

KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH LINDA C. HODGES

CONDUCTED BY THOMAS ALLAN SCOTT

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Thursday, 16 December 2004
Location: Telephone Interview from Pilcher Hall, Kennesaw State University

TS: Linda, let's begin with just a little bit of background information if we could. If you would just tell me a little bit about where you born, when you were born, where you went to school and such as that.

LH: I was born in northern Kentucky in 1951 and went to school in Kentucky for all of my education, so obviously high school and so forth. I went to Centre College in Kentucky, which is a small private liberal arts college in Danville. Then I ended up getting my Ph.D. in biochemistry at the University of Kentucky.

TS: I see that you finished at Kentucky in 1979, I believe it was.

LH: That's right. I was able to teach—I knew I wanted a career in college teaching. I went for the Ph.D., and I was able to have some opportunities to teach while I was in graduate school. I taught for a semester at Georgetown College.

TS: I know where Georgetown is.

LH: Yes. So I taught there one semester; they had a professor leave suddenly. Then the last year I was working, finishing up my dissertation, I taught at Berea College, which is a very fine liberal arts college with a very specialized mission.

TS: Berea College, I think, actually goes back to maybe the Reconstruction period. It kind of had a long history of trying to help out, I guess, people from that part of the country.

LH: Right, right. Actually it predates the Civil War because I know they were mixed racially. All during the Civil War, they were mandated that they could not be [integrated], and then as soon as the War was over and so forth, they opened their doors again.

TS: Okay. That's probably what I was thinking about then.

LH: Yes. They prided themselves on that equal opportunity approach back then. So that was a very fine place to teach. Then as soon as I finished my degree, I had an opportunity to teach for a year again because of the sudden death of a professor at Centre College, my alma mater. I taught a year there. It was kind of ironic, in a way. This might be an interesting thing for the history; the professor that really got me interested in chemistry at Centre College was the one that died rather suddenly. I came in on a temporary appointment to try to fill his shoes. He was in a slightly different area than I, so I didn't literally teach all of his classes; they shifted things around. I remember thinking that was

rather poignant at the time because I would have credited him with my interest in chemistry and in wanting to teach, really.

TS: Well, one of the things that we've been doing with these series of interviews is to ask people about their mentors and how they got interested in their field. So if you could just say a little bit more about—what was his name?

LH: His name was Harold [N.] Hanson. I started college the summer before what would have officially been my freshman year. He taught a condensed, fast-paced summer version of the general chemistry that I took. He was just one of those teachers, very engaging, very enthusiastic. He took sort of an interest—saw that I had aptitude, took a certain interest in me, asked me to do a little special project to look through a workbook that he was thinking about using for the class. I had gone into college expecting to major in psychology. I was interested in psychology, but that sort of turned the tide, and I majored in chemistry. That liberal arts college experience sort of reinforced that. I had other mentors: Professor [William Clayton] Sagar was a real mentor—almost a substitute father figure for me in undergraduate school. That experience of having professors that obviously cared about their teaching, obviously cared about their students, really inspired me to think that this was what I wanted to do as my career. So that really kicked it off.

TS: So in terms of mentoring, I guess what you're really putting the focus on is people who are really in teaching because they care about students as well as their subject.

LH: Right, exactly, exactly. That enthusiasm—not only for the subject but for also helping others enjoy and engage in that subject—that definitely had an impact on me. Then I decided to go to graduate school with the recognition that even back then—which would have been early '70s—more and more, if you wanted to teach at a liberal arts college, you had to have that Ph.D. for any kind of job security.

TS: Right. Absolutely. Didn't the president of the University of Georgia [Michael F. Adams] come from Centre College?

LH: He did. He was at Centre; of course, obviously not while I was there.

TS: But he was the president at the time that they hired him at Georgia, I believe, wasn't he?

LH: He was. That was a point of some surprise and, actually, I think, contention when he went to Georgia. Centre had managed to attract him; he had a lot of important connections. He was able to talk to policymakers and so forth at the time that Centre was able to hire him. So I know that those were the skills—some of the attributes—that they were looking for when they hired him at Georgia, I'm sure.

TS: Right. So you stay there one year and then, of course, it was a one-year contract, or I guess the remainder of a year contract. Then I guess they were looking for something other than biochemistry, and that's why you came to Kennesaw?

LH: Right, exactly. I did teach there the whole year. [Hanson] died, I guess, in the spring or summer. So for that first year that I was there, they simply tried to shift people around. In chemistry and many of the sciences, your biggest course load—student load—is in the introductory courses. So they were able to move things around and have me teach a lot in the introductory sequence, but they really didn't need a biochemist. Professor Hanson was an inorganic chemist, so that's what they really needed. There wasn't any opportunity for continuing there; I knew that at the time, so I went on the job market. The opportunity at Kennesaw came up, and I interviewed there and was very impressed with the department. The chemistry department at that time was very collegial, very enthusiastic and dynamic. The college—at that point it was Kennesaw College—had just gone four-year. The chemistry department was waiting to get approval to have its program converted to a four-year degree-granting program. In fact, they were awarded that the year that I interviewed. That was sort of one of the contingencies of my accepting the job; I did definitely wanted to be at a college that had a four-year chemistry program.

TS: And that was even before we had departments in 1980. I think it was '82 or '83 before we actually put the department structure into place, so I guess it was the division of natural science and math still at that time.

LH: Exactly. Natural science and mathematics; that's right. It had the division structure, and I think it was when Betty [L.] Siegel came as president that that reorganization into departments took place.

TS: Right. So you actually came, let's see, the fall of 1980; that is right when Dr. [Horace W.] Sturgis announced his retirement.

LH: Right. I think I only had a year, at most two, with Sturgis. I was hired, of course, by him, but then Betty Siegel came on board. That's kind of amazing to think she's been at Kennesaw that long.

TS: It is. She's got to have about the longest tenure of any college president anywhere right now, I would imagine.

LH: Yes, yes, that's right. So she had a lot of changes in mind when she came and did a lot of wonderful things, I think, for the college. And, of course, while I was there, it went from Kennesaw College to Kennesaw State College, and I think I left before the university name.

TS: That was '96 when the university status came in. Do you remember which year you left?

LH: 1992.

TS: Right. So we were still Kennesaw State College at that time.

LH: That's right.

- TS: Well, you mentioned the collegial atmosphere. Who were some of the people that were teaching chemistry? Was Patti [Patricia H.] Reggio here at that time?
- LH: Patti Reggio was there, and Patti was really very influential in my coming. She had come to Kennesaw, I think, just the year before I came.
- TS: That sounds right.
- LH: She was influential in sort of mentoring me as a young faculty member. We kind of mentored each other in some ways, I guess. But, you know, farther along that track, of course, we became really good friends. Also in the department was Frank [W.] Walker, who is now deceased, who was the first department chair. He was a very interesting man; I'm sure students of that era could tell you all sorts of funny stories about him. He was very bright and very astute and gave me a lot of good advice just as a faculty member.
- TS: Yes, I remember the first time I ever saw Frank, he looked about as, you know, coat-and-tie—just about as Ivy League, I guess, as you could look. Then the next thing you knew, he had a beard and had kind of gone over to the hippies, I guess.
- LH: Yes. He looked like a big, overgrown hippy, but he was a really good person. Like I said, [he was] very astute and very thoughtful; he actually cared a lot about students. And he cared about the people in the department, and that was great. Dan [Daniel J.] Williams, who is still there...
- TS: Right. I was going to ask you if Dan was there at that time.
- LH: He was there at that time. And Vera [B.] Zalkow. So the five of us that started the department, I guess, as a four-year institution were Frank, Dan, Patti, me and Vera Zalkow. Vera and I had some really great conversations about teaching. One of your questions you primed me for was the mentoring, and really, it was interesting, because the department at that time just had a really good mentoring quality about it in general. Certainly Patti and I were great friends and did the most—spent the most time talking and so forth about teaching, the role of research at that time at [our] kind of institution, and service and everything else. Frank, as a department chair, was instrumental, but really we were all very cordial. We were very collegial; it was a factor that students picked up on. We had, I think, the ability to attract more students, at least, to work in the department than we might have, given that chemistry isn't that popular a major. But the students that went through our department often remarked on the warmth in the department—how well we interacted with each other as faculty in addition to our work with students.
- TS: Well, if you're only going to have five, I don't think you could have a better five than the ones you named.

- LH: It was really quite great. For many years, you know, we added faculty, and for many years, that quality remained. So I don't know how—after I left—how it went. Of course, the bigger you get, the harder it is.
- TS: Right. Well, Vera was on campus last year for a program for the retirees, and I guess you know that Patti has moved on to the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.
- LH: Oh, yes. I e-mailed her and found that out. A month or so ago, I saw Dorothy [D.] Zinsmeister at a meeting, and she told me that Patti had moved. So I e-mailed her, and we had a little correspondence. Actually, I got an e-mail not too long ago from Vera.
- TS: That's great.
- LH: Yes.
- TS: You've kind of started on this topic, but talk a little bit about how you perceive the intellectual climate at Kennesaw when you came here in 1980.
- LH: It was extraordinarily vibrant, I think. Kennesaw—I mean, if you think about it, no offense meant—was seen as an urban commuter college that had just turned from two year to four year. There are stereotypical images, I think, that could come to your mind about what that experience would be like, and it just wasn't. By and large, the faculty that I talked to were vibrant and intellectually engaged; they were enthusiastic about their subject. Now, how that manifested was very diverse. Some handful of people were trying to do more traditional disciplinary research; others really put a lot of their intellectual energies into service and outreach. At Kennesaw we've had a very prominent mission to reach out to the community, K-12 and so forth.
- TS: Right. Patti talked about how she was able to do traditional research because she could really do it on a computer instead of having to have lab facilities and so on, That, I guess, is kind of the standard of what you would expect in chemistry.
- LH: Right, right. And I had to initially [do] my research by linking up with a lab at Georgia Tech. That enabled me to have access. In fact, I was able to work it out—Frank worked out a schedule for me, I guess it was my second year—where I had no classes on Friday. So I went down to Georgia Tech on Friday and in the summer, and I did research from down there for several years. [I] pulled some of those ideas also into work there at Kennesaw. The longer I was there, the more work I did. Just at Kennesaw. Certainly in those early years, it was kind of difficult to do it there at the institution.
- TS: Yes. About how large were your classes in the '80s?
- LH: A typical double section of an introductory class was—I can remember starting out with like forty-ish. But I certainly remember before I left having a class for the nursing students that was in the seventies. That was considered at that time a large class. I don't know if they've gone to the really large, large lectures yet or not, but having seventy or

so in a class was kind of considered, in many ways, the peak at that time. I think Patti may have taught a class of ninety at one time just because the demand was there, and there wasn't any other way to meet it but to have them all in one classroom.

TS: That's too many though, isn't it?

LH: Yes. But it's interesting. I saw the institution evolve a lot. I realized by the time—the last three years I was there, I was department chair—I realized in talking to my young faculty that, typically, they were teaching classes that were substantially bigger than I had. By the time the department had been approved by the American Chemical Society to give an accredited degree, we were able to keep the contact hours that the faculty taught—they dropped from, I think it used to be seventeen hours when I started, to fifteen. But their class size had gotten bigger, so there really hadn't been a substantial lessening of their load in any sense by that time.

TS: Well, 1986 was the year that you won the Distinguished Teaching Award. I wonder if you would just talk a little bit about your teaching philosophy and what you did in the classroom that worked so well for you.

LH: I was still very much a traditional, semi-traditional teacher, I guess, at that time. I mean, since [then] I've done so much more [with] innovative teaching methods. But I think what you would characterize my style as back then was, I was an interactive lecturer. So I did lecture quite a bit, but I interrupted the lecture, asking students to contribute to help me work through a problem, to give me strategy, to explain something. I'm a very enthusiastic teacher—very energetic. [I'd] try some humor, which works sometimes, and sometimes it doesn't. I think students felt like I was approachable and accessible; I think they thought I was probably enthusiastic and that I cared about them. I taught a lot, of course, of the biochemistry. At the upper level, you had the chance—those were smaller classes, and you really got to know those students; you worked with them in lab. But in addition, I taught a lot of the nursing chemistry classes. The nurses typically came into chemistry very afraid, and I was able to comfort them. I think the fact that I was able to show them that they could do this—you know, they had this sort of a phobia about it—I was able to show them that they could do it, that they were able to do it. That's a very empowering kind of thing for the student, and I think that played a role, too.

TS: How large were the nursing classes?

LH: They tended to be pretty large. They were typically anywhere, like I said, from forty to seventy students.

TS: So if you were comforting them, you must have spent an incredible amount of time with them, I imagine.

LH: Yes and no. I was able to try to bring this attitude across actually within the class. As I said, pointing out to them when we were working through a problem, getting them to interact with it, just pointing out the strategy of the problem, showing them they could do

it. Certainly they came to office hours and that sort of thing, but really I tried to instill that approach within the class. I believe in it, for one thing; then also, it was time-saving in the sense that one can't—as a faculty member, as much as you love teaching, even then—you couldn't spend all your time teaching. There were other expectations on you. I tried to make sure that the class time was spent as effectively, as efficiently, as productively, as it could be.

TS: How would you say your time was divided up in terms of teaching, service and scholarship in those days? Was it like a third, a third, a third? Or three-fourths teaching and research whenever you had a spare moment? How would you divide it up?

LH: I think it was probably much more [like] three-fourths teaching. We had then—and, well, maybe less now because the university, Kennesaw, is much larger than it was initially when I was there—we had a heavy service load and then, as you say, research was [whenever] you could. Of course, the college was fair about it; there wasn't, at that time when I first came, a big expectation for scholarship at all. They expected you to be intellectually active and active in your field in some way—going to meetings and so forth—but they didn't have a “publish or perish” kind of approach.

TS: Yes. I know Patti was able to bring in some grant money, and that gave her some release time to allow her to do more research. Of course, there wasn't that much emphasis on raising grant money back then either, I don't guess. At least I can't recall.

LH: No. Actually Patti and I were one of the first couple to get grants. Her grant, I think, came in technically first. Then I also got a grant from the National Institute of Health. They have a program for undergraduate colleges that targets undergraduate research in particular. And then I was also able to attract some money and get some grants from the National Science Foundation for equipment for the department to use, both in teaching and in undergraduate research. But we were the first couple, I think. I think Bowman [O. Davis] had done some grant writing—you've talked to Bowman already—years before. I can't remember whether he'd gotten any grants or not, but Patti and I were on the first wave certainly.

TS: And this was before Jackie Givens was here to help anybody apply for a grant, wasn't it?

LH: I think for the first one or two we got, she wasn't here; but then she was here with at least one of the grants that I got, so she was a big help. Is she still there?

TS: Yes.

LH: Yes. She was a great help.

TS: Yes, I was just talking to her by e-mail yesterday, as a matter of fact.

LH: Good, good.

- TS: I just got a little grant so I had to correspond with her yesterday.
- LH: Right, right, right.
- TS: But yes, that was really novel stuff for Kennesaw back then, I guess.
- LH: Oh, yes. I can remember the financial officer at that time—well, it might have even been Roger [E.] Hopkins. The National Science Foundation grant I got required matching funds, and so I had to get approval from the college before I even put in [for] the grant. I remember them saying, “Oh, yes, yes, no problem. You get the grant; we’ll match it.” And then I got the grant, and it was like, “Oh, my gosh! We’re going to have to match this!” But they did; they did, and it was interesting. The college was supportive but also recognized that this really was sort of moving them in a direction that they hadn’t initially planned. I mean, they were happy about it, but sometimes they couldn’t give [it] full support. At that point, it really wasn’t exactly in the mission, especially in terms of the research grant money.
- TS: Right. Well, it seems like the chemistry department was ahead of just about everybody else on campus, maybe ahead of everybody else in terms of moving in the direction of research, writing, grants and so on. Do you think it was just because of the people that were in the department at that time, or was there a larger reason why chemistry would have provided the leadership?
- LH: I don’t know if that’s a very good question; that’s probably very hard to tease out. I think it’s a combination of the people and then the discipline. Chemistry is just one of those money-intensive fields, and it was also a field, I think, that nationally early on started really pushing the value of undergraduate research as an aspect of teaching. So I think that played into it as well; it’s hard to say. And part of it, I think, was—this moves beyond just the chemistry department—but as I said, Kennesaw was a really interesting place during that era. Lots of really good people [were] excited about where the college could go. You know, you had Dorothy Zinsmeister, who, of course, has gone on to work down at the Board of Regents. And you had Tina [H.] Straley, who is now the executive director of the MAA—the Mathematical Association of America. There were lots of people sort of of that caliber, just looking ahead, pushing the envelope, if you want to use that analogy, thinking about helping make the college what it was going to look like in the next century, really.
- TS: So you sound like you felt like you were very much in on the ground floor in building a college.
- LH: I did, I did. It was a very exciting place to be and a very friendly, vibrant place to be during the time I was there.
- TS: What did you think about the quality of the students at Kennesaw, and did you involve them in your research projects when you started getting some grants?

- LH: Yes, I did. I had several students who worked with me. It was interesting; there was a wide range of student abilities at Kennesaw. One of the sets of students that was very enjoyable—well, they all are; I don't want to imply that any of them are not—but one of the sort of surprises, I guess, at Kennesaw was [that] by being a commuter college, you attracted a lot of students who were coming to college at an older age. They had done something else; they now had a new goal in mind, and they came to the college. They tended to be very motivated; they knew what they wanted, they were anxious for your help in order to achieve their goals, and they were often very bright. They were an exciting body of students to work with. We had a number of them who worked in the chemistry department with us, and [they were] really just very enjoyable.
- TS: That's pretty much my feeling, too, in terms of the history students. I think the older ones are the ones that I always enjoyed the most in the classroom because they were the easiest to teach. Of course, we're changing a little bit now now that we've got residence halls on campus. The student age is getting younger.
- LH: I bet, I bet. The other students, though, that I really did enjoy teaching—well, there was a mix, but often they might have been a little younger and tended toward the more traditional age, though I don't know if that's strictly true—were the nursing students. They were a highly motivated set of students, and they came into chemistry, as I said, often fearful. But if you could assure them, then it was sort of like they were your friends for life. It was fun; I enjoyed them. Sometimes that's not a demographic group that faculty will say they like to teach, but I did. I enjoyed them; I enjoyed all of my students, but those two groups really pop to the fore—the students that were non-traditional age and then the nursing students.
- TS: Right. Well, let me just ask you why you decided to leave Kennesaw in '92 given what you've said about the excitement of being here at that time? Could you just talk a little bit about what you went on to after you left Kennesaw and why you decided to leave?
- LH: Sure. By '92 I had been at the college twelve years, and it had gone from—I think when I came there, it was 3,000 students; in '92, by the time I left, it was 12,000. It was starting to be a very different place. I mean, it had established itself in certain arenas; it had grown, things had sort of changed, and I had always envisioned myself being at a small liberal arts college. Now I was at a place—well, I mean, you know, Kennesaw is larger than Princeton University.
- TS: Is that right?
- LH: So it felt different. An opportunity arose at Agnes Scott, which is down in Decatur, so nearby. It had the reputation for being a fine liberal arts college for women. There was an endowed professorship that came open in the chemistry department, and it just seemed like a chance to get back to that liberal arts college environment that I had always envisioned myself teaching at. So I applied for that job and got it. It was great. It allowed me to explore a different kind of arena. It allowed me to explore that single-sex education, you know, the education for women, which I really hadn't thought much

about. So I was able to think about what that really meant, especially teaching in the sciences. It opened up some different intellectual issues for me as a teacher, and I found that very rewarding. I certainly have fond memories of my time at Kennesaw and my colleagues there. It wasn't hard feelings in that regard at all, but it was just a new opportunity. After twelve years, I'd been promoted; I'd been approved for promotion as full professor. I left before that would be enacted, and I was able to move into an endowed professorial position.

TS: I see. So you weren't department chair when you went to Agnes Scott, but you got a chair when you went there.

LH: Right, right. It was an endowed professor chair. So that was a great opportunity—a change—and that's always intellectually invigorating.

TS: Were you ready to leave administration at that point?

LH: Yes, I was. I really didn't find that I thrived as a department chair at Kennesaw. I realized finally, at this point in my career, that I do like certain aspects of administration, but I really like programmatic sort of administration as opposed to policymaking, procedural kinds of administration. My first experience with being department chair at Kennesaw was really a major dip into administration, and I certainly learned some very, very valuable skills from that. But I also realized that I needed a break [from] that, and I really wanted to go back and focus more on teaching. So I did that for several years at Agnes Scott, and then I cycled into being department chair again.

TS: Is that right? Well, my perception is that people that become department chairs not only lose touch with the classroom, but they also oftentimes lose touch with their discipline as well.

LH: It's a very, very challenging form of administration. I think from the experiences that I've seen that that middle management position can be the hardest. You need to be an advocate for the faculty but also a liaison to the administration. You have some power and some authority but not as much as the responsibility that you have. It's a really great challenge, and I admire people who can thrive in it, who can find a way to feel like they make a difference and be personally rewarded in that. I think it's a great talent to do that. It wasn't my talent.

TS: Were you able to continue doing scholarship while you were department chair?

LH: A little, but it was very difficult. I mean, I didn't make any great foray. I did continue to take on some students, you know, advise some students and so forth, but it was really hard.

TS: Right. What was the name of the endowed chair at Agnes Scott?

- LH: It was the William Rand Kenan, Jr., chair. It's actually a national thing; they have a couple of William Rand Kenan, Jr., chairs here at Princeton.
- TS: Let me just ask you to compare the chemistry students that you had at Agnes Scott to those that you had at Kennesaw.
- LH: Well, Agnes Scott students are traditional age, by and large. Now they did have a program called "Return to College," which brought in a few over-the-traditional age students. They were, by and large, eager and bright; there was probably a little less diversity. The way I described it is, in all my teaching from Kennesaw to Princeton, what I have seen is a range of students. Depending on the mission of the institution and so forth, you might see a narrower part of that range. At Kennesaw, I think by being a commuter institution, you saw the broadest range. At Agnes Scott, by being a selective liberal arts college, you started to narrow in so you still saw a range, but you had students who were clumped a little more at the higher end. Then, of course, when you get to a place like Princeton, you narrow that even more. But I have seen really, really bright students every place I've ever taught, and I've enjoyed everywhere I've taught. I noticed, for example, that the students at Agnes Scott forgot what they'd been taught before just as readily as my Kennesaw students did; but if I reminded them of it, often they seemed to pick up on that a little faster, by and large, than say the majority of the Kennesaw students. But again, it's just a range; and you're just sort of narrowing the range at each place, or shifting the proportion, I guess, having a higher proportion of students who are operating a little higher on the range.
- TS: Right. How many years did you stay at Agnes Scott?
- LH: I was there nine years.
- TS: So you were there from '92 to 2001?
- LH: Right. Exactly.
- TS: Let me just ask you about technology in the classroom and when that came in. Were you using much technology—PowerPoint or whatever—while you were still at Kennesaw, or did you move to that at Agnes Scott? Or are you absolutely opposed to technology in the classroom altogether?
- LH: No, I think technology can play a role. I think we have yet to capitalize on it. For example, I think PowerPoint is often used rather badly; I don't think it's a saving grace. But I've used technology. I'm trying to think back. I think the technology that we used when I was at Kennesaw was overhead projectors. We did need those because in science, you often use a lot of diagrams and that sort of thing. What I found at Agnes Scott was that technology gave you some capabilities that you didn't have. So I started using some animations, being able to show animations in class at Agnes Scott. Being able to communicate with students outside of class by e-mail really became the norm, I guess, while I was at Agnes Scott. I don't remember....

TS: I don't even know that we had e-mail when you were here at Kennesaw.

LH: I guess maybe we didn't by '92. Isn't that funny?

TS: But I tell you what. I do more corresponding with students by e-mail than I do by phone nowadays. Certainly [more than] in person.

LH: Oh, yes; oh, yes. And that's both good and bad, I think. I think it makes them feel—it's very accessible, and that's good. There are certain things that it's awfully difficult to communicate by e-mail, though. I think the explanation of a touchy situation—that's kind of hard.

TS: Right. Well, I'm trying to move into Web CT. I'm not sure that I'm going to make it, but I'm working on it, at any rate.

LH: Well, we use Blackboard [course management software] here, but primarily they use it as a chance to just put up lots of materials for students. And you have to watch that, too. Just making everything accessible to students isn't necessarily good pedagogy because they don't know what to do with it. So being selective about that, I think, is important.

TS: That's right.

LH: But it is nice in that students can access materials at two in the morning; they don't have to worry about or remember handouts and that kind of thing.

TS: Right. Well, I think some of the people in science now are [having] the students take their tests on their computers. I'm not exactly sure how they do all of that, but I think that's the direction they're moving, at any rate.

LH: Yes, and I think Kennesaw's kind of led the wave, I believe, on some aspects of the—I don't know if they technically call it distance education—but some of the on-line classes and that sort of thing, that's kind of exciting. Princeton is a very traditional residential campus, and they're not really exploring those kinds of options at all.

TS: Really?

LH: It has a different mission.

TS: Well, when you left Agnes Scott, did you go straight to Princeton?

LH: Right. I had an opportunity while I was at Agnes Scott, which I would certainly want to make sure that folks at Kennesaw were aware of. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching has a program called the Carnegie Scholars Program that encourages and supports faculty who are involved in the scholarship of teaching and learning. I was fortunate enough to be chosen to participate in one of their early

programs. Part of that is a two-week residential experience out at the Carnegie Foundation in Palo Alto. Actually, it's two summers and then a short conference during the January in between. The idea is that you talk with other scholars of teaching and learning to flesh out your project and figure out ways to assess what you're trying to learn about in the classroom, about student learning. In doing that, I realized that I had gotten to a place in my career where what I really, really enjoyed doing was talking about teaching and learning very broadly. Talking with other faculty, finding out how one teaches in different disciplinary traditions—what are the challenges that students face in different disciplines, how do students learn? That whole area, that whole discipline, really, was really exciting for me. It was a big intellectual challenge. I realized that what I wanted to do was to have the luxury to spend my time thinking about teaching and learning issues in the broadest sense, across disciplines. So I started to look for positions in teaching and learning centers. Initially, the position that was open here at Princeton was an associate director. They wanted someone specifically with a science background, so I was fortunate enough to get that position. Then last year when our director left to become president of Kenyon College, [I became] acting director. Then I was chosen as director this year, so this has been a really exciting time for me in terms of sort of a new career.

TS: Right. So this is called the McGraw Center?

LH: It's the Harold W. McGraw, Jr., Center for Teaching and Learning. This is the McGraw family, as in McGraw-Hill.

TS: I see. Okay. So how many people do you have on your staff?

LH: Our center has eleven people. Five of us are involved in the part of the program that deals with talking to faculty and graduate students about teaching and to graduate students about professional development. We also work with the undergraduates in sort of a learning resource mode. Then six of our staff are involved in what's called the English Language Program, which works with international graduate students to enhance their English speaking skills in preparation for their teaching while they're here at Princeton.

TS: How much of your effort is with, well, I guess working with faculty to improve their teaching, would you say?

LH: [I'd estimate that] it's a third of what we do. At this point, we probably do less one-on-one with teaching faculty that way. What we have involved faculty more in at this point, because we're a fairly new center, is to invite them in to share their thoughts about teaching with other faculty and graduate students. We're bringing them in as resources, recognizing that at a place like Princeton—and any college really—some of your biggest and best resources are the people that are right there.

TS: Well, I would think that anything that would help the graduate students who are teaching their first classes would be wonderful.

- LH: Right. And we do lots of work with graduate students. Sometimes graduate students in universities [make up] the demographic group that is the least supported. Yet, they're facing some of the hardest transitions—going from being a student to learning how to be a colleague, a scholar, a teacher. So we work with a lot of graduate students, helping them transition in those areas—both working as teachers and then helping them think about their professional life as well.
- TS: Well, it sounds to me like the kinds of things you're doing are very close to what our CETL [Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning] is evolving into now that Bill [G. William IV] Hill has taken over as director of it. They have their own house now and have some faculty fellows that are engaged in different kinds of research projects, helping people with Web CT and that kind of thing.
- LH: Right. And you know, I think it's exciting. I think it's funny; CETL came into existence fairly early on during my stay there at Kennesaw, so it was in on an early wave of those teaching and learning centers. Then I guess after I left, it went through sort of a quiescent period, and now it's coming back again. It sort of models what I've seen happen nationally, I think, with teaching and learning centers, in a sense. There are some very, very old centers that came with the first wave, and then there are newer ones now. I think it's interesting that CETL has sort of spanned that era. I have to put this plug in so it's in writing; I want you to know that I'm the one that came up with the title for the newsletter for CETL.
- TS: Is that right? What is—I can't even remember now. Something through teaching.
- LH: *Reaching through Teaching.*
- TS: Reaching. Okay. So that's your contribution.
- LH: Yes, that's my contribution. [laughter]
- TS: All right. That's a good contribution. I think we've got it online now.
- LH: Yes, that's nice. It's a nice newsletter.
- TS: Yes, I guess it was really big for a while while you were here and then kind of declined. And I think it's coming back up now.
- LH: Yes, yes. I think there are different needs now. Originally, I think, a lot of the faculty had the impression that CETL was very much an outreach venture in some ways. There were some projects, I think, between CETL and the K-12 sector when I was there. It did, of course, highlight teaching and had the newsletter and so forth. But I think there are now so many demands on faculty at colleges, not only with their own disciplinary research, but then they're supposed to realize all this wonderful research that's going on—how people learn and how that translates into what we do in the classroom. So I

think these centers are now taking on an even newer role to be able to do some of that translation work for faculty.

TS: Well, now that you're the director of the McGraw Center, are you continuing to publish and do scholarship in the scholarship of teaching and learning?

LH: Not in the strict scholarship of teaching and learning, though I did publish my results and so forth from that particular work. What I've been publishing in more the last year or two is this field—sort of reflections about teaching and learning and the extent [to which] it can be used by people who are working with other faculty in faculty development. So my publishing continues to kind of evolve. It started out as publishing, obviously, in scientific research. Then I published in the area strictly of scholarship of teaching and learning. And now I've sort of moved into the area of trying to synthesize some of what we know about some of these fields of teaching and learning and so forth and [examine] how that impacts faculty in working with faculty on improving their teaching.

TS: Right. Are you able to teach any chemistry courses any more, or is that something of the past?

LH: Well, we try to keep our hand in teaching here. We feel like if we're going to be talking to faculty and graduate students about teaching Princeton students, then we need to be teaching Princeton students. So I didn't teach—I won't teach this year. But last year and the year before, I team-taught a large biochemistry survey course in the molecular biology department. That was kind of a trip because the first year I taught it, it was [made up of] a hundred students, and then in the second year, it was 130. I just wanted to point out that there are unique challenges to teaching in that format, I think, that I had never fully appreciated—even though you read about them—until I was put into that situation. So I just have a lot of sympathy for that challenge.

TS: Well, it certainly makes sense that if you're going to be telling people how to teach large sections, you've taught them yourself.

LH: Exactly.

TS: Well, I've got kind of a large, maybe kind of concluding topic that I'd like your insight into. We've been asking everybody that we've interviewed about master teaching and how they would define master teaching. Now that you're engaged in the scholarship of teaching and learning, you may have a different definition than you would have had a few years ago, but I just wonder, what's your definition? What constitutes master teaching or a master teacher?

LH: I think that teaching is an ongoing developmental process and that there's never an end to it. You never reach a point where you've perfected it, so in all the work we do, we don't approach teaching as something where you do this little bit or you study and you get to an end to where you know everything there is to know about it. But I think for me, one of the primary criteria for someone really being a master teacher is that they bring their

scholarly mind to bear on what's going on in the classroom. They're open and knowledgeable about some of the research on learning; they recognize the need to respond to each class on its own merit. That means they're flexible, they're responsive to what's going on in the classroom, yet they know the goals and have some clear goals for what they want to accomplish in the classroom. They outline some strategies for, hopefully, how to reach those goals, and then they try to see—they try to assess—if they have done what they set out to do.

TS: Okay. Well, let me just ask you also as kind of a concluding question—now that you've been at Kennesaw, you've stayed in contact with Kennesaw, you had the experience with Centre College and University of Kentucky, and then Agnes Scott and now Princeton—how would you describe Kennesaw, looking at it from afar at this point? And how would you describe where you think Kennesaw is at this stage in our development? You were talking about how we were getting a little too big for you at one point when you were thinking about going to Agnes Scott. We're up to about eighteen thousand now, I think, and they're actually talking about getting much larger than that. I guess our niche is kind of as a metropolitan university where enrollment's not going to do anything but grow.

LH: Right.

TS: Yet, at the same time—I think, more than ever, with the newer faculty that we're bringing in—faculty are really pressing for more time to do scholarship. They really want to do scholarship and what-have-you, and so we're really kind of in a struggle to hang on to what we once had as far as teaching as we move in different directions. Looking at us from afar—or institutions like Kennesaw State from afar—how do you perceive us today?

LH: Really, I think Kennesaw faces the same issues that most institutions of higher education face today, including Princeton, and that is how do you handle this tension between the need and the desire to do scholarship and research? A lot of that need and desire [is] being pressed by perhaps external forces for grant agencies to help support the academic mission, some of it [is] being pushed by the perception that what reflects success and quality is this ability to publish and do original research. So, the tension [is] between that and what we know it takes to do quality teaching and to promote effective learning in students. We're learning more and more about that, and so there's greater opportunity for really tapping into that and putting it into place in the classroom. And in a public institution like Kennesaw, there's a great pressure on accountability. Taxpayers want to know; parents want to know that if they're paying for this education for their student, they're getting it. So I think it's really hard; I think it's really hard for faculty everywhere now. It manifests slightly differently. Certainly, faculty at Kennesaw are under slightly different kinds of pressure than here at Princeton, but I even see it playing out here at Princeton. Faculty want to be really good teachers, but they realize that the reward structure is based heavily on their ability to be outstanding scholars. The university supports teaching and values teaching. There's a very prominent rhetoric on teaching that people believe, but it doesn't necessarily play out in the reward structure. I think you see that playing out in a slightly different form even in places like Kennesaw

and at Agnes Scott. I think it's a hard time in higher education right now. I don't have the wisdom and am perhaps not in a field to see exactly where it's going to end up. But I think possibly this new movement that attracted me, the scholarship of teaching and learning, may hold some key to help us come to some balance between what appears to be sort of opposing processes—the research mission and the teaching mission.

TS: In other words, a broader definition of what research is.

LH: Exactly. I think Kennesaw has a great opportunity. It's places like Kennesaw that I think have the luxury to redefine what research is—to really take [Ernest L.] Boyer's definition of scholarship of teaching, of application, of integration and to be serious about recognizing and valuing those. I think that would be a great contribution to higher education. It isn't going to happen any time soon at a place like Princeton. It's too bound by tradition; it's got too much at stake to experiment that way. I think Kennesaw has a great opportunity to do that, even more than a place like Agnes Scott. I think some of the small liberal arts colleges get sucked into the game of worrying about these rankings and hierarchy based on traditional models of research taking eminence. So I think Kennesaw has a great opportunity; I don't know if they'll be able to capitalize on it or not.

TS: Well, Boyer has certainly been the bible around here for the last decade or so, I think.

LH: Yes, yes. And I think there's a lot of good sense in that.

TS: Okay. Well, that's interesting. I was wondering what your take was on Boyer. Yes, I think the new faculty are more confused than anything else as to what the expectations are for them. They kind of feel like they ought to be doing this traditional scholarship, and they sometimes get mixed messages from administrators. I guess until you get tenure and promotion, you're going to be paranoid and not know who to believe.

LH: That's right. And that's common in a lot of places. I hear that from my colleagues at Agnes Scott and so forth. I think because the colleges and universities aren't really, really clear about what's going to happen and what should happen, it's hard to make those messages really clear to new faculty. Also, new faculty are evaluated in so many different levels. There's the department and how the department views those different definitions of scholarship, the broader school or college that they're located in, and then the university as a whole. So I think it's hard, and I think it's going to be hard for awhile. But I think that if any type of institution of higher education can pull it off and really redefine scholarship for this century, it'll be places like Kennesaw.

TS: But you really put the focus on the reward structure. What we better take care of is how we do tenure and promotion and how we do hiring, I guess.

LH: That's right, that's right. And being as clear as possible and getting buy-in from the departments. It can't be just top-down; you've got to get buy-in within departments because they're going to have a strong voice in the hiring and the tenuring process.

TS: Well, this has been very enlightening. It's certainly a new experience for me when you can't actually look somebody in the eye while you're doing an interview.

LH: It's fun. Yes, it's always hard when you can't see somebody, but yes, I've enjoyed talking about this.

TS: Well, I've certainly enjoyed talking to you. I think I'm out of questions, but I certainly appreciate very much you taking the time to talk to me.

LH: Well, you're very welcome. I enjoyed it a lot, Tom, and I hope things go well for you out there.

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