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October 27, 2000
Dr. Gerry Perkus

In the early days we just had that back part of your office in the corner. I remember the initial challenge, the biggest challenge was the cockroaches, just waves of cockroaches. I think when I first started in 86 you had to try and get them taken care of before we could do any work. We were all in a suite together. There was Beth Henry, Beth Payne, you, Judy and myself. Beth Payne and I got to be pretty close. It was a unique opportunity to have the research so close to the public information and were really able to frequently discuss some of the implication of some of the material I was finding. The thing that really amazed me, I went back Wednesday to the IR files in the Courtyard - we did an incredible amount of work those 2 years in terms of numbers of surveys, surveys of all types. Some of the things which we really, in retrospect seem so strange, so few people, there was still a large number of people in the community that didn't know we existed, didn't know where we were. It was a matter of kinda going out in the field. It was really exciting because it served, not just to collect data, but it was also to educate the public as to who we were and what we wanted to do. One of the exciting things was to have the gradual development of my office, as with other offices on the campus, to start with one person and then gradually be able to add people, allocate particular types of work to them and to be part of a kind of organism which was taking shape. Research was started just when the computer revolution was beginning and so the initial years, it seemed that getting information through surveys and informal more other than statistical means, and other than computer generated means was much more dominant then. I felt as time went on some of that initial excitement and initial kind of personal information gathering I

think diminished as the college became more institutionalized, larger, having more places to travel to. Between 86 and 88 when we were just at Central Park, and I'm sure you've heard this from others, that we were such a tight-knit group. And of course I remember that Halloween party at the college and I dressed up as a witch and nobody knew me... green outfit on and my wife's stockings on and I remember you were in your office there and I went to use the bathroom and I said, just don't mind me and I went in dressed in something like I have on now and came out in that witches' costume, total transformation, and I went around shrieking. That was the kind of thing, you know, well I can't imagine doing that here. At that time it was just accepted and became part of the folklore. I remember that first Christmas party in one of those bigger rooms, tree, Christmas carols. It was a family type of event and I know in future years we tried to keep that up... elements of being part of a family, very extended family. I think this is often true at first. There's so much camaraderie that whatever incipient problems there may have been, they didn't come out in the open till there was some kind of a conflict, some kind of a problem.

Dr. Anthony: It seemed that the conflicts were set aside when you had that kind of social function or kind of interaction on a different level. On Halloween or any of those kind of conflicts have dissipated You didn't have time, went back to work the next week, get back in the routine.

Of course I remember very well the first major visit of SACS in 89. I was very heavily involved with that and the many late nights. One I remember, we all got together during an ice storm on one Saturday in the president's office.

Dr. Anthony: Any characters you can think of back then other than yourself?

I remember Lou Connor, registrar. Again, we all worked so close together. I'd walk down the hall and we'd be able to resolve issues relating to statistics enrollment figures. Then Bill Dillingham – he was a good athlete...whipped me in racquetball.

Dr. Anthony: Beth Henry whipped me in racquetball down here one time.

That was exciting seeing her and her with her head man.

Dr. Anthony: Maybe I didn't have concentration when I was playing with her.

Really, she was an inspiration for me and I think when she left, she was just so full of energy, so full of ideas and very professional and I would do anything for her. So she was 15 years younger than I was, it didn't matter. Mike Voy, he was a real character. He rode a motorcycle. He had a camper parked out back there. I remember a number of the people have stayed. I remember the first institutional, the first strategic planning task force we had. I mean, speak about a difficult group to deal with. We had Ralph Hall, Jeff Edwards, Mike Cohick, Hoyce Helens and Bill Dillingham, and it was, what a mixture. And they all had needless soapbox – all of those people. I think that's one of the reasons this college became great was because we had strong personalities who were able to work together. We had that woman who ran fashion technology, she's kind of an Iranian girl – that always seemed strange that this woman was running the fashion department. So much has happened, it's hard to remember the Central Park Campus was so much smaller than just the one building. And I remember just taking my lunch outside and eat at that little picnic table. It almost seemed like I was transported to a little country area. I would leave my office after some difficult work and go right out back by that brook and I'd just spend some time and it was like I was in the country, the brook, the birds and the insects.

Some of that's still there. I remember doing laps, and running around that building and waving at people, knowing them all. Who knows what the image... you know with the Halloween thing triggered the Wizard of Oz. I played the role of the good fairy. Only Debbie could think up those things. As outrageous as it was, she pulled it off, I mean that actually took place and was received and accepted. We did six of those planning evaluation workshops. Didn't we do that at Canyon Creek, some other country clubs, some at other campuses.

Dr. Anthony: Did you go on the early retreats that we had done planning?

Yea, didn't go to the very first one but I did go to the others and again that was great where'd we'd sit around a long room and brainstorm things.

Dr. Anthony: Didn't you facilitate a few of those?

Yea, a bunch of them. This one, HV _____? It seemed like a brilliant stroke.

Dr. Anthony: Yes, yes, the vision I remember that, yes, and you were the impetus behind that.

Yea, in time it sort of worked.

Dr. Anthony: Yes it did. As I recall you filed the paper and the flip chars, posting the stuff on the walls. It set the tone for the future of the college. It was followed through pretty well.

I remember when you first told me you needed a strategic plan. You told me something that remained with me which was, *content is only fifty percent, it's the process, at least half*, process of getting people to do it. But we did that, I think successfully, I think so. I think people probably got sick of it.

Dr. Anthony: We were doing so much it got overwhelming there.

Combining... first there was the strategic Planning Task Force, then there was the Council on Institutional Effectiveness, then they joined in 1992 and put together CPIE which still goes on. And I also have the back of these the summaries of the surveys which were relevant at the time. I wrote an awful lot in those days. I did essentially writing analytical essays which attempted to put things into perspective. One of the funniest things was when I was working on enrollment, projection with Ralph Hall. Nobody still really knows how to do that.

Dr. Anthony: DeCody was the only one who could get the figures within a good trend – he just pulled them out of the air. He had a crystal ball.

I mean they had all these sophisticated systems which you would use... number of graduates from number of people who dropped out. All these different measurers to use, but still when it came right down to it didn't mean _____. I'd have to consult him at some point. He'd say, no you didn't do that right, he'd say no, you need to consider this. On the other hand Ralph and I got along quite well. I think once we got through this brashness, his roughness and could be helpful in his own way. I remember working on that Economic Impact stuff which was the first one we did, talking to and working with other business people and doing a lot of things like that. it was good to be in on that kind of thing and on the cutting edge. I found as I've grown older that it's what I've done, and of course I remember saying this when I was 30 that'll never happen to me. But I'm more conservative on some things I'd always prided myself on being on the cutting edge, the edge of change. That's what was so exciting about being here. But I was truly, I started offices, different types of offices in my other administrative jobs. Active in starting the Faculty Development Programs 30 years ago across the country. But now I've reached

the point where I want to basically tend to my own garden and do well, stay with what works that I know really works well. The Colima has been a real plus and it was an opportunity to be involved with another culture.

Dr. Anthony: How did you get that started? What was the impetus behind that initially? Was Tino involved? How did we decide on Colima?

Yea, I think because Tino was involved. I think Estellita tried to make contact the preceding year but somehow in call Mexico for some reason she wasn't able to. I had a sabbatical coming up, I had rejected. I'd already pretty much gotten permission to do a sabbatical or I was going to do a sabbatical in Austin to work on a research kind of thing... the Coordinating Board. But somehow that wasn't where my heart was anymore. I was ready for a change and it was actually, I was talking with Mitch. He was the one who initially suggested that maybe I should talk with Tino and considering that might be the kind of thing I might want to do. From Tino I got the phone number of his cousin. It took a lot of persistence on awful lot of persistence and calling back, frustration and all that. then they put me in touch with the school of Languages and I went down there. It was Hatavio Bravo who was going into his last 2 years of directing the school. Patty was the assistant. Michelle and I went there on our honeymoon in 94 and fell in love with the place and that's when we arranged to go down there in the spring of 95. we had to work it out with her schedule cause she was a graduate student in American Family Therapy. She changed her thesis top to What Happened to Colima, and she was able to do her research on Colima while she was there on the changing attitudes of the Mexican University Women. From teaching down there, teaching a couple courses, helping with the

curriculum and just talking with people it just.... I've been saying this for several years now, but I'm getting to the point where I'm ready to pass it on to somebody else.