion packages, and you're not looking at stuff you're familiar with, just learning that whole world on how they judge themselves and their peer review process and the juried selections and the reviews. The students had great loyalty to the school. It's a terrific thing for Rutgers.

SI: Going back to a question that was asked earlier about how you spent your average day, was it on faculty development issues, promotion things?

JS: I did lots of things outside the academic area. My title was an academic vice president, but I had a lot of executive functions, because I was doing lots of things with the president, particularly externally in Trenton and beyond. It would be endless attention to being present for the academic side of the house. Every year, I would make it a point, I would go to one faculty meeting of every unit every year. At FAS, Paul, just for your information, Dick Foley wanted me not to go to the faculty meetings. He asked me to come to his cabinet meetings, so I attended those. I would do that. I went to Camden and Newark routinely as well to see that faculty with their provosts. [Editor's Note: Richard "Dick" Foley served as dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences from 1992 to 1996 and then as executive dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences and dean of the graduate school from 1996 to 2000.]

The promotion season was a large time use with one day a week totally devoted to Promotion Review Committee meetings. We had a cabinet meeting once a week. We had administrative council meetings.

Then, I would see a parade of faculty and deans and center directors that all reported to me. I had a planning meeting for all my direct reports, which were all the deans, the university librarian and a multiple number of center directors that may number thirty people, maybe more. I would meet with each of them in the fall, beginning of the semester, for a planning meeting for the year. There were metrics that they had to produce for that meeting, what they wanted to do, where they were financially, where they were with academic initiatives, and we would say, "What are the goals for the year? What do you want to do?" That would be meeting each of those, we'd go through that. They were intensive meetings. I would have one of my staff assigned, divide up my staff, and so many had these units and so many had these other units. We would go over the planning document that they produced. We would then meet again in the spring, thirty more meetings, on where we were, what happened during the year. In between, we would have Dean's Council meetings, my deans. Once a month, we would do Dean's Council meetings. There would be the external stuff in Trenton and Washington, D.C.

There would be crisis, unimaginable crisis. Rutgers is like a city, so you wake up one morning and you go to work and you have your plan of work, and there is a communication from the New Jersey Department of Health saying they're about to declare a measles epidemic at the university and close classes. So, that would come out of the blue. They detected so many cases of measles, and were the students vaccinated? What about the health records? You would have this huge public health issue on your plate in the morning, and all the cabinet would come together for that. I remember that vividly and the issue with the state health people coming up. They wanted

to close classes and we discussed it and we said no and they said yes, and we went around on that. We agreed that some solution short of closing the university down but vaccinating all the students, making sure everybody had to produce a vaccination result and if not, they had to be vaccinated. It was really tough stuff, because, I'll tell you why. The doctors would come in and say, "Out of every thousand students we vaccinate, three are going to have a severe life-threatening reaction," and they did. You had to deal with the parents. That was the sort of thing that came routinely. That was a really big one that affected everything.

There would be mini-crisis and everything, such as a student throwing himself in front of the train. I think one of the hardest things that I ever did was meeting with President Lawrence and the mother of that student and the mother saying that that student went to his instructor and did not get a good response, I won't describe the details, and how to deal with that. So, that was a crisis. Again, you wake up, and there it is in front of you. There were security issues, police issues. It's a huge university, forty thousand people by now. So, you had enormous numbers of events like that that you were dealing with.

A board member would come in and say, "Hey, what about this?" whatever it was, and you would be dealing with that. It would come to the president, and then it would come to me. We have to cope with it, deal with it, whatever the issue is. Problem-solving and meeting and talking, a huge amount. I did a lot of work with the press, responding to media, being a point person for financial issues. That came from my role as the economics state person, because I had a lot of press contacts. I'm still doing it.

By the way, what I'm doing is my economics role from my former role, which you had asked me about, as a council, we run these economics models at the school. I think I mentioned those to you before. I've been asked by both the treasurer and the OLS, Office of Legislative Services, to look at the economic impact and fiscal impact of Hurricane Sandy, and so we're doing that. That was the sort of thing that would come up. You have a hurricane. What does it mean for state tax revenues? They have their estimates, but they want some other estimates. The legislature wants estimates. So, we're running our models and looking at the economic and fiscal impact of Hurricane Sandy. I did a presentation of a taxonomy of the effects, and the treasurer was at that presentation. Then, he calls me at night and asks me for the slides, because he has a meeting with the governor the next morning, could he use my slides. I said, "Sure. You don't even have to attribute it to me." So, it's that type of thing. That relationship, state economic issues evolved, [so] that I did a lot of the press talking-to.

PC: Did you have a personal relationship with people at *The Star-Ledger*?

JS: Very much so, yes.

PC: Can you tell me who?

JS: At the time?

PC: Yes.

JS: I knew the reporters, I knew the state house reporters well, Dan Weissman, Vince Zarata. Kelly Heyboer, I think, took higher education. At that point, she had the higher education desk. Tom Moran, he does the editorials now. He calls me up frequently. I tried to cultivate that. I originally saw it, and as Ed Bloustein asked me, as a service, it was a public service. You had to steer a path there if you're in the administration, because you're an advocate for the university and purposefully so. I wanted to be also viewed as an objective source for economic and fiscal information.

SI: How do you think the press, particularly *The Star-Ledger*, treated Rutgers during your time in office?

JS: The big issue was President Lawrence's misstatement at the beginning. That became a cause célèbre by the *Ledger* and others, and it was a very difficult time. Mr. Braun was the columnist and still is that writes on higher education. I wasn't involved much with that. Dr. Haska really was dealing with that. [Editor's Note: On November 11, 1994, in an address to the Camden faculty, President Francis L. Lawrence made a racially-charged statement in which he attributed low standardized test scores of African Americans to "genetic hereditary background." Robert Braun broke the story in the *Star-Ledger* on January 31, 1995.]

PC: One of the things I noticed in looking through archival material is that the university got a recommendation from CSPAD that it could shut down the Institute for Animal Behavior, which had been at Newark for a very, very long time. Instead, that turned into the new center at Newark, the Center for Molecular and Behavioral Neuroscience, that was probably their pride and joy during the Lawrence administration. [Editor's Note: CSPAD is the Committee on Standards and Priorities in Academic Development.]

JS: With Paula Tallal and Ian Creese as the leaders.

PC: You know more than I do.

JS: Okay.

PC: What I wanted to ask you is how that came about? How did it happen that the process of phasing out an old center that seemed to be doing traditional work turned into a new center at Newark?

JS: Well, it became part of the strategic plan initiatives that would be reinventing a Newark initiative from scratch with the recruitment, the idea that if you put resources in, recruit faculty leaders, much like the Pond model, again, applied here. I think it was the Pond model emulated by Norman Samuels [Rutgers-Newark provost] that this became a real cutting-edge, state-of-the-art faculty led by externally-recruited leaders.

PC: Where did the money come from to do that?

JS: Well, we found some money to, again, fund the initiatives on the three campuses. Norman would know, and I think you've talked to Norman.

PC: Yes.

JS: I suspect it was a significant amount of reallocation by Norman within Newark, and he was very good at that and a good academic leader.

SI: All right.

JS: All right. So, we are going to talk again.

PC: Yes.

SI: Yes. Thank you.

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