

Elizabeth Berry, Track 3

Tape 2, Side A

EB: Former wife. (Both laugh)

JB: You're _____ (??).

EB: That's right.

JB: You were talking about supporting—supportive mechanisms.

EB: Yeah. Notes—notes to each other. We have a Women Studies retreat once a year, and that is often—I mean, that's not just Women Studies people, we try to get people who we think—I mean, we're talking about what different issues within the Women Studies Program but we—we do include a lot of people in that, usually. In fact, I think you've been to that, haven't you? Yeah.

JB: Yes, I have. That raises something that I wanted to ask. If you were—if you were doing a rough estimate for the number of men in the administration or on the faculty that you would designate as feminist in the sense that you understand the term feminism, how many—

EB: Three. (Both laugh)

JB: Three?

EB: Three.

JB: Seriously?

EB: Seriously.

JB: Would you like to name them? Or would you feel free to?

EB: Sure! I would name Jim Hasenauer, limited though, I mean—I—he's as much a feminist as a man can be. It's really hard, I would—I think he's as much feminist as a man could be. I think Pat Nicholson, and I think you. That's. It.

JB: I'm flattered to be in that company.

EB: I think Jerry Richfield, intellectually, understands it. And I think his daughter has been very helpful to him. And he's also been, and I did mention this earlier, and I prob—and I

should, he has also been very helpful and supportive of Women Studies. And can I go back a little bit—

JB: Sure.

EB: —about the beginning of the program? Because I meant to say this when we were talking about—After the program was approved in '77, we had to put it in a school, and there were two possible schools that the committee thought. One was Social and Behavioral Sciences, and one was Humanities. Now, I didn't know either Dean at the time. But I remember Dick Camp being on that committee and saying, "Well, I think it would be better in the School of Humanities. I think they're more—it would survive better." And so, our recommendation to the Vice President was this school should—the—you know, once an interdisciplinary program's approved, it's gotta be housed somewhere. And so, we recommended the School of Humanities. Well, this—that was probably one of the smartest things we ever did, because Jerry Richfield really, I have to say, was probably the best Dean we could have had for a new program. One thing, Humanities is a good place for an interdisciplinary program, as good a place as any place can be on this campus for interdisciplinary programs which are always stepchildren, but he was extremely helpful and accommodating. But even, perhaps, in addition, because of it, in it—whatever. There was another person that made a tremendous difference, and it shows again how women can help women. He had an administrative program specialist, whom I did not know. And her name was Delia Rudiger. And she was a latent feminist, but had never said anything to anybody. She didn't—she had this within her, but she was—she was pregnant, I think, at the time, with her second child. We can check those dates, I think that's about right. And I didn't know her at all. And she—and I didn't know—well, to back up, Jerry Richfield convinced me to be the coordinator of the Women Studies Program. Now, I was an untenured professor at the time, I was just going up for tenure, I was about to get tenured. And he called me, and I didn't know him at all. And he asked me—and I said, "I don't think I can do that," and "It'll hurt me," and "I don't—why me, you have other people who—" Well, he wanted me to do it. So, he took me out to lunch and convinced me I should do it. And there began a long and very nice friendship. Anyway, I didn't know anything about how the university ran, and so, I had to go to this program specialist to help me with filling out all these forms for part-timers, this is my first part-time appointment and all this, and here's this person who told me how to get money here, and how to do this, and how we might ask Dean Richfield for this, and she became—I mean, she was critical. You hear about women being in critical gatekeeping kinds of roles, but between having Jerry who was sympathetic—but, you know, he—if he had had—if there had been somebody in that office that controlled the budget, and control—or had influence over the budget and assignments—she used to schedule our Women Studies classes at the best times so that they would make. So, there were all these things she could do that were absolutely critical.

[00:05:54]

JB: And this was a fortuitous linkage.

EB: Yeah! Yeah.

JB: She was a latent feminist. It brought her out on one hand—

EB: She—I remember one time, it must have been about a year later. She used to play it real cool. She said it wasn't good—she didn't want Jerry to know (Broesamle laughs) that we were doing all this. And finally, she—I can't remember what the issue was, it must have been about a year later, sometime later, she said, That's it, "I can't keep it covered anymore, I'm just gonna be up-front with this," and she—he had already gathered, you know, that she was very helpful and sympathetic to the Women Studies Program, but then, she just made no—she said it was out in the open. There—she—and so she was very, very important. Now, I wanted to insert that because I wanted to be sure that that was on the record, but you had asked me another question, was that—that led me to that.

JB: Well, we were—we were talking about the matter of an academic subculture. Networking. The ways in which women support one another within this—this network, which we decided wasn't a subculture.

EB: Okay, alright, that's right. Yeah. But it—Oh, we set up—as I said, we set up this—trying to set up a group to have women help other women faculty. We had a couple dinners. Breakfasts. For women. With new faculty members.

JB: You think the commitment that the original women had in the program is as intense as it was, then?

EB: Yeah, and it's a little more widespread.

JB: What about younger women coming in? New faculty members. Are they affiliating readily with the program, or—or not?

EB: That's an interesting question. We have part—some new part-timers, but in the fields of—we have—yeah, we have some new people, business law, Carol Dochen introduced a course, new course, but there haven't been a whole lot of new courses. I think because, primarily, the women in so—there haven't been any hires in Social and Behavioral Sciences which it would come out of, and in English, we had some new courses as a result of new women hires, and a real strong commitment on case, on the part of certain people. Philosophy, they've hired new women, but they're not involved in feminist issues.

JB: As the—as the sex ratio on the campus changes, do you expect the program to grow in its support among the faculty then?

EB: It will depend, I think, on the kinds of women that are hired in the departments they're in and what their field of expertise is. I think Religious Studies has just hired somebody who is a strong feminist, she was at the Women Studies retreat, she's got some ideas about teaching feminism in religious studies. We haven't had a full-time person there, I think that person can be brought in, and as we hire new people, it depends on what their fields of interest are. If they're hired in certain traditional fields, they may—may not involve too many more—it might not get stronger, I don't know.

JB: You think—do you see—

EB: Those of us who get old or tired. (Both laugh)

JB: When you see a falling off an interest at all among your own, what about students, for example, or among younger women faculty? Is there any sign of it?

EB: I don't see a falling off on interest. I don't know how many Women Studies minors we have now. I mean, there's always a core group of women. I do think we are—we have the same problem that lots of groups have—or I mean, lots of campuses have. And we—we talk about it, and it's—it's this—with the younger women, that there isn't a whole lot that needs to be done.

[00:10:03]

JB: The feeling that it's been done?

EB: Yeah. And they're interested in the subject matter. And they'll relate some of what we say, but—to what they—but—their experiences—and they're outraged about rape and sexual harassment, and abortion, and this kind of thing, but they don't really see the more subtle kinds of discrimination and sexism that continues. They haven't experienced it. The older women know, they're different—there still as wonderful and sensitive, and aware, as they always have been, because they've experienced these things. But we had an interesting experience with Dale Spender when she was here, and she made some really radical statements, and she gave evidence, and the students denied her—denied, in fact, one of them said, “Well, what say may be true in Australia, and maybe it was true before, but it isn't true now.” And we all just—were shocked that the—this person had—this woman had these responses. And yet, as a teacher, you know, there's—how do you deal with that? You—you wanna say, you know, you're going to face a lot of problems, but they won't believe it in the first place. And secondly, do you wanna just beat them down and make them completely depressed? You've gotta raise hope, too.

JB: This is reminding me of what happened with women in the 1920's, younger women
. _____ (??) one another? You're persuaded by that analogy, I understand.

EB: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

JB: Let's change directions again.

EB: Okay.

JB: What would you say have been the major curriculum changes of the 1980's? What are the
most important three or four that you have seen?

EB: On this campus?

JB: On this campus.

EB: Well, I wish I could say there were more.

JB: I didn't mean to limit you.

EB: Yeah.

JB: Or maybe three or four are too many.

EB: Yeah, I think three or four are too many. Well, there hasn't been enough integration of
women—study of women and minorities into the curriculum, it's just a real—that's one
thing I really want to work on. How do you get faculty to do more than just add a book
to their bibliography? How do you really get them to read about—read feminist
scholarship, and scholarship on Blacks and Chicanos, and read novels and materials that
would help them incorporate this into their courses? I think the women's courses is
serious curriculum change. Courses from all the departments come through—there's
women in theater, there's women in business law, the Women Studies curriculum has
been changed and modified—so courses have come through from departments
regarding women. Not many courses in minorities. And their lack of—talking about
lacks—is the Asian Pacific Islands program that we really have tried to push, and we've
got it ready, almost ready to go, and we just haven't had the kind of organization and
attention to it that needs to be done. I think that we are becoming more aware of the
need for writing in all different courses, but I—again, with our resource problem, it's
hard to get faculty to teach writing. Trying to separate out what—there isn't any major
curriculum changes I can think of. Interdisciplinary programs still—still have to fight for
their survival, I think they're such an important thing, I think we're trying to—I think the
Honors Program needs more encouragement, and I think they've—that's been a good
program, that's new. And the—we're now trying to get connections started again, we're
linking up two courses and two faculty members. Planned some. The other thing, that I

think is most promising, is instructional development and pedagogical research effort that we're making.

JB: What's the origin of the movement in that direction? Are you the origin? Is—

[00:14:57]

EB: Well, actually, it's Suzuki and me, I would say. When he came, I talked to him about the Institute for Tea—Advancement Teaching Learning, the old Institute [Institute for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning]. I wished we could reinstitute the Institute and get that kind of discussion going about teaching and learning. And he was very interested in that, and in fact, I even organized a lunch where he had—we had some of the former fellows there talk about what they did and how great it was, this was the first year he was here. And then, his interest in teaching and teacher education, and research on teaching, came into play, and so I think we both have really been committed to that.

JB: How much impact, do you think, the new general education program, now the *old* new general education program has had, in installing some of the kinds of pedagogy that you'd like to see in the curriculum?

EB: Well, that—that is true, if you consider, I'd forgot, general education gets to come in when that—'79, though, or '82.

JB: Well, '80, '81.

EB: Yeah. So, if that—at that—I think, was very significant change. I think that the Section F was a very important curriculum change. I think there were some that would argue that is too diffuse, that its original intention was to focus on Blacks and Chicanos, and now we study Jews and women and other groups that perhaps—so that—I think, some argue that that's too diffuse. But I still think that's a very important section. And with our general education review, I'd like to see if we could—and there have been recommendations that it—that students have to take one of those F—more than one unit course in F too. And I wonder if that'll happen. But I think by developing those courses in cross-cultural experiences, we become more aware of materials and scholarship that we can use in other courses, too.

JB: You talk more in terms of—and your first impulse was to talk in terms of things we haven't done. To what extent are students better or worse off, in terms of the whole body of curriculum now than it were at the outset of the '80s?

EB: I think it's better. I think that general education is better, it makes more sense. I have a lot of problems with certain aspects of it, and I think—I think the reason that our general education isn't better, is that when it was changed, it was changed at a time when

people were facing layoffs. And they couldn't think rationally about academic matters, without—they couldn't think rationally about academic matters without thinking about how it would impact on their departments and the numbers of students. It was so interlinked that I think some mistakes were made, and judgment decisions were made that I certainly wouldn't agree with. But I don't know whether I would have done differently.

JB: Would you like to suggest what some of those mistakes were?

EB: Well, I think that—I think that we have—one of the things that they did was they gave specific department's names for each section, thereby limiting certain sections to certain departments.

JB: Territoriality.

EB: Right. Section E was written in such a way that you can't understand it, we worked for a year and a half to try to understand what is meant, and we can't. I mean, it's hard to justify Section E, otherwi—other than, it was put in to help certain departments. And, in fact, it does, if we didn't use Section E would have serious implications for the departments, I mean it is a serious concern. I think it could have been more—what I'd like to do, and when we start our general education review, focusing is on how we can make it better by improving the teaching that goes on in general education. Really made general education something that is—not just something to get through with and get over with and get it done, and then move on to the important stuff for the major, but really make it more exciting. I really wish we had more team taught courses, I wish we had more interdisciplinary courses, more connections, and if we had some flexibility and resources, we could do those kinds of things.

[00:20:15]

JB: So, what's holding us back is not faculty will.

EB: Well, I think partly—I think we could get more innovative stuff than we have out of the faculty.

JB: But what's basically holding us back, you're saying, is resources.

EB: Yeah, that's always at least the excuse that's used. Why do this, we won't be able to do it anyway. And that's a horribly complex—Now, we have thirty thousand students, such a big—you know, Pomona runs a nice little GE program. And they've got a special GE honors program for two hundred and thirty students. And it's tight, and it's nice, and it's great. And they've won awards on it. Well, that's wonderful. Maybe we could do that, I don't know. Maybe with our honors, we could play that up. But, we have thirty

thousand students here, we're not impacted, it's just very difficult to do with a thousand faculty.

JB: I asked you to think about a favored human-interest story or two, that is either telling or particularly rich in itself. What comes to mind?

EB: Well, the one I do remember is picketing in front of the registration building. And it was actually on behalf of the Women's Center, it wasn't for Women Studies. But—mm, I'm trying to think of the issue, maybe Michelle Wittig will remember. Cause we were up in her office, running off dittos. Margaret Vernallis—we had no Women's Center, and there were some students in my class who were—this is in early '70s, like, maybe mid-'70s, who were wanting to set up a Women's Center. And—so, during the summer of this particular year, Margaret Vernallis lent her office to be the beginning of a Women's Center. She let her office be used. And it was just the—and we were then gonna apply for funds and space for a Women's Center. This was before the Women Studies Program. And I can't remember the issue now, but they were kicking us out of something. They were either kicking—Margaret Vernallis' office couldn't be used anymore, or we'd found a space and they were kicking us out of that space, or they didn't find a space for us or for the Women's Center, something to do with that. Anyway, we got all agitated and a group of us got pickets, signs, and we marched in front of the women—administration building, and I remember, one of my students, an older man walking into the administration and doing a double-take as he saw me doing my thing in front of the administration building. It was great fun. I remember thinking, at the time, Gee, this is fun, this used to be what we did, so it must have been in the mid-'70s, because there wasn't a lot of picketing going on at that time.

JB: Do you think it says anything about this campus that you went from the picket line of the Associate Vice Presidency where you're standing in a few years? (Berry laughs)

EB: All on the same issue! Not really all on the same issue. The interesting thing is, that I just read in some—this morning, I have these notes and it's underlines, I've got to fight for the Women's Center again, because they're going to be moved out of that building, and there's no space for them designated right now, for the Women's Center in 1989. They had a nice little building, and they did good things to that building, and now that's gonna be razed for the new building, and there's no designated space for them. And I have this circle that I have to call out Elliot Mininberg about this.

JB: So the issue comes back.

EB: Yeah, the issue comes back. So, I do remember that. And—I just—oh, oh yes, I do remember this. First year I was—first year I was Associate Vice President, Jerry Richfield was Vice President, and Delia was in his office as his assistant. And it was somebody's birthday, or we decided—it was in September—it was Delia's birthday. And so, I had been in that job about a month. Jerry was in the Acting Vice President. And I called a

group of people together, so I told you something about the early '70s, now this is the '80s, and I said let's go down and surprise Delia. So about fifteen of us, I guess, gathered in my office and we walked down the hallway, and we had some wine and cheese, and so forth, and we walked in and we set it up in the conference room, which was then next to—the old conference room which was next to, you know, down at the end of the hall? Where all EPC meetings had been. And we set up the party, and I went into Delia's office and I said, come on into the conference room, I want to talk to you about something. And we went in, and we had this party. And we laughed, because here we were, about fifteen of us, celebrating her birthday, and next door was the Vice President. (laughs) And he knew, I mean he didn't care! I mean, what a change. And that started a whole series, through the years, of these parties, we called, we have a name for them which I won't tell you, but, where we gather, and discuss anything that's on our mind.

[00:25:55]

JB: Are there any questions that you wish I had asked that I didn't ask?

EB: No, I think you asked wonderful questions. I'll probably think of them later, Oh, I should have told him this, I should have told him that.

JB: We can always do it over _____ (??).

EB: Yeah, if I think of something important that I—well, it's a very interesting time, cause I have been here since—it parallels—I think my time here and my life in general, parallels outer society, what's going on with the women's movement. The campus is only a reflection of really what's going on in the outer world, except the campus is a little more conservative in terms of its involvement in social—in women's issues. We're known, statewide, within the CSU, I might say, that we're known for having a strong feminist network, but we're not known for having a very strong widespread women's—like a women's art group, or a women's—we're still struggling with some of the very basic issues that faced lots of campuses. So even though we have a, I think, a good group of strong, committed feminists, we're not very far ahead of any other campus.

JB: The strength is more in the power of the network, than in specific applications of decision or interest, genre. You think that's coming?

EB: Yeah, it could. We need a cause—we need to—mm, if we wanted to move into women's—like, a major, we'd have to really devote a lot of time and effort and energy to working on that. And that would—we've got lots of issues that we're concerned about, but we haven't focused on something that brings us together work, work, work.

JB: Is this a movement in search of a cause right now, wouldn't you say?

EB: No, no, I wouldn't say that. I think we've got a lot of causes. I think—I would like to see us focus on developing some real good, strong, innovative curriculum and teaching devices. Something we used to do that we haven't done, and probably because of the lottery and all these speakers that come in, do you remember the Women Studies colloquia for a number of years, where we brought feminist research to—you know, what's—two or three times a semester, someone would present research on feminism? And those were—we did that, I did started that at the beginning as a way to, again, show how legitimate women's studies was as a field. And the Women Studies colloquia were a very important part of getting it publicity and legitimacy.

JB: Do you think there is, now, legitimacy? Is legitimacy fully established?

EB: Yeah, I think so, but I don't know, you know better than I. I think so, yeah.

JB: I think so, too.

EB: Yeah. You know, the question, Should it exist—I'm sure certain people think so, but certain people probably think, Should women exist—But I don't feel as vulnerable as a program—and it's expanding all over the country, and of course the research is, also.

[END OF INTERVIEW]