Harry Hellenbrand
March 22, 2013
interviewed by Susan Resnik
for California State University Northridge
Campus Leadership and History Project
50:14 min:sec of recording
Transcribed by Jardee Transcription

SUSAN RESNIK (SR): Today is Friday, March 22, 2013. This is Susan Resnik. I'm in the Oviatt Library conference room of California State University Northridge, about to begin recording the oral history of former interim president and provost, and vice-president for academic affairs, Dr. Harry Hellenbrand. This interview will be part of the university's Campus Leadership and History Project.

Dr. Harry Hellenbrand served as interim president beginning on January 1, 2012. He served until the next president was selected and began her appointment. Until the interim appointment, Dr. Hellenbrand had served as provost and vice-president for academic affairs at California State University Northridge, beginning in August 2004. He brought a wide range of administrative and academic experiences with him, including eighteen years of experience within the CSU system. Dr. Hellenbrand's background reflects strength in planning K-12 linkages, retention efforts, and commitment to diversity. Before coming to CSUN, Provost Hellenbrand served as the dean and professor of the college of liberal arts at the University of Minnesota from 1994 to 1998, and as chair and professor of the English department at California State University San Bernardino, from 1982 to 1994. From 1998 to 2004, he was professor of English and dean of liberal arts at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. His educational background includes receiving a bachelor's degree in English, and American literature from

Harvard College in 1975. He received his doctorate in modern thought in literature from Stanford University in 1980.

May I call you Harry?

HARRY HELLENBRAND (HH): Sure.

SR: Thank you. Let's begin by going back and having you tell me where and when you were born, and something about your family.

HH: I was born and grew up in Brooklyn, New York, in 1953. My parents were born in New York City. Their parents emigrated from Eastern Europe to the United States, basically in the 1880s, 1890s. It's the typical American story, where my grandparents were laborers and/or small shopkeepers. My father went to law school, and my mother was actually a politician in New York City. She was in the New York State Assembly for about ten years, and New York City commissioner for about another eight years. And as I tell people facetiously, she was a political boss for about two decades, worked her way up through the school board, and then all the way of doing those things in the 1950s and early 1960s. Her benchmates in the New York State Legislature were Shirley Chisholm and Carol Bellamy, so she was of that generation with Bella Abzug that gained power for women in the early 1960s.

SR: I was there, I remember it well. And I certainly remember Shirley Chisholm very well.

HH: It's an interesting time. I wish I had been a little bit older to [com]prehend what was going on.

SR: Yeah. Well, that's very interesting. And so you were growing up in Brooklyn. Where did you live?

[00:03:40]

HH: Lived on Grand Army Plaza, which is right near Prospect Park and the big library and the Brooklyn Museum. It's a gorgeous place to go.

SR: It's beautiful. I can picture it very well. So in your early years, where did you go to school? And tell me about your activities, friends.

HH: I went to private schools in New York City. I went to Berkeley Institute, which is a small private school in Park Slope. I went to Poly Prep out in Bay Bridge [phonetic]. And there was a split in my life. The high school that I went to was largely Jewish, Greek, and Italian. Those were the kids who were moving up in the middle class to lower upper class in Brooklyn at that point in time. The neighborhood was largely Roman Catholic, Irish, and African American. And that's because of the changes that had *not* occurred ethnically in parts of Park Slope, where we lived at that time. So I had two different worlds of friends: my ones at home and ones at school.

SR: That's interesting. And so you weren't just with one group, you were with all these diverse groups early on.

HH: Yeah. I think that had a big effect on what I liked to do, and played lots of sports in high school, and hung out on the streets a lot.

SR: What kind of sports?

HH: Played soccer in high school, played baseball, played basketball, played a variety of different things.

[00:05:14]

SR: Uh-huh. When you were in school, clearly if you went to Harvard you must have been a good student in high school. Did you have any particular teachers you liked, or subjects that resonated?

HH: I was a pretty good student. I think I went there, I got in there, because I was a mix of student and athlete and student leader. I did the triple thing on that stuff, because there were many kids who were better academically than I was in high school. I'd say that Reuben Brower, who was a professor of English, taught something called new criticism. Oh, he had a big impact on me, which is doing very close reading of literature. And I worked with an astronomer, Owen Gingerich, who was there for a number of years. His humanity impressed me a great deal, and his care for students.

SR: That's nice.

HH: And a couple of professors in the art department who I worked with on landscape design had a big impact on me too.

SR: Okay. And then you went to Harvard. Why English?

HH: I think, like most kids in college, you sort of bandy about. I went there thinking I was going to do architecture—and quickly lost interest in that. And I think it had to do with the teachers more than anything else. Drifted into art history, and did that for a long period of time. In fact, I essentially graduated with a minor in art history. But I've always been kind of economically shrewd, and I figured out that the job market is not as good in art history as it was in literature, if that's what I wanted to do eventually, so I changed to an English major, still toying with the

idea of going to law school. I figured that would be better preparation. So I sort of lapsed into English and American literature.

[00:07:06]

SR: And so you spent four years up in the Boston area?

HH: Yeah. I think I largely grew up as an urban kid. I would go to college by walking out of my parents' apartment in Brooklyn, going to the New York City subway, taking the subway to Grand Central Station, the train to Union Station in Boston, and then the Red Line to Harvard Square. So I didn't learn how to drive a car until I got to California. And that sort of urban density and mixture of life is what I've always appreciated.

SR: Yeah. I understand that. So many people are so surprised because kids who grow up in New York City don't get driver's licenses often until much later.

HH: Nothing to really *do* with it.

SR: Right. That's true. So then what else? When you were in college, given the years that you were there, were you involved in any of the student movements, or what was going on? Let's put it in historical [context].

HH: As far as student protests, I did my share of sit-ins and throwing tear gas canisters back on the streets. These were also the years of divestiture. And I'd go roaring down the Vietnam War, so it was a very cynical time. And I think it was a time in which many professors had disengaged from their students because they were still suffering the disenchantment of the late sixties and the way the university turned on them in the middle of change. So it was between generations. It was,

politically, as I've mentioned, a very cynical time—just about the time of Nixon's impeachment. I think that was '74 or so.

[00:08:45]

SR: Right. Yeah, I can relate to that. So then you decided to go to Stanford?

HH: Yeah, I had a choice. I had been working summers in a congressman's office, Hugh Carey. And I worked for Hugh when he ran for governor in his Brooklyn campaign, and I had a choice to make of continuing that and living in Albany, New York, or doing something different, and I decided to do something different. So I applied to a couple of grad schools on the West Coast—probably more to get away from New York and family and friends, than anything else. I can't say it was a positive insurrection as much as it was a negative reaction, and a career shift, because politics was the family business.

SR: It sounds like it, yeah.

HH: So I wanted to get into some other line of work. So I moved out west, and academia took.

SR: Okay, so tell me about your years at Stanford.

HH: Well, I always studied several things at the same time, so I did English literature and art history at the same time. When I was at Stanford, I became interested in architecture, landscape design, and literature. So the issue became What kind of program would fit that need? And I discovered a program called modern thought in literature, which was basically a bake-your-own-cake program. And Stanford was a good place for anyone working in American studies and American history and literature. I got a chance to work with David Cahsh [phonetic] in the

education department, who was a professor of American education and the history of ideas. Lawrence Cummon [phonetic], who was one of the magisterial figures in the field. And I worked with some very good people in the English Department: George Decker and James Biegelman [phonetic]. I got a pretty good grounding in American history and literature. I have no idea where my interest in economics and mathematics came from, but that's always been with me, but I can't really attribute that to any teachers, per se.

[00:10:48]

SR: And so you decided that a life within the realm of academia was what you wanted?

HH: Yeah, I thought that would work, because I liked designing my own projects. And it's ironic that I ended up to be an administrator and liked the freelance aspect of being a professor, because it really is an untethered life in many ways. You're in class twelve hours a week, or eight hours a week, but you've got much of the time to do your study and travel as you please, essentially.

SR: During those years, socially—well, you got away from politics, because, as you say, that was the family business.

HH: I kind of did, but I didn't. It's funny how you turn away from things, and then you end up going back to where they were. So my first long-term girlfriend was a political activist here, ended up working down in El Salvador, and worked for the press secretary of the El Salvadorian governmental…. Excuse me—Nicaragua, rather. My second long-term girlfriend worked with the Jesuits down in El Salvador. So we were pretty heavily involved in the pro-Sandinista, anti, quote,

"imperialists," unquote, friends in Los Angeles and New York City at that time. That was probably late seventies to mid-eighties.

[00:12:30]

SR: Right. And then?

HH: And then my second girlfriend and I separated. She stayed down in Nicaragua. I stayed up north. We had moved out west together to find a place where we could both work in Los Angeles [unclear]. So I ended up taking a job in San Bernardino, and she was working for a legal rights outfit in L.A., and we were living in Pasadena. I stayed on at San Bernardino for about twelve years, and strangely, got into administration—sort of backed my way into that, about halfway through my time there. That became my career [unclear] time moved along.

SR: And you were there for quite a while.

HH: Twelve years. I have a pretty strong background in American history and literature. I did a fair amount of publishing and writing on Thomas Jefferson and early American literature. And when I finished the early book, I moved on to do some administrative things as a favor to the dean. And he found out that I did those things well, so I stayed in that capacity. And then I was there through '94, and just decided that it was time to get out and do something else. So all told, I've been at six universities since 1982.

SR: What did you do in Minnesota?

HH: I was at the University of Minnesota Duluth, which is about as far away as you could get climatically and everything else from San Bernardino.

[00:14:15]

SR: Oh yes.

HH: I was there for four years as dean and professor of English.

SR: Uh-huh, but then you came back to California.

HH: Yeah. I thought I was not going to come back, because I actually ended up liking Duluth a lot. It was a midsize town that converted itself from a port city into sort of a medical center and tourist center. They had long-term representatives in Congress who knew how to turn the faucets on for money, and rebuilt the place very imaginatively; reclaimed the Lake Superior shoreline; allowed the parks to penetrate the city; did very good work; very enjoyable place to be, and it is a town where you could move into the university and the community simultaneously and easily. It was just about the right size.

So I liked it a lot, but then what I thought was my dream job came up at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. One of the faculty recruited me to work there, so we did. And Central California's a gorgeous place to live. We lived in Pismo Beach for a number of years. So we couldn't complain, but it was really the chance to get back to one of the few parts of California I really enjoyed. And my parents, by that time, had settled in San Diego. So it was about a six-hour drive, but it was still closer than being in Minnesota.

SR: Okay. Well, I can relate to that, since that's where I live, partly. Okay, the next juncture, of course, will be here, right?

HH: Right. And I think I moved here for a couple reasons. This is not in any priority order, but the want to be closer to our parents. My wife's parents were still alive

then, and living in the Claremont-Pomona area. And mine were living in San Diego, so that cut the commute in half. Secondly, it was a chance to get back to that sort of urban texture at the university. I just work more easily in that environment. It's one that I understand instinctively. I understand how diverse groups of people interact or fail to interact. And it's just the world that I grew up in. So it's like [water?] to me in some ways. So we moved back down here. I could live without Los Angeles. It's just a knot of highways surrounded by a cluster of housing tracts.

[00:16:50]

SR: Where do you live?

HH: I live pretty close to campus in Porter Ranch. So we moved back here, and it was also a chance to work with Jolene Koester, who I knew of in the system and I thought was probably the best administrative president in the system. I was very fortunate I got to work with her; and before that, with Warren Baker at Cal Poly. So I thought that I would apprentice myself under probably the best policy person in the CSU at that time, who was Warren Baker. And then probably the best campus steward, who was Jolene Koester. And I was old enough at that point in time when I moved here to take the job on the basis of not just the attraction of a promotion, but the quality of the people who were here. And since I'd been in the CSU for a number of years, I knew everybody fairly well, and they knew of me, so there's not a match of unknown quantities.

SR: So what was going on when you came here?

HH: Jolene was in probably her third year or fourth year, and there were a lot of projects that were just beginning. They were in the throes of working on their ongoing effort to improve their student retention rate, which was a big deal. They were in the throes of trying to solidify their enrollment bases, because they'd been told campus is not going to grow, it's going to shrink. They were in the throes of beginning to plan the performing arts center, which was a dream at that stage. And we were in the throes of building up a profile and an identity for the campus that would take it from the nineties into the new century. And of course we were at the beginning of integrating technology into classes in a big way—sort of the major emphases that you'd find across the United States at higher education institutions, making the transition [unclear] doctoral programs in the university and changing the character of the university slightly so it became a little bit more research and grant oriented than it had been before.

Politically it's been a fairly quiet time. Budgetarily it's been a mess, but politically…. Every year or so my office gets occupied, but that's kind of par for the course. No fierce confrontations.

[00:19:19]

SR: Was there still feelings of having to make changes, repairs, from the earthquake in 1994?

HH: A little bit of that, but I think it was less that than—the performing arts center is a good example of the work that was done—construction—which is What new project should we do? So that and the science building were two of the preeminent things that we began to work on when I got here.

SR: When you talk about—you were familiar with this whole diverse mix of people, clearly, from East to West Coast—different but still diverse—and people whose parents had never gone to college, et cetera. From what I have read, you've accomplished a lot.

[00:20:17]

HH: A fair amount, but that's because a lot of work was done before by people like Louanne and Jolene, obviously. But you know, the fact is the student body was one that I knew well by analogy which is they were first-generation college kids, who had lower middle class or middle class parents whose aspirations for them might not really match what they wanted to do. So I was familiar with that, and familiar with the fact that they were trying to jockey between that, academic and vocational commitments—that's pretty common. And certainly I knew about public institutions from all the writing that I had done. I knew the ambiguous role they fulfill in American society. I had the contacts to understand that the love-hate affair with American universities is not just one that grew out of the 1960s, but it's been around since the 1800s. So that gives you a different perspective on the stuff.

SR: That's very interesting, because I wasn't even that aware of that.

HH: It kind of tends to make you less resentful at the moment, because there are long-term issues at play, that just will never be thoroughly reconciled. I mean, the function of the universities in a democracy are both to critique it and to advance it. And that automatically makes people in the university vulnerable to anger of the public at large because they're not always boosters and supporters of it.

SR: Yeah.

HH: On the other hand, sometimes they have to be. That has been the history in higher education in the United States—not funding education beyond K-12, because the assumption was that anything beyond that was really for individual purposes, and that the federal government itself should have no role in funding higher education, because we didn't want to centralize the educational system in the States. So those issues have been at play for 250 years. So that just changes your focus on what's important and what's not, with the arguments on what they are. (recording paused)

I'll talk about a couple of stories that I'll disperse, give a sense of what I consider to be important in light of how the university has changed over time. One of them actually relates to when I was interviewed here. One of the questions I was asked by the dean of business when I interviewed here, was how I was going to get the university better students. I told him and the recruiting committee, "Well, we have choices. Either you go to Mars and look for students there, or we hang up a sign and we could work with LAUSD to make better teachers to get better students." In the long run, that last thing was harder to do, but it was the only way that I knew to effectively get better students. And that became—because I wanted to strike the theme at the start, that if I was going to come here, connection to the K-12 and retention work required not just prayer and not just complaints, but actually doing the work itself: working with the students that God gave us, rather than hoping that God would give us different people.

And I think that worked fairly well, the message was sent fairly clearly at the start.

One anecdote I told, the time about funding in the CSU, comes from 2005. We had a system-wide meeting. We have many of these system-wide meetings. They don't get a lot done but we have many of them. This one was about—we had agreed to a new labor contract, but there's no money for the labor contract. I remember asking at this system-wide meeting what the plan was for funding this, and the guy who headed the budget for the [C.C.?] said, "There is no plan." I said, "Well, there's *gotta* be a plan, right?" He said, "No, there's no plan." I said, "There's a plan, right?" He said, "No, there is no plan." I remember coming back and telling Jolene, "Well, I just went to this meeting, there's no plan, which means that we have to plan ourselves." And that became a signal moment for me, because I realized if we were looking for help from the State or the system, it just wasn't going to be there. So how do we take charge of our own destiny? Being aware that the system would resent that in some ways, because they want to keep everybody under control, which is the nature of the system. So that became an ongoing theme over a period of time, working that out.

And I think that probably one of the impressions I really left on the university was developing alternative ways of generating resources. And because I quickly reached the conclusion that the state budget was going to be inadequate. And this was not a temporary thing, this was a permanent condition. And then the other piece that is an interesting story about wrong attitudes and how the place needs to run came about three, four years ago—probably longer than that,

probably six years ago—beginning our accreditation report for the WASC commission. We had a telephone meeting with them where we go over the initial report and do all of this other stuff. We went around the room and we gave our names, and they were sitting at the other end of the phone, and there was this moment of silence, and I thought the phone line had been disconnected, so I said, "Hello?" And they said, "Well, why aren't there more administrators around the table?" because we had mostly faculty. And for me, that's a signal of achievement, because we had worked off a culture that had a lot of faculty involved in it. They're used to a more administratively top down model. So I think it speaks to some of what I've tried to do in my work here, is one, get people to understand that if you want to improve the quality of our lives here, we have to work on it ourselves, you don't pray for it [unclear]. So you have to generate your own resources. And three, you have to work together as a group of people and as a team. I think that last piece comes out of my experience in sports and other things like that, and weaving people together in community back in New York City.

[00:26:34]

SR: It's so important—and difficult.

HH: It's difficult if you go about it the wrong way. If you go about it the way that suits your temperament, it's actually fairly easy to do.

SR: And have you found colleagues of like mind, and people that you've bonded with in this whole….

HH: Yeah, I think a lot of it comes down to…. There's this great scene at the end of Thomas Pynchon's *Crying of Lot 49*, this novel that he wrote in the late sixties, where he describes this dance called the Anarchists' Ball, where all these people who are deaf, who are dancing on this ballroom floor, not weaving into one another, no one is hitting one another, and they all have this tune in their head, they're all harmonized in some way. That's what you're trying to achieve at the university level—create a super-melody that allows room for other people to have their songs and music. And you're not looking for exact [unclear] general consensus as to how things should be done, giving people the liberty to work within that. If you have a framework like that, it can work fairly well. If you're expecting everybody to conform to a particular plan, you'll be frustrated in a university—at least a public university. Might be different in a denominational school, but a public university will frustrate you in that respect.

[00:28:01]

SR: That's very, very interesting. When you mentioned that example, it brought to mind something I noticed reading of all the different kinds of developments here. Tell me about—isn't there a whole program, or I don't know how it is now, but for people who are deaf?

HH: Yeah, there's a deaf studies program and an audiology program, and those have been here for a long period of time. And they go to an interesting contrast in the field, and also in the university as a whole, which is the deaf studies program is really antipathetic to the idea that hearing should be ameliorated by technological devices. It's a program that values deaf culture and [unclear]. I wouldn't say

militantly opposed, but it's ideological opposite to the program that we have in audiology and speech and hearing, that focuses on ameliorating devices, technology to relieve the separation of all people together. And that gets to the heart of what recurs in a variety of parts of the curriculum, the Pan-African studies program, the Chicano studies program, the gender studies program. Do these programs exist as independent cultural entities, or do they yield to a "greater," in quotes, whole? What's their function?— to integrate into the greater university?—to separate out? I think one of the things that Northridge has done over the years, probably unconsciously, is it struck a balance in that piece, and really hasn't pushed the debate. And that's probably been why the balance has worked so well.

[00:29:58]

SR: That's fascinating. And so they just sort of coexist?

HH: Right. Makes a good contrast with San Francisco State where it's become more of a political issue at times—[unclear] coexistence has been more obvious.

SR: Hm. That's interesting.

(recording paused)

HH: I should talk about a couple projects that I've worked on here, but I think the thing that I'm most glad of long-term is I think we've been able to achieve good working relationships across the faculty, the staff, and the administration here. So we have not had a lot of contention on curricular issues or on budget issues and things like that. And that's taken some work. But I've always thought that if you are going to get governance to work well, you have to work on the culture first,

and spend time there, and then the governance will follow. So I think in this time of budget trial, we've actually built up a reserve on campus of seventy to eighty million dollars. So that speaks to what we've been able to do. This is where you have to have a tolerance for a sense of humor. I was called down and chastised by the chancellor of the CSU because we had too many students, we had hired too many faculty, and we had made too much money. So I thought, "Well, if we're being chastised because we've taught too many students, we've hired too many people, and we have too much money, then there's got to be something wrong with the system, because I don't know what else we're supposed to be into." So you just sort of smile, go your way, and realize that's the system in some ways. So I think the other part of it is being realistic, learning how to push the envelope, not expecting adulation; and you're in opposition against certain things. And if you're waiting for the adulation, you'll be waiting a long time. And you'll probably get the adulation from people who you don't admire, so it's meaningless anyway. So I think that's been one thing, the comity that we've had with people here, and the ability to forge [unclear].

[00:32:16]

SR: Well that's quite an accomplishment.

HH: Yeah, I think, and it's taken [unclear]…. Basically we've implemented a—it sounds highly technical, but it's more psychological than anything else—we put a bunch of processes in place where, at least in academic affairs, we cut the budget each year, reallocate it for new investments. One of the things I learned a number of years ago is if you want change, you just can't tell people to change, you have

to supply the [unclear] resources to do it. So the issue has been each year we'll cut 7% to 10% of our budget, and then we'll reapply that money to new things. So the money doesn't leave the university, it's reapplied in some ways. And that's allowed us to change and do many innovations. And I think we've been very successful in the retention. We've almost doubled the rate over the last ten to twelve years.

[00:33:09]

SR: That's marvelous.

HH: And I think that's because we invested in the changes that we needed to make, and we were very analytical in what we've done. Central to that is hiring key people. We hired a very good person, Bettina Huber, institutional researcher. Knew how to do data analysis very well. I think two of the big points I've learned about making change in the university is number one, you have to have reasons and not preferences. You need evidence and not innuendo. Because if you approach service or change in the university on any other terms other than substantial research, it won't be respected. Present people with the data and research findings, you're speaking their language.

SR: That's right.

HH: So that is a crucial piece. And the second piece related to that is identify what the problem is, and then inviting people to solve the problem. If you solve the problem for them, then they resent it. You're overlooking their expertise, because many occasions where we've turned the problem around to people and say,

"Here's the problem," rather than "How do you fix it?" Come up with some marvelous solutions that way. You get a lot of buy-in by doing that piece.

SR: Yeah, that's like community organizing.

HH: That's why a lot of it is not rocket science, it's sort of simple.

SR: It makes a difference when people feel they're part of.

HH: Right.

SR: That's very good.

HH: And so I think it's more that than specific projects. You know, we built the performing arts center, we built the science center, we did this, that, and the next sort of thing, but it's really those human relationships that I value most.

[00:35:01]

SR: That cuts across all of it. And as you said, first having an understanding of the culture and then doing this. I know something about, there seems to be pride in the website.

HH: There's a group of people who are working on this web project, and a lot of it has to do with a couple things. One is that the web presence of the university—well, let's go back a step, and just talk about the web in general for the university. Most web presences on campuses and elsewhere have developed haphazardly over a number of years.

SR: Right.

HH: But they've gotten to the point now we occupy two cities, a physical one, and a virtual one. The physical city, you just can't throw up a house where you want to, you can't build a road where you want to, there's a whole structure of permits,

permissions, authorizations you need to go through to preserve public safety and health and access and stuff. What we're now at the stage of doing in higher education here is taking a look at our web and organizing it so it becomes navigable—not just a conjury of neighborhoods the way medieval Paris and medieval London was. So providing that organization is a crucial piece, and it involves changing the political culture where people think that they own their piece of the web [unclear].

[00:36:28]

SR: Oh, that's very interesting.

HH: So some of it has been that. Some of it has been creating a, quote, "brand," or a look and feel that identifies Northridge. And that can be overemphasized in some ways, but you still need something that stands out. And then the third part is creating the inner expertise to get the work done, because otherwise you're in the business of farming the work out to experts who charge you an arm and a leg, and the expertise stays with *them* and isn't carried over to you. So when they leave you, or you leave them, you lose the whole area of work that they've developed.

SR: Sure.

HH: So we're working on that piece too.

SR: So how's it all coming?

HH: It's coming moderately well. It's taking a period of time, because it's learning a new set of skills. But I think the journey is part of the reward. I mean, getting people to work together. We can't have a sense of individual ownership to a teamwork approach of things, and learning the technology together is a big deal.

So I think in that sense it's been going very well. In terms of doing the product, we're probably a little slower than we would want it to go.

SR: In terms of this getting people to work together and reaching out to people, do you have any programs—I believe you do—that are involved internationally or with students coming from other countries?

HH: Yeah. For diversity and financial purposes, Terry Piper, who had been the student affairs vice-president here—he died about three years ago—decided to double or triple the number of international students we brought to campus. So we now have the largest number of international students of any public master's institution in the United States. Which is not a lot by R1 standards, but by our sort of university standards is very high—it's about 2,700 students. And that took a number of years to achieve. And part of that was out of the realization that because our students are rooted in the area, many differing families are not wealthy, they can't travel to the world. They can't travel to the world, let's bring the world to them. And we get a lot of positive feedback from our students that one of the things that they value most about the campus is the diversity, that it's a world-based campus [unclear].

[00:38:58]

SR: That's great.

HH: Fortunately for us, that coincides with finances, because the out-of-state students, the international students, pay twice the state rate, so we get a financial benefit from that. So in our budget we have thirty-four to thirty-five more million dollars than we would have had if we didn't have those students here. So they provide

the support for the university. We've done that, and we built up the extension program, which brings in a number of foreign students for the English language program, and that's been going for about a decade now.

SR: That's terrific.

(recording paused)

[00:39:39]

HH: Right now, higher education seems to be in a crisis, because there are these online competitors. For example, let's say going here costs six thousand bucks a year, and the state throws in another twelve to fourteen, so it's twenty thousand bucks a year to go through here. Aid obviously brings the dollars down a lot, but it's so big an amount of money that the society's paying. To go to University of Phoenix is eleven thousand bucks a year. To go to studyonline.com—which is a course aggregator, just puts courses up, it's not a university—is fifteen hundred dollars a year. So the central question becomes, Why would you go to a Northridge? Why should a Northridge exist, not these other places? And the answer is then, How [unclear] to the following proposition: for a university to exist physically in this day and age, it has to be, ensure, that it's a proper steward of its place. Does it serve its community and its region well, the way that these other places don't? So when we we're retaining graduating students, we're retaining graduating students from a local area, an identifiable region. And we should be held accountable for making these schools succeed, to working with them to improve teacher preparation. And we've done that through things like the Carnegie grant that we had a number of years ago, [TNE?] and these other grants. What do we do to

make the neighborhoods around us better? In the long run, that redounds to us. And education relates to these clinics everywhere on campus [unclear] health and wellness clinic, and we have a couple of business clinics out there. What do we do to make this community better? So it's a matter of outreach, it's a matter of having a social impact on the community, it's a matter of preparing better students, because what we will do is what these online institutions can't do. They can deliver a degree from nowhere to anywhere. We can deliver a degree from Northridge to the Santa Ana Valley and the L.A. region.

[00:41:41]

SR: That says it well.

HH: And we have to be a steward of that place. And to the degree that we can do that well, we will be appreciated. If we can't, we won't. In 1954, Milton Friedman wrote an essay, "School Choice." It remains a conservative classic, in which he argued that people are willing to support elementary education publicly in the United States because they see the benefits to the neighborhoods, which is we get educated kids who graduate from high school who can work and do all this other sort of stuff. But he didn't see any benefit to college education being paid for publicly, because that is an individual wealth and success issue. Well today we know otherwise than that. We know [unclear] politics, but we understand that if we don't have college-prepared people, then we won't hold onto the jobs that are so important to us and our quality of life, and our tax structure will depreciate. But to win that support, you have to go out and earn it, because the proposition itself is too bare naked for people, there are too many competing priorities. So

probably what we try to do is adjust that by having this presence in the community. And that's why it's important to have a historical perspective on this stuff, because the battle that you're fighting for support is an ongoing one that's involved in battling for the survival of the culture, [unclear] and tells you something about American history, because these battles have been going on for ages. And it's a matter of [unclear] and seeing how people have succeeded before.

[00:43:14]

SR: Well, I think what's exciting too is for you to be sharing this, and hopefully it'll be online, and for people to understand better. As you explain all of this too, maybe more people will tune in and understand what's going on. I'm sure you're communicating, and it's *very* interesting, and it's very exciting.

HH: I tell people the reason why the messages are not always heard easily is because of the people teaching English, but they live in Northridge; and their work is in English, but they live in Northridge; and they don't understand that the institution is not in their discipline, it's in the place that they live and work. Making the connection, changing the axis of the orientation to that is difficult to do. And the problem with the administration is oftentimes we live in that axis and we don't see the horizontal axis of the discipline. Because people on the horizontal axis of the discipline don't see the vertical axis of the community. So the trick of doing administration is being the fulcrum that allows these things to swing together.

SR: That's so beautifully said. That's great. And there are so many complaints—I mean, I can just recall so vividly hearing that kind of problem at Columbia University, where they don't get it together.

HH: Right, there's nothing unique about those issues. They play out all over higher education. I mean, Columbia was accused for years of being a terrible steward of the Harlem community, and a decent landlord, and all that kind of stuff. NYU, the same deal. Harvard the same deal with Cambridge.

(recording paused)

[00:45:15]

HH: I think for the future of the university we still have several things we need to do. One is, we've discovered that not everything, but a lot, depends on shared governance and working all together. We were fortunate over seven to eight years to have a number of people who got together well, who were perhaps too fortunate, because it didn't take effort to get that comity there. So how do you get that in place, and how do you pass it from one generation to the next? It seems to me in a dispersive area like L.A., given the pressures higher education is under, it's crucial. Creating a cultural mechanism for succession is an important piece. Probably the most important piece that we need to figure out how to do, we spent some time thinking about that, but that's the important issue, is how you, quote, "raise" the next generation of leaders on campus. Because they're not going to be created *ex nihilo*, you have to sort of raise them and nurture them in some ways.

Then some of these things are fairly obvious that need to be done. We have to make our peace with the technology that's out there in the world. I think

that the general tendency of the culture at large is to celebrate it, or to treat it dystrophically, and you need to be somewhere in the middle on this stuff. The hope that digital technology will revolutionize life and provide equality in the way that nothing else ever has is a phantom. But then on the other hand, it allows you to use time and space differently. We're just at the throes now of getting some mastery of that so we understand how we can use the technology to free ourselves from some sort of the tiresome things that we do in courses, and use our time more productively. And I think there will be more effort along those lines over the next five to six years.

We're waiting for the system to catch up with us on budgeting, because we've determined that we need to be independent. We're waiting for the state system and the State to recognize that's the way we all need to go. So part of what we need to do there is lobby for those things statewide and within the CSU as a whole.

And we've got to develop the stewardship of place notion that I talked about before. And we're developing a center for health and wellness, and we work with the San Fernando Valley on preventive and preemptive healthcare and social care issues. My phrase for that is, I tell people our motto should be, Our journey is to keep you off the UCLA gurney. Because the problem in America is institutionalized healthcare and the cost of that, and the way it renders life. So what do you do up front in healthcare, environmental change, and social care to preempt that cost? We have an institute [unclear] on that front.

We have made some headway in working with K-12 on STEM issues—science and technology and engineering and math issues. We have to work that through.

I think the ongoing challenge [unclear] student population. That is, college-qualified, but not college-ready. And I think that's true in any large urban district. Those students who have passed some sort of formal criteria that make them acceptable into the college, but are they truly college-ready? That's because the high schools are struggling to graduate students, and they don't have enough energy to deal with the students who need to go on to college. So dealing with that gap in a positive way, that doesn't make you cynical, will be a continuing challenge for us.

And the last piece for us—and it's hard for us to recognize that we need to do it, but we do—is to accumulate the evidence and make the arguments that prove that we're important to the community. We like to think that that should be just an accepted fact. But it's an age and era in which distrust is rampant, particularly in institutions and professionals. That's begun in the corporate sector, it's worked its way into religion, it's worked its way into education generally. It has to do with the fact that people have distrust of institutions, they want proof. So creating the mechanism to harvest evidence of what you do, and then publicizing it, is important for us to do. And that grates people in the university, because they think that the work that they do is in and of itself good. That's fairly naïve, so we're treating that as a big issue.

So I think this is some of the things that'll go on.

SR: Well thank you so much, and thank you for sharing all of this with us today.

HH: My pleasure.

[END OF INTERVIEW]