

Part 2: University Governance

NARRATOR: This interview is part of the University of Pennsylvania Faculty Governance Oral History Project. Today is August 1, 2005, and I will be interviewing Professor Gerald Porter, of Penn's Mathematics Department, in room T-215 in Biddle Law Library. Professor Porter has been at Penn since 1965. He has been very active with the Faculty Senate. During this interview we will explore Professor Porter's experience with the university governance at Penn since the mid-1960s.

INT: Could you say a little bit about when you first became involved with faculty governance at Penn?

PORTER: So, as far as the Faculty Senate was concerned, I had not been involved in the Faculty Senate at all. I certainly was aware of things that were going on, say, in the late '60s/early '70s, with Spice Rack, and secret research, and things like that – and I think I've precipitated or played a role in precipitating another crisis at another time, but as far as having any leadership role or any role on the senate advisory committee, I was frankly quite surprised when one day I got a call that asked me to be chair-elect of the Faculty Senate.

INT: And this would be in the '90s then? That's what we were talking about.

PORTER: That's Correct. From 1980 to 1990, I was the Associate Dean for Computing in the School of Arts and Sciences. During that period, I knew lots of people, I knew lots of people in administration, and I still know lots of people in the administration. So I knew my way around the university, but I had very little interaction

with the senate. There were a bunch of people that I knew were “the senate people,” people like Julie Wishner, who had been the head during that Spice Rack thing, or Ralph Amato, or Herb Callen, I knew who they were, and maybe chatted once or twice with them, but I had really zero involvement with the senate. I think the only senate committee or council committee that I ever actually served on at that time was the Council Committee on Communications.

INT: Okay. So why don't we then start with focusing on the '90s and your period with the Faculty Senate. Do you want to say a little bit about that?

PORTER: Of course, it was a three-year term. It was a unique three-year term, because I dealt with three different administrations. I began in the last year of Hackney-Aiken, and then I had Claire and Marvin for a year, and then Judy and Chodorow, Stanley Chodorow for a year.

INT: So you can reflect on all three of those during those periods –

PORTER: So I had all three. Now, of course there were large differences, because one was on their way out, another was interim, and a third had just come in. The major event that occurred during my first year, the year of Sheldon – the year of the lame ducks, if you will-- <LAUGHTER> -- was this whole “water buffalo” todo. And that was something that we had really very little to do with. David Hildebrand, who has since died, was the chair of the senate that year, and Louise Shoemaker was the past chair, and –

INT: And this – you should lay a little foundation of, that this was a student – something that a student did.

PORTER: What happened was that a bunch of African-American women were outside one of the high-rises – this is my recollection, anyway – they were outside one of the high-rises one evening, making what one student perceived as excessive noise, and the student yelled out the window at these women with a phrase that the women interpreted as a racial phrase. Whether it was or not, still to this day I can't comment. He said, "Shut up you water buffaloes" or something like that, and the claim was that that was an ethnic phrase that meant something, "you're acting boorish". In any case, they interpreted it differently, whatever it was.

And, this led to the whole question of speech codes, and the issue of civility on campus. How do you respect each other. All of these codes were really in place in some sense. I know the first thing that is essential to the university is the idea of free speech. And so there was this clash between speech codes and free speech – (INT: "Mmm-hmmm."). Alan Kors in the History department was a strong adherent of free speech, he was a defender of the student. Alan was a very strong defender, he has very strong positions. This was all reported in the pages of the Wall Street Journal, and more or less, all hell broke loose. <LAUGHTER>. And, I remember when the changeover in the senate took place. The first thing I did when I became the chair, I went to Sheldon, and I said "Sheldon, the university is hemorrhaging, you've got to stop that thing," and Sheldon said, "I'm just following the rules, there's nothing else I can do." And, so that was that– Penn got a lot of publicity, I don't think very much of it good.

I'm not sure to this day how one handles those things, but it laid the agenda for the next year, when Claire Fagin was the president. She appointed a whole bunch of committees on civility, I don't remember the right name for them. In

consultation with the senate chairs Rebecca Bushnell was chosen as the person who would chair all of those things, and there was a whole year of meetings discussing what civility means on campus, and how do we deal with that issue.

At the same time, I felt that that year was really a unique opportunity for the senate to lay out an agenda for an administration that hadn't yet been appointed. And, so, I spent much of that year doing that. I appointed a whole bunch of committees of my own to lay out what we thought were the major issues that the new president should be addressing. I haven't looked at that recently, and I don't really remember all the details, but I do remember the one issue that resulted from that, that Judy did accept wholeheartedly, and has come to pass, and that's the whole issue of college houses. David Brownlee was the chair of whatever committee that was, and we went around, I remember, looking at some of the college houses that were there, and making recommendations that that would be something that we should really expand to the whole campus, and build upon. And, when Judy came, we presented her with all these reports, and that was the one that she was very happy with, and I think she adopted, and I'm sure by now she believes that that was her idea <chuckling>, and that's great – half of success in life is making other people think that your idea is their idea, so that's okay too.

INT: Could you say – the importance that you see, of the college houses that you see and everything – in the whole picture of –

PORTER: The whole idea was to have an integrated learning experience, so that it wasn't simply that you went to class and then you went someplace to live, and that everything was separated from everything else, but that everything was a part of

the whole. A small percentage of the learning that takes place at the university takes place in the classroom. Much of it takes place out of the classroom in discussion with your peers, in your own work outside of the classroom, and so forth, and the idea was to facilitate that, to make Penn a more academic place, if you will.

INT: Mmm-hmmm.

PORTER: Because, you know I think traditionally Penn had not been viewed as the most academic of the Ivies, and this was an idea that improved the whole academic environment of the university.

INT: And how successful would you say that it's been implemented?

PORTER: I think it's been a success – very well. We've taken these dehumanizing high-rises and tried to break them up into various college houses as well, I mean that was an idea of the '60s that was – the high-rises, that was pretty much a failure, because instead of forming communities of people, it separated people, because – people used to meet in all sorts of places, they meet in bathrooms, they talk to each other, but when you live in an apartment house, the only people you really see are maybe your apartment mates. And instead of breaking down walls and facilitating all sorts of meetings and between students, the hi-rises have exactly the opposite effect. And part of the problem – part of the hope now and I think it's been successful, is that the college houses and the high-rises overcome some of those alienating aspects of university living.

INT: So what about – are there any other things again, from '92-'95, that you –

PORTER: So I think – let me tell you, one of the things that I did that year, which I thought was wonderful, was that for me, I had the opportunity of writing a column of every two weeks in Almanac, and I took full advantage of that column. And it gave me a bully pulpit that really none of my successors have taken advantage of. Barbara Lowery, who followed me, was not the type of person to write, and I think after that, people forgot that it had really ever been done. I recently dredged them all up and put them on my website, and read some of them. And some of them are as appropriate today as they were in 1992 or 1993.

I see now the university is looking again at the calendar, and when to begin classes. I remember one column that I wrote which was entitled “Thirty Days Hath September, and We Need Them All?” <LAUGHTER>. And, we actually got university council approval – we got several levels of approval for starting the week before Labor Day. But then Stanley Chodorow came in and he passed it out to department chairs, and political science said “well, we could never do that because our professional meeting is the week before Labor Day,” and that was the end of it. But I – you know, it has always been the case I think that the fall semester is a week shorter than the spring semester, and that academically is not a good thing for either the students or the faculty trying to cram material into that period.

INT: Do you recall a couple of other topics from your column?

PORTER: I mean, there were – the faculty handbook was coming online, and there was a column like, oh, “It is 11:00 p.m. on Saturday. Where’s Your Faculty Handbook” or something like that, or I think there was one entitled “Financial Tales, Academic Dogs,” and I’ll leave that for your imagination, <LAUGHTER>, for what that

one was about, but there were, or – at that time we hired a new Provost, after all. And because of – because of responsibilities in our budgeting, the – the Provost's office really does not have the power that it once did. And that was an attempt to restore some finances to the office. Whatever greatness this university has, I really attribute to David Goddard. Harnwell concerned himself with raising money and Goddard ran the university, and he had very good taste. And he had a budget – he had budgets that he could, for example, as I explained before, essentially bring in a new math department. Could you imagine today, if a Provost decided to bring in a new department, he'd have to first deal with the deans and then everything else, because of the way the budgets are. And – Goddard was – after all, he was eventually, secretary of the academy, he was a well-respected man. Throughout the country, he had his friends all over the place whom he could call on for advice. And he had the wherewithal, the funding, to make major changes academically.

All that disappeared when Meyerson became president. He had a guy by the name of Paul Gaddis, who came – I think Paul Gaddis came to Penn after the Pennsylvania Railroad folded and frankly I think he had no more idea what a university was like than a pickle factory. And he delegated to John Strauss and John Hofstader the whole budgeting thing, and we wound up with this monstrosity that we now call “responsibility center planning” now. At one time, it was called “responsibility center management”. At that time, it was called “responsibility centered budgeting.” There's a big difference between the two, and they've morphed one into the other. And that was what that financial – that column on financial tales – academic dogs – was really about.

Because – we had a campaign that Martin ran that was called “One University.” One of the strengths of Penn is the fact that there are twelve schools on one campus. But in fact, the budgetary situations that were set up surely discouraged and disincentivized, if that’s the right word – disincentive I guess is the right word – participation between schools and joint projects, because the budgets resided in each school. And – and I think that we’ve been struggling with, and I don’t think – I think at this point in time, there’s no way that anybody can do anything to change that radically, because these various fiefdoms have become more powerful than the center, but the column I wrote was really an attempt to return some power to the center for central planning, as opposed to just letting the schools sort of do what they want. Build ugly buildings, whatever. And, you know, a dean comes to the Provost, or to the facilities committee, and says “I have this money, and I want to do X.” Almost always the dean gets their way. Central planning at the university is not strong.

INT: So there’s really been this pull away from a united community at Penn, to these more separate –

PORTER: I don’t know if there was ever a united community in practice, but at least the budgetary situation has moved to rigidify the status quo – the fact that there really are twelve schools, and each of them is responsible for themselves. Some of them are pretty wealthy and can do pretty much what they want. People think of Penn as a very wealthy school. They say “Oh, there’s an endowment of \$4 billion.” Is that the right number? Something like that. And the truth of the matter is that if you look closely at that endowment, what you are going to discover is that \$2 billion of that belongs to the health system, and if you look at the remaining \$2 billion, probably a

major chunk of that belongs to the school of medicine. So when you get down to the individual schools, whether it's the Law School here, the School of Arts and Sciences, there's not much of an endowment. Hugo Sonnenshein, who was dean in Arts and Sciences, used to say that the endowment of the Department of Economics at Princeton was greater than the endowment for the School of Arts and Sciences at Penn. So I know now, they are planning on a new campaign for Penn, I assume that that will probably be a \$5-6 billion campaign. In part, those numbers are not real numbers, but I think that that's important.

If you look at a place like Penn, one of the things that we put on the table for Judy was that she had to increase the percentage of undergraduate financial aid that came from endowment, and she did. It went from 8 percent to 12 percent while she was president. A couple of years ago, we had a middle states evaluation. The Provost from Princeton was here. We were chatting with him and we said "what percentage of Princeton's undergraduate financial aid comes from endowment?" And he said, "last year, I think it was 106 percent." Well, what that says is that the schools are not really getting tuition to operate under, they're getting discounted tuition, they're getting tuition discounted by financial aid. And that makes financial problems. Arts & Sciences has always had financial problems, because, remember, Arts & Sciences is only what, 25-30 years old? I mean, it came out of the College of Liberal Arts for Women, the College for Men, the social science departments of the Wharton School, and the biomed group and so it came into life with very little endowment – and it has always struggled. It always needs a big subsidy from the Center, which sometimes it gets and sometimes it doesn't, but if you're going to be competitive to attract and retain

the very best faculty, as a friend of mine used to say, “money doesn’t talk; it shouts.” And so, you know, it’s very important that you get your financial aid up. That helps a great deal. Somehow people like to build maybe buildings that have their name on them but financial aid really is the most important.

INT: And can you say a little bit about why that is? What is the difference say between Penn with their lower level, and say Princeton. That comparison you made just a few moments ago.

PORTER: Well, if you are charging whatever – pick some number for tuition -- \$26,000? So you have that \$26,000 that’s coming to whatever budgetary unit manages the academic enterprise. Well, at Princeton it’s \$26,000 that’s coming, because tuition is coming out of the central pot. I mean, the financial aid is. At Penn, it’s not the \$26,000, but maybe it’s \$18,000 or \$19,000, because you don’t get tuition, you get net tuition, that is tuition minus financial aid. And that’s really an important thing.

INT: So you would have a lot more then, if you have these monies, then you have a lot more to work with in terms of faculty and programs for students.

PORTER: Of course. So that’s a very important thing.

INT: Now, in 2001-2002, you returned –

PORTER: Let me tell you what I –

INT: Okay.

PORTER: You skipped the early times, and that was fine, because I didn’t have a real involvement there, but let me tell you one story –

INT: Sure.

PORTER: <OVERTALK> -- Maybe I’m the only one who knows this story.

INT: Maybe you are.

PORTER: It's about the Faculty Senate.

INT: Okay.

PORTER: And – I don't really remember what year it was. Maybe it was in 1975 – that's a good, round number. Donald Langenberg was the Associate Provost for Graduate Studies, and he then went on to be head of NSF, and then Chancellor of the Maryland system. Up until that time, the way graduate fellowships were given out at the University of Pennsylvania was that – and this is the graduate school so it's not the law school, – is that a department, say economics, would come and say "we have these really twelve great applicants and we'd like to offer them financial aid." And they'd look at it and they'd say "Oh, these look like great applicants. Go and offer them financial aid." Well then what would happen and might happen, and I don't want to pick on economics, because it might be some other department as well, is that those twelve students – maybe eight of them had Penn as their backup school, and they really wanted to go to – well, you can fill in the names: Stanford, Harvard, whatever. And they turned down Penn, but economics still had the twelve fellowships that they could offer to the next group of eight people or whatever.

And Don didn't think that that was quite a legitimate way to do things, so he put in a committee that was going to look at all the fellowship applications for all the departments, and we would rank-order the applicants. So then, if somebody in economics turned it down, maybe that fellowship went to somebody in romance languages. Or whatever. So it was a committee that I was on with Joyce Randolph who was at that time in the German department and went on to become head of

international students and an anthropologist by the name of Chet Gorman, who later died, who had done work in Thailand. A bunch of other people were on as well. We carefully read all of these applications and we rank-ordered them. The best applicants were often not from departments that would normally have been highly subsidized by the school – some of the folklore applicants were absolutely wonderful.

INT: Mm-hmm.

PORTER: And we did our work. We weren't political, we just looked at them, and it was easy to see – I mean, I remember at that time the best history applicant was actually a math major from some southern school that I assure you would not have been accepted to our math program. And, so we rank-ordered all of these applications and all hell broke loose. <CHUCKLES>. The major perpetrator of all hell breaking loose was a professor by the name of Hartwell – Robert Hartwell, professor of history, who if my memory is correct, was later arrested for making a threat on Ronald Reagan's life. <CHUCKLES>. The truth of the matter is that people come to Penn to do their research and to train graduate students. And we had not really given the history department any fellowships. And he said, well, "We all came here because we want graduate students, and we get the best we can, but we have to give them some money until we get some decent graduate students." And the result was that there were – the Faculty Senate was convened, there was a special meeting of the whole faculty to discuss these things, and I'm later told by – perhaps we'll say, an anonymous source -- <LAUGHTER> -- I can't verify the authenticity of this – that Irv Kravis, who has also died, was the chair of the senate at that time, and he went into see Martin Meyerson, and said "Martin, this is horrible. This is a bad situation. The only way it's going to be solved is that either you

or Elliot Steller have to resign.” Well, Martin said “Let me think about that.”

<CHUCKLES>. So Martin sat there for about three minutes, and he says “Elliot!” And Elliot Steller, who was a prince of men and a wonderful person, had to resign. I think the next year, Martin resigned as well.

INT: Mm-hmm.

PORTER: So that’s one instance where – as I say, many of those people have died, but that’s one instance where the Faculty Senate did make a difference. Before I became chair, I went around and I talked to some of the people who had been previous chairs. I talked to – I remember talking to Ralph Amato. And what Ralph Amato said was that he thought that the Faculty Senate was a sleeping elephant, and most of the time it just sort of dozed off, but if you woke it up it could cause havoc. And he said he spent his entire term as chair of the Faculty Senate praying that the elephant would continue sleeping. So I mean the Faculty Senate, from time to time, does wake up – as in the Spice Rack case and also this other case. –Some student from the DP called me up this past term because they were doing a story on the Larry Summers flap, and I referred them back to this as a case where the faculty did act. I’m sure all the appropriate documents for this must be in the university archives, because that was over twenty – it was over twenty-five years ago. So, to get back now to 1990 or whatever?

INT: Well, then we go into 2001-2002, you –

PORTER: Larry Gross had been the chair of the Faculty Senate the previous year, and then Larry decided that he would become an associate dean in Annenberg. So the rules stated very clearly – if you were to have somebody take over as past chair,

you don't want somebody who has no idea of what the Senate is all about. I had spent the year I was chair-elect, trying to learn what the senate was all about. And the council as well. I went to all the council committees, I figured out sort of, what those things were about, and you don't want somebody to come in as a past chair, and say "What's this all about?" So, the rules say that the past chair is to be selected from people who have previously served as past chair. And I don't think there were a lot of past chairs available. David Hildebrand had died, Barbara Lowery – I don't know if she had died at that point, or if she was in the administration, so she wasn't available. There weren't a lot of people – I was one of the people, so I agreed that that year I would serve as past chair.

INT: And, is there anything special you remember from that period, then?

PORTER: The major thing was that the major function I guess of the chairs of the Faculty Senate is consultation, twice a month, between the three chairs and the President and the Provost. And that consultation is a very important because it gives the President and the Provost the opportunity to get feedback on things that they are considering. It also gives the senate chairs, who are speaking for the entire faculty, a chance to raise issues of importance to the faculty and to get the response of the President and the Provost. And – all in all, I found that working with Judy Rodin was really a very good experience, because she would listen to things. On the other hand, Bob Barchi came from a different culture, and I really dreaded the meetings when Judy wasn't there and Bob was the only one there.

INT: And how would you explain that culture?

PORTER: Well, the culture – the culture on this side of Spruce Street is a culture of collegiality, of listening to other people. The culture on the other side of Spruce Street is a top-down culture, it's a hierarchical, and I think that people who survive in each of those cultures survives in different ways, and – I have nothing against Bob, I talk to Bob and I was on Academic Planning and Budget for many years with Bob, and you know, I had no hesitancy to say anything to him. But I think that – I just think that his approach to things was a very different approach to Judy. And when Judy was there, and that's true with Stan Chodorow as well. I mean, when Judy was there, she was the dominant force, and she – she had no hesitancy in straightening out situations when a provost mispoke, and as I told you before, Goddard was a strong force under Harnwell -- of course, I think at that time the power of the university lay with the Provost. I think that's no longer the case, it really is the President who is the dominant force.

INT: Could – let me just see – what would you say your impressions are of overall faculty satisfaction, going back from the '60s to the present time. What changes would you say – is it the same? Is it different? Just in terms of the faculty being satisfied?

PORTER: So let me – I'm going to expand that question a little bit with my answer (INT: "Okay"). Faculty – I've said it a couple of times – faculty come to the University of Pennsylvania, number one, to do their research, number two, to train the scholars of tomorrow, and number three, to teach undergraduates. Nobody comes to the University of Pennsylvania to serve on the Faculty Senate or to be on a committee. <CHUCKLES>. It's often a very difficult thing to get people to serve on faculty

committees. I have no idea how many people were asked to be chair of the senate before I was asked, I know I've – I've been in the position of a nominating committee asking people to serve as chair of the senate, and it's seldom the case that the first person you ask agrees. That does happen occasionally, but it's seldom the case. And it's a very difficult thing even to get people to serve on committees. The majority – I mean, what most faculty really want, is they want a good research environment. They want a research environment where they have time to do research, and they want good students to teach. And as long as you provide those things, the rest of this other business is of secondary importance. It really is what people are looking for. People who come to Penn, come to Penn because they think Penn offers this. People who leave may leave for very many reasons, but one of the reasons is that they feel that they have better students or better research facilities somewhere else. So, I think that's been a constant, certainly, for the whole time that I've been at Penn. I think that those of us who somehow or other get involved in faculty governance feel that we do so to some extent, we hurt our own careers. As you know, people get endowed chairs for research, and for teaching there are awards such as the Abrams Award and the Lindback awards. Where are the awards for service to the university? I think they're negative. I think from my own point of view, that my department doesn't view my service to the university as something that can be rewarded from the department level. My school feels the same way. I was chair of a major SAS committee. I've been chair of major university committees, task forces, and so forth. I would hope that one day there is some sort of recognition on a university-wide basis of service to the university,

because if you don't have that, and we don't have that, then it becomes increasingly difficult to find people to serve in that role.

INT: And, so at this point, the motivation would be just care for the institution itself. That you individually, or other –

PORTER: So I don't know why and there's any number of reasons that probably are not so dissimilar from service to the general populace. I mean people run for public office, if you look at the stuff that's in the paper, you wonder why anyone in their right mind would run for public office. I mean, the idea is that there are various types of satisfaction that one can get in life. You can get satisfaction from proving a nice theorem. That's really a great high. But you can also get satisfaction from doing something important. I served as chair of a task force on the privacy of personal information. I just come from a meeting. And since that task force issued its report, the university was the first school in the country to hire a chief privacy officer. We in many ways we led Blue Cross to the point where very shortly you'll get a new Blue Cross/Blue Shield card that will have an identification number that has nothing to do with your social security number. Emerson said that the reward of a job well done is having done it. And I think that's an important thing as well.

INT: Sure.

PORTER: I guess I've always felt an obligation for service both to the organizations and to the community that I'm a member of.

INT: What would you say on the issue of academic freedom especially at the present time. Do you see any problems with academic freedom?

PORTER: Academic freedom is always under threat. And the history at Penn is not a very pretty one. You've got to remember, Scott Nearing was dismissed from the University of Pennsylvania for his political activities.

INT: Can you say a little bit more about that?

PORTER: I really can't, I'm sure you know, Scott Nearing was a professor, and he was a leading socialist or radical back in the time around World War I and the university fired him. And we suffered under McCarthyism. The whole issue of – it goes both ways. There was the whole civility issue that we spoke about earlier, having to do with the “water buffalo” incident, and the swing back was that – what was this guy's name, Dorfman? The guy from Wharton who made a comment to an African-American student and basically had to go through remedial education because of that. I think that twenty years from now, if anybody remembers it, will probably be viewed the same as the Scott Nearing incident. At the same time, we have incidents at Columbia, where the students are running around accusing the Middle Eastern professors of espousing their views in class and forcing them to learn them.

There's a proposal right now before many state legislatures that there's an ombudsman for students to complain about professors that speak their mind in class, and I think that academic freedom is always under a threat, sometimes from the right, sometimes from the left. I think it's important that the university maintain its own position on academic freedom, and is able to police itself. Do I believe that a professor who tells a student that the student's going to fail the course because they're African-American should be reprimanded? I surely do. And I certainly know of cases, not at this university, but at the University of Texas, where that happened. Professors

spend their lives studying a particular subject. They come up with a viewpoint, and – and, they should have a chance of giving that viewpoint. They should also at the same time – they should be tolerant of people – you know, it doesn't have to be that “I've spent my whole life studying this, and therefore I believe this, and on the other hand this person over here who's an idiot says something else.” I mean – but, you can have different leanings and have people look at different other things as well, and – but I mean, there's always an attempt to make the university fit into whatever the political thought of the time is. I think that science in this country is under terrible threat. I mean, you have this “intelligent design” business at Kansas. I don't know how those kids can get prepared to come to the University of Pennsylvania. I mean, you know, people can believe whatever they want. They can believe the moon is made out of green cheese. I don't really care. But you're not going to teach that in a science class and call it science because once you do that, you undermine the validity of science, and I think this is a very dangerous time. And it's a dangerous time for freedom of speech, freedom of thought, and everything else in this country. I think that some of the provisions involving the Patriot Act are limiting us at bringing scholars from other countries to the United States as well as graduate students from other countries to the United States.

INT: Mmm-hmmm.

PORTER: You know, the important thing if we're going to really believe that this is a good system of government is that we have to bring people from other countries to the United States, those who might be our enemies, and let them see

whether it is or not. We can't simply build a wall around the United States, as we seem to be doing, both metaphorically and actually.

INT: I just wanted to ask you one last question: is there anything else you'd like to highlight concerning faculty governance in your experience here?

PORTER: Yeah. I think there's one area you haven't mentioned at all.

INT: Okay.

PORTER: And that's sort of the trustees. The trustees play an important role in running the university. Often that role is delegated between the trustees and the president, but sometimes it's not. I don't think that there's really very much communication. I think that there's almost no communication between the trustees and the faculty, and I served for a number of years as liaison on the Trustees' Committee on Budget and Finance. And when I began that, it was nothing more than a dog-and-pony show. Whatever decisions had been made had been made already. They came in, their chair would announce those decisions, people voted, and that was the – if you've ever been to a trustees' open meeting, you'll see that that's the same thing that happens there. Then, after a while, I complained about that, and there was some modification, and they actually had the meeting where they approved everything after the meeting rather than before it, but -- I understand now that it's gone back to the previous situation. This past year – and you can ask Helen Davies when she comes – she was the chair, obviously, the de facto chair of the committee called the Social Responsibility Advisory Committee, where it was our task, our assignment if you would, to advise the trustees on how to vote proxies. And, it was a committee that was a truly community-based committee. We had alumni, we had faculty members, we had

graduate students, we had staff, we had undergraduates. And we spent a considerable amount of time going through the proxy materials we got from the investment office.

We took our role very seriously. We went through all these proxies, made recommendations on them, probably gave them forty-five recommendations on the proxies that should be voted, and how they should be voted. Occasionally, we said that they should vote against the proxy. Sometimes we said that they should abstain, and we sent this off to their committee, and their committee met by telephone without any of us there, and they decided, I think, to vote five of the proxies that we had recommended, and among those five, I think one was – one had been withdrawn, and another one was one that we said to vote for the company. Communication between the trustees and this committee was nonexistent. This was something that had been put together by the trustees, and was put – the vice chair of the trustees, or the chair of the trustees, actually, had put together conditions under which one could make recommendations. The conditions were ridiculous. We had no input into that. We were not able to discuss with people. We had no one – they came back and said we haven't made a strong enough case on some of them. Well, I mean first of all, we have other things to do too, but we made no stronger case for the ones that they decided to vote on than we did for the ones they didn't decide to vote on. And, I think that that's currently under discussion with the President. But I think, in general, the chair of the board of trustees should meet once a year with the faculty senate, in much the same way that the President and the Provost do, and maybe more. And there should be some back and forth. Al Shoemaker was the chair, and certainly he came to us before an interim president was appointed. I remember that meeting, and David Hildebrand, before Al

said a word, said “I think it should be Claire Fagin.” Al said “that’s exactly where we are,” and that’s the way it was. But I think that the trustees’ view of the university is perhaps different from the faculty view. I’m convinced there’s sort of a three-legged chair there with the trustees, the faculty, and the administration. I think that administration and the trustees have sort of carved out their spheres of influence, and I think that that whole area needs to be broadened. (INT: “mmm-hmm.”). And that the faculty has to be involved in some way or other, because otherwise, I’m sure the trustees – many of the trustees just think of the faculty as paid employees.

INT: Is there anything else you’d like to say? That’s very good. That’s very good. You’re the first person we’ve interviewed who’s really brought in the trustees, so I think that is –

PORTER: Well, it wasn’t on your question list. If I hadn’t really gone over this the other day, that’s probably not something I would have said off the top of my head, but it’s also a reflection of this activity that occurred this past year. Finally, all these mechanisms – whether it’s Faculty Senate, or whether it’s school-faculty meetings, or whether it’s University Council, all these mechanisms exist as pressure valves. They are there to keep simmering debates and simmering issues from exploding. And I think on the whole, they generally do a pretty good job with that. From time to time, things do explode, but I think that’s really the major function. The purpose of the University council is to get the students and the faculty and the administration together to speak about issues of common concerns before they erupt, and for the most part, I think it’s pretty effective. Sometimes it’s not. I can’t say I enjoyed the hours that I spent at University Council, but I think that for the most part, those people who take their senate

– who were elected as senate representatives, and there are some places in the university where no one is willing to serve as a senate representative, but those people who do so and serve faithfully. Henry Teune was an example. I don't always agree with what he says, but Henry takes it very, very seriously, and I think all the faculty are better off for those people who do take it seriously, and – in some sense, it's like the general governance of our society. A very small number of people vote, and a lot of people complain, and those are not always the same groups of people. <LAUGHTER>. And I think, you know, if – what do they say, if you are going to talk to the talk, you better walk the walk, and I think that's an important thing for – I think more people should be involved in the senate. I think, generally speaking, senate representatives do not report back to their constituencies. It probably would be a good idea if they did, even if it were just an e-mail.

INT: Right.

PORTER: You know, I guess – the one other thing I really do want to say, is that my time as chair of the senate would have been a very difficult time, a much more difficult time, if it weren't for Carolyn Burdon, because Penny really cared more about the faculty than the faculty cared about the faculty. And, you have to remember, you have this musical chairs of people moving through this position every three years, and there's no real sense of history except perhaps the executive assistant at the senate, and she knew what happened. She kept me from making a fool of myself many many times, because she said "but that's happened before. This is what happened before." And she was the repository for the history from Henry Abraham through a few years ago. And she knew it all, she lived it all, and she made an enormous difference for the

faculty I don't know if the faculty ever realizes, as I say, that she cared more for them than they cared for themselves.

INT: Mm-hmmm.

PORTER: And I think I was very, very fortunate in having her there as an assistant. I think that today, the chair is probably – I don't know Christine Kelly very well, but it's hard to imagine anybody devoting their life the way that Penny devoted her life to Penn and to the senate. And there are very few people that are willing to do that anymore, and I think that that really made an enormous difference.

INT: Okay.

PORTER: Thank you.