Oral History Interview of John Berg

Interview Date: November 19, 2018

Interview By: Chianna Calafiore and Emma Nee

Citation: Berg, John Interviewed by Chianna Calafiore and Emma Nee, Suffolk University Oral SOH-046, November, 2018. Transcript and audio available. Moakley Archive and Institute, Suffolk University, Boston, MA.

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Interview Summary

John Berg, a Suffolk University professor emeritus of government and environmental studies, discusses his early career and activism, his teaching and research, his time as Government Department chair, and the development of Suffolk’s environmental studies program. Berg describes his work with professional organizations and partnerships with organizations such as the Washington Center. He also shares his philosophy on teaching and leadership. The interview concludes with a discussion of the leadership transitions that took place at Suffolk from 2010-2018.

Subject Headings

Berg, John C.
Suffolk University -- History
Suffolk University-- College of Arts and Sciences
Universities and colleges -- Faculty
TRANSCRIPT BEGINS

CHIANNA CALAFIORE: Today is Monday, November 19, 2018. And we are here with Professor John Berg of Government and Environmental Studies. He’s a former chairman of the government department, director of environmental studies, who also continues to teach part time today. Thank you for agreeing--

[00:00:18]

JOHN BERG: You’re welcome.

CHIANNA CALAFIORE: to be interviewed for the Suffolk University Oral History Project. I’m Chianna Calafiore.

EMMA NEE: I’m Emma Nee.

CHIANNA CALAFIORE: We’re both history majors at Suffolk. We do ask, if you would, please review and sign the consent form which we’ve just previously done.

JOHN BERG: I have done it already. Yeah.

[00:00:33]

CHIANNA CALAFIORE: As we explained, your interview will be available for researchers in the Moakley Archives and probably will be posted online. We will focus on your career as a professor and chairman at Suffolk and your work outside of the university. All right. Why don’t we get started by first discussing your background? Emma.

EMMA NEE: So, our first question for you is, how did working under Senator Nelson, help shape what you wanted to do career-wise?
JOHN BERG: Oh, okay. You’re sort of jumping in. You threw me a lot of facts there.

[Laughter]
[00:01:03]
Yeah, I grew up in Wisconsin and graduated from the University of Wisconsin and I majored in English literature at the time; wrote a senior thesis on the poetry of William Butler Yeats. But during my last year I thought, well, I really want to be working on sort of the more public policy issues. And so, I decided to apply for graduate school in political science. And because of that interest, I also thought about the idea of getting some kind of internship over the summer. And my uncle, a man named Davar [?] Labin [?], had been the chair of the Regents of Wisconsin and was again later. But he was a close friend of Nelson’s and he helped me get a position there.

So, it did give me some understanding of how politics works, how national government works, how the legislative process works. In particular, nobody understands it completely. There were a couple of times we thought we’d done something that turned out not to have, not to met what we thought it did.

[00:02:06]
But it was a very interesting job. I worked for two summers. I worked there for a summer and then came to, got into Harvard where I got my PhD and then went back and worked there the next summer. It’s hard to put a finger on what it meant. Well, I guess, one of the things, okay, just an example, is that I was working there during the Tonkin Gulf incident when some America military vessels near Vietnam may or may not have been attacked by the North Vietnamese.

But in any case, where President Johnson held a press conference and announced they’d been attacked by the North Vietnamese and said that we needed to make a strong response
and got a resolution passed through both houses of Congress in two days, calling on the
president to respond. So, Gaylord Nelson was concerned about the possibility of a war.
And during the floor debate in the Senate, he introduced an amendment saying that this
resolution in no way authorized a commitment of American troops to a land war in Asia.

[00:03:25]
Senator Fulbright who was managing the bill said, “Oh, Gaylord, you don’t need to worry
about that. This resolution doesn’t do that anyway.” Now, I understand everybody has a
time and that was legislative history and that determined how the resolution should be
interpreted. So, Nelson said, “Fine,” and withdrew the amendment. The resolution passed.

And for the next, as long as he was in office, Lyndon Johnson proceeded to cite this
resolution as the Congressional authorization for everything that he did in Vietnam, which
was to escalate the war, put a substantial numbers of US troops there, fighting and 50,000
casualties on the US side. So, that made me sort of question the whole efficacy of politics,
as it worked and I became quite radical for a while and got really involved in the anti-war
movement when I was a graduate student.

[00:04:25]
Am I taking your question too far [Laughter] or should I just go on?

EMMA NEE: Not at all.

JOHN BERG: So, one way it affected me is by the time I started working at Suffolk I
had been involved in as, one of the leaders of a student, actually took over the
administration building at Harvard. And eventually I was suspended from Harvard and
then continued to speak on campus despite orders not to. And so, they eventually
prosecuted me for assault and battery on the dean of Harvard College. And we were quite
radical. We defended ourselves, me and a guy Jamie Colbreth [?], who is now a lawyer in Maine, were convicted and sentenced to nine months in the Middlesex County House of Correction. The jury was shocked. Nobody had ever been sentenced. There was no injury. We’d sort of held, I’d sort of held the dean by his elbow and walked him out of the building [Laughter]. But no one had ever been, gotten prison time for assault and battery when there was no injury before in the history of Massachusetts.

[00:05:36] So then, the other way it affected me, and so when I finally went back and finished my PhD. I didn’t quite finish my PhD, I was still working on it when I applied for and got the job at Suffolk—and I was quite worried about how my record there would affect my employability. So, when—I had a CV that sort of left a blank in that period of time. When asked what I’d done I mentioned a couple of, well, I’d driven a laundry truck for a while, which is true, and kind of tailed off.

And then, once I was here, you know, I said, well, wait a minute. If I eventually get tenure and then they discover there’s something dishonest in my record, they will be able to take tenure away. So, I was careful to figure out how to let everyone know about this whole experience during my first five years. And at the—actually, fairly shortly after, I guess it was some anniversary of the time we took over University Hall, Boston Magazine did a feature article where they interviewed me. And so, I sent to the dean and the president and just with no comment saying, “Oh, you might be interested in seeing this article about me.”

[00:06:50] So, I don't know, did that affect my understanding of government? I’m not sure. But it certainly was an important part of my coming to Suffolk. It probably also meant that it did affect my employability. I mean Harvard had a system where—the government department at Harvard had a system where, which worked pretty well, right, from one point of view—
where, when they knew of a vacancy, a teaching position, a faculty position in some other university, they would pick one person to recommend. They wouldn’t just send everybody there. They probably changed it now because it’s subject to all kinds of problems. But that’s what they did then.

[00:07:31] And so, they didn’t. I think they didn’t think much of Suffolk and they didn’t think much of me and it seemed like a good match.

[Laughter]

**CHIANGNA CALAFIORE:** So, you started working at Suffolk in 1974.

**JOHN BERG:** Right.

**CHIANGNA CALAFIORE:** What made you choose to work at Suffolk and make the move to Boston?

**JOHN BERG:** Well, I was living in Boston, so that was easy. I was living in Boston. I was married and had two children. And it would have been very disruptive to everyone else, you know, had I moved to another place. So, I pretty much, I did apply for some jobs elsewhere but I pretty much limited, tried to target my search on Boston.

[00:08:15] It was the only firm offer I had. Dion Archon, who was the chair of what was then the department of government and economics, had gone too; was a Harvard man all the way. Had been an undergraduate there. He got a PhD in political economy there. And he’d
become chair. And so, he was—determined to be succeeded as chair, he was getting near retirement age, by somebody else with a Harvard PhD.

And at that point he had hired two of us, me and a woman who was then named Judy Elmusa but later got divorced and went back to her maiden name of Judy Holleman. He’d hired her a year before but then she had left. And he didn’t know if she was coming back, so he reached out to me. I think I’d written to every college in the Boston area, college or university. About midnight one night he called me up, “This Dr. Dion Archon. You know we have a job at Suffolk. Are you interested?” That was kind of his style of doing things.

[00:09:20]
So, I came in and interviewed and that was it. You know, it was—Suffolk at the time was not like it is now. And it’s still not really a primary research, you know, top, prestige national university. So, I think for the first five or six years I was sort of, well, I’m here now. Now I can use this as a basis to apply for another job. I did apply for a couple but I didn’t get any of them. And eventually I became more interested in staying at Suffolk, partly because after a while I realized that things were changing and it was an opportunity to—rather than find someplace that would be different—to try to change my job here, as to be more, more like what I wanted it to be, which I think I was sort of able to do, to some extent, to quite an extent.

EMMA NEE: So, you started the government department. How would you describe the government department’s growth over time?

[00:10:24]
JOHN BERG: It grew quite a bit. I think—boy! When I started, it was the department of government and economics until 1982, when the two were split. And in government there was Dion Archon. There was Judy Dushku. There was John O’Callaghan. There was me. I
have a sense, maybe there was a fifth person but I’m not sure of that. And now it’s about, I think, 15. I’m not sure exactly. And economics was even smaller. I think there were three people in the economics side. So, it’s grown a lot.

I recently came to realize, my experience being in the government department was not the same as people in some other departments. We were always a department that got along pretty well. A couple of us put a lot of effort into making sure that there was, it was a very sociable department. We’d have couple of pot luck get togethers that everyone would come to twice a year. And people respected each other.

[00:11:44]
And also, we are—this is even true today. I mean one of the ideas of the president, top administration is that we’re—the public policy is one of Suffolk’s strengths. And so, we always tied into that pretty well. So, I think sometimes we were able to get a little more support than people in other—I’m saying, somebody interviewed my wife, who was a scientist. And the sciences have always felt, I think rightly so, that they’re not supported as much as they should be. Even though the dean for 25, 20 or 30 years was a chemist. But there’s always been the sense that they don’t really count and that they have a hard time getting promotion, getting more faculty positions, getting resources.

But we did, we always did pretty well. And when I was chair, we grew, were able to add three or four faculty positions in six years. I’m making up that number. I have no idea what it actually is.

[Laughter]

**CHIARNA CALAFIORE:** It’s all right.
JOHN BERG: I’m not sure I answered. I can’t remember what your original question was.

CHIANNA CALAFIORE: Do you want her to repeat it?

JOHN BERG: Did I answer it?

CHIANNA CALAFIORE: I think so.

JOHN BERG: Okay.

EMMA NEE: The next one?

CHIANNA CALAFIORE: Okay. So, you had mentioned you had become chairman. So, what were some of the challenges that you faced taking on the role of chairman of the government department?

JOHN BERG: Well, it wasn’t—I don't know challenges. I really got lucky at the time I did it, you know, the timing when I did it. So, let me back up a little bit. When I said I began to see the possibility for changing things, so, when I started, right, it was a time when Dean Ronayne had decided that he would no longer offer full-time faculty positions to people without PhDs or equivalent degrees. But there were a lot of people on the faculty who did not, you know, hired before that who didn’t have such degrees. Some of them were excellent. Many of them were excellent. That’s not so much the point.
But there was very little value placed on scholarship and research. The idea was, well, you should teach. Teaching load was four courses a semester. And the pay was pretty low. The tuition was also pretty low. Tuition when I started was $1,600 a year. And after, sometime about five or six years in, the university made a decision to do much more to cooperate with the Federal Financial System. So, when students got more federal aid, that as a result, tuition also went up because people could pay it who wouldn’t have been able to pay it without that.

So, that was the situation here. The situation in the academic world, generally, as there had been kind of an explosion in PhD programs and people and in the numbers of students and in the number of programs. But when I was admitted to Harvard, my class was huge. It was about 50 or 60 students. And I later heard that what had happened is that Harvard had admitted about as many students, as many applicants as they usually did but many more had accepted. So, it was educationally not ideal. So, graduate seminars that should have been 10 to 15 students had 30 to 50 students. You couldn’t have that kind of discussion you should have had.

[00:15:37]
But, you know, most of, many of those people, with the usual percentage went on and completed a PhD and were looking for a job. And the same thing was happening everywhere else. So, there were—from Suffolk’s point of view, it suddenly meant it wasn’t even hard to hire only PhDs because there were all these people with PhDs looking for jobs. And it meant that the faculty members who started about when I did, a little before, a little after, and continuing to be, were much more interested in doing research and publishing and playing a part in their profession, their discipline nationally in their professional organizations.
So, suddenly there were a lot of people who wanted that. And the resources to do it lagged, right? So, then were—many universities, when they hire a new faculty member will give you $10,000 or $20,000 for your first research project. It doesn’t replicate but you’re supposed to use that to qualify yourself to get grants in the future. And no chance of that whatsoever, as long as I was here, anyway.

[00:16:50]
But still, there were people who were, there were people you had something in common with, who could work together and encourage each other. So, that made it a lot more enjoyable place to work. But going back to your question, by the time I became chair, so Judy Holleman had replaced Dion Archon when he retired. She did it for six or seven years and then she—she was really great. She was a great scholar, a wonderful teacher. She was so committed to teaching that she couldn’t sleep the night before she had a class. She would stay up all night thinking about exactly how to do everything more effectively. And finally, it was just too much for her. So, she left the academic world and moved to Georgia with her partner. And Agnes Bain became chair. And Agnes was chair for, I don't know, 15 or 20 years. I don't know know the numbers. And she was wonderful. You know, she really made everything work well.

[00:17:56]
Judy had finally managed to get rid of the economics people. I mean she was—the deal was they needed—you know, she was on a search committee that had hired David Tuerck and the chair of the new department, and that was part of the deal for getting rid of them. And so, we were now a political science department, so-called government but no longer government and economics.
That was important to us, because it counted for some prestige in the discipline. We’d tried to join the National Political Science Honorary Society before and they said, no, you can’t do it because you’re not a political science department. And now we were able to do it.

[00:18:38]
But then Agnes took over. She really solidified things. Everything was working very smoothly. So, all I had to do when I became chair was sort of get ideas and try to sell them to somebody. But it was—you know, there were a couple of personnel clashes I had to deal with but nothing really major. And it was a period when, for us, a period growth. For the university, it was a period of growth. And the people—I still don’t know the truth about this, right?

Dave Sargent, from our point of view, was a wonderful president. He was very visionary and expansion minded and could see that could happen and try to make it happen. He made a lot of things happen. He made this building [Sargent Hall] happen. He opened the Senegal and Dakar campuses. He led the transition from not having any housing to having housing. He may have overreached financially, right? And that’s still not clear to me. I mean there are some problems. We’re still having problems, probably from paying off this building because the capital campaign failed. Somebody else can talk about that one. But he was very supportive of things.

[00:20:11]
Ken Greenberg became the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. And he, as long as you were being—as we were expanding, he was great with that. You know, he was really supportive. He wanted to do that, too. He had all kinds of ideas. You could go to him with ideas and often get help. You know, a few years later there was this—I guess I’ll talk about it a little bit. You might have it somewhere else in your interviews.
It turns out, Sargent, although a great president he hadn’t started out with money and so he really wanted some money to leave to his family. I think that’s it. And the chair of the board was a very strong supporter of David Sargent. So, he kept raising his salary and kind of did it without really fully consulting the board, just sort of—and so then it came out in the paper once that Sargent was getting—universities have to report the salaries of their top five paid people and all their officers every year. And he was getting, he had a salary of $2.8 million.

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It wasn’t really true, right. They made a one-time contribution to his pension fund to make up for years of low salary. But under the IRS rules, that counts as salaries. But you took that out, still, his salary was about $900,000, which was still more at that time that the president of Harvard, for example. And this—raised a big ruckus, with people, especially here in the law school where we are having this interview, why I’m calling it here.

We’re signing petitions and stuff saying, “Give the money back or resign or something.” And his friend, Macaronis, the chair of the board made some really tactless statements to the media about how these law professors who were protesting wouldn’t even know how to interpret a contract. Well, you know, that was sort of—they’re in a law school.
[Laughter] We’re trying to get students to come to the law school. We have the chairman of the board saying the law faculty aren’t competent at law. That’s really bad. So, Macaronis had to quit.

[00:22:27]
And once Macaronis was gone, Sargent, was pushed out by other people on the board, who knows who, and replaced by Barry Brown as interim president, I guess was his title. Barry Brown was a law professor. And he had been appointed Provost. And because he was provost, he became acting president or interim president. And all I can say is, his track
record as a university president is not very good. He did better at Suffolk. He went on to Pine Manor [sic Mount Ida] and closed the school down.

[Laughter]

Because the just—I don’t understand him but he’d keep deciding there wasn’t enough money and we have to cut things. And so, he kind of devastated the place. So, then the good days were over. And that just happened to be about the time—I had served as chair for five years, which I thought was the appropriate time for someone to be chair of a department. And I could see why.

[00:23:35]
You know, I thought that going in. But I could see why in my experience that you start, you say, “Oh, I’m chair now. Let’s see what I can do.” And you get ideas. And you build to support them. I think the main thing I did, I did a lot of things, but the main thing I think of is I really worked to give more opportunities to the faculty of the department, helping them get grants, getting new roles for them.

After five years what I was finding is, gee, this is a lot of work [laughter] to do that stuff. And so, I could go—many people at Suffolk in those days, I don’t know, still were chair for 20 years. But you can see after a while the job, you know, the way they could serve for long is, well, I’ll just make everything as easy as possible, you know, do it the same way every year. And so, the new ideas and new initiatives kind of goes out the window at that point. I didn’t want that to happen to me so I was eager to move on. And there were plenty of people in the department who would make perfectly good successors.

[00:24:50]
One of them is chair now, Rachel Cobb. And so, I told the dean I wanted to resign as chair. And he said, “Oh, we can’t do without you. And what would it take to make you stay?” And I said, “Well, what it would take is,” because it had been one of my goals, “give somebody a course release to direct the introductory course or the undergraduate program,” I forget what it was. And he said, “Okay.” And so, that was, I did that with Rachel Cobb.

But the next year it was, okay. Well, I’ve done that. So, now I’m really going to step down as chair. I also applied for a full-year sabbatical. I don’t think we have them anymore but at that time we did. And so, he was sitting there. He called me from a Promotion and Tenure Committee meeting, which is where they consider sabbatical requests. He said, “John, you applied for full-year sabbatical. You really do want to step down as chair.” I said, “Yes, I do.” So, then I did. I got the sabbatical, too.

[00:25:56]
But again, I’m not sure I answered your question.

**CHIANKA CALAFIORE:** No—

**EMMA NEE:** No, I think you did.

**CHIANKA CALAFIORE:** Great explanation.

**EMMA NEE:** So, our next question is, what was your involvement in helping Suffolk unionize?

[00:26:08]
**JOHN BERG:** Ah, that’s an interesting question. Okay. You’re talking about the lectures.
EMMA NEE: More of like for private universities to help get them like in unions.

JOHN BERG: Okay. Well, there’s—the full-time faculty are not unionized. And early in my time here there was the Yeshiva decision, which didn’t quite say that full-time faculty couldn’t unionize in private universities but sort of said it would be very difficult. The NLRB wouldn’t recognize you. You could always organize and go on strike and say, recognize us or we won’t work. But you can’t go through the NLRB process because they ruled that faculty were part of management.

[00:27:02]
There was at least one and maybe two attempts by support staff to unionize. And the secretary of the government department at one point, Jean Walsh, was very active in that. But that failed. They didn’t quite get enough members. And then there was a successful attempt of part-time faculty lecturers to unionize. And at that time, that was when I was chair of the government department. And whatever you think of the Yeshiva decision, department chairs certainly are management.

So, legally, I couldn’t have anything to do with that. And in prior years, you know, I’d been a member of the American Association of University Professors, which is not only a union, it’s an academic freedom organization—and an organization that generally tries to represent the interests of university faculty, full and part time. But then, it’s very interested in being the union where faculties are unionized, both full and part time. So, many state universities are not subject to NLRB anyway. They get recognized as unions through the procedures in their own states. This is federalism.

[00:28:31]
And so many of those are AAUP. And they began trying to do, organize part-time faculty. I was, for a while, president of the AAUP chapter at Suffolk, which was primarily full-time people. My predecessor, as chair of the AAUP had been Blair Bigelow in the English department. And Blair was really committed to, particularly helping part-time faculty get health insurance and then supporting their attempts to unionize.

And they did get health insurance. I mean—through various, for various reasons. Blair had a meeting once with Dave Sargent near the end. And said, “Oh, I’m glad you’re giving in to our demand.” or something else like that. And Sargent was indignant. He said, “No. No at all. I’m doing this because I care about the part-time faculty.” Who knows? He probably did. But he was really mad at—

[00:29:34]
But they got health insurance and then subsequently the union. So, I’ve been involved in the AAUP. But once they started the NLRB process of petitioning, I had to be completely out of it. So, I knew all those people and had talked to them previously and been supportive but I couldn’t do anything more because it’s an unfair labor practice if management get involved in it.

CHIANNA CALAFIORE: So, you were a part of many outside organizations, as you mentioned, such as the Washington Center, which helps students gain professional experiences. Why is it important to be a part of organizations that help students on their career path?

JOHN BERG: Well, the Washington Center, that’s an organization that Suffolk has a contract with to place students there, not just to gain experience but, in my opinion, more important to learn about, learn political science, learn about—well, they’ve actually
covered all majors but, you know, that’s the one that was especially important to me, I got involved with them—no, back up.

[00:30:41]
So, sometime, probably in 1975, but I can’t place it. I might be a year off, a couple of students came to me who’d been offered—had been asked by members of the Massachusetts House of Representatives, state reps, if they would come and be interns for them in their office. And they wanted to get credit for it and we didn’t have any program like that. And so, I went to, my chair who was still Dion Archon, and I went and worked out with him how we could set this up as a course, which would involve weekly class meetings and readings and stuff and keeping journals.

And that worked fine. And Mordville [?] did it so we came to have maybe 12 students, on an average semester doing local, part-time internships. Originally, it was a six-credit program. They got three credits for doing the internship and three for the class they took with it. Eventually, when we went to the four credits a course system, eight seemed too many. And so, we made it four and reduced some of the assignments to make it fit.

[00:31:52]
And then, at some point I read something in one of the APSA, American Political Science Association publications about this program, the Washington Center for Learning Alternatives, as it was called at the time, which offered to take students from colleges and place them in Washington internships, provide housing, have a course for them, become a full credit program.

And then, since I was doing internships, I was trying to learn how to do it. There was a woman at—there was an education director in the State Senate, a woman named Marge Schiller who was a staff member of the senate president, who was Kevin Harrington at the
time. And she—I went and talked to her about how to do it and arranged some placements.
And then, partly through that I got on some lists and then the National Conference of State
Legislators had a conference in Newport about state internship programs.

[00:32:55]
So, I went to that and it was very—I learned a lot. I met some people. I gathered various
materials about how to do it, forms to use and all. It was very helpful. But at lunch I
happened to be sitting next to a woman named Sheila Burke who was one of the founders
of the Washington Center for Learning Alternatives, to come there to, you know, talk
about that program. And so, with that connection, I went on, went ahead and applied for it,
applied to them to be affiliated. And proposed here that we be affiliated with them. And,
[without] getting too detailed, but it worked.

So, we were Suffolk. We agreed to do it. We worked out a financial arrangement where it
would charge students tuition. We would pay their fees as long as their fees weren’t higher
than their tuition that would be fine. And if their fees were ever higher, we would charge
students a supplement. And so, you know, we did that for, have been doing that for over 40
years, I guess, and have sent hundreds, if not thousands of students there to their programs.

[00:34:05]
They also do two-week seminars, usually in January and sometimes other times of the
year. And we send more students to those. And so, they have a national—so you have to
have a campus liaison. So, I was a campus liaison with them, to centralize the whole
process. And they’d have a—they started appointing some of the liaisons to a Liaison
Advisory Committee. Because we were a fairly regular customer, I got onto that.

So, I got more involved with them. It’s not exactly being a member of it because they are
not a membership organization. They’re a non-profit corporation. They’ve grown a lot.
They’ve got their own dorm now. They don’t call it a dorm. They call it a residential and teaching facility I think—no, residential and academic facility because they have classrooms in it. It’s a RAF. So, they’re taking quite a few more students than they used to. But it’s been great for us.

[00:35:09]
And then we—based on that, a couple of years later I came upon Educational Programs Abroad, which is a UK-based organization that originally placed interns in the House of Commons in Britain—and then eventually grew. They have programs in several European cities. And we have sent students to London, Brussels, and Edinburgh through them. Anyway, that was a partial answer to your question.

**CHIANKA CALAFIORE:** So, how do you encourage students to take on outside programs and internships?

[00:35:51]
**JOHN BERG:** Well, they kind of encourage themselves, frankly. The Washington Center, and to lesser extent EPA, I would bring in representatives from those organizations, you know, who would speak. And the method that seemed to work pretty well is I would schedule five-minute classroom visits. I would go with them when I could, just five minutes in a class. They’d do a very brief pitch and then there would be an information session.

Because what I’ve found was, I think if a student is going to go off to another country or to Washington, where they’ve maybe never been, it feels a lot safer if they’ve met someone from that place, where they are going to be, from the organization they are going to be working with. If it just me saying this is a great program, I’d get some, you know. But I
wouldn’t get nearly as many because it was just like, well, what is this? Am I selling a bill of goods?

But now they’ve actually seen somebody and say, well, I guess it’s real. And it’s a pretty exciting thing. Then after a while there are people who have done it, right? And then about eight or ten years ago, I suppose it had been building up, but there was what seemed to me like a sudden change that from a time when most students didn’t do internships and those who did were really committed to it. And people started saying, “Well, this is my third internship,” students. And I was kind of shocked at first. Why would you do that many? And you can’t do that many for credit. So, they’re just doing it voluntarily. Maybe you’re doing it, I don’t know.

[00:37:52] And I realize people are—I mean there are problems with that. Students are thinking of them purely as a way to get a job and not as a learning opportunity, at least in an academic sense. But it also meant that we were—there were many more people who wanted internships. So, they just kind of sold themselves, as a matter of just saying. It’s more, this is the one you should do because it will be higher quality. You’ll really learn something.

**EMMA NEE:** You once said, “After all my years in education, what remains really important to me is the quality of teaching and the recognition that good teaching is part of our job.” So, what do you mean by the quality of teaching?

[00:38:34] **JOHN BERG:** When did I say that?

[Laughter]
CHIANNA CALAFIORE: When you received the Lifetime Achievement Award.

JOHN BERG: What? Oh, okay. I don't know. You guys have done some research, more than I—well, that must be the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Political Science and Education section. I got two. Yeah, so what’s the question, what do I mean by quality of teaching?

EMMA NEE: Yes.

[00:39:04]

JOHN BERG: Oh, well, I don't know if you can define. It’s just caring about students, caring about whether they learn or not and thinking they can learn. And figuring out how you can facilitate that process. I’m not sure I really like the phrase, even if I said it. I’ll tell you why. Because I’ve always felt, what’s really important is what students learn. And you can learn without being taught. And people learn without being taught all the time, sometime rightly and sometimes wrongly.

Most university courses, you could learn all the material by going to a library and reading books and journal articles or whatever, right? And so, partly you have the course because you wouldn’t do that otherwise. And maybe you need an explanation of some things. But, you know, most of us in the faculty, right, we went to school a long time ago. And that’s what we do if we decide to teach a new course or to launch a research project. You don’t necessarily get somebody to teach you. You learn, right?

[00:40:31]

So, partly what we’re trying to teach is how to learn, how to channel that process. And we’re in this funny position that, you know, we get paid because students think they have to have courses from us and they have to have a degree. They think that because employers
think they have to have a degree in order to get hired; which they didn’t use to think. You know, that’s fairly recent that a college degree has really much influence on whether you get a job or not.

I mean even in the 1920s and 1930s, you saw plenty of people who got professional jobs without—you couldn’t be a doctor or a lawyer, but without—well, you could be a lawyer without a college degree. David Sargent, I mentioned before, he had a Suffolk law degree. He didn’t have a college degree. Joe Moakley, who this archive [Moakley Archive] is named for had no college degree, only a Suffolk Law degree. I think he’d taken one course in some school in Florida.

[00:41:35]
But that’s changed now. You know, most law schools won’t accept you without a degree. So, our challenge is to, just from our personal, financial interest is to create a situation where people feel that they get enough benefit that it’s worth paying the tuition. And there’s a lot of question about that these days, as you may have noticed.

CHIANNA CALAFIORE: So, you have interests in both government and environmental studies. How does your teaching and research combine your interests?

JOHN BERG: That’s a funny thing. My real interest was in environmental politics. And then this Environmental Studies Program got going. I was involved in—I’ll give you my side of this. There were other sides to it I later learned. In 2005, I think it was, the—I cared about the environment. I cared about climate change. So that the—I think it was in 2005, Russia signed the Kyoto Protocol which called for reducing, achieving certain targets and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

[00:42:53]
They had been resisting it. They signed it, finally, because first of all their economy had collapsed and they had already achieved the targets. It didn’t cost them anything. And they wanted some other things from the European Union, in particular, that that helped them get.

But their signing it, and the reason the European Union was willing to offer them something, brought the treaty over the threshold to go into force. Because it was that countries, nations, states, parties representing, I think it was 50 percent of greenhouse gas emissions had to have been, maybe it’s 60 percent—but whatever it was, the US had withdrawn, right, which was the biggest emitter then. Now we’re only second. But Russia—so it’s hard to meet that threshold but Russia brought them over.

[00:43:45]
So, we quickly organized this symposium here. We brought in leading people, the German Consul Ross Gelbspan, a prominent author in this field, a journalist, and a bunch of other people and had a forum about it, sort of, to promote some interest in Suffolk. And I was sort of thinking about, maybe we should do some kind of interdisciplinary environmental program. My wife, Martha Richmond, who was in this project, we weren’t married then but she—meanwhile, unbeknownst to me, she was part of the committee to organize this. But Dean Greenberg had been talking to her about taking over the environmental science program because he was just—they only had three students. He thought it should amount to more.

[00:44:37]
[Section Omitted]
But he—and combining with an environmental studies program—so, I was put on a committee to help design the program. And in the process of that I agreed, offered to teach an introductory course in environmental studies. The program at that time had a one-year,
introductory course in environmental science and a one-semester introductory course in environment studies, which was sort of defined as all the non-scientific parts, right.

And I was supposed to co-teach it with Fred Marchant in the English Department, so it would be social sciences and humanities. But Fred backed out, arguing he had too much to do. So, I taught for the next six or seven years. I learned a lot from that. So, I became more interested in this interdisciplinary approach. About that time, an organization was formed, nationally, the Association of Environmental Studies and Sciences. So, I started going to their meetings, became a member of that. And met other people that were doing stuff there. And as a result of that—so your question was, how it affected my research? I got kind of interested in the climate movement and wrote a paper for a conference I go to in England every year, the American Politics Group. It meets in January in England. Not the ideal time to be in England but better to be there than here.

[00:46:31]

They meet at different universities in England for three days every year. So, I wrote a paper on sort of what became 350.org and the anti-Keystone pipeline campaign, relating it to changes in climate science, a new approach pioneered by James Hanson of—I’m getting too detailed here. But instead of looking at the rate of greenhouse gas emissions, looking at the total amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and figuring out how much can we afford to add, how much do we have to take out to achieve a given global mean temperature?

So, I wrote this little paper. And then I had been talking to a woman from a publisher, I’m blanking on the name, Lynn somebody in Boulder. The woman was named Jessica Gribble about a different book I want to write on the American political party system, which I still want to write. Lynn Rienner. So, one year I wrote to her, to Jessica. And this is shortly after this paper. And Lynn Rienner wrote back to me and says, well, judging from the
contents of this message, it was really meant for Jessica and she’s not here anymore. She
worked for Praeger, which is also based in Boulder.

[00:48:03]
And so, I wrote to her and said, “Well, it doesn’t really fit Praeger but I’m looking for
somebody to do a book on the politics of coal, and coal and climate.” So, I couldn’t resist.
So, that’s what I’m working on now. I’ve got six chapters. No, I think I’ve got seven
chapters. I’m working on the eighth. But I’m not sure. I lose count after a while. And that’s
probably the end, but there might be one more. And it’s due in two weeks but it’s going to
be a little late. So, that grew out of my teaching environmental studies here. I don’t think I
would have done that otherwise. I would have still been writing about political parties.

CHIANNA CALAFIORE: So, you mentioned environmental studies. When did
environmental studies come into play at Suffolk?

[00:48:53]
JOHN BERG: That’s a good question. I have no idea. About 2006 or 2007, I would
guess. But I would have to go look it up. At first, I was just teaching the course. Martha
Richmond was directing both the environmental studies and environmental science sort of
as one thing. And then, a few years later she became the chair of the Chemistry and
Biochemistry Department. And that was—you know, she didn’t want to do all those
things. So, I agreed to take on Environmental Studies.

EMMA NEE: So, how has working outside of Suffolk in different political science
organizations helped shape your teaching at Suffolk?

[00:49:38]
JOHN BERG: Oh, you mean professional associations?
EMMA NEE: Yeah.

[00:49:42]

JOHN BERG: Yeah, I have from the beginning, I can’t remember what year it was. I mentioned Dion Archon hired me primarily because he was hoping I might become chair and he was going to retire in a few years. And sort of the year before he did that, there was sort of this possibility—I was still pretty junior. So maybe ’77 and ’78. But there were sort of hints that maybe I should be chair. And then I went to the American Political Science Association, which I didn’t always go to but I went that year.

That happened to be a kind of an almost revolutionary year in the American Political Science Association because—which had been kind of hide bound and sort of controlled by a clique who passed the presidency around. But somehow, they passed it to James MacGregor Burns at Williams College who a noted scholar and real historian of the US presidency. And Burns was much more radical than they realized. And he appointed a couple of people to run the program who just transformed it a lot. And that was the year I happened to be there.

[00:51:16]

And so, I went to all these interesting sessions and discussions and I thought, gee, you know, I really do want to keep involved in research and writing and publishing. And I’ll never do that if I become department chair. Nobody did who was department chair at Suffolk then.

So, I went to the other Harvard PhD, because I knew that’s what they wanted. And actually, we were the only people with PhDs of any kind in the department. Agnes Bain might have just completed hers and came back to Suffolk. But she and I were hired the
same year. But then she was hired temporarily because somebody else quit on the first day of classes. And then after the year she went back to BU to finish her dissertation. But then she returned as a permanent member later on.

[00:52:02]
So, she wasn’t quite in the running. But it was either me or Judy Holleman. And Judy said she was willing to do it. I said, “That’s great. You do it.” I had to convince the dean. He thought I would just be timid or something. But I finally said, I would be really upset if he insisted on my becoming chair. He said, “Okay.”

So, that affected me there. And then I’ve just—it’s kept me active, you know, because I’ve—maybe it’s my personality, my style—so I’ve published two books, one written and one edited. And I hope I’m soon going to have a third. I’ve published very few journal articles, many fewer than I should have because I don’t—my mind is always racing ahead. So, I’ve done—what really keeps me going is conference papers. So, if there’s a conference I’ll do a paper.

[00:53:01]
And what I should do is, what I should’ve done retrospectively is done fewer of those, taken one, worked it up into a journal article, gotten it published somewhere and then go on to the next one. But I never did that. So, it’s really been an important part of my intellectual life. And, of course, you go to conferences. Pretty much the same people go to the same people go to the same conference. The APSA is huge. It’s thousands of people. But it’s got an internal structure. So, there are sections and people who share a common interest. So, the people you actually interact with a lot are a smaller group and you get to know them, too.
And that’s a real, intellectual community that you exchange ideas with and see each other once or twice a year. So, I’ve done quite a lot of that. Plus, I love to travel. And it’s—one of the hardest things about retirement is I’m still interested in the same conferences but I can’t get any money from Suffolk anymore. I have to cut out some of them. And when I don’t cut them out, I have to spend a lot of money. But I saw a lot of places.

[00:54:13]
I got involved in the International Political Science Association. So, they have this research committee structure, where you have to get a certain number of people to sign up. And they have to be from, I think at least two continents and five countries. But not that many people, you know. So, I did that—Research Committee on Socialism, Capitalism, and Democracy. And we would have to go to the IPSA Congress, which is a big thing every three years. And we would get some panels there. But we also had to have at least one meeting of our own between each Congress. We’d usually have two, one every year.

And being part of the IPSA was an enticement to all kinds of people because in much of the world that carries prestige. And so, they could get support for that, that they couldn’t for—if I just organized a conference on my own or if Suffolk sponsored one, you know, it wouldn’t be as attractive. And that was great. We went all kinds of places.

**CHIANGNA CALAFIORE:** Going back to Suffolk, you have been collaborating with many different departments in the university. What would you say has been your most memorable collaboration?

[00:55:32]
**JOHN BERG:** Collaboration. It’s a funny word. [Laughter] Not sure how to— I mean everybody works with everybody else all the time at Suffolk. You know, sometimes—or else you fight them. But through all kinds of ways—formal collaborations, the major ones
as a department would be with the—I don't know, they keep changing their name. I think it is now the Institute of Public Service. It used to be called the Department of Public Management.

And it’s a department. So, it’s sort of confusing that they now call themselves an institute. But that’s what they are. They are really a public administration department. So, a lot of them have always been political scientists and our department had a lot in common with them. They’re in the business school. They started shortly before I got to Suffolk. And I think there was a little inter-college war going on about who would get to do graduate programs. The College of Arts and Sciences had graduate programs, only what was then the Department of Education and Human Services, and which had begun really as education and teacher training, graduate programs, which they don’t even do anymore, I don’t think.

[00:57:00]
So, the business school, because they had an MBA, they decided to have a master’s of public administration, which is traditional, political science department activity. And so, there was some fighting going on. But the people they hired to do it were Dick McDowell, political science, David, what’s his name. I remember him, polio victim and used a wheelchair. I can’t remember. I know him well. He’s dead now. I knew him well but I’m blanking on his last name. He’s another political scientist. Fran Burke was a political scientist. So, we collaborated a lot.

[00:57:35]
And then, when we started having more graduate programs in the College of Arts and Sciences, we sort of made an agreement, where our students and theirs could count part of their programs. We eventually had a dual degree, where they would get both degrees with a reduced total number of credits.
So, we collaborated a lot with them, collaborated more with economics when we were a joint department. But we still did some work with them. But most of what you do at Suffolk is not so departmental, I mean especially in those days. Maybe it’s more departmental now because departments are bigger.

[00:58:16]
You know, there are a lot of committees, you know, like on the library or the research committee where you just individuals drawn from different departments.

EMMA NEE: So, our next question is, when you retired, why did you decide to stay at the University and become a professor emeritus?

JOHN BERG: Oh, well, it’s a sort of a no-brainer if you can do it. You have to apply. But what you get for that is continued access to the library, which you don’t have otherwise. There are other libraries in Boston but this is—access to the library primarily today means, you can go online through the library portal and get into the world of scholarly journal, which otherwise costs $300 each to subscribe to, right. It’s just impossible at the individual level.

You also get continued access to the computer system, which is not all that important but it—I mean you have to have an ISP. Unless you come to campus, you have to have your own ISP to connect with the University computer system. And you get an email from that anyways. But it’s the other big benefit. Plus, it looks better after your name, you know, if you want to—you still have an academic title. So, if you want to apply for something it’s there.

[00:59:50]
And there’s no work involved. President Kelly now is trying to get people, not just emeritus faculty but retirees in general—trying to create more of a tie between retirees and the university’s present life. I’m on a task force that’s working on that. But it wasn’t much of a decision, really. I mean I guess there’s some people who just decided when they left that that’s it. I don’t want anything more to Suffolk and they move. But this doesn’t mean having anything. Unless you are going to leave academic life completely, you know, not do any research, it’s only advantageous. There is no reason you wouldn’t want the title and the status.

[01:00:46]
I think there’s an office someplace on the campus that’s supposedly shared by all emeritus faculty. But it’s such a ridiculous idea that I’ve never used it [laughter]. I guess I suppose there may be one or two people who do it and that would tie it up.

CHIARANNA CALAFIORE: How is life different from teaching part time compared to full time?

JOHN BERG: Oh, well, I just started teaching part time. So, I’m still learning how to do it. Well, the big problem with teaching part time is—well, there are two. One is, okay, they’re paying me a certain amount of money to come in and teach a class once week and have an office hour. So, I can’t really, it can’t become everything I do, right? It’s not like I was getting a full-time salary when I wouldn’t have to do anything else.

So, it’s a little more difficult to see students. I mean I just discovered this. Okay, I gave the midterm exam and there are two students who had one kind or another of personal problem that kept them from taking the midterm exam. And scheduling a makeup was so hard because I wasn’t going to come in another day to give them the makeup. Finally, I got the
staff in government department who said, “Oh, we can’t watch them but we can give them the exam.” And even that, one of them still isn’t done after three or four weeks.

[01:02:15] And you got to sort of remember that you’re doing that so that you get all the stuff that you have to do for the next class. It’s not like you’re teaching every day. It’s like, oh, wait a minute. I’ve got a class to teach. [Laughter]

CHIANNA CALAFIORE: What classes do you teach now?

JOHN BERG: Now I’m teaching Environmental Policy and Politics, Government 438.

EMMA NEE: So, are you still part of any outside political science organizations today?

[01:02:51] JOHN BERG: Oh, yeah. I mean in the sense I pay dues and I’m a member. There is one in England that I mentioned. I’m going to that in January. And I’m also a paid-up member of American Political Science Association, the Northeast Political Science Association. New England Political Science Association is not membership based but I’m still involved in that. Those two, I was president of each and so I feel like I’m sort of involved and obligated to show up from time to time and give what support I can.

I quit paying for the International Political Science Association because it just was too expensive to go to their meetings. And I am still involved also with the Association of Environmental Studies and Science. I think those are the only ones.

So, there used to be two benefits for, probably more in some cases. But the two, big reasons to be an actual member is, one, you get a cheaper rate on the annual meeting. And
that can be important for meeting people and sharing interests, and the case of NPSA also for networking with publishers. And, two, you get the journal. But these days you get all the journals from the library anyway. So, since they’re electronic—it used to be worthwhile getting your own copies. You wouldn’t have to go to the library. But now you don’t have to go to the library. Some [inaudible] but usually you can get what you need that way. So, I only joined the ones where I’m going to the meeting.

CHIANNA CALAFIORE: Do you have any new books coming out, articles?

JOHN BERG: It better come out. They put it in their catalogue already.

PAT REEVE: Who is the publisher?

[01:04:56]

JOHN BERG: I think it’s Praeger. Praeger is owned by ABC-CLIO and I’m not sure. Sometimes it looks from their literature like they made it an ABC-CLIO title. I know they are—ABC-CLIO is sort of library oriented. And I know the proposal had to pass review by a panel of librarians. And it’s called Leave It in the Ground: The Politics of Coal and Climate. It’s got a beautiful cover. It’s a picture of an open pit mine with all these big, heavy pieces of equipment driving around and a terrible gouge out of the earth. But, as I said, I’m not finished writing it yet. And it will certainly come out if I finish it, I think.

You never know, right? They have to do another review after it’s all in. But I’ve been sending every chapter to my editor and she’s been very pleased with them so far. So, I think we’ll manage to get it through.

CHIANNA CALAFIORE: Have you learned any important values as your time as chair or even a professor that shaped your teaching? Any activism now?
[01:06:01]

**JOHN BERG:** I’m not sure I understand that question, important values, or learned—well, the main thing about being a chair or being a leader of anything, really is that—well, I guess there are two different ways to think about it. One is, it’s—I was going to say, it’s not about having power. It’s about finding a way to help people. Another way to say it is, there are two kinds of power. There is the power to get things done, to help, to enable other people to get things done. And there is the power to sort of stop people from doing things, or make them do it your way.

[01:06:48]

But if you want to succeed as, and this is true at all kinds of levels, if you want to succeed, you have to be trying to help other people succeed. And paradoxically, I mean not everybody sees it. So, we always had in the government department really good support staff, really excellent support staff.

And part of doing that is you have to be, you have to realize that that’s a job, where they could only go so far. And after a while, they really ought to move. You know, they really ought to do something else and you have to encourage them to do that because otherwise you won’t get people at that level of capability because they won’t—or they’ll leave bad feelings because you tried to hold them back. But faculty, too, you have to sort of be always looking how they could do more, how they can be taking on more of a role.

[01:07:53]

Teaching, I don't know if I understand teaching yet. It's always been the thing I struggle with most. I think really, it’s, and this is the hard part for me, you have to sort of understand what a student wants to learn and why they want to learn it and how you can help that. And continually remind yourself that the point isn’t to make sure they learn a
particular set if things that you have in mind from the beginning. Sometimes that could be part of the point if they’re trying to qualify for something or prepare for something else but it has to fit in to what they want to do and stimulating their desire to learn it, their motivation is more important than telling them what they have to learn.

**EMMA NEE:** So, is there anything else that we missed or didn’t go over that you want to add to this interview?

[01:09:06]

**JOHN BERG:** I don’t know. What time we got here? Yeah, we got time. I don't know. Do you want to talk about Suffolk presidents?

**CHIANKA CALAFIORE:** Sure.

**PAT REEVE:** I’m going to interject here because I’m aware of the work that you did around the McKenna. That was an awful--

[01:09:31]

**JOHN BERG:** Yeah, I thought you might ask me about that. [Laughter]

**PAT REEVE:** So, feel free.

**JOHN BERG:** Yeah. Yeah. I mean, because I mentioned—Suffolk went through a bad time. There’ve been, I don't know how many presidents. We’ll count them through. So, I’ve been here, went from Vincent [sic] Fulham to Dan Perlman to Dave Sargent. And then we started very fast with Barry Brown and Jim McCarthy and Margaret McKenna and then Marisa Kelly. I don’t think I left anybody out.
PAT REEVE: Norman.

JOHN BERG: Oh, Norman Smith. Yeah. Thank you, yeah. It was right after McCarthy. But the period from Sargent to Kelly was not very long. There was a lot of turnover and it relates to the big picture I was talking about. When I started teaching, there were many faculty—many of the older faculty had a real fear of saying anything too controversial or even coming to the attention of trustees. There’s this belief that the trustees ran everything. The trustee Donahue, I can’t remember his first name, I think it was Donahue. This is the story I heard from other faculty. I didn’t even know the guy.

[01:10:59]
But he was a judge. And at one point, reportedly, he would review all the book orders. And he had a list from House on Un-American Activities Committees of authors who were too far left, red, Communist sympathizer authors. And he would look for them and cross them out of the orders. I don't know if it’s true. I just know other people on the faculty told me that this happened. So, there was a lot of fear.

And gradually it got better. So, you know, we were—I want to say this carefully. So, one year they—the trustees were always giving honorary degrees with their prerogative. They weren’t really what anybody else thought. So, one year they gave one to a guy who made an anti-busing speech in the height of the busing crisis.

[01:11:54]
And the next year, maybe it was the next year, they gave one to Mildred Jefferson, an African-America woman who was a physician, a doctor at Boston City Hospital. But really what—she filed a complaint that led to the prosecution of the director of gynecology there, I guess it was, Kenneth Edelin, another African-American [doctor] for performing an abortion. Right? And so, he was tried for murder, acquitted eventually.
But it was really—so, a lot of us were incensed about this as an honorary degree. And after lots of meetings and talk, we finally decided that if she was presented with a degree we would stand up and turn our backs on her. And she got a big round of applause, from the audience. [laughter] much like it. So, I didn’t have tenure at the time. And so, people said, “Oh, you can’t do this. I can’t do this.” But I got tenure a couple of years later.

[01:12:59]
And so, then I realized, well, the trustees have been—and, at the time, so, we met with Dean Ronayne. And he was, he wasn’t happy she was getting the honorary degree. He wasn’t happy we were doing this. But so, he says, “What will you do if the trustees say to fire us.” He said, “Well, I would have to tell them that I would go to the accreditors.” I was kind of surprised he said that. But it was very, very—I’m still moved by it.

But I thought, okay, so the trustees no longer quite run everything, right? And then we got Sargent as president. Well, Sargent was their baby. He kind of held them in the palm of his hand. He knew how to work him, and they had a lot of respect for him. And so, things were pretty free. And so, when he got pushed out and then suddenly, we saw not—I forget whether it was Barry Brown or McCarthy, but suddenly we got presented with a new draft of a faculty manual that was terrible. It was really repressive.

[01:14:08]
It had no attention. It was just top down, telling faculty all the things we had to do, all the things we couldn’t do. And there was no, really, no process for trying for having much input into this. There’s been a lot of conflict over that. I think it’s gone now. And so, suddenly, it was like back in trustee domination. And the trustee, it was mostly at the top but it was pretty clear that somebody said when they were searching for—well, Barry Brown was temporary.
One afternoon, one Friday afternoon he fired 12 or 14 people, and including the director of human resources, whom every loved including the university counsel who until that year had been at an outside law firm doing the work and had been persuaded to come on board, only to be fired. It was like—and claiming there was some kind of financial crisis, trying to sell a bond and had to do it for the bond holders, which nobody else believed.

[01:15:24]
And so, they replaced him quickly, sped up the search and brought in McCarthy. And I remember during one of those searches -- I think maybe it was the one where they finally hired Margaret McKenna -- meeting with the search committee. The trustee that was on the search committee, the team for the search committee, getting faculty input, he says, well, there are a lot of people—there were people on the board who felt that they let things get out of hand with Sargent. They didn’t pay much attention to the finances. And that now they have a responsibility to pay more attention and they sort of really overdid it. So, what we needed was a president who could win the trust of the trustees and at the same time keep them in their place. You know, convince them what the legitimate role of trustees is, which is not to manage everything. And so, that was a really tumultuous process. So, they had a search. They sped it up a little bit because they didn’t like Barry after that. Barry was the financial advisor or something to Rosalie Stahl, who the Stahl Building is named after because she owned it and started this process where I don’t think it is Suffolk’s property yet but eventually will be.

[01:16:45]
And so, they felt they owed him that. They needed him to manage her. But then, he was too bad so they pushed him out. And they hired Jim McCarthy. McCarthy, after a year, it became clear to him that he wouldn’t be able to do any of the things he needed to do to realize his vision of the university, which he had—and that they were just concerned with
cutting money. They had this wonderful thing, the Rapaport Center based in Suffolk Law School, which Suffolk had to pay some money for but it was a wonderful program. And they canceled that, against his will. They refused to sign the contract.

So, he suddenly just left. You know, and so then we got Norman Smith, and reminded me of. He came from something called the Registry of Higher Education, which assigns—universities can hire people temporarily from them who are experienced. You know, he’d been president of Wagner College before. Friend of mine was Provost at Wagner College or academic vice president or something. He says, “Oh, well, temporary job, two years, that’s probably what Norman’s good for. He’s got a good vision. But he’s really a micromanager and he gets really bad after a while.” And sure enough he did.

[01:18:10]
And they hired McKenna. I though McKenna was the one who, and she thought her job was to control the trustees. And she tried hard. And in a sense, she won. Because she got fired but she was 67 years old and she only came out of retirement because she wanted to—she believed in Suffolk’s mission. So, she got fired. But the conditions of her being fired was that a lot of the trustees had to resign and they had to adopt new by-laws. And I think it’s probably better now. Although there’s still, you never know.

And, so, yeah, there was a lot of faculty protest when she was—they tried to fire her once and we sort of stirred things up. I published a couple articles that Pat’s referring to online in Commonwealth Magazine. But then they waited until the middle of the summer and fired her anyway.

[01:19:14]
And by then Marisa Kelly, as you probably know, was provost at the time and was made acting president. And I think people were so tired of the annual presidency changes that
they decided, why don’t we hire her. So, there was process, you know, and I don't know anything about the process. Somebody contested it but they decided it was okay. But I think they wanted to hire her for the stability. And she looks like she’s pretty good and things are finally under control.

Is that it?

EMMA NEE: Yeah.

JOHN BERG: Thank you.

CHIANNA CALAFIORE: Thank you very much

JOHN BERG: You’re welcome.

PAT REEVE: John, thank you so much for doing this.

JOHN BERG: Yeah, it was fun.

PAT REEVE: I appreciate it.

END OF INTERVIEW