



2015

Gilbertson, Phil Oral History Interview

Ken Beauchamp

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarlycommons.pacific.edu/esohc>

Recommended Citation

Beauchamp, Ken, "Gilbertson, Phil Oral History Interview" (2015). *Emeriti Society Oral History Collection*. 61.
<https://scholarlycommons.pacific.edu/esohc/61>

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the University Archives at Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Emeriti Society Oral History Collection by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Commons. For more information, please contact mgibney@pacific.edu.

FACULTY EMERITI INTERVIEWS
UNIVERSITY OF THE PACIFIC ARCHIVES



Philip N. Gilbertson (1996-2014)
Provost, 1996-2010
Director, Pacific History Project, 2010-15

February 13, 2015

By Ken Beauchamp

Transcription by Jade Vo, University of the Pacific,
Department of Special Collections, Library

Subjects: First Impressions, instituting and managing change in curriculum and rest of University, prominent institutional issues and achievements, prominent personages among admin, faculty, staff, students, alumni, regents, and challenges to the task of enhancing the University's academic programs

UOP ARCHIVES FACULTY EMERITI INTERVIEWS

February 13, 2015

BEAUCHAMP: I am Ken Beauchamp, and today's date is February 13, 2015, Friday the 13th. Phil Gilbertson is being interviewed on a lovely afternoon in a very nice backyard in his home in Stockton. So here we go. When did you arrive, and what were your title-titles?

GILBERTSON: You may recall, Ken, that President DeRosa decided he was going to give the title of Provost to the Academic Vice President's position--

BEAUCHAMP: That's right.

GILBERTSON:--which hadn't been done at Pacific. It wasn't that with this title he was describing a much broader range of responsibility than in the past, but he thought it was important to designate the chief academic officer with a separate title. As he always said, "first among equals" with the other vice presidents. So that's the title I had from the start, and that's the only title I've had from when I came in March, 1996 until I retired from the Provost position at the end of June 2010. Since then I have been Provost Emeritus during my years writing the history of the university from 2011 to 2015.

BEAUCHAMP: Did they designate you as a Professor of English as well, or not? I don't remember.

GILBERTSON: I'm quite sure that I was, Ken. I've never used that. The President insisted I be reviewed for a tenured appointment by the Department of English. . .

BEAUCHAMP: Yeah, he did the same thing for himself in psychology.

GILBERTSON: So I put together a portfolio, after I had been appointed, but he wanted that review and any comments they might make about it, and any kind of recommendation. And they graciously granted him that request. So I did, and I was confirmed as a Professor of English.

BEAUCHAMP: Must have been--

GILBERTSON: But I've just rarely used the title. I did come at a strange time. I came March 15 of 1996. The President was so eager to get a Provost in place. He had been appointed July prior, in 1994, and had a major retreat with the board and so on, working with the new board chair, Bob Monagan, and he realized there was so much to do, and he had to have a team in place. I was the Dean of Arts and Sciences at Valparaiso University in Indiana, and they were gracious enough to allow me to leave early. It was a little odd, coming right in the middle of spring term, but I always thought it was an advantage in the end, because it gave me an opportunity to

come in a sort of lower key way--rather than the beginning of the school year, you know, with all of the pomp and circumstance--and get my feet on the ground, so that by the fall, we were off and running you know, already into the faculty salary plan, and all of the academic programs.

BEAUCHAMP: And all of the budgetary changes and everything else.

GILBERTSON: Right. I mean, he hired [John Stein], his executive assistant, just two months after me, and then Pat Cavanaugh came the next year. So he was really quite prompt in getting teams together that lasted a long time. Then Don DeRosa, Pat Cavanaugh, and I all served in our posts [together for a long time--13 years]. Cavanaugh was the CFO for 13 years straight [along with DeRosa and me], which is really quite extraordinary in higher education.

BEAUCHAMP: To have that many--?

GILBERTSON: For anyone to be in an executive office for 13 years straight. But to have three of them, you know, with the same positions for that long was unusual. I think one of the key factors, and Don and I agree on this--I'll use the name Don all of the way through this interview referencing President Donald DeRosa. Don and I really thought that --reflecting on this near the end--that the continuity of leadership really was an important reason the University was able to become more successful during those years.

BEUACHAMP: Yes. That makes obvious good sense Phil. Ok, so those are the circumstances; what were your first impressions of the city, and the people, of Stockton?

GILBERTSON: Well I was all impressed, because I came out of the Midwest, and I grew up in the rural Midwest. My hometown of Sioux Falls, South Dakota, a city of about 100,000, was the largest in the state, and the whole state had less population than San Joaquin County. The change of climate, of course, was dramatic, but mostly the change in the appearance of people as you drove down the street, just the incredible diversity here of ethnic backgrounds-I found that very exciting. I could see that this city truly represented the full range of urban issues in the country, and in the world to some degree. That's what I've said over the years, that Stockton was a great place for students to learn, because it reflects so many of the challenges and issues that so many countries face, and I think that's a good thing. So to me, that was a very, very positive feature. My wife Carole and I have been saying for years that Stockton is, by far, the best place we've lived. By far the best place. So that's not the reason we're leaving Stockton now in 2015--we've loved it here. So I had a very positive view when I came, having lived mostly in smaller communities prior. To be in a in a community that truly was a city was an asset for me.

BEAUCHAMP: And at the same time--at least from our experience--it has a small town character to it.

GILBERTSON: Yes. I was going to add this: I remember so vividly, Carole and I driving just on the way to Lodi or wherever, noting that it feels in many ways like the rural Midwest.

BEAUCHAMP: Yes.

GILBERTSON: One, it's flat. And they had some of the same crops, even corn fields--

BEAUCHAMP: Yes-

GILBERTSON: --in that time. Everything wasn't vineyards back in 1996.

BEAUCHAMP: Oh boy it wasn't.

GILBERTSON: But what we really meant is that the people, too, seemed down to earth, you know, as I think more rural communities are. There's no pretention, so it was very comfortable in that respect.

BEAUCHAMP: First impressions of Pacific on that initial visit?

GILBERTSON: Well I'll tell you. Obviously the beautiful campus is striking, there's no question about that, even though at the time there were Quonset huts right in the center of campus and so on, still: it was by far the most beautiful campus we had an opportunity to serve. But most importantly, as we interacted with the faculty and staff, one of my apprehensions was relieved quickly, and that was this: I had been Dean at Valparaiso and at smaller liberal arts colleges prior to that, where in a smaller community there really is a human connection with people, and respect for people in a friendly way. There's not the kind of harshness that you hear about in large public universities you know...

BEAUCHAMP: Sure, Sure.

GILBERTSON: The edginess, the in-fighting, the vindictiveness, and so on. Well, it wasn't here at Pacific. I had thought, well maybe, with all of these professional schools, and with the University struggling at the time, that there would be a tremendous amount of interpersonal tension. And I didn't find that at all--I mean, I found the values here to be parallel to those at Valparaiso University, which made it a point to seek faculty who had values of social justice and broader social views that built on compassion, and empathy, and so on. Well, I mean it was every bit the same here. Every bit. And I think the California locale had something to do with that.

BEAUCHAMP: Certainly.

GILBERTSON: Northern California does this well, particularly in terms of social values and the whole gay issue for example, all of that--so a much healthier atmosphere--it was energizing for us, absolutely, and has been throughout.

BEAUCHAMP: Was there someone at Pacific who was especially helpful in your initial orientation to the University?

GILBERTSON: The biggest help was Don--

BEAUCHAMP: Of course--

GILBERTSON: He had been a Provost; he was very collaborative, open with me right from the start, always probing questions, never trying to trump me... Never trying to surprise me in any way; I mean just a very mature person. So that was tremendously helpful, and I avoided some real stumbles in those early years especially, because he advised a different course to deal with an issue, so I learned a lot from him. But I have to say, [my executive assistant] Debbie Miller in my office, and [administrative assistant] Kitty Gilbert, the two staff people in the office, who had been there a long time, they knew the ropes, how things operated in the University, and to have a good assistant who was a seasoned pro really made a difference.

BEAUCHAMP: Yes. Yes. Jackie Smith was the same in the [College] Dean's Office.

GILBERTSON: Yes.

BEAUCHAMP: She knew everything.

GILBERTSON: Yes. I got along with almost everybody on campus [through their help], and so you know, it just opened doors and got me to the right door in those early years. There were two other aids for my orientation: all of the programs and schools had an orientation for us, Don and me together, and it was very, very helpful. They were thorough and impressive. The other was the formation of a council of deans. There was an informal gathering of the deans, but I formalized it, and we met every week for roughly three hours, and so that was a strong orientation for me--all of the deans who had been serving--most of them--for some while. I quickly knew that some needed to be replaced, and that was one of my early tasks, to make sure that happened, in two, three or four cases. It took a while, but that was, in a sense, a way of getting oriented that was very helpful for me. I know that some version of that Council of Deans continues, and it's important, because that's how you build a common sense of vision and mission: you have the deans together hammering out perspectives on things, sharing ideas, sharing different view points, and then, not necessarily coming to some kind of unanimous agreement, but at least, sharing a mutual understanding, and so their frame of reference in

their work then is much larger, it's University wide. They're taking more into account, and that was an important part of what we were trying to do.

BEAUCHAMP: Describe the changes you observed in the curriculum during the years you worked at Pacific. Well, that's a lot of years and a lot of changes.

GILBERTSON: Yes, it changed so much.

BEAUCHAMP: What were some--yes, way too many individual changes. Is there any global sort of overarching...

GILBERTSON: Well, let me tell you some of the big ones. My first hire was [Phil Oppenheimer] to be Dean of the School of Pharmacy. Even though I had two petitions from the [school's] faculty--a majority of the faculty--two petitions during the search to request that I appoint the Interim Dean who was there, so we overrode the judgment of the faculty on that, but with great relief, they [school faculty] quickly changed their minds.

BEAUCHAMP: They found out he was a real winner--

GILBERTSON: One of our very best deans is still Dean of the [pharmacy and health sciences] School. And he insisted, almost from the start, that the school revise its curriculum in a major way. It really had an old fashioned curriculum for Pharmacy--

BEAUCHAMP: Oh man, that's right--

GILBERTSON: I can't get into details, but that was huge, because it was a school wide change, and it improved the school immensely. Another, of course, was in [undergraduate] General Education. I mean there was massive effort to make revisions [that was accomplished], and then there was a second follow-up, one related to university learning outcomes [for all the schools and college], which I found very exciting. So those were two additional, broader ones. But the School of Education has changed their curriculum; the Dental School has changed their curriculum.

The Engineering School also streamlined their curriculum, but I think the most important change in the Engineering School, in my years, was that it became much more linked to the industry, to the practice of engineering. It was peculiar, because they had had Dean Heybourne, the greatest engineering dean [in the history] of the school, introduce the Cooperative Education [program requirement], which basically is work-based learning, where roughly one year out of students' 5 years is spent in the workplace, and often leads to their first professional opportunity upon graduation. So that was in place for all students, but curiously, the faculty really had little to no relationship with those firms, or with engineers in the public sector or whatever, and so, when the new Dean [was appointed], Dean Jain, who was a Dean for about a

dozen years, that was the challenge he took on, and did so successfully over time. It was a big change for that school, a very important advancement [to link the school closely to professional practice]. So I view Engineering as one of the really transformed schools. Another was Physical Therapy--they did a major curriculum revision, and so that program, that was struggling in 1996, by the early 2000's was flourishing, and has been just outstanding. So there are many examples, but that's enough!

BEAUCHAMP: What was your perception of your task to enhance the educational or academic programs in this University, and what were the primary challenges? What did you see as your mission?

GILBERTSON: Well, there were two things, maybe more than two, but there were two that were evident to me that came as much from the Board of Regents as they came from the President, and that was [that] we had to develop an effective planning process linking planning and budget in some fashion. That was broken, it needed repair, and so that was a key thing. Now, the second thing was that we had to bite the bullet and conduct an [comprehensive] academic program review. It had been on the agenda for years, and it had never really been done. There was [WASC regional] accreditation pressure, from 1994 or earlier 1990's, on that issue, once the other controversies were--

BEAUCHAMP: The governing stuff--

GILBERTSON: --were dealt with. That was something that Pacific hadn't responded to, as an accreditation requirement. But also, the sense that what I called "house cleaning" needed to be done: that there were too many weak academic [degree] programs, particularly masters programs that enrolled a handful of students. So the Board said you've got to get that done, the planning and the program review. And the third thing they said was, you've got to do something about faculty salaries. This was a burden on the University--they [the regents] knew the complaints, year after year, and there was no effective way to address it. The Faculty Compensation Committee--Ken you were probably on it--

BEAUCHAMP: Oh yes, absolutely--

GILBERTSON: There was a tendency, because there was so much animosity on the campus, to grand stand a bit by the committee, and so the committee would make some--in my words of course--"wild" demands, about raising salaries 10% or whatever, and then of course they wouldn't get anywhere--they didn't expect action, but this was a way of saying "this needs attention." So what DeRosa did then, he appointed me, he said you're going to Chair the Planning Committee, so you have to get that organized; you're going to Chair the Faculty Salary Plan; and you're going to conduct the Program Review.

BEAUCHAMP: That's what Chief Academic Officer means!

GILBERTSON: Yes. It is no wonder then that, I think it was John Williams, the English prof, who first coined the term "ever-ready bunny" [a popular TV cartoon ad for batteries] for me, because he said we always see you scurrying around campus, you're always in a non-stop hurry! And that's why, because there was a lot to do.

BEAUCHAMP: Yes, sure was.

GILBERTSON: But we were successful, in my judgment, in all three of those. Less so probably in Program Review, but by setting a multi-year strategic plan and a salary plan, and the President's resolve on this, and [finance vice president] Cavanaugh's discipline handling the budget, we were able to build confidence that we can do this--

BEAUCHAMP: We would do this, yes--

GILBERTSON: So we did that one [salary] plan, and then it was the pension contribution, to increase the University contribution [to employee pensions from 7-1/2% to 10% over several years]. And then another [three-year] salary plan, and so that worked. The planning process was extensive, really. The President and the University created the Institutional Priorities Committee. That's what Don wanted it called, so that's what we called it. It could have been called Planning and Budget, but that's ok, and we met hundreds of hours. You know, one of the unfortunate things for the University is that I have tremendous stamina for meetings! So we set a planning process in place that included consultation with all of the constituencies, and the first "MVP," as we called it, a Mission Vision and Priorities Statement, was published and disseminated. I practically memorized it and carried it [the pamphlet] around all the time, always preaching that we had to focus on priorities. So [the planning process] was successful. The Academic Program Review was completed in a year [1996-7]. It was painful, it was awkward, and it was disillusioning for a lot of faculty. It took a lot of time.

BEAUCHAMP: Yes--

GILBERTSON: But in the end, we did cull out a lot of programs that I think helped the University, and we were able to identify some investments that needed to be made, and we did that, even if modestly. But I understand of course all the complaints about it [Academic Program Review], and that will never end, I don't believe. Any kind of Program Review is going to have an undertow of resentment, because you know, it's bureaucratic: you've got to fill out reports and blah blah blah, and probably never get quite what you want for your program in the end, so I understand that. But these big initiatives were by and large, in my judgment, successful enterprises, and then the other big thing for me was the ability to be able to get some movement on changing the deanships.

We desperately needed a new dean in the School of International Studies, and before 2000, hired Margee Ensign, who I thought was a very powerful leader in so many ways. We were able to do so in Engineering. Then we got a resignation in the School of Education, so that process of change began. And of course, Pharmacy was the first one. Don always said the deans are the engines that drive change for quality and improvement, and growth. He said that over and over again through the first year. He thought it was so important we get good deans, and so when we conducted dean searches, I was in there, chapter and verse, into the weeds. And Don, in the end when we got to the finalists, was also [very involved]--far more than most presidents. I know I was more involved than most provosts would have been, because we tended to have two or three or four [searches] going on at one time, and it took a lot of time. The point is you work as hard as you can at it because it's so important, it's so important. I don't know how the faculty feels about that over the last 15 years or so, but to me and to Don, it was critical for our success that we made the changes that we did and brought in the talent that we did. Most of it stuck. I mean, Oppenheimer's still here, Ravi Jain recently retired, Margee not so many years ago. Most of these people were here anywhere from 8 to 15 years. That's some long deanships. I suppose there were exceptions; [the school of] education had problems getting the right match there.

BEAUCHAMP: But you did. I mean, eventually.

GILBERTSON: Eventually, eventually we did. Eventually we got the best [dean] we've ever had.

BEAUCHAMP: No question about that.

GILBERTSON: But she [Lynn Beck] didn't come until 2005. We had some good interim deans there, but a couple of bad choices. What was I going to say about another school...? Oh, the College, of course - making the very difficult decision not to renew Benedetti's appointment when I knew that the faculty in the College had such respect for him and trust, and he is a magnificent person. That was difficult, especially then, with the succession of "temporary" college deans. I mean we didn't plan them to be temporary.

BEAUCHAMP: But they were.

GILBERTSON: But [Gary] Miller, who comes in--first of course we had an interim dean with Bob Cox, then people had to get used to that. And then Miller coming in--I think he stayed maybe a third year or was it four, I'm not sure. It wasn't the five that we asked for, I tell you. So that was disappointing, and then his successor the same [a short tenure then resignation]. That's hard on a faculty to have that turnover. It's not so unusual in higher education, but at Pacific it is. It's made it more difficult for the college faculty. Enough talk about that. My point, Ken, here was

that of the big changes I was involved with --program review, faculty salary plan, the planning process-- that the change of deans was a very critical part of it, and then using that leadership team [of deans] as I did heavily.

BEAUCHAMP: Okay, administration. Who reported to you initially and then how did you change that over time?

GILBERTSON: Well it's always been a broad assignment because of the nine schools, so you've got automatically nine deans and then you've got the Dean of the Library. We invented of course the Director of Technology, a new position that I placed on the Deans' Council. Cavanaugh and I had asked the president to make that position a vice presidential position and place it in the cabinet. We thought it was that important. DeRosa would not hear of it, and he never did change the composition of the cabinet. It was always limited to those four vice presidents [provost, CFO, student life, and development/advancement] and his executive assistant, and that was it. So I thought, well it's far too important to [the technology head] just sitting out there, so that position was added to the dean's council, and it [technology] took a lot of my time. I think in all of my years, the one unit that devoured maybe more time than any other was technology. It was so difficult, so demanding, and so frustrating for me and for everyone else.

BEAUCHAMP: For everybody.

GILBERTSON: Yes. It's just always been a challenge, and I find it interesting that since I've retired that they've continued....

BEAUCHAMP: It's still a challenge.

GILBERTSON: It's so hard to get the right kind of people in technology leadership positions, and then the resources are always short on that. I mean, technology is a black hole in terms of resources.

BEAUCHAMP: Yes.

GILBERTSON: That's been a real challenge, but I did some other things too that to me--I'm going to use this term, but I'm using it casually -- "modernize" the academic operations. I mean most universities had some formal way of addressing student diversity, student-faculty ethnic diversity and gender diversity, but we didn't have [coordinated leadership for it]. So I created an assistant provost position that focused on that and then because the person in the position was interested in administration, adding assignments to her portfolio to give her broader...

BEAUCHAMP: More experience?

GILBERTSON: More experience and so on. That worked out successfully because she became a provost and now is a college president [Heather Mayne Knight]. But there were other positions as well-- I ended having twenty-two direct reports. One key was that we didn't have any budget officer to coordinate the [academic] budget process. There was a lot of unevenness in terms of the skills and experience of the administrative assistants within the schools. It was frustrating for the dean, so we created an academic budget officer. We put her on the Council of Deans because it was important for her to track things, and we began to do budget studies and analysis, what we called "cost allocation" analysis, for each of the schools to determine [which schools] were really highly dependent on the university for its resources and which ones were producing, through their student enrollments, producing income. I remember when we first came out with that [report], as flawed as it was, it was so evident that the business school, which always thought it was the cash cow of the campus, was not at all – and still isn't, still isn't. It's what we call a "subvented" school, a dependent school; it can pay for its direct operations, salary and so forth, but it can't pay for the overhead.

BEAUCHAMP: Yes, its percent of overhead.

GILBERTSON: Right, which is sizable, it was about 50%.

BEAUCHAMP: Wow.

GILBERTSON: As we analyzed it, analyzing all of the resources of the university by school, based on the proportion of enrollment, we developed formulas. Well, all of this gave us analytical tools, so then of course we needed an institutional research office.

BEAUCHAMP: Absolutely.

GILBERTSON: Which was, at the time when I came, here was Lee Fennel...

BEAUCHAMP: Lee Fennel doing eight jobs.

GILBERTSON: He was the acting academic vice president. He was the registrar, he was the head of technology, and he was doing [institutional] research at the back of his office.

BEAUCHAMP: It was ridiculous, just ridiculous.

GILBERTSON: So "modernizing," meaning that most universities had these in place, particularly ones as robust as Pacific, with its enrollment then around 5,000 to 5,500 students and nine schools--you need that. But of course, we did have to take criticism from faculty who felt that their programs were understaffed and here I was adding...

BEAUCHAMP: Administrative positions, yes.

GILBERTSON: around 6 to 8 positions over time.

BEAUCHAMP: Yes.

GILBERTSON: But you just have to do, nonetheless, what in your best judgment needs to be done to make the university work. In the end it takes that [level of administrative, and I still believe it. So I don't have any regrets for making those decisions, Ken. They were the right decisions in my judgment. I'd make them again. I'm trying to think what other matters we addressed [by adding administrative leadership], but I think I've hit on the big ones.

BEAUCHAMP: In the process, you've added to your direct reports. It piled up. So what'd you do about that?

GILBERTSON: Yes, so in the end I did have 22 [direct reports], and it was impossible. I mean it was embarrassing to admit it to CEOs of companies and businesses and so on, because they thought I was crazy.

BEAUCHAMP: It's ridiculous.

GILBERTSON: And so about half way through my tenure, we brought in a consultant who had been the president of a couple of universities, who spent several days interviewing people and analyzing what could be done and came with his recommendations. I remember sitting with Don in his office, going over these recommendations, and talking them over at length about what it would mean. One, for example, was to place admissions and financial aid under the student life vice president. To give that major responsibility to the vice president for student life, which is fairly common in public universities and in community colleges. But Don just said, "You know, there's no way I'm willing to do that. It's got to be in the academic sector because the issue of academic quality is always going to be there..."

BEAUCHAMP: Yes, critical.

GILBERTSON: "...and we're trying to improve it. We've got to track it and keep it accountable." And of course we were making investments in admission and financial aid, and so that did require a lot of my time, a lot of my time. The consultant recommended a vice provost to which assistant provost would report.

BEAUCHAMP: Some kind of hierarchical system.

GILBERTSON: Particularly those who were not in charge of a school, all of those positions should report to a vice provost. The question was, and then would we have to add a position of vice provost? [So we did not make any major changes in reporting.]

BEAUCHAMP: Well, you loaded everybody with more work, that's what you did.

(Laughter)

GILBERTSON: I guess, I guess.

BEAUCHAMP: I know that.

(Laughter)

GILBERTSON: I guess I tried to push work out of the office, but it really wasn't particularly successful. When Maria came, Maria Pallavicini, my successor, that was one thing I recommended to her. If right from the start you create a vice provost position and have these other assistant provosts reporting to it, I think in the long run, this will make the [provost] job survivable.

BEAUCHAMP: So you never really solved that problem?

GILBERTSON: I didn't, no. I just rode it out, rode it out in the end.

BEAUCHAMP: Lived with it.

GILBERTSON: I wish we had addressed it sooner and had taken on that approach, having some kind of Vice Provost to which these other important entities would report--whether technology or diversity or planning and so on--because you can't have the dean of a school reporting to a vice provost, and probably not the library either. The interesting thing was, Ken, that in preparation for the consultant, I discovered that so many of our comparable, smaller comprehensive private universities were doing exactly the same [many positions directly reporting to the provost].

BEAUCHAMP: Yes, key – that's a key point.

GILBERTSON: Yes. But part of it was, Ken, my administrative style. I mean any dean would tell you this: "Why do I need to meet with the Provost every week or every other week?" [eventually some monthly] I wanted to keep them in touch with the conversation of what's going on with the university, and making sure that their plans and initiatives meshed with what's going on in other schools, and making connections and so on. It wasn't finally that I wanted to monitor their work. It was to build a university, and that takes consultation, I think. But they would say that we had far too many meetings. Some of them didn't like it at all. But it allowed us, for example, with very difficult faculty personnel matters, to track our progress on those, to try to get them resolved. We did resolve them all, but it took a lot of time and steady attention to it. Then finally, if you've got a plan - a game plan, a university plan – for the schools to try to match up their priorities with the university's priorities, who is the person that's

tracking that? Well it's got to be the provost. So you've got to make sure they're keeping on track. "Are you attending to this--because this is a priority? We need your help on it."

BEAUCHAMP: You're clear about communication with the administrative team. How about with the rest of the University community?

GILBERTSON: I never felt that either Don or I was a particularly good communicator with the larger University community.

BEAUCHAMP: Don, well, Don definitely was not, in my opinion.

GILBERTSON: I think that faculty and staff need an administrator who has a presence. That is, a personal presence, so the whole notion of "management by walking around"--which is the term used in leadership books and so on -- was always a failing of mine. I failed at it as a dean, in my prior position, criticized by the faculty for it. And I failed at it at Pacific. Although I felt I had a better reason -- because the job was so massive. But, I missed that. I mean I think it was unfortunate. I did try to set up every month a meeting with [an academic] department -- the physical therapy department, the physics department; you name it -- across the campus, kind of randomly. I never made it around to every one, I don't think. I tried to do that particularly with the college and it was helpful, it was helpful, to have lunch and just talk about what's going on with them and hearing about faculty research, picking up ideas to follow up on. But I have to admit, that there were many days when I was grateful that I didn't have to get out of the office because I knew if I did, I would have three more things to do.

BEAUCHAMP: When you got back.

GILBERTSON: Right and I just didn't need that. But that's of course exactly why people want and deserve, I think, to have some level of supervision come on site to see what it's like in the trenches. I know a number of faculties resented the fact that I didn't teach a class regularly.

BEAUCHAMP: That's an unfair criticism, personally I think.

GILBERTSON: Well, but there are Provosts that do it. I understand. Some do it because they just aren't willing to give it up, but they typically will select a senior or graduate seminar that meets one evening [a week].

BEAUCHAMP: Right, small.

GILBERTSON: Some [choice course] that a faculty member in the department doesn't get. And I thought, well the only right thing for me to do would be to teach freshman English, and I knew what time that took. As an early administrator, I discovered that I would cheat the students. I wouldn't get to their papers returned because there was some administrative issue that

became more urgent. So I just decided I could not do that. At a position like this, you have to discipline yourself to accept a lot of criticism for decisions that you make, even in the use of your time, and live with it, to get the job done.

BEAUCHAMP: The only legitimacy to that criticism, for me, is it robs you, as an administrator, the opportunity to come to know the students and the student population.

GILBERTSON: Yes, that's right.

BEAUCHAMP: That's what you missed.

GILBERTSON: That is exactly right, Ken, yes. Interacting with a few student leaders, that's not the same, it's not the same, I know. That's the failing of that. It's unfortunate, yes right. I think that I could have seen a person of a different temperament, who had a different administrative style [to continue to teach], but not with my insistence on the side of macro-micro engagement with the job and the university. I mean everyone marveled at how much I knew about every program and every department and what they were doing and so on. I did know a lot more than most provosts do because that's what I spent my time doing. I was a progressive teacher who left teaching when I was at my best, and I remember the feeling of that interaction with students, and I don't forget those encounters. But the fact is that over time, the generational changes among students are significant. Then that's what you lose touch with.

BEAUCHAMP: That's what you miss.

GILBERTSON: Yes, so that was, no question, a sacrifice. But I always said that my job was, as a dean, to empower faculty to empower students in their learning. Then as a provost it was to empower the dean to empower the faculty. I always thought of the administration as an inverted pyramid. The president is at the bottom [of the pyramid], then the provost is next. All these people you're reporting to, you're reporting to your deans who report to their faculties, who report to their student and staff and so on. That's who we serve, that's who we serve. Then there's an ethical obligation for me to figure how I can serve every single one of those deans, each with their quirky personalities and priorities and strengths and limitations –figuring out how I could be helpful to them. That to me was the job. It takes time, you've got to get to know the people; you have to figure out how they operate.

BEAUCHAMP: Okay, governance structure. What did you encounter, what was good about that, what was not so good?

GILBERTSON: Well of course Don and I came at an odd time when the governance structure was broken - not just not working well, it was really broken. There wasn't really a clear statement of the roles of the board [of regents] and the president and the faculty and so on. Hammering that

out in those early years was a real learning experience for me. I hadn't reflected that much on it in my prior position. I learned a lot about governance. One of the things that I learned was how to figure out how to engage the faculty in the direction of the university in helpful ways. I think that Don and I both had difficulty in the early years on this governance issue because the expectations of faculty – and here I'm generalizing – were to be so involved that it seemed inappropriate. Based on his prior experience and my prior experience and what we knew about higher education leadership and so on, the role of the faculty here hadn't been adequately defined in a way that was a reasonable compromise of faculty involvement, without having them finally with veto power on important decisions--that [took into account] the president's corporate responsibility to the regents that couldn't be jeopardized. I know even some of the deans disagreed with us on that score.

BEAUCHAMP: Well it had a great deal to do with the history of the prior 20 years of problems. Faculty didn't set out to spend all their time on governance in the first place. They were filling holes.

GILBERTSON: That's right. I suppose I did conclude, Ken that the impact and influences of [business professor] Sid Turoff did perhaps pull or push the faculty governance issues a little farther along than maybe would have happened otherwise. I sure wish I had known him - a very powerful person in so many ways, positively. But as a union labor organizer, there was always a little bit of union mentality [in his actions].

BEAUCHAMP: Sure, of course there was.

GILBERTSON: But given the leadership at that time--that was in the latter days of McCaffrey's tenure I think...

BEAUCHAMP: Well early and later.

GILBERTSON: Early and late, there was so much equivocation [by the president and the administration]. It must have been really frustrating. Well, I felt that once the new governance document was adopted [in 1997] and we got in step with things, that things worked pretty well. The staff issue came up after a couple years, and Don is quick to say that he didn't see it coming. He didn't realize that the staff felt excluded and marginalized.

BEAUCHAMP: Marginalized, correct.

GILBERTSON: So there was a unionization effort [by the staff]. One of the leaders was one of my administrative assistants, so that was a little awkward. It was awkward, but not tense because she's a wonderful person. But in the end, good came with it, because they [the staff] were granted a more thoughtful opportunity to voice their views...

BEAUCHAMP: A place at the table.

GILBERTSON: ...and organize as a staff council. Yes, that's what they wanted – was to have an opportunity to have some meaningful interaction on staff issues. It'd just been neglected. I thought we made a lot of headway on that. I know there's always going to be chafing points on the issue of governance, on who is responsible for what.

BEAUCHAMP: Sure.

GILBERTSON: Frankly, Ken, there were many times, on modest decisions, where I probably should have consulted with executive boards, say of Academic Council, but I just went ahead with the decisions without thinking about it. There were times when Don would tell me, "Phil, you need to talk with the [Academic Council] exec board about this."

BEAUCHAMP: Oh really?

GILBERTSON: Yes, he helped me figure out what the right balance was for consultation and not. I mean you have to make many decisions--hundreds a day you're making, but to make better judgments about that, that's one of the things I learned from him. I became better at it. I was surprised when I first arrived [on the job], Ken, because the chair of the Academic Council at Pacific was an exceedingly important position--it had evolved to become that over these difficult years, to have a point person who really championed the faculty concerns. That was not my experience at any of my prior institutions [to have a faculty chair with such an important role]. So the notion that I would have weekly meetings with the faculty chair, I thought, "Well, yeah that's a good idea I guess." So I welcomed it, but I didn't know how it would go or what it would amount to, and of course quickly discovered how important it was, once I discovered especially how important the role was for the faculty. It's really an ombudsman role, a kind of lightning rod. So many of those council chairs with whom I worked, you know, they were just quite overwhelmed by the job. It was very good for me to be in touch. I had, honestly Ken, I had great faculty leaders to work with, excepting one. Only one, in fourteen years, did I feel never quite understood my job and his job. But everyone else--some were not as strong as others, but they approached it with sincerity and never tried to abuse the position in some way to get some personal favors or whatever. It was impressive.

BEAUCHAMP: Okay, people. Interesting question: Who were the individuals at Pacific who were most memorable and why? I found that a difficult question.

GILBERTSON: Yes, well because I can say, "all the toughest personnel cases of the faculty"-- I remember those!

BEAUCHAMP: The tough personnel problems.

GILBERTSON: [Seriously,] let me mention some names, but when I mention them then, I am embarrassed because of course there are so many others. I mentioned the council chairs, and so all of those people were really important, excepting the one that didn't work out. In the academic program review--in that first year, which was particularly difficult in that nobody knew me and I didn't know anybody and so on-- the role that [engineering professor] Louise Stark played, was a godsend. She was diplomatic, she was tough, she kept things on track, and she devoted endless hours to making that process work. [Education professor] Peg Langer was the [faculty/Academic Council] chair, I think, that first year. Peg was a part of that team too, that made sure that we were going to get this done, even though there were derailment efforts right and left. Louise has been one of those stellar people all the way through. In governance, it was Roland di Franco, the math prof, who understood what we were trying to do. I thought he worked effectively with regents without abdicating his sense of responsibility as the faculty voice and coming out of forthrightly to make sure the faculty had a significant presence in that [governance] document, finding the right compromises along the way. And then really being the key architect of the whole faculty handbook revision, which sounds boring and irrelevant, but the fact of the matter is that they're the rules by which we operate in fundamental ways. He [diFranco] was heroic to me in that, and I was so pleased we dedicated the handbook to him. I thought, "Irreplaceable, irreplaceable."

For me, the relationship between the academic division and the student life division was important. I grew up in small colleges, and I could see how important it was to link the residential life of students--the co curricular life of students with the academic life. I could see it in my own children in their college years. I remembered so indelibly how important co-curricular life was to the intellectual, personal, and social development, in every way, of my two children. So the opportunity to work with [vice president for student life] Judy Chambers closely and her trust in me was very important early on. I didn't realize how she was the one who modernized student life for Pacific. We really were behind some years because [president] Burns didn't care a diddly about it. He didn't understand it. [President] McCaffrey did, and she and he really professionalized that operation, so her best years were in the 70s', 80s', 90s'. And then having the gift of Griego come in [to the position of student life vice president], Elizabeth Griego, here's another national leader in her field, as Judy was, NASPA national president. Extraordinary -- we have had two national presidents from Pacific-- just astonishing. Elizabeth was wonderful to work with, loads of talent, and in particular understood the academic enterprise so much better than anyone in that field because of her work with WASC [the regional accrediting association]. [Finance vice president] Pat Cavanaugh was always a dear friend, and still is, as the CFO, but we "battled" often. We were continually crafting and re-crafting that relationship to make sure that it was solid. Building trust was really important. I always said to Don and others publicly that he [Cavanaugh] was the best hire that Don ever made. That if he hadn't had a CFO with Pat's capabilities -- his liberal arts background, his legal

background, his acute, sharpness of mind - we never could have accomplished what we accomplished. I mean, to me he was just so critical, so critical. I judge him to be the best CFO Pacific has ever had.

BEAUCHAMP: Sure.

GILBERTSON: I looked at the records of those earlier ones and they're famous people, but their achievements in their area of specific responsibility didn't match... Another person, then I'll quit for now – because I could go on and on – is Art Dugoni, the Dean of the dental school. I could quickly see that this fellow was an extraordinary human being, and I ended my career saying the same thing I did in the first or second year: “This is the most extraordinary educator I have ever met.” And I still feel that way. I understand his limitations and so on, but I'll tell you again and again and again, his performance on all of the areas a dean is responsible for, was always 110%. So early on, I asked him if he would help mentor the deans. Then he says, “Oh, come on Phil, that's not going to happen at Pacific. These deans, frankly, they resent my success.” I said, “Art, that may be true, it may have been true in the past, but it's not going to be true.” I said, “We need you to mentor these deans to learn how to do their jobs.” Yes. So the first thing I did when I hired Phil Oppenheimer was to take him over to the Dental school for a long day's visit – to get acquainted with Art, but also to show him [Oppenheimer] what a model school can look like. It was particularly easy because Pharmacy is a parallel [health profession]. The surprise was that when I hired Elizabeth Parker to be Dean of the Law school, she immediately gravitated to Art. She could see the same thing. At what other university would you have a Dean of a dental school providing leadership and faculty development at a law school? They wouldn't accept somebody like that, but because of Art and Elizabeth – credit to both of them – it worked. Art is an extraordinary, extraordinary leader. I still just stand in awe of what he was able to accomplish. But he always said, “Phil, there's blood on the floor. There's blood on the floor.” He said, “How many firings and reprimands and insurances did I have with my faculty to turn them around and begin to support their students. I changed the whole culture of dental education.” That's what he was about. And fundraising--the deans stood in awe of his fundraising around 2000, and he said, “Not even ten years ago I was there where you guys are, way down there. This isn't magic guys.” Now, his magical personality, his fantastic memory - all of these things - his sociability, were unusual gifts. I know there are others who feel that I've exaggerated his talents and role, and I think one might have been Don DeRosa. I think DeRosa never felt the same rapport with Art. I always wondered if those two Italians might not be quietly in competition with one another.

BEAUCHAMP: Not implausible, no.

GILBERTSON: But it didn't matter to me, and so I developed quite a close relationship with Art, surprisingly, given the distance [from the Stockton campus to the San Francisco dental school]

and all the challenges I had. [I could, fortunately, [almost] ignore the dental school for years, in those early years. We "ignored" in the sense of having to...

BEAUCHAMP: It's not a problem that needed to be solved, yes.

GILBERTSON: ...yes, help with problems, because they solved their problems pretty much. I mean it wasn't universally true, but over the years we got more involved. There are many fantastic leaders at Pacific - at every level. The people that I tend to spend time with were people who had some kind of leadership role – a committee chair or this or that or whatever. If we were to talk about the faculty [in their roles as professors], who are the outstanding faculty members, then that's a different question. There, it isn't that I knew them so well, but when you get a sense of what William Chan is doing in the Pharmacy school, what [history professor] Ken Albala does, what [music education professor] Ruth Brittin does in the Conservatory of Music, and so on. . . You learn these things through tenure review, promotion review, and so on. . . Even though my personal interaction with them isn't there like it is with other leaders, you know who the standouts are, at least many of them – not all of them. I mean [law professor] Steve McCaffrey is a giant, giant faculty member at this University. To me, he's the most outstanding in the sense of having an impact on the world. So I mean I don't think we have anyone quite comparable to that at the law school. So just to clarify that issue of [influential] people, I mentioned it had to do with the advancement of the university as a whole through their leadership. Of course without those stellar faculties, there wouldn't be anything to advance. It's important to make that distinction. When you've been a rank and file faculty member, as I was for 15 years, you don't forget the steady relentless demands of that job. I never presumed that my job as provost was the "hardest job in the university" as everybody always says--that's what they say in higher education. The provost has the toughest job in the university.

BEAUCHAMP: Sure. Yes, I understand that.

GILBERTSON: But the fact is, I know how demanding it is to be a damn good English Prof; it's hard work and takes a lot of extra hours. It's unrelenting. That issue of who does the work--I mean come on, everybody does the work.

BEAUCHAMP: That's to some extent comparing apples and oranges. The nature of the work is different.

GILBERTSON: Yes.

BEAUCHAMP: Alright, we've got this long list about how we describe these groups. You've done a good chunk of it already.

GILBERTSON: These are quick statements about the campus groups. Regarding students, I'm so pleased with three things that happened during my 15 years. We increased the quality of the students – academic quality. They probably still need as much remedial education as they did in the past because of the public schools, but I know that in most programs, their academic capability has improved, and we've also improved the quantity, which I always thought was important. It bothered me more than it did any other cabinet member – that we had excess [enrollment] capacity in our academic programs, almost all of them, and that's dogged me to the end--we had the capacity with too many classes that were too small, too many programs with too few students. A little sidebar, that also bugged me to the end: the fact that we couldn't get our freshmen to sophomore retention up to 90%.

BEAUCHAMP: Yes.

GILBERTSON: Given our [academic] profile, I thought we should be at 90%. We started at 82%, we got it to 87%, even above, but we never got it to 90, and that bugged me. Overall, though, the quality and quantity and the diversity of students--I'm very proud of that profile. The faculty also, the increase in quality and diversity, and also in quantity - that increased over time. I thought the administrative staff as well increased in quality and diversity--and probably in quantity, yes.

BEAUCHAMP: Oh definitely in quantity.

GILBERTSON: What impressed me about the staff was that the staff on each of the three campuses had a very strong sense of identity, of ownership, and community. I didn't know what to expect, especially on the other two campuses, but that was one thing that I was so proud of – certainly not because of my doing, the commonality [of this dedication to mission and loyalty to the institution] helped us a lot in terms of the [public] institutional identity. We did have to get the law school to focus more on student learning and more on accountability and so on, and to become more student-centered basically. To change it from the Gordon Schaber years where it was known as a boot-camp, threatening environment where sometimes half the students were flunked out. That may have worked in those [earlier] days, but it doesn't work in these times. We had to change that culture and we did. It took a long time, but we changed it. But in terms of the staff, that camaraderie was there and it was gratifying.

BEAUCHAMP: And the focus on the students.

GILBERTSON: And the focus on the students, you're right.

BEAUCHAMP: And the staff?

GILBERTSON: Yes, and how important the staff people are in student retention and development. I knew that because I'd seen it so many times. Any administrative assistant is a critical factor often for--

BEAUCHAMP: Helping the kids.

GILBERTSON: Yes. The regents also increased in quality and especially in engagement. Now I think they're more engaged than ever. One of the themes in my history of the university is the long march of the regents from neglect and limited competence to becoming truly the leaders of the university as they are now. Today I think the most, under President Eibeck, of any...

BEAUCHAMP: Progression that had started before, actually Atchley started it, I thought.

GILBERTSON: Yes, yes exactly right. He did, yes. He started it. I think that each of the presidents made some progress on it, but the most progress [to strengthen the Board] was actually from the late 80s time, yes.

Alumni? The change there to me is an alumni that was basically not engaged, at least in the right ways with the university. The early [1980s-90s] alumni board and its leadership were focused on the Feather River Inn, which was a red herring if you will. It was a misplaced focus of time and energy and creativity and talent. Understandable, but it had to change and it did over time with [Alumni Director] Bill Coen and [Assistant Director] Kelly Page together as a team for ten years. It really made a huge difference, and the university's investment in that whole program to engage alumni in the priorities of the university, and its story and its saga, and where it needed to go. They've made a huge transformation from the time I came. It's very impressive. I'm so proud of the alumni association.

In terms of donors, the one conclusion I draw in the history [of the university] is that we have had one bona fide benefactor in our history. The couple, Bob and Jeannette Powell, the only true benefactors we've had [who have made a transformative gift]. We've had many generous families, led particularly by the Long family and their foundations, not only in pharmacy, but in general education, in theater, they've done a lot.

BEAUCHAMP: They've done a lot over the years.

GILBERTSON: Yes. The Eberhardt family is the other that's such a standout and continues to be and will continue to be. It's very, very impressive what they've done. To a lesser degree, the Spanos family.

BEAUCHAMP: Definitely lesser.

GILBERTSON: But it's not by any means trivial. One of the most outstanding current regents in this regard is Tony Chan, who's a pharmacy alum; his wife Virginia also an alum. She's now a regent, he just retired as a regent. They are, that couple, are the single most generous donors the university has aside from the Powells. It's extraordinary. So you add it all up and you say, "Well, where were the transformative gifts in the 19 century, for example?" Well there wasn't a single one. There wasn't a single one - whereas most other universities had some benefactor early in their history that enabled them to survive. We somehow managed to survive without it, which is extraordinary to me, that all these modest efforts, that kind of kept us going. but it is to me a theme then of our history as much as the growing up of the regents: our struggle to try to move out of poverty, and I don't feel like we're there yet.

BEAUCHAMP: No.

GILBERTSON: The Powell gift, yes it'll have a big impact, but it's going to take another major successful campaign, and just continuing to work on it. We still are a seriously underfunded university, given the range of our professional programs. It's been the single most important thing that has hampered our success, in my judgment. I know so many, many leaders say, "Well it's not the money in the end, it's the vision, it's the creativity, it's the innovation" and so on, but I'm sorry, in my judgment it's the money, it's the money. Of course then, that's why a Provost ends up focusing on issues of efficiency that the faculty get irritated about, and I understand that, but you try to figure out--when you don't have sufficient resources--how to become more efficient, and that's the issue then of "excess capacity," and trying to fill programs that are under enrolled. Never being quite able to accomplish that has been frustrating.

BEAUCHAMP: We've talked about much of the controversial issues – anything we haven't covered there?

GILBERTSON: Yes. Well thank God that the football issue was decided pretty much before I came aboard. Three months before, but then you had it up, of course, for review again in '98 that brought it all up again, and there was a lot of time and attention paid, but I think that [follow-up review] was an important thing to do because it did build more confidence that this was in fact the right decision.

BEAUCHAMP: Particularly with the board.

GILBERTSON: Yes. I guess I would say, and maybe with the athletic department - that if they couldn't have a [NCAA] 1-A program, they didn't want a program, which really surprised me. I remember being surprised there. I thought, "Well many schools like us have an I-AAA or I-AA [football program], and why not -- getting in to that Pioneer League or whatever." But I understood it. If you've got a I-A program in your other sports, it's probably not compatible. At

least that's the argument. I'm glad that that issue, fairly earlier on [in my tenure], resolved itself. It has not been a worrisome issue since. Obviously the academic program review has been sort of controversial all along, so that's one. I think we haven't talked about the faculty expectations in relation to promotion and tenure that had become problematic during the DeRosa administration because of the decisions that Don and I made on particular candidates. It seemed to happen almost every year with a candidate in particular who was denied tenure and/or promotion, a candidate who most people assumed would be approved and was not, and that's always hard, because you know that you're sending a signal to a certain group of faculty, at least in that department and probably associated departments, by making that decision. Sometimes the signal that's received or interpreted is not accurate. That is, they assume that the decision was made for "X" reasons when it was instead made for "Y" reasons.

BEAUCHAMP: Yes, you can't publicize "Y".

GILBERTSON: Exactly right. Or sometimes there's just a difference in judgment; it is a judgment call. It was difficult sometimes with departments that just, in our [DeRosa and my] judgments, did not hold up high enough expectations for themselves, even though most of the senior faculties were at that higher level. It always puzzled us that they wouldn't hold their junior faculty to as high of standards as they had for themselves. I'm generalizing here, but there was a sense of that. I know there was controversy, right to the end of course - especially that notorious case of the chemistry prof, but we won't get into that here.

BEAUCHAMP: No (laughs).

GILBERTSON: Technology, of course, was always controversial it seemed like. I liked working with the first chief information officer, Lynn Kubeck, but she didn't work well with others, so we changed out, and I stuck with Larry Fredrickson for far more years than most people thought was appropriate. I know the president felt it was inappropriate almost from the start, but I told them that the difficulty of finding a sort of ideal person [for CIO] was a huge challenge, and we were getting some things that we wouldn't get from other people. It was controversial till the end.

Of course when President DeRosa retired, there was tremendous controversy about his compensation package, and then the issue of the compensation packages for the rest of us on the cabinet, that he had used to secure our commitment to stay beyond his presidency. Some faculty members know this, though I haven't talked about it publicly, but I intended to retire two years earlier than I did. It was in 2008. I'm so glad of course I didn't, because the [national] economic collapse was happening about that time.

BEAUCHAMP: Around 2008, yes.

GILBERTSON: Of course everybody lost their shirts and their pension income. We lost about a third initially. But that was my intention, I was going to retire early in 2008 because I wanted to do other things in my life, and Don just wouldn't hear of it. Of course then what he did was to create these incentives, which was some additional pension, healthcare, etc. So when the information came out about his package, which again involved a lot of deferred compensation and so on, it just seemed inappropriate for a place like Pacific to have someone who was at the top of the [national] list practically. It seemed excessive that the Board of Regents overplayed their hand on that one. I know that some of those regents who were involved, I know they don't feel it [the president's retirement package] was inappropriate at all because I've talked to them. But I think the community did; it's just a matter of comparative view in relations to private higher education in the U.S. It was an unfortunate excess, and not the president's fault - it was the board's action. The board was so appreciative. You have to remember this was just months after the securing of this 100+ million dollar {Powell} gift, in addition to rebuilding the university, quite frankly. I feel that DeRosa really transformed the university, rebuilt it sort of all. He [DeRosa] alone deserves credit for bringing the Powells closer to Pacific in this way. Now Powell had been a regent under Atchley, but served barely one term. I'm not sure; he just didn't like regent meetings at all. Atchley told Don DeRosa to be sure to follow up with Bob Powell, and so he did, and engaged him, and spent ten years working with the Powells, and some of it on a very personal level. They both shared serious medical issues, and Don was able to secure Stanford medical services for Bob. He was very appreciative of that. So it was a close friendship, even though Bob Powell was, by that time in his life, ill and a bit reclusive. He [DeRosa] was responding to someone who he gradually understood wanted to be generous to the University of Pacific. That takes a lot of discipline, a lot of listening, careful planning, and just a lot of time. What they call stewardship, cultivation. Don deserves 100% credit for that. 100% credit for that. The board could see that and so, that on top of a very successful presidency, I mean, they wanted to do whatever they could to recognize this man. I just think they found some excessive ways of doing it.

BEAUCHAMP: A little overboard.

GILBERTSON: Yes, and so that's forgivable in the end. If you can think of other controversies that I should comment on, Ken, I'd be happy to. . .

BEAUCHAMP: The question about how much emphasis on research was always an issue for you. I know you tried multiple times to get people to recognize that, you weren't pushing the Division I, research level I program on Pacific, but people still believed that...

GILBERTSON: I know, I know they did; it's just been very frustrating Ken. I'm still not sure that that culture has matured - the culture of a fine teaching university. Frankly, you can find [small private] liberal arts colleges after liberal arts colleges that have higher expectations in

scholarship than we do. Yes, some are well endowed and so the teaching loads are adjusted and so on, but some are not, and I just never, never understood that [faculty pushback on reasonable scholarship expectations]. I understand better knowing the history of it, but it's unfortunate. I think it's gotten better, but it will have to kind of work through this generation. I remember one important faculty leader, [philosophy professor] Herb Reinelt. He was the chair, I think, of my search committee. When I interviewed Herb recently [for my university history], he talked about his work in his department, and how his mentor scolded him often for not paying attention to scholarship. He said, "My mentor was right." But that's not what you heard, probably, from Herb as a faculty member, along with the whole group of others in that era that really was quite defensive about this matter. I mean, your department [of psychology] was kind of this rare exception [in the College].

BEAUCHAMP: Was an outlier.

GILBERTSON: Maybe like chemistry, biology.

BEAUCHAMP: Biology, yes – outliers.

GILBERTSON: The three sciences were. Anyhow, enough on that. On achievements, Ken, I do want to mention a couple of other things that I think are worth mentioning, just for the record. The four-years honors program developed during that time. I don't take any credit for that, but I sure was supportive of it. We had some really strong directors - [English professor] John Smith and [Communication professor] Jon Schamber, then [English professor] Gregg Camfield was the one who really took charge on that one. I know that some colleagues had difficulty working with Gregg, but he was a very talented fellow who really did help create that four-years honors program, and then was instrumental in the Phi Beta Kappa application. So I have great respect for his time, energy, talent, and leadership.

The Center for Teaching and Learning came out of a faculty task force; I think that was when Larry Spreer was chair of the [Academic] Council and did an exceptional job. I remember feeling so positive about his role. One [of his achievements] was the creation of the Center for Teaching and Learning. Don forced the deans to fund it out of their hides. [We agreed,] that was important, so we did. I know that that's floundered a bit in the last several years, but it's getting back on its feet, I understand. There's a new director, and so it's going to move ahead. It was really unfortunate that we had to take a step backwards.

BEAUCHAMP: Yes, because Bob Cox got it off to a good start.

GILBERTSON: Yes. [Then there is] The national fellowship advisor. It's not that we have had such a stellar record of students achieving national scholarships like the Fulbright and the Truman's

and so on. But we have done better, and the fact that we're providing this support for talented students so that they can be at least competitive is a good thing to me.

BEAUCHAMP: I totally agree. I did the Rhodes thing for years, and it was just something that was added on to my load and a couple of other people's, and we didn't...

GILBERTSON: It actually takes more time than....

BEAUCHAMP: It takes time; it takes effort...

GILBERTSON: It really does, it really does. And the undergraduate research [program], I always valued it even though [Geosciences professor] Lydia Fox, who was championing undergraduate research as the lead faculty member on this, never felt that I was supportive because I didn't provide [the program] with resources for years and years. There were just too many other things. I shouldn't say years and years, because we gradually did increase support for undergraduate research, but it was only in the last couple of years that we made it a higher priority. It wasn't because I didn't recognize its importance and want to do it – I did – it was that I just felt I couldn't in relation to other priorities. There are, of course you know, others who strenuously disagreed. "You're hiring an assistant provost for diversity when we've got this problem with undergraduate research?" There you go. And you can't do everything at once when you're tight on resources. You have to sequence it, and then you have to make a judgment and then live with it. So those are some of the things that I felt good about. On the building improvement side of things, we made a little headway, but not so much.

BEAUCHAMP: You made a lot of headway.

GILBERTSON: Yes (laughter). But I'm thinking of [overall] academic facilities. It still leaves something to be desired. I think the beauty of the campus overall is much improved during these years. So I'm just thinking in terms of laboratories and library support and so on. It's still not where it needs to be – none of those things are, I don't think. We built a new biology building and it's a splendid facility in many respects, but you know it's a plain, generic box – to me it's so disappointing architecturally, when the initial plans...

BEAUCHAMP: They got cut.

GILBERTSON: They had to be cut, cut, cut. Pat Cavanaugh had to lead the way on that, and there were times when it just angered me, but I knew he had to do what he was doing, so I never, ever questioned it. But it meant that we didn't build what we should have built. I will be this blunt, Ken, and that is, that on the cabinet I think perhaps there was a lack of aesthetic sense for how a campus, maybe, should look in relation to the elegance of the original campus.

BEAUCHAMP: So a block, a plain box it is.

GILBERTSON: Even the DeRosa University center is--as impressive a building as it is--still to me architecturally leaves something to be desired. I felt that about all of our buildings during my time.

BEAUCHAMP: I understand what you're saying. But on the other hand, I looked at my history in the Quonset huts and I say, "Yes, you're right, but dang the Quonsets are gone, and we've got, in the place of it, a beautiful building – relative to what we had."

GILBERTSON: You bet, you bet, you bet. Right, and to complain about that biology facility when you see what goes on in those labs and classrooms there, oh, it's fantastic.

BEAUCHAMP: Yes, it's a great teaching facility.

GILBERTSON: It is. The engineering building - same thing; it's half the size it should be, but what goes on there is splendid. So I have no argument in the end; it's kind of a separate issue – the issue of the architecture, the aesthetic of architecture on a campus that's beautiful is a kind of separate category. If we'd had more true benefactors to the university, it, maybe, it could have been different.

BEAUCHAMP: Yes. Okay, has Pacific met your expectations?

GILBERTSON: Oh, far exceeded them, far exceeded them. I appreciate, Ken, that I'm sure many faculty wondered what in the heck the president was doing, bringing this fellow from small colleges and a mediocre academic background to Pacific when he was trying to rebuild quality and sustainability. And I can't explain it either. I suppose to some degree he himself came from a similar background [to mine] in that respect, not the fact that he was a child of immigrants in New York City and I was a country boy from Dakota, but rather our modest academic backgrounds [in terms of pedigrees]. It must have been disappointing [to some faculty], and I felt from the start that it would be disappointing for them. But you do the best you can. I had the best job in the world, and of course that's the reason I put 110% into it – because I wanted to do well, because I thought, "this is the best university I've played a part in."

It deserved to be a whole lot better than it was in 1996 when we came, and I think it's gotten a whole lot better. It's gotten a whole lot better in many respects that I didn't anticipate or I didn't know, I wasn't aware of how it could be better in certain ways. There are all kinds of little examples – the Brubeck collection, for example, is really quite a remarkable thing, and others of that sort. The transformation of individual programs that seemed just fine in 1996, if I dare mention it, like the history department, that was just fine, but it's so much better ten years later. There's probably another dozen programs like that that are so much better - that I thought were really quite good then - but they're so much better now because they have

stronger faculty, who are better teachers and better scholars – both. It’s so impressive how many really outstanding teacher-scholars there are at Pacific, and that meets our mission.

I think the other dimension I haven’t talked at all about is the international partnerships in education, [our] approach to international education, the advancements there - they haven’t stuck very well. The current administration has placed less importance on them, and so it’s disappointing, that we needed another five year of attention on that. I didn’t start my involvement in international education until about my tenth year. It was almost that late, and again it [that delay] was intentional, because I came with a deep passion for international studies from three [academic] positions earlier, but I held back on it because I thought there was so much else to do. I wish I’d started a little earlier because I think we would have matured some of those international connections better than we have.

As I’m thinking about it, Ken, if I may say, I am also disappointed that the social-emotional-intelligence initiative didn’t develop. I understand why it didn’t, but that’s too bad, and I think the global social entrepreneurship program is another program that we just needed to find more faculty, “permanent faculty,” to engage in those programs, and we didn’t have enough time to do that, or didn’t find in-depth ways to do it, so that’s too bad, but that’s a lesson. I talk about it in the history book – that [President] Burns was like this, he loved innovation, so he was always ready to try a new idea, but he didn’t provide sufficient resources and time and attention to [to sustain them]. That’s true of these programs that are going to come and go now, is that there wasn’t enough time, attention, and resources to get it done.

BEAUCHAMP: Not enough commitment.

GILBERTSON: A robust university would have hired three faculty members in “X” or “y.” If you’re going to do something innovative [like global social entrepreneurship], you have to be willing to really make a serious investment. It’s hard to know if the cluster colleges from the 1960s would still be alive today if they had had proper endowments behind them. If they each had had, say a 5-10 million dollar endowment, would they still be around? It’s possible that at least one or two of them might be. The Covell College one, for example, that lasted the longest might, might have been if we had been able to sustain scholarships for Latin American students. But that was, I think, one of the downfalls –we just ran out of money to do that.

BEAUCHAMP: I always thought Raymond had the most promise. They all suffered from the same lack of resources.

GILBERTSON: Yes, yes. The Raymond story is more complicated, too.

BEAUCHAMP: Yes.

GILBERTSON: Let me end with a comment about students. . . Since we talked earlier about how I didn't avail myself of the opportunity to really get to know students well. I know I didn't, but nonetheless I tracked student government, the student newspaper, interacted with student organizations of all sorts in small ways here and there. So I have a sense of [student culture], and through this era, there's been tremendous amounts of criticism of undergraduate students and their generations, and how selfish they are, and crassly ambitious, and so on. I know there's a certain truth to [this shift in our culture], but my experience was always perhaps a privileged one – to see these engaged students, who are purposeful; who were motivated, who were service oriented, who wanted to make the university better, who wanted to make their organizations better, who wanted to serve the community. I just saw it again, and again, and again, and so whenever people would ask me in the community about students, with a little cynical tone to [their voice], I would say no, that's not true of Pacific students. That's not true of our students--by and large, it's not true of our students, and I still believe that. Part of [this conviction] is just what I would hear, too, from faculty, because they talk about their students [in this positive way]. I think one of the reasons is that [Pacific] had that kind of student culture - and I hope we retain it - because we still enroll many students from underserved communities. When ¼ of your students are eligible for the one federal program that supports impoverished families in higher education, the Pell Grant, - ¼ of our students, that's remarkable. It's about double what St. Mary's [College] or Santa Clara [University] or all these church-related institutions that should be serving these people--we're serving them better. Part of it is, of course, our location, but it's a mission that Don always felt very sensitive to. In fact, Ken, I'd like to tell, if I may, a little story about that. Because there was a time about 6 or 7 years ago--it was when Tom Rajala was the associate provost for enrollment and we were trying to figure out a better way to improve the efficient use of our financial aid in relation to our recruitment goals, our quality in numbers. At our beck and call, he had organized a proposal from a firm that in effect we would outsource financial aid awards to. They had a very robust computer program that would enter all the data, and then in effect calculate what it would take to get any individual student to enroll. It was really a very robust and sophisticated system. Over time, Tom would make presentations and we'd talk about it in the cabinet meetings and gradually all of us got on board. We got quite excited about this – this is the modern thing to do, right? And Don would sit silently and then ask a question, and then another question, and [finally over time] we'd say, "Okay, now we've got to decide this today, Don. We're running out of time." Nope, we've got to think about this more and more. What was the issue? In the end, he finally just laid it on the table, he said, "If we do this, we won't have students from the lowest economic classes."

BEAUCHAMP: The first generation and so forth.

GILBERTSON: First generation students. He said, "We're going to lose those. They won't come. By this model, we'll get all these middle class and upper middle class students." He said, "I am not willing to make that kind of change to this institution." So we forewent that opportunity that all of the rest of cabinet had decided was a good idea. We hadn't quite seen the implications of it that even he didn't see immediately, but finally that was the issue. That was the issue – that we were going to change the economic profile of our student body. His conviction on that issue was very impressive. It brought to the floor, I guess, what we hadn't talked about so much, and that was this issue of what is our mission in regard to the Valley.

BEAUCHAMP: Diversity, yes - the diversity of the Valley.

GILBERTSON: A diversity of its students. Yes, the economic diversity is going to mean ethnic diversity. Why is it that our Latino population has gone from 10% to almost 20% now? It's partly because we've remained faithful to that mission. There's more of those students now out there, more Latinos who are high school graduates. It's been very gratifying because the ethnic diversity of our student body has been a major concern of mine from the start. We have great students and I'm proud of them. It's been such a joy to be in a comprehensive university. I learned far more than I ever brought. It's been a joy; it's been a joy, Ken – just a lifetime of joy.

BEAUCHAMP: Excellent. Good place to stop.