

Interview with W. Phillips Shively

**Interviewed by Professor Clarke A. Chambers
University of Minnesota**

**Interviewed on August 27, 1997
University of Minnesota Campus**

W. Phillips Shively - WPS
Clarke A. Chambers - CAC

CAC: Here we are again. This is Clarke Chambers, your friendly oral interviewer, and I am, this morning, with W. Phillips Shively, Phil Shively, of the Political Science Department. We had a long interview about three years ago; so, we don't have to go back pick up on that; but, anyone who is reading this or listening to it should probably go back to find out who you are, and where you came from, and what your values are, and your research agenda, and all that sort of thing. This is really the last phase of my project, to pick up events the last five, eight, nine years, the years of the [Nils] Hasselmo Administration. You came to play a central part in that. You played a central part, particularly, as provost of . . . I'm not going to rattle those off.

WPS: Arts, Sciences, and Engineering.

CAC: That cluster had been earlier with one of the vice-presidents?

WPS: Yes, vice-provost and, later, vice-president, Anne Hopkins.

CAC: That definition was made during the Hasselmo Administration or earlier . . . that cluster?

WPS: I'm almost certain . . . yes, during the Hasselmo Administration.

CAC: So, in a sense, when these provostial posts were made in the professional schools, the one that you directed and, then, the Health Sciences, whatever that was called . . .

WPS: The Academic Health Center.

CAC: Yours had a defined constituency by recent history?

WPS: Yes and no. It had a defined history. At the point, in 1994, when Nils was thinking of setting up the provostial system, which changed the nature of the jobs, the question of what the definition of the territories was to be was reopened and, initially, Nils had been proposing putting together the professional studies and what is now known as Arts, Sciences, and Engineering, but without Agriculture, I believe. Under the vice-provostial system, which Nils had had, there were three vice-provosts: one for Agriculture, one for the Health Sciences, and one for the Arts, Sciences, and Engineering. There were four or five floating colleges that reported directly to the vice-president for Academic Affairs.

CAC: Floating and free-standing, in that sense?

WPS: Free-standing, yes . . . Education, the Carlson School [of Management], the Humphrey Institute, and Law.

CAC: Ah.

WPS: Possibly, I may have missed one. Initially, the thought was to put those colleges together with Arts, Sciences, and Engineering as a provostial unit. Eventually, they were put together with Agriculture instead.

CAC: How were these clusters created? I know that you come into the story later; but, I'm sure that you realized when you came in how this reorganization was achieved. Who did it and what were the objectives of creating these three provostial posts?

WPS: I think who did it was primarily Jean Keffeler, and [Ettore] Jim Infante, and Nils.

CAC: Oh.

WPS: Jean had offered the services of a consulting firm to Nils to advise as to better management in the university and I think that this had come out of that. Jean was a big fan of setting up the provostial system.

CAC: What did she have in mind?

WPS: I'm not sure. Have you done one of these oral interviews with her?

CAC: No.

WPS: That would be fascinating. My guess is that she had in mind that this would give her lever. First of all, she had a couple of things in mind—this is just my read on this—that this would look like doing good things, modernizing and making a more businesslike the university,

which was always a theme of hers. She was always very interested in getting personal control of things. I think that she saw the provostial system and the provost possibly as a tool—I'm just guessing.

CAC: That's a pretty big guess.

WPS: It is a pretty big guess.

CAC: [laughter] I don't understand the guesses that you're making here because she could work one system or another equally well, it seems to me.

WPS: Yes, but this would be one that had . . . again, I don't know. This would have had her imprint. It would break . . . she was, at that time, expressing a good deal of frustration with Jim Infante. It would provide a different set of people than Jim who would be running things.

CAC: I see.

WPS: I will tell you, there was a point later when Jean Keffeler met with the three provosts—this was at the beginning of the tenure squabble but before Bill Brody, the provost from the Health Sciences, left. She met with Gene [Allen], and me, and Bill Brody, and Pat Spence was also there. This was ostensibly a meeting of the chair and vice-chair of the academic . . . whatever that committee was that she chaired and the board with the three provosts. What she proposed to us was that the three of us take over the running of the university together with her. She said that there was a vacuum of power, that Nils could not govern, and that the provosts were the only place where real power resided, and if the three of them could act in concert along with a regent, they could run the university.

CAC: The three of you received this with what disposition?

WPS: I stated very strongly that I was very loyal to Nils and that, even if I weren't, you couldn't run the university with a troika. You either had a president or you didn't. Bill liked the idea and Gene, I think, agreed with me. It didn't go any further. This is part of the reason and also my general read of Jean . . . why I think that some of her motivation may have been as a political tool in her fights with Nils.

CAC: Now, Mr. Infante, who was then senior vice-president, was also part of the group that sought to define these new . . . ?

WPS: Yes. I think he very generously and very public spiritedly saw his job as being an unworkable job. When he came—I've heard this quotation many times—into the job of provost and vice-president for Academic Affairs, he told his staff that he intended to be eighty percent provost and twenty percent vice-president. Clearly, by the time, the provostial system was being set up, he was operating about eighty percent as vice-president and twenty percent as provost.

CAC: Ah!

WPS: He recognized that he could not accomplish the job as it was defined; so, he supported it, I think, out of his experience of finding the job of academic vice-president and provost of the campus unworkable. So there were various motives involved here.

CAC: My guess is that every vice-president of that disposition, after Gerry Shepherd, must have suffered that?

WPS: Yes, I think so.

CAC: It's my sense that Gerry Shepherd was, perhaps, one of the last who could do it and not because he was such a brilliant or hard-working person . . .

WPS: It was just simpler.

CAC: . . . it was a simpler university.

WPS: A simpler time.

CAC: Things really got complicated after Gerry left.

WPS: Yes. It was Ed[win] Fogelman in the university senate who coined the term, "Black Hole" to define Academic Affairs . . . paper goes in but no paper ever comes out.

CAC: Those are interesting insights, particularly, because you would be aware that from the outside, some persons have guessed that the person who held that position, Mr. Infante in this case, would be proud of territory and reluctant to redefine it. But, you're describing something quite different.

WPS: Yes. When I came in as provost, Jim was very generous in helping me and in not trying to hold onto territory. I think he was very good that way.

CAC: Would it be a fair speculation that Mr. [Len] Kuhi, who preceded him in that office and was, really, one of Hasselmo's first appointments from the outside, coming from Berkeley, had such a learning task ahead of him being an outsider that he really got bogged down in that position that Infante then filled?

WPS: Yes, I think that's fair. It's also the case that Jim Infante was an indefatigable worker. He worked harder than I ever would have been willing to do and I think harder than Lynn Kuhi was willing to do. It is legendary that, at least initially, as vice-president he would be in at the office at four in the morning working.

CAC: Good grief!

WPS: It's true. He worked just non-stop. It took its toll. I don't think that's a smart way to operate; but, he did.

CAC: It wouldn't surprise you . . . I've talked to any number of people . . .

WPS: Things did get bogged down with Lynn Kuhl as vice-president. I know it did.

CAC: . . . who pass through Morrill Hall as an associate or assistant to all those positions for three or four years and, then, they rotate out, all of whom have said that Morrill Hall, as then structured, was an impossible assignment and . . .

WPS: Yes, I think so.

CAC: . . . just couldn't do it. As a consequence, people worked far too hard.

WPS: Yes—and they still do. I did as a provost and it was a much better structure. I still think I worked far harder than I think is wise—at least, I was scheduled more fully than I think was wise.

CAC: We'll come back at the end on kind of reflections of how one manages this sprawling, funny institution, the University of Minnesota. This small group of persons defined the new positions and the regents bought it?

WPS: Yes.

CAC: Then, there were searches for the three provosts?

WPS: Yes.

CAC: You went through the search process for that cluster of Engineering, Science, Arts?

WPS: Yes.

CAC: Do you want to say something about that search . . . what kinds of . . . the job is really undefined. You're going to come in and the other two are also. Was that part of the questioning of the candidates when they were brought in?

WPS: Yes, what should this job be? I concentrated more on what I thought the university should be in most of my presentations.

CAC: Ah!

WPS: I thought that we could work out the institutional structure as long as you had smart people of reasonably good will working together. I thought it would be a period of adjustment. The one thing that I required when Nils offered me the job was that I have absolutely full control of my budget, that I reported only to him on how I was using the budgets in those colleges.

CAC: Oh, there would be no other option. How else could you do it?

WPS: We used dotted lines all over the place in our administrative structure . . . a dotted line to Jim Infante, for instance, or a dotted to the finance vice-president. I insisted and this was also Nils' view of the position; so, I didn't have to insist hard.

CAC: And the other two came to do the same thing or it came to be settled along that line?

WPS: Yes. Although, in the end, the whole period was sort of jockeying for defining just what that meant in practice.

CAC: Say something about that.

WPS: It was one thing to have full control of your budget; but, it was another to have some participation in defining how that budget was to get set up. We had a lot of jockeying with Academic Affairs, with Jim, with Marvin [Marshak] later, with [Richard] Pfutzenreuter.

CAC: Marvin?

WPS: Marvin Marshak, sorry . . . a lot of jockeying about what the provost role was to be when the president was talking about the university budget. In other words, it's one thing to say that I get full control of my budget; but, if the budget comes out of a black box . . .

CAC: [laughter]

WPS: . . . I haven't really got much control of anything.

CAC: Did the budget come out of a subtraction from the Academic Affairs office?

WPS: Actually, the budget was the college budgets. My budget, in my office, was not a big thing. I did get a little bit. I asked for and got, I think, \$500,000 a year contingency funds to meet all the things that came from the colleges, things like when the solar car got into the international competition. Where could we find \$20,000 to send it over to Japan to compete? All that did was that it saved those things going upstairs to the president. I got that and I had my staff, which was just essentially the size of Anne Hopkins' staff, sort of, basically, Anne Hopkins' budget.

CAC: Say something about the staff. How large a staff did you have and these other positions?

WPS: Eventually, I did grow the staff somewhat, but mainly in two ways: one was an investment and the one was not in that group. The one part of Central Administration which was specifically decentralized to the provost's offices in this shift was that some of the Human Resource people were moved out of Carol Carrier's shop and into mine, and Gene's, and Bill's. I acquired two and found I had been shorted in that. I got these two people with no computers, no clerical staff.

CAC: [laughter]

WPS: It was the usual sort of shabby deal. I found that two were really insufficient to carry out that function. I eventually expanded it by reallocation to four. Those four gave . . . the colleges were so happy with how our Human Resources functions operated during the provostial period. I think it's one of the potential great losses in the shift back because I'm worried about where that will go. I expanded that to four and I also built a new operation called "Project Clarity," which was to develop information systems that departments and colleges could use, where they could get online all of the budgetary information they needed, real-time information about where enrollments were in the courses during registration, the sort of thing that the colleges and departments need to operate under this new IMG system.

CAC: What are those initials?

WPS: Incentives for Managed Growth, I think.

CAC: Thank you.

WPS: It was the remake of Responsibility Centered Management, RCM . . .

CAC: [laughter]

WPS: . . . a bureaucratic remake of that. It simply puts colleges and departments much more on their own responsibility for planning, and for allocation, and use of resources. They have to have financial information to be able to do that. So, we built a staff of several people to do that; but, I think that's a good investment which we made. Other than that, my staff consisted of myself . . . if you take off those two things, my staff consisted of myself, two one-half time vice-provosts . . .

CAC: Who were faculty?

WPS: . . . who were faculty: Louise Mirrer, who had been head of Spanish and Portuguese, and Norma Allewell, who had been the head of Biochemistry in the College of Biological Sciences [CBS]. Then, I had a financial officer, who was initially Peter Zetterberg, and when he left to take Dave Berg's place, Susan Grotevant joined me to do that job, and Linda Ellinger, who had

been a sort of chief dogsbody, and chief of undergraduate things, and chief of liaison to MnSCU for Anne. She continued in those roles for me and she was wonderful.

CAC: So, you had some continuity with that staff?

WPS: Yes, I kept Anne's staff. Other than that, we had a couple of secretaries; so, it was a fairly small operation.

CAC: The same thing would have been true of the other . . . probably not.

WPS: Gene's operation . . . there was a fair continuity there. He had been vice-president for Agriculture and he sort of kept that and added a two-thirds time vice-provost, Jeff Mariama.

CAC: I would guess that the health affairs was tertium quid. It must have had a different structure?

WPS: No. No, because there had always been a vice-president for the Health Sciences.

CAC: But, it must have been larger?

WPS: No.. It was the same set of colleges: Medical School, Dental School, Public Health, Nursing, Veterinary Medicine. I'm probably forgetting a couple. There was no change in the definition of that at any point from the old vice-president for Health Sciences under [President C. Peter] Magrath up until present, except that Vet Medicine was moved back at the time of [President Kenneth] Keller from Agriculture to Health Sciences.

CAC: Perhaps, I'm asking the question awkwardly. I have a sense from so many interviews that whatever the formal structure was in the institutional relationships that there was always in the Health Sciences a degree of autonomy and power . . .

WPS: Oh, yes.

CAC: . . . that would not have been true of the other two areas?

WPS: Yes. Yes. That continued to some . . . You asked about why the provostial system was set up. I had supported fairly strongly setting up the provostial system as a faculty member. My motivation was to get equal power to the basic core of Arts and Sciences. During the period of the provostial system, though the Health Sciences, for instance, had an autonomy and a separate power, the other provosts were pretty even. It worked out pretty well. In fact, I think that Frank Cerra is sorry to see the provostial system go even though, in some ways, he's strengthened by it. But, he's also isolated by it.

CAC: Ah!

WPS: The provosts had fairly equal power and equal standing. The worry that people had about the provostial system is that there would be internecine warfare among the three. In fact, we found that we operated almost unanimously almost all the time. That made us very powerful within the university.

CAC: Even when Dr. Brody was provost?

WPS: Yes, even with Brody. We never talked this out consciously but I think, unconsciously, there were two things at work, at least in my analysis as a political scientist. One was that we really did stand to gain so much by being unified because there was a frequent running conflict between us and the rest of Central Administration over budgets especially. So, we stood to gain a good deal by staying unified. Also, one thing that I liked about the provostial system was that I realized that each provost was large enough. This is in regard to Mancur Olson's logic of collective action . . . his idea that if you have a lot of small players, like the subscribers to public television, each one can say, "My contribution is so infinitesimal that if I don't make it, the common effort will not suffer; so, therefore, I can be a free rider." This is why public television has to just abase themselves every few months trying to get people to send in donations. Whereas, if you have a group of a few very large operators, anyone operator cannot say, "My contribution is so small that if I don't make it, the common effort will still continue." It's like Dayton's in the downtown operation . . . Dayton's cannot pull out of the Downtown Merchant's Association. The operation would collapse. Any college can almost say, "I can play a lone game and the university will get along okay."

CAC: For awhile.

WPS: Quite awhile. So, you get a lot of deans who are not awfully public-regarding, but tend to be pretty parochial with regard to their college's interests. None of the three provosts could do that. Each of us had a big enough part of the university that . . . I found I was very dependent on the good health of the Academic Health Center. IT [Institute of Technology] has lots of connections with the Academic Health Center. CBS has lots of connections with the Academic Health Center. If I'd been dean of the College of Liberal Arts [CLA], I might have figured that I didn't give a shit about the Academic Health Center; but, as provost for Arts, Science, and Engineering, I needed them to prosper. I needed Gene Allen's area to prosper. My area could not work without them doing well; so, we worked well together.

CAC: It was Dr. Brody who was the only outsider who came into this. Gene Allen has been around for twenty years and . . .

WPS: I've been around.

CAC: So, that he, like Lynn Kuhl, had to learn the local situation.

WPS: Yes.

CAC: But, he wasn't here very long.

WPS: No.

CAC: I should think it would have made his function, in fact, if not on paper as you're describing it, a far more difficult one?

WPS: Oh, yes, yes. You're absolutely right.

CAC: How long was he here?

WPS: He had been provost for close to a year when I became provost and he probably continued several months into my time. He was provost perhaps almost as long as I was a provost. [laughter]

CAC: [laughter] But he got there sooner.

WPS: He got there sooner.

CAC: We'll come back to that later because I want to raise a question of Dr. Brody's relationship to the tenure dispute, which we'll try to clarify just a teensy bit. You spoke about seven minutes ago, I'm guessing, about Human Resources and how you served the colleges within your cluster well. Say something more about that. What does that mean . . . Human Resources. That's a pretty big word.

WPS: Human Resources meant everything from developing policy as to how we would do buy out retirements, to policy with regard to the use alcohol on campus . . .

CAC: Oh, I misunderstood this. Go ahead.

WPS: . . . to all of the bureaucratic stuff about review forms for faculty members that have to be filled out, lay-off forms for clerical staff, personal counseling for staff. Some of the things my office of Human Resources did was worked, for instance, with the College of Liberal Arts on things like reorganization of the college staff operations. How do you set up and have a good working organization of an office staff? They became pretty proactive. The thing that I think distinguished our operation was that we had people who were very closely connected to the colleges, knew the colleges pretty well by the end of my time, who saw their role as serving the colleges rather than laying down something from Central.

CAC: Ah.

WPS: I don't mean to slight what . . . I think Carol Carrier's operation has been very good.

CAC: That's what I was going to say. It seems to me that's what Carol Carrier's office did?

WPS: Yes. My folks worked very closely with Carol.

CAC: She was still associate vice-president of Academic Affairs?

WPS: Yes.

CAC: And had that portfolio?

WPS: Yes, except that—it was her idea, I think—the only central function which got decentralized in the provostial set up was Human Resources. She said that she thought that she would do better if she became a central operation and if the provosts carried out the Human Resource policy in their areas. Then, we worked in very close concert with her. My folks met with her once a week.

CAC: I see.

WPS: It worked really well. I think Carol would tell you it did. So, I don't mean in any way to slight what Carol had been doing.

CAC: I understand.

WPS: I think she knew that the deans had seen Human Resources as an inadequate and overly centralized response to their needs and that once we decentralized it in the way we did with very close liaison to Carol, we didn't have a different Human Resource policy going on in Arts, Science, and Engineering than you had out in Gene's shop, but that it was very close to the people it was serving. Boy, did it work well. The deans, I think, would tell you this. They always said that was one of the best things about the provostial system.

CAC: Human Resources would also include hiring, tenure and promotion?

WPS: Yes, procedures and oversight on that and so on. On the academic side, I kept that very much in my own hands; but, I worked very closely with Janet Aucoin, my Human Resources director because she was awfully smart about these things and I learned a lot in doing that with her.

CAC: That function was decentralized?

WPS: Yes.

CAC: So, that you were making these reviews of hiring, tenure and promotion?

WPS: Yes.

CAC: And merit pay?

WPS: Oh, yes. Everything that the college deans did, they did and reported to me on.

CAC: I'm going back now. This would have seemed to me one of the burdens on the academic vice-president/provost's office before the provosts were created that would make the job just . . . you couldn't do that wisely, it seems to me, or do it at all?

WPS: The promotion and tenure . . . I worked like hell on my, roughly, fifty or sixty cases a year . . . read every file. One of my vice-provosts read each file as well. They divided them up in halves. I read all of them; they each read half. It was a big, big job and to do that for the entire system . . . [whistle]

CAC: One adds hiring to that . . .

WPS: Yes—although, I left that more or less to the deans. I worked with them on it. I met every week with each of my deans; but, that was the dean's responsibility.

CAC: In the meantime, the procedures of Affirmative Action were monitored elsewhere?

WPS: No, we monitored them.

CAC: You did . . . in cooperation with the . . .

WPS: In cooperation with the—I still get these offices confused—Office of Equal Opportunity. They also signed off on each file. In fact, I think maybe that got changed when this wonderful woman, Pat Mullen, left.

CAC: Oh, yes.

WPS: I think that office no longer had a formal sign-off authority. I think it was just the provost.

CAC: There was an exodus at the time when Pat left. Everybody else left, too. Janet Spector left. Josie Johnson left.

WPS: Yes . . . although, not nearly at the same time.

CAC: Oh, very close . . . within three or four months, I'm guessing. I'm not suggesting a conspiracy. It just happened they all . . .

WPS: I think Janet Spector left about the same time. I think Josie went on for about a year later.

CAC: Gene Allen—you can read his sometime, if you wish; it will be transcribed and available—testified that he felt and he felt very deeply that the dean's and the chairs were much more comfortable with the existence of the provosts than they had been before in the long line trying to get into Morrill Hall directly. Is that your experience also?

WPS: It certainly was my experience in my area. I know that at least three of the four deans, [unclear] academic core Liberal Arts, IT, and CBS, all expressed that. I have heard indirectly that the reaction of Gene's deans was more mixed; but, I don't think it had to do with performance. I think it had to do with a certain status anxiety of deans of Law School, and Business, and so on reporting to an agricultural person—that's just my guess. I know that when Mark Yudof met with the deans and talked with them about administrative structure, he got a very mixed message with regard to the provostial system. I wasn't there; I just heard this indirectly. I heard it indirectly that my deans had stated pretty strongly that they liked the provostial system and that Gene's . . .

CAC: For that reason primarily, that it gave them access to someone who could understand upstairs and [unclear] Morrill Hall . . . ?

WPS: It gave them an advocate in Central Administration, which they never felt they had before. Gene's deans were somewhat more mixed. I think there was some unhappiness in the Academic Health Center. I just had that indirectly; so, I'm not a good source on it.

CAC: Could you speak objectively, then, of this relationship of chairs, deans, and, in your case, the provost for this cluster? How did that work? Did you ever go down into the department?

WPS: Oh, yes. As a matter of fact, I made a point of never acting . . . although, I would listen sympathetically to anybody who came to me. I had faculty members come. I had chairs come. I thought that my office had to be open to anybody. I had students come with complaints. I always listened fully and sympathetically to anything. I never acted on them because I didn't want to establish another route around the deans; but, then, I always talked with the deans about what I'd been hearing and often those complaints led to action.

CAC: In these cases, faculty would feel more comfortable going to the provost rather than to a chair or a dean?

WPS: Sometimes, yes . . . very often. So, that was good, I think. I think I handled that okay; but, you'd have to ask the deans to be sure. One important aspect of this kind of job is the guy on the wedding cake; so, I went to lots of events . . .

CAC: Ahhh!

WPS: . . . lots of formal events, retirements, celebrations, openings of buildings, openings of labs. I played wakes and weddings and [unclear].

CAC: [laughter]

WPS: There was an important academic leadership role. I visited every department in that set of colleges twice, at least, in the two-and-a-half years as provost.

CAC: That's a lot of departments.

WPS: Yes.

CAC: The Arts College alone has forty or more.

WPS: Yes. I loved those visits. My staff could tell when I'd been on a department visit because I was pumped.

CAC: Did you see the departments or the chairs?

WPS: The departments . . . full meetings of the faculty.

CAC: Ah, good for you.

WPS: I also met in groups of chairs frequently. In the summer, I'd meet with all of the chairs in groups of maybe a half a dozen and have lunch for a no-agenda discussion. In all of this, I presented my vision of the university, and my vision of the possibilities in the university, and the fact that this is a research university, that that implies and benefits from a very important undergraduate mission, and that there's no inconsistency between those two, that the places where people are dying to send their students as undergraduates are the great research universities in the country, Harvard, Yale, Stanford, Princeton, Chicago, Wisconsin, Michigan, Berkeley, both public and private and that this is how you build a great research university, but that the great research university is also important to making this a great undergraduate university, and that I thought that this was a message which the state would hear eagerly and happily and would support. Then, I'd hear the problems that the departments had. Sometimes, I went with deans. Julia Davis was very insistent that she come with me when I met with the department. I thought that was very appropriate. I certainly didn't want to undercut the deans in that. The other deans didn't care so much. I don't think they were as eager to spend as much time as I was doing that. [laughter] But, I always talked with them about what I was hearing in the departments.

CAC: How do you account, then—many of us have shared your vision and it is on eighty tapes out of one hundred and twenty—for the persisting perception of the research mission and the undergraduate instruction mission as being competitive. Now, this is on the part of many

professors and also on the part of the public . . . you know what the story is. How do account for the persisting strength of that perception in this university?

WPS: [sigh] I think it's partly because it gets tied together with another question, which is access to the university—which I think is a different question.

CAC: Different but related.

WPS: When I say that this can be a wonderful undergraduate institution, it's not the only undergraduate institution in the state; it's the only research university in the state. A research university can be a wonderful undergraduate institution but not for every undergraduate.

CAC: Ah!

WPS: That's not exactly the same thing as the brightest undergraduates. It's for those for whom there are things the research university offers that they can't get elsewhere and for which they're willing, perhaps, to tolerate the complexity and size of a research university and the difficulty of finding your way around sometimes. I use the example of my daughter who chose between Carleton College and the University of Minnesota. She was accepted at both. We told her that we would fund her fully at either. She wouldn't have to borrow any money. I don't know how the hell we thought we were going to this in the case of Carleton. We gulped and said we'd do it.

CAC: That nice girl [Professor Chamber's daughter, Sarah] went through four years at Carleton.

WPS: Yes, yes. Helen would have enjoyed Carleton a lot. She went here because she wanted to have instruction in cello from Tanya Remenikova. In fact, she proposed to Carleton that she go to Carleton but be able to come up here once a week and take courses from Tanya that she would then transfer to Carleton. They refused to do that.

CAC: Why?

WPS: They had their own cello teacher there and they weren't about to have that person undercut by somebody going to the university. One of Bob Holt's daughters transferred here after two years at Holyoke [College] because, here, as an undergraduate, she could have access to an electron microscope and for her advanced work as a junior and senior, she wanted that. So, there are all sorts of things that you can get here. You can get an undergraduate major in Japanese here. You can't get that in most places. So there's both the fine faculty and . . . [W.] Ron[ald] Gentry tells a nice story that he once went into his Introductory Chemistry class and announced to them that should open their textbook to page 245 and on page 245, read this paragraph . . . that paragraph is wrong. He said, "The reason I can tell this is that yesterday in my laboratory, we proved it wrong."

CAC: [laughter]

WPS: So, it's all those things that you get at a research university.

CAC: That's a wonderful story.

WPS: There are also difficulties for an undergraduate at a research university. It's big. Faculty are serving multiple missions. They may not be as personally accessible—although, many are. I still think that a fine research university should have a mix of faculty, some of whom are just wonderfully accessible to students on personal terms.

CAC: Yes.

WPS: I think that the great research universities of the country are like that and I think that's what we should be. That's different than access because you can't do that . . .

CAC: Yes, all right.

WPS: . . . for everybody and you shouldn't do it for everybody. Partly, I think that the question of access gets very mixed up in this. This is a very populist state; so, access becomes a flag.

CAC: Yes!

WPS: That's part of this. One of the things that I'm very proud of—although, I don't have any illusion for a moment that I accomplished this personally—is when I came in as provost, when I went to meetings of the executive council and I would talk about the research university, other members of the executive council would shush me. They would say, "We can't use that word. We can't talk that way." By the end of my time as provost—this was not me; I'm not quite sure who all did this . . . I contributed—at the legislature, we were presenting ourselves boldly as a research university offering splendid undergraduate programs and the legislators loved this. This was a terrifically success year for us at the legislature and we went there talking about the special role of a research university for undergraduates and the legislators thought this was great.

CAC: This is Mr. Hasselmo's vision?

WPS: Yes. It was Nils' vision but, you know, the underestimated and unsung person in all of this is Gus Donhowe.

CAC: Heavens! Say something about that.

WPS: Before I became provost, I worked for one summer with Nils on special assignment as a faculty member to help him on a couple of jobs. One was that he wanted to meet with faculty

to talk with them about how we strengthen departments. I got a bunch of round tables of faculty together with him. This, eventually, led to my Pew [Foundation] round table discussion in 1993 about strengthening departments, which we wrote up as a white paper. I was involved in a couple of white papers in 1993 with Pew discussions, one on tenure which, actually, turned out to play a role in the tenure discussions later and one on strengthening departments, which is really good. Patrice Morrow was very important in that.

CAC: You say Pew . . . that's the Pew Foundation.

WPS: The Pew Foundation, yes. That's sort of one strand; but, the other very important thing that Nils had me working on was what we called "Speech Writer" but it was really sort of working with him as he developed his vision. This was his first summer . . . his first year as president. He had two important speeches. One was his first state of the university speech, which he'd be giving that fall and the other was he wanted to develop a paper, a speech, on higher education policy in the state. He asked me to work with him, to go around and talk to people, gather information and ideas for him. He and I met weekly for him to talk and think and Gus became intimately involved in this effort.

CAC: I'm going to pause a minute. We're almost out of tape. We'll pick it up on the other side.

[End of Tape 1, Side 1]

[Tape 1, Side 2]

CAC: Mr. Donhowe was then vice-president?

WPS: Vice-president for finance.

CAC: He's part of these conversations?

WPS: He's part of these conversations because he had a vision for the state. He was, personally, very close to Nils. He and Nils would pop out in the evening to go to jazz clubs, which was a strong interest of Gus'. Nils relied incredibly on Gus for personal support, for guidance, for strategic thinking. Gus understood the university, and understood the state, and understood business, a very rare combination of things. I spent a lot of time with Gus that summer working for Nils, with Nils, helping Nils develop his vision of the university and his vision of higher education policy for the state for these two speeches. The one eventually was called "The Silent Crisis in Education." The closing of the Waseca campus was intimately involved with that vision for higher education in the state and Gus Donhowe was intimately involved with that. Gus would sit with me and I would bring him a draft of what I was working on for Nils and he would say, "Phil, I can see why you're an academic. I can see why you wrote this. This is garbage. Nils needs to hit a long ball. You've got him hitting a bunch of singles in here."

CAC: [laughter]

WPS: Gus was just so intimately involved in this. I sat as a guest of Nils' cabinet that summer. I remember a cabinet meeting up at Duluth. It was developing the budget for the year. The Academic Affairs people came in and they said, "We have to come in for zero faculty salary increases for the next two years because we need this money for programmatic development." Gus said to Nils, "Nils, you can't do that! The faculty are the heart of this university." So you had the finance vice-president pushing against the Academic Affairs people on this. Gus was just a rare bird. Part of what he was pushing me on and Nils on this whole time was saying, "Nils, you have to define the role of the university. This is a research university; but, why should the people of the state of Minnesota support a research university?" What Nils developed that summer—I helped in this and Gus helped in this—was a vision that the research university is and can be a very special place for undergraduates. One particular book that Gus brought to my attention and Nils' attention in this was important and that was Henry Rosovsky's *The University: A User's Guide*. Rosovsky had been dean of the college at Harvard for many years and this was his reflections on Harvard. We drew a lot on this. There's a wonderful chapter in there on what tenure is and why it's important. There was a wonderful chapter in there on who should go to a research university as an undergraduate, and who should not, and why, and what undergraduates get out of a research university.

CAC: Ah.

WPS: Gus also brought to our attention a bunch of papers coming from some guy at Stanford, an economist, about how the academic mission functions economically. He was very concerned by mission creep, for instance. Gus was just critical in all of this. The whole couple years I was provost, looking at what Nils was doing and what I was doing, I felt that in many ways we were accomplishing finally what Gus had started or a lot of what Gus had started. It was just a terrible loss when he died.

CAC: Yes. How long was he in that office?

WPS: About a year and a half. I've often thought of him when I was provost.

CAC: I've heard so many people say this but none with the specifics that you're mentioning this morning; so, that's a very useful observation. Does this kind of lead into University-2000, then, as a definition of the mission?

WPS: Yes, I think so. I've always thought University-2000 turned out a little unfortunately, just in rhetorical terms.

CAC: Say something about that. My perception is that the faculty never understood it because it had too high a level of generalization.

WPS: Yes, I think that's true. It operated at that high a level of generalization in order to get broad political support.

CAC: Outside the university or within?

WPS: Both outside and within.

CAC: It left a lot of faculty stranded. It just sounded . . . oh, well, that's thick marshmallow stuff.

WPS: The university mission is complex and it tried to address all of that complexity. It said that research, undergraduate, diversity, outreach all were important. I think it was very clear to Nils what University-2000 was and he had a very clear program.

CAC: But, he was always frustrated that people weren't understanding it? That's my perception.

WPS: Yes, I think so . . . very frustrated at it. I think it was partly that the written materials that went out never were as focused as Nils himself was in his mission. If you watched what Nils was actually proposing and called that University-2000, it was a very focused mission. It was all there in the rhetoric of University-2000; but, it never got quite the bite to it in the University-2000 rhetoric. University-2000 was a framework within which to make a focused set of decisions. The decisions were very focused; but, the University-2000 framework was a framework and, as such, people couldn't identify with it the way they could identify with a program. They could neither love it nor hate it and that's one reason why it didn't generate broad political support . . . because you couldn't hate it; but, you could love what Nils did. What Nils did was he made this a research university, which is a wonderful, comfortable, good place for undergraduates to come, and he was constantly and continually trying to strengthen his research faculty. That, I think, is coming farther behind because of the economic vicissitudes. Especially for the academic core that I was operating with, I found that Nils was incredibly supportive of me. I think we were able to turn around the academic core in terms of leadership and finances—certainly in terms of finances. Nils was wonderfully supportive of me in this. I went to Nils a couple of times and told him, "Nils, we have to do something." One time, I went to him and I said, "Nils, your basic college, the College of Liberal Arts, is in desperate financial straits. It is very close to running at a deficit. This year, it was only able to launch fifteen searches. That is not enough to maintain the college faculty. We need \$1 million." He said, "Phil, you have it." I know that later, a friend of mine overheard two very high central officers in Morrill Hall complaining about the fact that Nils had done this and swearing that they were going to get it back from me—but they never got it back.

CAC: [laughter]

WPS: In my first year as provost, CLA carried out fifteen searches. In my second year as provost, they carried out forty-five searches. For next year, they're carrying out thirty searches. Nils was very supportive in doing this.

CAC: I guess that raises a question from my own experience, which is more limited than yours, that it's always difficult if you don't know the size of the reserve and the pockets that are there to make this possible. You never know how much to ask for. Is there ever central accounting? Did you know how much he had?

WPS: Yes.

CAC: Was that shared with all the provosts and all the vice-presidents?

WPS: Yes. Also, I think I had the best financial person outside of the budget office on the campus in Susan Grotevant.

CAC: That would help.

WPS: Yes. She really followed what was going on closely. I always felt that one strength I had in advocating for my part of the university was that I thought I knew more about what was going on in budgets in the university than anybody outside of about half a dozen people in Morrill Hall. Yet, I felt a very direct responsibility for the well being of a set of colleges. One problem that I think the academic vice-president/provost role has is that that person is responsible for all kinds of things and cannot be an advocate for the academic units. That person is responsible for information technology operations, for the libraries—the libraries are closely involved—for coordinate campuses, for the Academic Health Center, for . . . I think one of the things my deans liked was that they had somebody who was an amphibian, who was operating at their level, more or less, and operating very closely with them, but also, I was a part of the inner executive council and I really knew what was happening in the budgets. Actually, Nils didn't have much money to play with and I knew it. I knew what it meant when he gave me that \$1 million. It wreaked havoc with his budgeting; but, it was for an important thing, and he knew it, and he came through. He did this again this year in the budget process.

CAC: You will laugh when I say that in this modest project of mine, I never knew whether to ask for \$20,000 or \$22,000. [laughter]

WPS: [laughter]

[break in the interview]

CAC: We paused just to see where we would go next. These are complicated stories and each one leads to another and, sometimes, that leads us down strange paths.

One of the reorganizations that occurred during your years, and I assume that you played a part in that, was the reorganization of the biological sciences.

WPS: Yes. This is something that we'd been talking about for twenty years at the university. Our biology is spread across all three provostial units. It's spread across seven or eight colleges. Roughly, one-third of our faculty at the University of Minnesota are laboratory biologists—in the Medical School, which is the biggest college in the university . . .

CAC: Good grief!

WPS: . . . and the College of Agriculture, which is one of the biggest, Public Health, Dentistry, College of Biological Sciences, Nursing and a few of the psychologists are really physiologists. It's a big deal.

CAC: Let me just intercede there. I have a sense that the biological sciences clustered in various kinds of specialities are at the cutting edge of new knowledge in the way physics was from 1910 to 1950, for example.

WPS: Yes. If you look at what's on the cover of *Scientific American*, about two-thirds of the time, it's some sort of neuro-science or genetic thing.

CAC: This is not a local story?

WPS: No, it's not a local story. The state of Minnesota economically is terrible dependent on biology . . . agriculture, the health technology industry, Medtronic, and so on. This is a big center for health care industry with the Mayo Clinic and the University of Minnesota and all of the medical alley: St. Jude's, Medtronic, and so on. It's a big industry for the state. Also environmental studies because the environment and tourism are so important to this state. This is a big thing for this state.

Nils, very shortly after I came in as provost and he had his full complement of provosts together, had a sit down with Jim [Infante] in some sessions where we thought about how to restructure the university. He was coming under great pressure from Jean Keffeler to do something big. Jean, especially, wanted to see some blood on the wall. She wanted to see a college closed. Nils and we looked at what . . . also, we all wanted to improve the university. Bill Brody was pushing very hard the idea of making the university a more rational, businesslike place; so, there were a whole bunch of things coming together. Jim Infante and I especially pressed the fact that biology was a weak area for us, that in the latest ACE [American Council on Education] ratings, the average ranking of our graduate programs in biology was 60 something—60 something! Yet, this is something that's so important to the state of Minnesota. [The next day, Mr. Shively called to correct this data; physiology was very low, but other disciplines were clustered in the 30s.]

CAC: And as we said, to the nation. This is where the action is.

WPS: Yes, to the nation and this is a biology state. This is a state where, probably, more of our high school students are interested in biology one way or another . . .

CAC: Ahhh.

WPS: . . . because they're bird watchers . . .

CAC: I see.

WPS: . . . or they're ag kids, or they're out in the country, or whatever. Per capita, I'll bet you that more of them are interested in biology than most states in the country and, yet, they don't come to the University of Minnesota to study biology very much. CBS was not a freshman admitting college when I became provost. I changed that.

CAC: Ah!

WPS: As part of the biological reorganization, we changed that. We were sort of broadly canvassing things to do. Jim and I pressed strongly that biological reorganization was something we should do.

CAC: I'm going to interrupt for just a moment. I have a sense that Bob Holt, as dean of the Graduate School, was very sensitive to this?

WPS: Bob Holt was very sensitive to this.

CAC: Was he part of these conversations?

WPS: No, he was no longer dean.

CAC: He had informed many people about this?

WPS: He certainly had. One of the first things I did when I became provost was I sat down with Bob to pick his brain for about four hours on what we should be doing and how we should be doing it because he's a very smart cookie.

CAC: Yes.

WPS: It's always been in the air. The Campbell Committee had pressed for reorganizing biology. Peter Magrath had appointed a task force under Chuck Speaks to address how to reorganize biology. David Hamilton had been very active in this at the time of the Campbell Committee—but nothing had ever happened. Nils decided that the provostial structure offered a new avenue which might do this. He asked the provosts, with me designated as lead provost, to bring about a reorganization of biology. There's economic waste in the present arrangements.

We have two biochemistry departments, two cell biology departments. There's a lack of intellectual coming together. They're spread across . . . the geographic gap is a very big impediment . . . a four-mile gap, between the two campuses, it turns out.

CAC: Was there also a methods gap with the introduction of molecular biology?

WPS: Yes. Basically, Minnesota blew that. We missed the molecular revolution; so, we needed to come in and catch the next wave.

CAC: The next wave had to include molecular?

WPS: Oh, yes, of course; but, it includes an awful lot of genetic mapping. Also neuro-sciences, where we have a lot of strength, is going to be a big deal.

CAC: But, at the time you came in, molecular biology was still lagging?

WPS: Yes, and it still is. We haven't changed biology in two-and-half years. We're talking about a third of the faculty, as I said. Coincidentally with this, Pete McGee had resigned as dean of the College of Biological Sciences, before I became provost. He had done it, I think, out of some unhappiness with the provostial search. There was a lot of attacking of the provostial search and of my own appointment as provost, as you know. Pete had been unhappy about my appointment.

CAC: Presumably because you would be seen as not enough informed or sensitive to the needs of the biological sciences?

WPS: No, no, no, nothing to do with biology.

CAC: Okay.

WPS: There were a couple of things. I don't know all the reasons. The positive reason was diversity, that a woman or black should have been appointed.

CAC: Oh.

WPS: There is some question . . . Pete, himself, had been a candidate and he withdrew from candidacy. I don't know all of the story there. Several months—Pete continued as acting dean—into my provostship, before we'd launched the search for a successor, I told him, "Pete, it's not too late if you'd want to reconsider. I'd be happy to have you withdraw your resignation." I liked Pete a lot and thought he was good. He took a few days to think about it and came back and told me that, actually, he had enjoyed the last several months very much but that he'd also really enjoyed the idea of quitting as dean now after eight years. So, we had the search and we

got a wonderful dean in, Bob Elde, who oddly enough came over from the Medical School to do it.

CAC: Bob Elde?

WPS: Bob Elde is a member of the faculty in the Medical School. We did an expedited internal search. The heads of CBS came to me and they said that with all of the talk about biological reorganization going on, they were afraid that in a national search for a dean, we would not be able to get a good person to come. If we did get a good person to come, that person would be automatically wedded to the continued existence of CBS as a college and, while as heads, they liked CBS, they also really wanted to see biology strengthened and they didn't want to set up something which would be an impediment. They wanted a short-term dean for the period until reorganization was completed; but, they also didn't want this to be an interim dean because they wanted this person to have full clout. We got a special dispensation to have a dean search without a national search because the university's rules state that a dean search has to be national. We made a special exception and I had to get the sign-off of the academic vice-president, Jim Infante, to do that. I got a special dispensation to do it . . . a local but real dean search for a limited term dean, one of two years term as dean, with a full search committee, full posting, not the way you usually do an interim dean. I just appointed interim deans. I talked with people. I didn't do searches for them. We did a full search. I was delighted that we did the full search because it turned up Bob Elde, who would not have appeared otherwise as a possible interim dean. Bob has great political skills and also a very broad vision for biology. It turned out that the Council of Biological Science Deans has a rotating chairmanship and it was CBS's year to be chair; so, Bob ended up as chair of the Council of Biological Deans. This was critical because . . . in fact, as the reorganization has proceeded, Bob has taken a real leading role. I, as provost, took a leading role also. I appointed Norma Allewell, my vice-provost, to be liaison on behalf of all three provosts to the Council of Biological Deans; so, she met with the Council of Biological Deans all the time about biological reorganization. Bob and I worked very closely together. Bill Brody appointed Harry [Orr], a very good guy who was a vice-provost in Health Sciences, to also be a liaison in this operation. So, the biological deans, and I, and Norma, and Harry really were very closely involved. Over a period of a couple of years, we have developed a set of initiatives which are wonderful. In undergraduate studies the Council of Biological Deans agreed to unite all lower division biological studies in the College of Biological Sciences but drawing on faculty from outside CBS in a broad pool which would collectively oversee this undergraduate lower division curriculum. As part of that initiative, we also made CBS a freshman admitting college and that's going splendidly. It's a win/win thing. It brings students to the university who would never have otherwise come here. It gets a biological focus to things at the undergraduate level, which we didn't have before. At the graduate level, we had, I think, thirty-eight different graduate programs and we are clustering those so that there is, for instance, a biomedical clustering of about eight graduate programs, which are coming together. An undergraduate anywhere in the country would apply just to that cluster and, then, would specialize in one of the programs.

The real tough part was organizing the research efforts of the faculty. How are the departments organized? There is a considerable departmental restructuring underway, which has gone—it's been a rocky political business—pretty well. There is a new, what's called, the White Paper Department because it was based on a white paper written by a couple faculty members, which is bringing together molecular biologists and developmental biologists from about seven or eight different departments into a new Department of Genetics and Molecular Biology. Collectively, that group of faculty in that department administer right now about \$10 million in funded research. It's a stellar department. It's going to be very, very strong; but, it created the problem of, what about the people who aren't joining this department? It's been very iffy but it looks as if there's a new biochemistry department coming together, brought together from the two pre-existing biochemistry departments, except that several of the people have left those departments to go into the new department. There's a great ferment going on and there's been a great deal of unhappiness in some quarters. Some people don't like the idea. There were some young people in biology, both in the Medical School and in CBS, who were not going to stay here unless they saw hope that this was going to be a great place for biology and we've built on that strength.

CAC: I have to interrupt with a personal question. How much biology as a political scientist did you have to learn to even address these issues?

WPS: I learned a lot.

CAC: How did you learn it . . . just with ears?

WPS: One of the things I did when I became provost was subscribe to *Science*.

CAC: Which you had not read before?

WPS: I'd never read before. I started reading it carefully. I also just did a lot of talking with biologists.

CAC: And you could pick up really what they were doing? I don't know how much an administrator has to know about the details of method and field?

WPS: You have to know a lot because if you're going to offer academic leadership, you have to know what you're leading. Partly, I drew on Norma Allewell, my vice-provost. Partly, I'd drew on Bob Elde. Partly, I drew on a bunch of young faculty. One thing I did, often, to help colleges out—I never forced myself in this way—in recruiting especially, for endowed chairs, is I'd get quite involved in those recruiting efforts, not in making the decisions but in helping get people here. The College of Biological Sciences was recruiting for the Ordway chair in Developmental Biology my first year and a half. We went through a few candidates and I got intimately involved in talking with those people about their work. I don't think I got very far into biology; but, Mark Brenner, and Bob Elde, and Norma Allewell, and others tell me I did.

CAC: [laughter] That's good.

WPS: I made a presentation to the Board of Regents on biological reorganization—in much more detail than what I've given you—and they told me afterwards they thought it was very good. I think that it was like Samuel Johnson's business that we admire a dog walking on its hind legs not because it walks so well but because it walks at all. I think that's the level of biology I've reached; but, I have certainly made some folks there think that I know what I was talking about. I learned a lot that I had no idea about before.

CAC: It suggests that persons in those kinds job have to have that kind of learning.

WPS: I'd not know what developmental biology was before, for instance.

CAC: Of course, why would you? It's a wonder that Ken Keller, who knew that so well as a chemical engineer, wasn't able to identify and move ten years earlier?

WPS: I think it almost took having Central Administration be closer . . . I think the provostial system really did help do this because it gave the colleges a set of central administrators who belonged to them in a way that you didn't have . . . When Ken was president, there was a vice-president for Health Sciences, whose main role was . . . that was sort of that; but, it was a very defensive role.

CAC: Oh, sure, to maintain the empire.

WPS: To maintain the empire. You had an academic vice-president, who really was responsible to all of the coordinate campuses, to the Health Sciences, as well as the academic core, as well as the professional schools, as well as a whole bunch of operations, and could not play that role. When Ken decided to take on academic reorganization, he did it with a faculty committee, the Campbell Committee; so, it was Central Administration and the Campbell Committee. The deans felt very threatened by that, I think, always. The deans were not involved in that process very much. I think the provostial system . . . you almost had to have something like that in order to accomplish biological reorganization. We worked with the faculty but we really gave the deans the lead role in that.

CAC: I asked the question the way I did because, of all the high administrators that I'm familiar with, Ken was the only one who would have known these things just by instinct and by his career.

WPS: Yes.

CAC: Are there more things we need to say about the biological . . . I know it could go on and on.

WPS: I don't think so. It could go on and on, obviously, but I think that sort of covers what we were doing in it. It's, obviously, an unfinished tale at present.

CAC: Let's turn then to the General College, which I think is a matter of, perhaps, less moment but higher controversy.

WPS: Higher controversy . . . it certainly affected me personally a lot. Actually, I think it was of more moment than people realized. I'm going to speak fairly frankly here. This is for historical purposes and regents can speak for themselves and have historically. First of all, I just want to clarify what it was we proposed because there's been misunderstanding about it.

CAC: Yes.

WPS: Let me go back and give some background on it. The General College proposal came out of the same general ferment that Nils, and the provosts, and Jim, and Bill Brody especially were going at as to how we could really turn this place around. There was a lot of pressure from the regents on this.

CAC: It rises out of [Commitment to] Focus, doesn't it?

WPS: Yes. There's a strong continuity between Commitment to Focus and Nils' presidency, very strong.

CAC: Yes.

WPS: It rises out of that; but there was also special pressure coming from the regents on this, from Jean Keffeler especially. Jean, a couple months before we brought the General College issue forward when we were pondering all these things, made a speech in a public regents' meeting. She said, "Mr. President, we want to have bold decisions from you. You bring us your tough decisions and we will provide you with air cover." At the next regents' meeting, the regents' meeting just before the General College proposal was brought to the regents, Tom Reagan, the chair of the board, said, "Nils, we want you to bring us the toughest decisions you have and we'll get them done. I will provide you with the support for the tough decisions you feel you need to make." All of this was in urging us to, basically, close a college. That was pretty clear.

CAC: And it had been part of the Campbell report earlier with Keller?

WPS: The General College proposal had been made in the Campbell Committee—of which I was a member, by the way.

CAC: Yes.

WPS: But, we were pondering a whole bunch of things. I had concluded—I had not realized until I became provost . . . I had not known a lot about General College—by this time that General College was not doing a good job with its students . . . the success being defined as transferring into some part of the university. The [success rate of] minority students who came into General College was about one in twelve. The success rate for all students was about thirty percent. They didn't have a degree from General College if they didn't transfer into something in the university. It was also very expensive. They were spending about \$8,000 a student; whereas, CLA, for its lower division students, spends about \$4,000 and IT about \$7,000.

CAC: Do I misunderstand that? I remember one of the points the General College was making was that they pay their own way.

WPS: No, they don't.

CAC: That point was made.

WPS: But, it was wrong. There's no college in the university that pays its own way. It's very expensive. In its research mission, it was not very successful, I concluded. There were a few faculty who were doing good research but not many. So, this was something to look at. The proposal we made was not that the second chance into the university be eliminated. I strongly believe that if this is the one research university for the state, there should be a second chance in. I actually don't like the way General College does its admissions because what they do is they take the threshold of CLA and, then, they take the several notches below that threshold and take those students, except for one hundred students who are selected on special criteria. I think, if we're going to have this operation—we need this kind of operation—we do our admissions into CLA and the other colleges on two basic things: high school grades and standardized aptitude test scores. There are going to be error terms in those; we're going to make mistakes. The students who are mistakes should have some chance to get another hearing. Plus, there are students whom we want to have here for various reason. They're athletes. They're concert musicians. They're minority students who may lack one or another thing that we want to have here; but, they can benefit from what we have to offer. A student who is lousy in math but is a brilliant violinist, a student who is lousy in math but a brilliant quarter back . . . there's a whole bunch of ways. We want to have another port into the university. The question was—this is the same standard we would apply to any college—is this college fulfilling its mission well? Is this college fulfilling this mission efficiently? Nils and I concluded that the General College was not; so, we made a proposal. The proposal was that this proposal be aired and be examined by a citizen's committee over a period of a few months before the board would come to it. The proposal was that we eliminate General College, that we set up a special working partnership with one or more community colleges. My proposal was that we offer them a building on campus and bring them onto our campus in a partnership so that they would have a special role of preparing open admission students—General College is not an open admission college now; the community colleges are open admission so that they do offer that second chance—that we

have an open admission junior college working in close partnership with us. Further, there were some other things . . . that we work through CEE [Continuing Education and Extension] as well. We had a set of things which we would propose as an alternative.

CAC: Just to underline that point, if one looks at the number of community colleges: White Bear, Normandale, Anoka . . .

WPS: Cottage Grove.

CAC: There are a lot of them

WPS: Yes.

CAC: It's the whole cluster of people within the seven county metropolitan area?

WPS: Yes.

CAC: Okay.

WPS: I heard from a number of faculty in junior colleges at this time that they felt they were prepared to undertake a really serious partnership with the university in doing this. They liked the challenge. But, the MnSCU Board received a request from Tom Reagan that they not even talk about the possibility and have it under consideration. So, the issue was not considered.

CAC: I'm going to change tapes.

[End of Tape 1, Side 2]

[Tape 2, Side 1]

CAC: We're well into the General College and we'll pick it up.

WPS: That was what our proposal was. When we brought it out, there was a firestorm of protest. I think we did a lousy job of bringing it out. One thing that that taught me for future reference was that our news service is good at figuring out how we deal with formal news operations but . . . We were being so careful to keep this story quiet in advance and, then, bring it out in an orderly way. Nils, and Gene Allen, and [Mario] Mike Bognanno, and I spent about three days, just prior to bringing this proposal forward, sitting with Marcia Fluer fine-tuning the writing of the press statement. What we should have done is we should have had that group of people, Nils, Mike, Gene, and myself, out in the community for three days meeting with group upon group upon group telling them what we were planning to do and that we were going to be announcing this three days hence and asking them for their support, their input, their thoughts, and so on. This emphasis on the fine details of a press release was just crazy. We brought it

out. There was a firestorm of protest. We had talked to each regent individually beforehand.

CAC: You say, "we."

WPS: Nils, Gene, and I divided up the board and we had contacted each one individually beforehand. By our count, we had anywhere from either nine or ten regents supportive of bringing forward this proposal on General College.

CAC: Including Mr. Reagan, the chair?

WPS: Yes.

CAC: Including Miss Keffeler?

WPS: No, we were uncertain about Jean. I shouldn't characterize other regents, except that Tom was very supportive about bringing it forward. So, we brought it forward and it lasted a couple days, I would say. [laughter] There was also some very strong support. The Alumni Association were very supportive of us. The [Minnesota] Foundation Board were very supportive of us. The business community, the High-Tech Council, Business Partnership, and so on thought this was something that definitely deserved looking at; but, the General College faculty, and students, and the minority advisory committees, and the minority community—particularly the General College faculty and students—won the TV war fast. They played a little dirty at times. There were some lies stated. One thing which I personally resented was that I offered to David Taylor that Nils and I would meet with the General College faculty the day this was announced and he said that he preferred not to do that but would like to have me come to a general meeting of the faculty staff and students two days later. I said that I'd be happy to, that I would meet with any of them under any circumstances. I did that and it was set up, hazing operation, a huge packed hall, people yelling, and they video taped the whole thing. Then, they sent copies of the video tape to all of the legislators. It was a bit of political theater. They were very good at it and they won fast.

CAC: This kind of pressure was brought to bear upon the regents?

WPS: Yes.

CAC: Many of the regents must have been ready, not unsympathetic to changing their position or, at least taking . . .

WPS: I think so. I want to be very fair to the regents. We had not asked them to commit for supporting to a closing of General College because, in fact, we were saying, "We have this proposal. We think it needs public discussion." Their commitment . . . there wasn't a commitment. Our understanding was that they were supportive of bringing this forward for a period of three or four months of public discussion at which point, there would be decisions

made at the regent level. So, the fact that they decided to close down discussion was not something that was treacherous or anything like that. They responded to their view of the political situation, I think.

CAC: There are some who felt—I'm speaking for an anonymous group, right?—that the regents were using this to get at Mr. Hasselmo for other reasons also?

WPS: I think so. There were not many but only a couple of regents who were trying to get at Nils. The whole time I was provost, I think the decisions by a couple of regents were very often based on that. I think some of the opposition to my appointment was based on that, for instance. I don't flatter myself that any of that had anything to do with me personally. I think there was some of that. I think it was also that there was some very genuine pressure and some very genuine personal feelings. One regent, Wendell Anderson, has very strong feelings about General College.

CAC: Yes.

WPS: Another . . . Bill Hogan, the same. I think that the passion of a couple of the regents, who on very strong personal terms did not want to see General College closed, was greater than the passion of those who maybe thought this was something worth bringing up and when those regents saw the other regents . . . One problem with this is also the open meeting law. The regents didn't have a chance to sit down together in private before we brought this forward to see how strongly each other felt about it. There were a whole bunch of things at play there.

CAC: Mr. Yudof came in pretty early—I heard him defending the continued existence of General College—and I assumed that he was informed of this thoroughly and he's a quick study.

WPS: Yes. Just one other thing on the General College. You said it's a matter of small moment. Really, in one sense it was but in some ways it wasn't. As far as budget goes, it's small potatoes. It's a budget of several million dollars. Since you would still be wanting to fill the same function, I think you'd have had a savings of a couple of million dollars. Considering the amount of fight, it was not worth that big a fight over that size of money. I think it also was a case for the symbolic influence of the conflict being very great. It had some negatives but also some positives. One negative was it hurt Nils' relationship with the board for several months thereafter . . .

CAC: I'm sure, yes.

WPS: . . . which did not help at the time of the tenure fight. I think it hurt me politically or it cost me politically. I won't say it hurt me politically but it cost me politically. One thing I think it did was in an odd way—I said that I didn't know how we'd gotten to the point at which there was general acceptance of the University of Minnesota as a research university—the way that the

General College issue played out was that the decision was made to not even consider closing General College; but, that got very clearly framed as an exception to the general mission of the university, that this was something that we wanted to do as a political exception. I think that in the end, coming out of the General College dispute, the definition of the university's mission as a research university was firmly solidified, mainly because of all the business support which had come in on the other side and just the general discussion of mission which came in the General College issue. It got framed not that the University of Minnesota has a responsibility to admit everybody but rather that we have this one special little college, which is a small part of our budget, that is to be an exception to our overall mission and an acceptable exception. I think it got framed that way and I think the end result was that the dispute over the mission of the university, which started with [Commitment to] Focus, ended in the General College conflict. I don't think I'm just rationalizing there. Another thing which I think was positive—although, this betrays my views of where we were in the tenure conflict—is that some regents, who were pushing strongly for a corporate model of the university . . . that was behind a lot of the tenure push. Before the General College issue, it had strong business support. It lost that business support in the General College conflict and I think that they were not in as strong a position when we came to the tenure issue as they would otherwise have been. So that in odd and subtle ways, I think, there were some very strong positive effects of the General College conflict; although, there were also some very short term costs. Certainly, we can [unclear] politically with the board. We can [unclear] politically with the board.

CAC: Follow-up questions . . . one thinks of pressures on the president and the president's office and the pressures on the Board of Regents, individuals and as a corporate body. You mentioned the business, and technology, and medical core. In this controversy, I have the impression that the governor and key legislators also played a major role.

WPS: In General College?

CAC: Yes, in pressing the regents or individual regents? I ask that as a follow-up question.

WPS: Yes and no . . . a lesser role than you'd think, less of a role than they did in the tenure crisis, for instance. The governor's role, if anything, was ambiguous. The legislators were divided on the General College issue . . . some, Phyllis Kahn for instance, and, to a lesser extent, Lyn Carlson because Lyn does not like to interfere. I don't think Phyllis thought she was interfering but she certainly was involving herself. I don't think she was interfering. I think it was a very appropriate involvement. There were some others like Becky Kelso who thought the General College closing was a great idea. For that reason, the legislative involvement . . . I don't think it was a major factor.

CAC: The governor didn't have this high on his agenda?

WPS: If anything, I think the governor was responding positively to the proposal; but, it was not high on his agenda. It is possible that he may have been doing things that I didn't know about.

CAC: This leads logically into the tenure dispute, which was probably more complicated.

WPS: Yes.

CAC: Where do you want to begin?

WPS: Oh, god!

CAC: [laughter]

WPS: Actually, I can begin at an odd place, which is before I was provost. Nils, the year before I became provost, in some way or other had gotten a grant or had agreed . . . What it was was the Pew Foundation was having a set of round tables at universities. Nils was very interested in this and he's agreed to host a round table, paid for by Pew—that, basically, meant that they sent a couple of staffers to coordinate it—of local people, faculty, and administrators to talk about the mission of the university. We had that session and . . .

CAC: This was on the initiative of Pew Foundation?

WPS: The Pew Foundation initiative, yes.

CAC: It was not an application to them?

WPS: They took the initiative. There were a lot of universities involved around the country. Nils, I think, offered that we would be one of the participants. I guess the first one was just set up out of his office and it was a whole bunch of people. That one was set up fairly early on in his presidency, now that I think of it. Coming out of that, I got involved in working on this collaboration at Wisconsin with Nils that I did before I did this. That one must have been a few years ago. But, the year before I became provost, as a spin-off of that session, Nils had agreed with Pew that he would have three, or four, or five local round tables that we would set up. He asked me if I would set those up for him and, actually, put me on a couple weeks' summer salary to give me a little support for doing that. I did that. I talked with various central administrators as to what would be some good issues and I also talked with faculty governance about what would be some good issues. Jim Infante felt very strongly that we should have one on tenure. He said, "Tenure is coming up as a hot item and the Board of Regents are getting interested in tenure. Especially, Jean Keffeler is getting interested in tenure." This was before Bill Brody had ever come as provost, before any provosts were here. So, we had a full day session on tenure with a lot of faculty members, who later figure in the tenure business: Mike Bognanno, who was then a faculty member in the Business School; myself; Ellen Bercheid; Jim Infante. We invited

two members of the Board of Regents as members for the day-long session and Jean Keffeler and the guy from Rochester—I'm so bad at names—the doctor . . .

CAC: Neel. [H. Bryan Neel]

WPS: . . . and Regent Neel were there all day as part of this session. I was told later that the people in the president's office had particularly wanted Jean to be there because they thought she was getting awfully interested in tenure and they thought she'd better hear somebody with a faculty perspective on it.

CAC: Sure.

WPS: That was back in 1994. This thing just continued to cook. Jim and the executive council told us that Jean kept pushing on the tenure thing. He thought he was going to have trouble heading her off; so, he felt that we needed, for this last academic year, to schedule a whole series of sessions in the regents' meetings on tenure. That's how that all got started. I'm actually a little hazy in my historical memory on this myself. There was so much going on and it's all sort of blended. Bill Brody caused a lot of the problem because he was very hot for re-engineering. He went over to the legislature and he told them he needed money, that the Academic Health Center was in terrible financial shape—which it was.

CAC: He went over on his own initiative?

WPS: I'm not sure what initiative . . . he may have been over testifying to a committee.

CAC: Okay.

WPS: I know that he told them that he really didn't have the tools to solve this because he was locked into this tenured faculty. In fact, he saw himself—he and I had many arguments about this—as quite locked in.

CAC: Interruption here for clarification . . . Would it not be the case—that's a good way to put a question—that the larger proportion of the medical faculty were tenured on soft money than anywhere else in the university?

WPS: Yes.

CAC: That's a systemic problem?

WPS: Yes, it's a systemic problem . . . exactly. Also, he and I in our discussions concluded, among other things, that the demographics of his faculty were different than mine.

CAC: Ah!

WPS: It looks as though he had a younger tenured faculty than I had.

CAC: They'd be around longer.

WPS: I kept saying, "Look, I have all the flexibility I need. My worry is not that we're going to be stuck with faculty we don't want. My worry is that we've got a whole lot of replacement because we're going to be losing a third to a half of our faculty over the next ten years and we're going to have to replace a lot of them. Even if we would be having to shrink, we'd still be doing a lot of replacement and this is going to be at a time when there aren't going to be good candidates out there because everybody's told their good undergraduates, 'There are no jobs. Don't go to graduate school.'"

CAC: That was not modified or held back at all by the removal of the seventy retirement requirement?

WPS: It just delays things. As I kept telling people, "Nature takes over where legislation leaves off." We are going to be losing our faculty either feet first or because of mandatory retirement sometime over the next decade.

CAC: But, eight or ten years would make an enormous difference in timing.

WPS: But, after all, mandatory retirement was lifted some years ago now, a few years ago; so, we've already passed through some of that. We see lots of retirements up coming now. You can see it in the History Department.

CAC: Go ahead.

WPS: You don't see it?

CAC: No. I see a lot of people in their seventies now who are hanging on.

WPS: Yes, of course, they're hanging on but they're leaving.

CAC: They'll leave eventually; but, I'm saying it's retarded it by four or five years.

WPS: Yes, it has retarded it by four or five years. I was talking about a problem of the next decade. The timing would be changed by this but the problem would not be changed.

CAC: Yes.

WPS: So, I said, "The problem certainly in Arts, Science, and Engineering is not that we have deadwood tenured in; although, there are some people who are tenured in that I wish had never been tenured." Rather, we have to be a wonderful place for faculty five to ten years from now when we're going to be doing massive hiring.

CAC: Right.

WPS: I said, "The last think you want to do in the world is to be messing with the tenure system." When a high central officer with a lot of credibility—Bill was very articulate—went to the legislature . . .

CAC: But very new on the scene. He didn't know all these other things?

WPS: No.

CAC: That's not to fault him.

WPS: No. He was very brisk and got right to the point of things. He was very articulate.

CAC: I'm guessing that he probably had the backing of the medical technology industry?

WPS: Yes, sure. Businessmen, mostly, find the tenure system just abysmally difficult to understand.

CAC: Particularly, those who are engaged in the medical . . . ?

WPS: I don't know about particularly . . . I think any businessmen do.

CAC: Except they would have greater access and clout within the health field?

WPS: Yes. Bill, particularly, had their ear. I think it was really when he went to the legislature and told them that tenure was preventing him from improving the University of Minnesota. That's when things changed at the legislature, I think. Before, people would be muttering about tenure and they'd say, "That's a crazy way to run a place but, then, it's a pretty crazy place." [laughter] But, when a high ranking officer went over there and told them that, it just changed the nature of the discussion, I think.

CAC: Then, the legislator gets back to some of the regents?

WPS: Yes, and some of the regents overreact to that. A couple of the regents themselves are very interested in re-engineering and want to push that agenda. All hell broke lose. Gary Engstrand has tried to pull together a time line of this. It's a couple hundred pages long. It's monstrous.

CAC: Would this be available to our historians?

WPS: Yes.

CAC: Okay.

WPS: But, it's not really very good because it's mostly based on publicly available record and it misses all kind of stuff that went on. It's also very much based on the faculty governance structure. The faculty governance structure, while central, was only one of several central operations going on. I don't know where to begin on this.

CAC: If I were a better questioner, I'd help you along.

WPS: Geez.

CAC: It's the Faculty Consultative Committee that's right up front on this all the way from the beginning and what other governing . . . ?

WPS: The Faculty Consultative Committee was up front on this. The truth was that most of us—I include myself in this; although, I was making these same arguments about how my biggest problem is replacement faculty not the tenured in—partly in response to public pressure, certainly saw things that could be changed in the tenure system. We're not adamant that we should not have a changed tenure system. I even changed my position, as I went along, on the question of whether tenure should reside in the units or in the colleges. In this white paper—this was a white paper that people like Ellen Bercheid, and Mike Bognanno, and myself, and Patrice Morrow, and other active faculty were involved in and brought out—we stated that tenure should reside at the unit level. That was back in 1994; so, there was an evolution of views on this . . . partly, seeing just what got people upset. There's no sense in making a change. These changes were not important enough for the cost in faculty morale.

CAC: Not even for the health fields?

WPS: No, not even for the health fields. Frank Cerra concluded that he had flexibility enough.

CAC: But, that's after Bill left?

WPS: After Bill left. So there was an evolution of positions. The Faculty Consultative Committee put together a task force on tenure. You probably know all this.

CAC: It's not me knowing it.

WPS: Somebody . . .

CAC: No, very few.

WPS: It's a complicated business. The Consultative Committee put together this task force, which included John Adams, Carl Adams, Dan [Farber] from the Law School . . .

CAC: Sullivan?

WPS: Sullivan . . . Sullivan came in very late. This is back in the beginning of the last academic year.

CAC: I see.

WPS: This group was working and they brought forth a set of proposed tenure recommendations for discussion, which, basically, I could have happily accepted as a tenure code. Most of them, I wouldn't have fought for. Then, there turned out to be some very strong faculty opposition to this. This ended up crippling the Consultative Committee because the task force which had brought this out was seen as the creature of the Consultative Committee. Carl Adams and John Adams had been on it. John Adams chaired it. One problem that happened last year was that the faculty broke up into various groups so you had the Committee of Nineteen, who were very harsh in their attacks on the Consultative Committee. Maybe this was over a two-year period, now that I think about it.

CAC: I think so.

WPS: It really think it was at the beginning of two years ago that that task force was operating.

CAC: Right, right.

WPS: I'm sorry.

CAC: This is not the Sara Evans task force?

WPS: Oh, no, that's another later one. This was sort of the, if you will, establishment task force back before things got hot. In response to the regents . . .

CAC: Self-appointed?

WPS: No, appointed by the Consultative Committee . . . full statutory legitimacy.

CAC: Okay.

WPS: It was a good group of people and they did good work; but, they were, in the end, extremely distrusted by many faculty. By the end of the academic year before last, they were being pilloried.

CAC: Particularly John Adams and Carl?

WPS: John Adams and Carl Adams were especially pilloried. It was because of a lack of trust. I don't even know everything about what broke down that trust. In the end, there were at least four groups operating. There was the Consultative Committee. There was the Committee of Nineteen, primarily led by Fennel Evans and Ellen Bercheid. There was the AAUP [American Association of University Professors]. All these things interlocked. And there was the union. They were all independent possible sources of positions and conflicts. The whole thing just went to hell.

CAC: How did the regents interact with these various faculty groups—if at all?

WPS: They interacted with them in various ways. They tried to co-opt them. They tried to—Jean Keffeler particularly—get just everyone of those faculty groups with her. At one point, [V.] Rama Murthy, very late in this business, the president of AAUP, came to Mike Bognanno and I one day. I was over in Mike's office and Rama came in. He said, "I just had a very interesting telephone call with Jean Keffeler. I think that we can work with her." Mike and I burst into laughter. We said, "Rama, it's not because we think anything less of you for talking with her. By all means, talk with her. But, you're probably the fifteenth faculty leader who's come this way saying that." At the same time, the regents were working all along through this with their own consultant and their own lawyers.

CAC: That was my question. How on earth did they get that particular consultant group, who, it turned out—if my reading is at all approximately accurate—knew very little about the structure of tenure codes at other comparable universities.

WPS: The Chate Consulting group knew a lot about tenure codes elsewhere. Chate had been down at Arizona to consult with their board about it. They'd been consulting all over the country.

CAC: I see.

WPS: There wasn't any ignorance in those operations, I don't think. Jean always complained bitterly that she couldn't get Jim's office to provide her with information and that was why they needed their own consultant. She was sort of right about that. Jim's office was very ineffective at getting some information. She became very suspicious of Central Administration, partly because she had trouble getting information she asked for. She also asked for tons and tons of information . . . some fairly simple stuff such as, what are the tenure codes like at the twenty major universities in the country? She asked Jim for that early on in this. By a year later, she

still hadn't gotten that from Jim's office. She was frustrated and I can understand that—and Jim was frustrated. In the end, Bob Kvavik, finally, because they hadn't been able to get the office to do it, just got on the phone himself and did it in about a day. So, there were all these things feeding to distrust. The General College had also, by the end of things, fed distrust between the regents and Central Administration. Incidentally, just a side to the General College . . . One thing which I objected to a lot was that most of Morrill Hall were running to the regents, undercutting Nils during the whole thing. That's just a side that I was remembering. I've learned a lot in this job . . . [laughter]

CAC: [laughter]

WPS: . . . as a political scientist. The level of trust between Central Administration and the regents had largely broken down. The level of trust between faculty and Central Administration was delicate. There were some back channels that worked pretty well. Mike Bognanno and I were, I think, trusted pretty much by the faculty leadership throughout, by all groups. We kept up some conversation there. The trust between the regents and the faculty had just disappeared by the end of things.

CAC: At what point, then, does the dean of the Law School get into this?

WPS: At a very late point.

CAC: But, there's Sullivan I, II, and III. We need not go into all three. Those are public documents for any historian.

WPS: Sullivan came into this at a point after that disastrous regents' meeting in Morris in September where the regents brought forth their consultant's proposed tenure code—which was just horrible—which we in Central Administration had been strongly begging them to not bring forth. Their trust level of Central Administration was so low that, initially, they were not going to show Nils that document until the regents' meeting. He insisted on seeing it. When they did give it to him, it was on the condition that only he and the senior vice-president for Academic Affairs could see it; so, I had not myself seen it until the morning in regents' meeting in Morris.

CAC: You were there?

WPS: I was there at Morris. I didn't know what was in it; but, I'd heard it was terrible. When I heard it presented, I went to Bryan Neel. I thought Bryan was my best hope. I said, "Bryan, you folks have got to do something within the next twelve hours to pull this off or you're going to have a union election called within a week." I literally told him within a week he'd have it. I said, "Aside from the union election, this is just going to destroy recruitment of faculty." He said, "Phil, do you have a physician down in the Twin Cities that can prescribe a tranquilizer for you?"

CAC: Oh.

WPS: Nils had been trying very hard to get them not to bring that forward. That was brought forth within about another month or a couple months—I forget the timing. There developed in the Law School the sense that they could, perhaps, propose their own tenure code and that this could be something that other people could look to as well. I have a suspicion that Fred Morrison was somewhat involved in that and that Sullivan, then, brought it forth as a proposal to the Board of Regents.

CAC: Do you want to spin the story farther than that now?

WPS: I have trouble remembering the story. It's so blurred.

CAC: Speaking to the persons who may be reading the transcript or listening to the tape, where would they go? What is the paper trail on this?

WPS: The best paper trail will be this document that Gary Engstrand has been preparing for the Consultative Committee. It's over a hundred pages now. It documents at least what was happening in public meetings throughout. I honestly blur the time line. I would benefit from just having a time line in front of me. Then, one other problem is that there was an awful lot going on privately. I've been fairly frank in telling you a few stories here; but, there's a lot of stuff that was going on that I can't very easily share.

CAC: There's a lot that . . . even oral history picks up tidbits here and there. I can't interview fifty people.

WPS: The oral history of the tenure fight here would be . . .

CAC: A project all in itself.

WPS: I think it would be a project of the magnitude of the one you've undertaken.

CAC: Yes.

[break in the interview]

CAC: These issues are so complicated that we have to pause once in awhile and figure out where to go next. One person's memory, even if he has a good memory and is well-placed, begins to blur and you really do have to have documents in front of you. A good historian trying to untangle this would indeed get those documents and depend on the spoken word as a guide or a trigger to go look at this and consider that; but, it's certainly not the whole story by any means.

Many people I've talked to have talked about the corporatization of the university. In a sense, the concern of the business community with the tenure issue and the real difficulty for one culture to understand the other . . . we start there. Take that somewhere for me.

WPS: Yes, okay. First of all, just to say a word on the culture . . . I found myself in the tenure issue . . . not infrequently, I was the point person for the Central Administration with the business community on this because, among other things, I was our liaison to the High-Tech Council. There was one meeting, for instance, where Jim Infante and I went and spent an hour with them presenting the administration's proposals on tenure to them and why this was different than what the regents were considering. It was an incredibly hard sell. I remember that I made arguments that I thought would make sense to a business. I said, for instance, that different organizations which have different kinds of products have to organize themselves differently. An organization that has a product where uniformity of the product is very important have to be very tightly controlled.

CAC: Ah!

WPS: So, that a factory producing machine parts, for instance, has to turn out a part to a tolerance of microns. You have to have a structure with constant checking and constant accountability and uniformity of processes.

CAC: Good metaphor!

WPS: Whereas, in other sorts of businesses like a law firm or an ad agency, where you rely on an individual creative act, they have to organize themselves much more loosely and with much more individual autonomy and protection for individuals against being moved by somebody else. I said, "A university is that kind of organization." Then, I looked around this room and it was all manufacturing people . . . [laughter]

CAC: [laughter]

WPS: . . . these stony faces looking at me. I made another argument. I said, "You actually are getting a better bargain in a university if you have tenure because there's a trade-off and you're, in effect, offering faculty members a good deal of personal security to do creative work, which they want to do, and you can get them to work for less money because you're offering them that. The university would cost more if you didn't do that." I thought these were good arguments for a business group. Finally, the chairman of this meeting just was boiling. He said, "Don't give me anymore of this shit! If I came to my board of directors and I told them what you are telling me, they'd say, 'You go there and fire that guy!'"

CAC: [laughter]

WPS: It turned out the only argument that they found compelling was that we couldn't be out of line and we could not be the first university to do this because we would have a recruitment disadvantage. They said that as long as MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology], and Harvard, and Yale, and Berkeley, and Michigan, and Wisconsin were having tenure like this, they agreed that we could not do a radical change in our tenure code. That was the only argument that moved them.

The corporatization was actually, though it's awfully related to that, different. There was another thing different then, although related to the tenure issue, and that was downsizing of the university faculty. In many ways, people who had a sort of a business view of the university, looked at us and said, "If you're serious about planning, how much are you going to reduce the faculty?" I got this from members of the Board of Regents. I got this from people within Central Administration, people in Academic Affairs. I felt that for those couple of years, one of my major fights was combating that view, that it was progress to reduce the size of the faculty. David Lebedoff, whom I talked with about this, gave me a very good line. He said, "What people don't realize is that the faculty are the product of the university. They are not the machinery that produces things. They are the product; so, if you reduce the faculty, you are reducing the product of the university."

One thing I did was I had Susan Grotevant do an analysis for me of how much money we save if we reduce the size of the CLA faculty by one person. So, what we did was she took the average salary of faculty members, sixty years or older, figuring that they're the mostly likely ones we'd be losing, and offset that with the tuition that they generated with their teaching and found that if you eliminated that faculty member, you saved about \$40,000; but, if you replaced that faculty member with a beginning assistant professor—then, we took the average salary of assistant professors and the average tuition generated by assistant professors in CLA—it turned out that you saved about \$40,000 if you shrunk the faculty and you saved about \$30,000 if you replaced that senior faculty member with a beginner. The real savings of shrinking the faculty was about \$10,000 a head. For that, you're losing research capacity. You're losing the advising of graduate students. You're losing the creation of intellectual community. You're losing the outreach to the community. I made this argument time and time again with Nils and the executive council. I also made this argument with the Board of Regents in a presentation I made to them. I always got a very good hearing. I think this helped. I did feel that this argument for the research university and for the non-corporatization of the university was something that had to be fought successively and continually the whole time I was provost. By the end, I think we were fairly successful with it. I don't think this is a one-person thing but a whole bunch of things coming together. The business community were very important in this because the business community, though they don't like the idea of tenure . . . they just can't like that but they do really value the university as a research university. That came through especially in the General College issue debates.

CAC: Some of my less informed colleagues would, when the word corporatization—in quotation marks—is there, they think of the exclusive contract with Coca Cola . . .

WPS: Ah, yes.

CAC: . . . or with Grain Belt.

WPS: That's a different kind of corporatization. That's selling out to the corporations rather than trying to become one.

CAC: Right.

WPS: I think it's a fine line we have to walk. I really applaud the fact that the university is trying to resonate more and more with the population of the state. It's things like the little flags on the mall, which I think make it look more like a campus. I love that! I do. They're a little hokey. I wish our gopher weren't quite so cartoonish.

CAC: [laughter]

WPS: I really applaud that. There are some other things involved in our sort of athletics [unclear] community relations, which I don't like so much.

CAC: Many guys like myself and gals aren't particularly affectionately toward Goldie Gopher; but, if he's going to sell beer, that's another . . .

WPS: Yes. My problem with the Coke is also not just so much even that we did it . . . in some ways, there's no reason why we can't use our existence as a big economic unit to get some economic advantages.

CAC: Sure.

WPS: I think we should be pressing Northwest Airlines for a corporate rate, for instance. Apparently, they don't offer it. That kind of thing . . . There's nothing wrong with our signing an exclusive thing with a soft drink company in return for financial rewards; but, that money got compartmentalized into things in which it doesn't feed very much of anything but athletics.

CAC: I think that's the truth. I'm going to flip our tape. We have one other topic left.

[End of Tape 2, Side 1]

[Tape 2, Side 2]

WPS: I also think that there's something symbolic and, therefore, subtle but terribly important and that is just how we present ourselves to ourselves. For instance, we do some things with corporations, Silicone Graphics, and IBM, and Intel where we either make special contracts with them or accept special favors from them; but, we make clear how those are feeding into our

research and instruction mission. I don't think any of us feel particularly bad about that. The Coca Cola . . . I think the problem was that we didn't present that to ourselves and to the state as that Coca Cola is forming a special contract with us and, as a result, here is a classroom which is going to be better equipped for our students and here is a faculty member who is going to be able to do research. We didn't present any of that. We presented it . . . we were going to be the Coca Cola campus. It's partly how we present ourselves but partly what we think we are. That is still not entirely resolved.

CAC: And how does it get folded into the budget for the ends that faculty would like? Let's kind of end our conversation—we have caucused a bit so we know the major things we want to cover—with a subject that comes from other people I've interviewed as well: a sense of the task of governing this place. Some people are worried about chairs, and their lack of orientation, and how they churn through three years and maybe three and three, and the difficulty of orienting chairs in different departments, whose responsibilities are very central and it goes all the way up to the impossibility of Central Administration to do much. Where do you want to attack that kind of thing? Often I've had people say, "This place is just ungovernable." They don't mean Morrill Hall; they mean the whole darned operation.

WPS: I don't think that's true at all.

CAC: Okay.

WPS: I think this place is extremely decentralized and, in one sense, you want it to be and, in other senses, it will be whether you want it to be or not. I think, as a result, you get quite variable things going on. So, we have some departments which are just not real effective. We have some others which are just incredibly effective under circumstances where it makes you wonder how they could possibly have been so effective with the resources they've been given. I think that the end result of that is a rich and surprisingly successful university. This is the smallest state in the country to have a top thirty ranked university. It's a half-filled glass because I can see all sorts of things wrong all sorts of places on the campus.

CAC: Sure. I used to think when I was in the great war, how the hell is this army ever going to win the war; but, finally, they win a war.

WPS: Yes, so it's a half-filled glass. As I look around, I think this is a place where there are daily miracles. I think it's really very successful; but, on the other hand, I do find all kinds of frustrations with the jobs here. My main concern is not so much the fact that you can't get this place to work like a machine. That doesn't bother me. I found as a central officer . . . I'm worried about Central Administration in the university and how it operates in a couple ways. One is that those jobs . . . whether we could figure out a way to do them differently, I don't know. They are defined as being far too time consuming, far too consuming of energy and of body than they should be. They're kind of unhealthy jobs. It's very hard on family life. I didn't

have much chance to read anything while I was provost. I didn't read anything in political science, my own field, the whole time. I'm going to catch up now—which is wonderful.

CAC: Did you get a year or a quarter to retool?

WPS: I have a sort of a variant of a year off. I have some teaching duties, some minor administrative duties, but it's mostly retooling and research.

CAC: Good.

WPS: They're just draining jobs. They're uncomfortable jobs. One thing that bothered me a lot was that the day I became a provost, I crossed a line and my colleagues from the faculty, who had known me for twenty-five years, ascribed an entirely different set of motives to me than they had the week before. Nobody trusts you. They are very hard jobs. We have defined them to be terribly time consuming. We're over-scheduled, over-booked. At the same time, there is a class distinction, which I was always very uncomfortable with. Central administrators, partly because everybody else defines them as being different from them, define themselves also, I think, as being a self-group. It's natural. It's like when I go abroad, I feel more American than I do when I'm at home because everybody's treating me as if I'm different. I think central administrators do see themselves as a class and it's a privileged class. I was always embarrassed when I was provost at the fact that if I needed another secretary, all I had to do was sign my name to a piece of paper and I'd added a secretary to my staff. There were no controls on that. I could manipulate budgets all I wanted, to my own benefit. I think there's a fair amount of that that goes on. My office was carpeted. I had art work from the Weisman Gallery in it. I knew that a department chair could not . . . if you wanted to add a secretary to your department staff, it was moving heaven and earth to make that change. It was like you said, the difference between asking for \$22,000 and \$20,000 for a project. It's a big deal. Also, you have to argue for it; whereas, I could move much larger amounts of money on my own behalf without any problem if I wanted to. I tried not to. You hear a lot of faculty-bashing, faculty jokes.

CAC: Oh, I see. It works the other way?

WPS: Oh, yes.

CAC: I shouldn't be surprised.

WPS: There's sort of a defensiveness there, which is not unnatural because administrators are maligned a lot. It turns up the other way: a great suspicion of faculty on the part of most administrators. I think that's really unhealthy.

CAC: That happens rather soon in office?

WPS: I don't know how soon. I don't think it happened to me in two and a half years—at least, I like to think it didn't.

CAC: That, we attribute to your personality and character and not to the system.

WPS: A lot of these folks have never been faculty members. A lot of our central administrators are not from faculty. A lot are but are fairly remotely from faculty. You hear lots of things about why is it that most faculty like to teach a Tuesday Thursday schedule . . . something about spoiling the weekend if you had to do anything else, and jokes about screwing in light bulbs, and all the rest, which I found quite offensive and which I occasionally called people on. I also have sometimes felt like the first woman in a male department, that I thought my being in one of the those council meetings changed the nature of the discussion. I don't think I was imagining things there. I don't know whether this sort of estrangement exists everywhere. I suspect it does. I suspect it's worse here.

CAC: The existence of the provost presumably should have removed some of the pressure on other officers in Central Administration. You were very close to Mr. Hasselmo not only these three years but before. I just cannot understand how someone in that office can continue to work for nine years.

WPS: I can't imagine it. I turned down every inquiry I had about a presidency while I was provost. I would have no interest in being a president of a college or university because you have to totally give over your family for it. I was willing to make the sacrifice I did as provost for this university. I wouldn't be willing to go anywhere else and do it because I don't feel that dedication . . .

CAC: You knew it wasn't going to be a twelve year . . .

WPS: I wasn't planning on it being a twelve year. I had in mind a little longer than I did. I enjoyed what I was doing but it was a real sacrifice. My family paid a sacrifice. I sacrificed in other things I could have been doing; but, I thoroughly enjoyed it. I was a volunteer.

CAC: There's an anecdote that's on one of the other transcripts of Bill Wright, who was in the Office of International Programs out of Morrill Hall for awhile and very busy. They had an assignment office in the old Extension dormitory over there and he had a bathroom in his office, but not a much bigger office than this, and he had a cot. Frequently, when he'd come back from overseas—he would fly in Thursday or Friday—he'd just stay in the office. He wouldn't even go home. On tape, he said that one day—he didn't know what day it was—he talked to Don Smith. This was some years ago. It's Sunday morning at eight o'clock and he's kind of unaware. He calls up Don Smith and Don Smith is there! Then, he was shocked when he realized, I expected Don to be there.

WPS: Yes.

CAC: It's that sort of thing. It's not only the high offices but these associates and assistants.

WPS: I think that's unhealthy.

CAC: Do you suppose the same burden is there in corporations?

WPS: No, I don't think so.

CAC: How do they get around it?

WPS: I think this is a much more difficult leadership and administrative job than CEO [chief executive officer] of any corporation. Think about it. Honeywell is a simple operation compared with this. What does Honeywell do? Honeywell can state what its mission is really clearly and easily and it can also tell pretty precisely how well each part of its operations is contributing to that mission because its mission is to produce certain kinds of products that it has skill in doing and sell those at a profit. The amount of profit measures how successful it's been. The president of the University of Minnesota could never begin to state in as clear terms as that what's expected of either the university or him.

CAC: What kind of rewards do you think there are, then, as you observed Nils Hasselmo, whose a decent human being.

WPS: Oh, yes.

CAC: I asked Bognanno that yesterday. He said, "Boy, it was rewarding" . . . it was only three years.

WPS: I loved doing my job. To me the real reward was the satisfaction and sense of accomplishment and also the intellectual challenge of developing strategies and accomplishing. The game of it was really fun, too. As a political scientist, I was engaged in fairly high politics; so, the challenge . . . those were the two fun things. For Nils . . . I talked with him some about this myself.

CAC: I will on tape myself.

WPS: I'll just tell you one cute story. Nils is so easily underestimated. People think of him as this nice person and he is a very nice person; but, they think that a person cannot be a nice person and also be a tough leader. He's very, very tough. That summer that I was working with him, I said, "Nils, this looks like just the worst job on earth that you have to me. Why do you do it?" He said, "Well, Phil, I just rather accidentally got into these various administrative jobs over the years; but, I've just discovered that I really enjoy living on the edge," in this very soft voice.

CAC: Ah. That's remarkable.

WPS: When I was interviewing for the provost with him, he had told me about the provost job, and he said, "Phil, you'll find that you have to count on inner satisfaction in this job because you'll mostly be being attacked. You'll at least know every morning when you come in what you're going to do that day. The truth is that there are certain types of people who seem to like these jobs. I think I'm one of them. The Swedes have a term for it; it's called "having the bloody tooth."

CAC: I don't get that.

WPS: A carnivore that's tasted blood.

CAC: Oh! I'm sorry.

WPS: It's a very aggressive, macho sort of image for a softly spoken person.

CAC: Politicians talk about fire in the belly, right?

WPS: I think Nils has that. Something I sort of shared with him . . . the fact that when I'd come back from one of these meetings with departments—most administrators quailed at the idea of going and meeting with the department faculty—I'd come back just pumped up feeling so good about what was happening in this department, usually. Nils just really warmed anytime he was with people, talking with them. He really got a kind of warmth out of that and got revitalized, whether it be major donors, or students, or faculty; so, there is that. I don't know how you keep getting people to go into these jobs.

CAC: Are you carrying back to your own research agenda the questions, which by analogue, you can carry from the experience you've had?

WPS: Not really. When I was faculty lobbyist over at the legislature, Deon Stuthman from the Agronomy Department told me how he envied me—he was over there working also to help the faculty over at the legislature—because to him it was just professionally wasted time; whereas, for me, it would be feeding in my research. I said, "Deon, what I'm doing over here right now has the same relationship to my research as your backyard vegetable garden has to your research in agronomy."

CAC: [laughter]

WPS: It's related and I get lots of good stories to tell in class in my teaching.

CAC: But, no basic fundamental insights into the political process.

WPS: My research is some other kinds of questions so it doesn't really do it. It gets me broad insights. It helps keep me broad. I like that.

CAC: You don't seem to be as tired as many people I've talked to who have gone through this experience. You must have a good physique and physical system?

WPS: Yes, I did. I gained about twenty pounds as provost.

CAC: Oh!

WPS: I've lost about ten of it now since I've stopped. I didn't sleep well while I was provost. I'd wake up. I slept by other people's standards damned well; but, I've always slept like a baby. I'd get awake most nights and be awake for a half an hour to an hour and a half thinking over the various things I had to do and how to solve them. Your adrenaline goes up and just stays. The weekend isn't long enough to get it down. It was two and a half years of being on high pumping adrenaline and that's not good for you.

CAC: It may be a good foretaste and prophesy of sleeping habits of the aged.

WPS: [laughter] That's what I've heard.

CAC: It was a tremendous surprise to me as I got into my seventies that I had broken sleep. I panicked with it at first because I'd always sleep like a baby, as they say . . . babies, indeed. It's there. You have to learn to adjust.

WPS: I did learn. At first, I was very bothered by it; but, as I went on, I realized that if I'd lie there and mull over my problems, and my challenges, and regrets of what I'd done or not done that day, and so on for about a half hour to an hour or so, I'd drop back off and I knew that would happen. So, it didn't bother me.

CAC: Did you ever have the experience of waking up then at six-thirty with some of those problems resolved?

WPS: No.

CAC: I've had that happen in my research and teaching that you have a block, and you sleep on it, and you wake up at six and, suddenly, the chapter is there.

WPS: Oh, I often had that. It usually happens in the shower. It doesn't happen when I wake up.

CAC: I see. Do you have other reflections on this experience, sir?

WPS: No, except that I really did thoroughly enjoy it.

CAC: Good. We thank you for those three years and we thank you for the two and a half hours.

WPS: Yes. Thank you.

[End of Tape 2, Side 2]

[End of the Interview]

Transcribed by:

Hermes Transcribing and Research Service
12617 Fairgreen Avenue, Apple Valley, MN 55124
(612) 953-0730