Otto Jakubek interview

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Lowther: Today we are interviewing Otto Jakubek, who retired from the Geography department. The interviewer is Larry Lowther. Ham Howard is running the equipment. Otto, before we get into your career with Central, I would like to hear a little bit about your background, family, education, career before Central. Anything like that.

Jakubek: I’ll try to make this brief, Larry, because it goes over a great many years. I graduated from San Pedro California High School in 1943. Went as a freshman to the University of California in Berkeley. What an eye opener that was because I had come from a rather sheltered background. I didn’t know people talked about things like that let alone thinking about them, you know. And then during the war because of a murmur that the doctors heard in my heart why I was not in the military but I worked in the post office. After the war, then I went to various community colleges to pick up some credits and finally I went to Oregon State where I got two degrees. Headed back to the University of Iowa through the offices of one of my professors at Palm Beach and was there for several years. Taught in the University High School and also in the geography department. Met Doris. We got married and then by virtue of the fact that Central was one of the two schools in the country that offered positions in our respective fields, we decided we really didn’t want to go to Frostburg, Maryland. We wanted to come west and this was the only school in the west and we were fortunate enough to be hired here.

Lowther: What about your family?

Jakubek: We have two sons. Alan is a professional photographer in Burlington, Vermont and Steven lives in New Castle, which essentially is part of Bellevue and works for a telephone company - cellular telephones.

Lowther: What did your parents do?

Jakubek: Well my step father, whose name I carry, was a pipe fitter for Union Oil and then later was a stevedore at Los Angeles Harbor and was injured so he spent the last nearly ten years of his life in bed and my mother who had no skills - now we’re talking about the 1930’s and ‘40’s here - worked at various menial capacities until she got on in the post office too and retired from the post office.

Lowther: Did you have brothers or sisters?

Jakubek: No, I’m an only.

Lowther: Okay.

Jakubek: A wonder as they say in?

Lowther: Were you the first generation of your family to go to college?

Jakubek: I’m certain of that.

Lowther: That’s interesting. How did you happen to end up in Central?

Jakubek: I think I just said that. May I tell you a story that I think is kind of amusing? Doris and I had both applied and we cross referenced our letters. She for the position in Hebeler Elementary School and I for the one in geography. I was in almost continuous correspondence with Harold Williams who at that time was
chairman of the social sciences division. Professor Williams was kind enough to keep me apprised of the progress that each of us was making through the various committee levels and department levels and all that. So he told me I was going to get an offer and a letter came over the signature of former President McConnell which had a line evidently left out - the critical line offering the job. The job was described, the salary, but the offer was not specifically made. So I talked with the geography chairman in Iowa who told me of a man in the Sociology department there who had formally taught at Central and he said, ‘He’s pretty well acquainted there with things. Why don’t you talk with him.’ And so I did and he said, ‘Well, do you want the job?’ and I said, ‘Yes.’ He said, ‘Well, why don’t you write back and accept it and see what happens.’ So I did and it happened.

Lowther: Okay. What was your academic assignment and your beginning rank?

Jakubek: The second question I’ll answer first - an assistant professor. The assignment was teaching - at that time a normal number of contact hours for a week was 15. Any - too many - no too many beyond that you see.

Lowther: Were there certain types of courses that you taught or did you teach the whole range?

Jakubek: Well, no. All of us at that time taught the beginning of the World Geography course. All of us being the three professors, Funderburk, Kaatz and myself. Then I taught courses in Economics - Geography and Urban and Asia - but mainly the load was at the freshman course level.

Lowther: Okay. Did you - what rank did you hold when you left - when you retired?

Jakubek: For three months I was a full professor.

Lowther: Can you tell me something of your teaching philosophy?

Jakubek: With the size and nature of the classes as well as the particular subjects, I guess students at various times said they appreciated the kind of relaxed humorous approach. I guess I was sort of the gagster in the department.

Lowther: Why do you say gangster?

Jakubek: Gagster. (laughs)

Lowther: Oh gagster. I’m sorry. We needed to straighten that out.

Jakubek: Now you’re ruining my appearances, Larry.

Lowther: Gangster, got it.

Jakubek: Yeah, I like to inject humor into practically all aspects of life and I guess I did especially in teaching.

Lowther: Did you prefer a lecture approach over say discussion or is it a mixture of both?

Jakubek: I liked especially the discussion classes. I guess what I liked most was talking with individual students. I think if I made any contribution here –

Lowther: On a one to one basis?
Jakubek: On a one on one basis. If I made any mark here it was at that level.

Lowther: When did you first start your sloppy method of filing?

Jakubek: For those who are watching this tape, let me explain what he means. (laughs) Because I had a few things out of place on my desk one day when he came in to see me, now I have this reputation. No actually, it - the desk usually was mounded with many kinds of things.

Lowther: And you always knew where everything was.

Jakubek: No, but I sometimes found what I was looking for.

Lowther: That was one of your distinguishing characteristics. Your desk with a mountain of papers on it that overflowed onto the floor.

Jakubek: Isn’t that a wonderful legacy. Oh boy.

Lowther: What’s your impression of the students that came to Central and their quality and did this change over the years in your opinion?

Jakubek: Yeah, I think the good - the really good students were probably as good as you could find anywhere. I guess the student with the sort of background I appreciated most was the kid off the farm who knew about environmental things. Who had an appreciation of economic things and who knew how to work. Several have gone on from Central into graduate work and have gotten PhDs. One - a local boy, Joe Stoitman, for a long time was and may still be the chairman of the geography department at Western Michigan. That’s an example and there are others. When we get to the latter part of your question, I think that - I’ve been out of the game for seven years. I think that students now - based upon what I hear from colleagues and friends on campus - generally have a much shorter attention span than before. Are less appreciative of what is offered them in terms of learning. It’s perhaps a cultural thing as much as anything.

Lowther: Was that true of the student during your last years of teaching?

Jakubek: Yeah, you could see the trend. Yes. However, I think you and Ham and I can all look back on certain classes that were so great and so interesting to teach that - well perhaps you would agree with me that I’d think every once in a while, ‘Gosh, this is so much fun and I get paid to do it.’ However, when you had a class at the other end of the instructional stick, it was terribly hard work.

Lowther: And of course you probably noticed a difference between majors and then those that just came through survey courses?

Jakubek: Well sure. And you would expect that.

Lowther: Okay. What was your philosophy of grading?

Jakubek: I used the definitions of grades as given in the university catalog and I told the students at the beginning of each quarter. I referred them to the pages in the catalog where those things were given and I said, ‘That’s what we’ll use.’ I think my colleagues in the geography department did the same because over the years geography was one of the lowest grading departments on campus. I think the only lower ones were physics and math. Not that that’s anything necessarily to be proud of, but I think something to be even less proud of is giving away grades and I think we’ve all seen some of that going on everywhere. Not just at Central.
Lowther: Do you think there’s been over the years a grade inflation?

Jakubek: Sure. Especially at the high school level. Kids come in with good high school grade point averages and some of them are very poor readers and what not.

Lowther: You may recall the debate concerning raising the standards by raising grade point requirements for certain programs and so on and I think you were a participant in that debate. Do you recall the position you took on that?

Jakubek: Larry, you’re a historian so your memory over time is much better than mine so I guess I don’t but it seems as though that’s a position I might have taken.

Lowther: Yeah, it seems to me that I remember - I can’t remember whether it was something you said to me or whether it was something in writing that you felt that it was futile to raise the grade point standards because that would just result in grade inflation.

Jakubek: Ah. Okay.

Lowther: Do you recall having taken that stand?

Jakubek: No but

Lowther: I didn’t want to put words in your mouth.

Jakubek: You’re trying to (laughs).

Lowther: Okay, I want to switch now to your recollection of some of the administrators at Central. Oh, I should clarify, you came in 1959 and you retired in ‘88 was it?


Lowther: Just wanted to get those parameters established. Let’s think in terms of the deans. I think Don Warner was one of the deans that you served under? Do you have any impressions of Don as a dean or did you have any interaction with him?

Jakubek: One of the very highest class individuals I think I’ve ever known. As a person and also as a professional in that kind of position. Excellent man.

Lowther: Okay. How about Burt Williams?

Jakubek: Burt was a good friend. We - we used to have a lot of laughs together. I think he set standards for faculty that a lot of faculty resented because even while he was dean and teaching, he still wrote and published and his attitude was, ‘Well, if I can do it, everybody can do it.’ Some people looked at it differently. But let me say this about Burt, he and I were pretty good friends and sometimes - several times when I was lecturing to a class in that tiered room in what used to be our domicile, you know?

Lowther: Shaw-Smyser.

Jakubek: Yes - in the afternoon why Burt would come by and stand in the hail and make faces at me. So I usually would invite him into the class and say something to the class like this, ‘Well here God help us is the dean of the school in which this department is located in.’ So we used to josh around quite a bit. He’d come into my office and we’d smoke cigars. This was a while ago.
Lowther: Before that was forbidden?

Jakubek: Yes.

Lowther: Do you think he provided effective leadership?

Jakubek: I think so. But as I say, there are some who resented him. I liked him. I admired what he could do.

Lowther: Okay. Any other deans that you recall?

Jakubek: I didn’t have much contact with the others, you know. Well you know the –

Lowther: Bob Brown?

Jakubek: Bob was dean, I guess, during the last couple of years when I was here so I really didn’t have much contact with him.

Lowther: I think - wasn’t Zoitman Kramar dean for a time?

Jakubek: That might have been after my time. I’m not sure. Larry.

Lowther: All right. How about the Vice President for Academic - variously called Provost used to be Dean of Instruction I think - in fact probably Wes Crum was Dean of Instruction during your early years. Your impressions of Wes as an academic leader?

Jakubek: I don’t really want to comment much on that question.

Lowther: Okay. Charlie McCann?

Jakubek: Charlie was on a mission. He could speak to the faculty as - not only as a member of the - as a peer but also as one who had considerable academic accomplishments. I thought he was a good man.

Lowther: Do you think he did anything for the academic standards of the college?

Jakubek: There was one incident that I guess would kind of detract from what I said. The administration from time to time during the years that I was here issued edicts that final exams should be given at the scheduled times and places. I think we all remember that. I remember one year when several students came to me and said, ‘Look, your exam is the last one in the week and all the other professors have already given their final exams.’ This is in the last week of classes. ‘Well, what about giving it on the last day of class?’ I said, ‘I don’t think so.’ So I called up Charlie and he sighed and said, ‘Well, I know that’s the regulation but what can you do?’ I’m sure there would have been ways that could be used but I think - this was during a time when the institution was growing and I think that the administration probably didn’t want to put too many black check marks against people’s names.

Lowther: Okay. Ed Harrington?

Jakubek: Ed had a very difficult position I think. I - may I give you another vignette. I don’t know what day of the week it was but there was a faculty meeting that was scheduled - a general faculty meeting scheduled for 3:00 in the afternoon and at about 1:30 Ed came from the geography department’s office and he said. ‘Well, are you going to the faculty meeting?’ And I said, ‘No.’ ‘No, why not?’ Well, I said, ‘For the last
three faculty meetings you and the President and your messages to the faculty have essentially castigated
the faculty for low performance or not doing what the administration wants the faculty to do.’ I said, ‘I’m
tired of that negative stuff. We - in this department I think can speak for my colleagues - we work hard.
And we think we’re pretty good at what we do and so your messages mean nothing to us.’ That really took
Ed back and I heard from somebody who did go to that meeting that he sort of changed his tune a little. But
you know, I’ve never been an administrator and the institution can be thankful for that. I guess you could
sort of get into a mind set that we would get into at a certain level of performance requirement.

Lowther: Do you have any general impression of?

Jakubek: I think that he did probably as well as he could under the circumstances. They were trying times.
Very trying.

Lowther: Were you here during Bob Edington’s tenure?

Jakubek: No. Notice the smile.

Lowther: Okay. All right. Well let’s - some of the presidents. McConnell, I think you were here the last
year or so of McConnell’s –

Jakubek: We came in September and I believe that he left the following March or April and at least I don’t
think there was any association between our arriving and his leaving. I suspect that this has happened with
later presidents but that was the decision of the Board of Trustees.

Lowther: Did you have any dealings with President McConnell?

Jakubek: No.

Lowther: Okay. Were you much aware of his presence during that year?

Jakubek: Well, he would conduct the faculty meetings. We used to have them once a month or once every
two weeks. Something like that. Yeah, and they were general type meetings but one thing I’ll say for them,
everybody who attended the meetings had an opportunity to learn about what was going on on campus. Of
course it was a small institution. I think about 1,700 or so. You got to know everybody and I think the
institution now has become so departmentalized and bureaucratized that that’s not –

Lowther: Do you think there was more of a sense of collegiality at that time?

Jakubek: Sure.

Lowther: And you said you knew just about everybody on the faculty?

Jakubek: Yeah, within the first year I think Doris and I got to know most people.

Lowther: What - do you recall about how large the faculty was at that time?

Jakubek: No. Just a couple hundred maybe at the most.

Lowther: Was there a good deal of discussion and interaction across disciplinary lines on an intellectual
level. I mean other than just socializing?
Jakubek: Well, probably at lunch or perhaps at some parties. There used to be a lot of parties. But I don’t think there was much doing in the way of let’s say people from different departments working together teaching a course.

Lowther: But did you often discuss intellectual issues, academic questions with people from other departments?

Jakubek: Sure, yeah. One of the people that I got to know pretty well was a formal colleague of yours, Walt Berg who was an outspoken person. I think that’s fair. I shared an office with him once during my first year and every once in a while, you know, Walt would suddenly get up out of his chair and put on his coat and his hat and storm out of the room saying he was going to go get somebody’s hide. I’ve seen him do that a couple of times. I said to him as he was putting on his coat, ‘Wait, let me be your Sancho Panza.’ (laughs)

Lowther: Did you - do you feel that that sort of cross disciplinary interaction, not this specifically, but contacts between members of different disciplines has that - did that decline over the years of your tenure? Do you think it continues on?

Jakubek: Well, I think that perhaps as a percentage it went down but that was to be expected. When I came here we didn’t have departments. We had divisions and geography was in with history and the other social sciences and we would have a social science division meeting and that way you got to know people. I think that - that there is more physical separation of the disciplines now and even within departments there is more physical separation as new buildings have come about and old buildings have been remodeled sometimes at considerable expense. I’m just looking around this building and yes, and I think that’s too bad because many times one can be stimulated by - intellectually stimulated by talking with somebody from a different field altogether and then begin to see there are some overlaps. Oh, what can I learn from you? And hopefully what can you learn from me. That’s the fun of it.

Lowther: Getting back to presidents, President Brooks. Any recollection of President Brooks?

Jakubek: Yeah. When he came here he was a young vital - he’s just a few months older than I am. He’s younger. Enthusiastic man and I learned later that he came with several shackles put on him by the Board of Trustees. He had to promise not to unload most of the administration over a short while. I think that - and it was the case in a lot of schools - it was events that came about not necessarily on campus but perhaps replicated on campus those that happened elsewhere that led to a noticeable, discernible split, gap is a better word between the administration and the faculty. But as organizations get bigger why that’s what happens.

Lowther: Now this was a period of great growth for Central and a good deal of diversification. Do you think that that diversification was deliberately brought about?

Jakubek: Oh, I don’t think it is in any academic place. Things just happen. Opportunities come about. Suddenly the legislature said, ‘Here’s some money.’ Or usually for Central it would be worse, ‘No, you can’t have that money.’ So you can’t do what you want to do. So, well I didn’t envy Jim’s job. Let me say this about him though and I know you want to get into my opinions of college and so on later but when Jim Brooks left the presidency and came into the geography department, he never talked about the presidency except in answer to a direct question but I’m sure that he was perhaps not pleased or satisfied with the way some things went but he did his job and he did it very well. Students were very enthusiastic about him as a teacher. I really admired him for that to make that jump and, you know, had just the guts to say well that part’s behind me now and I have this challenge.

Lowther: President Garrity?

Jakubek: A wise ass. You can edit this tape if you want to.
Lowther: No, we won’t edit it.

Jakubek: Again, a vignette. Soon after he came here, he asked I guess through the faculty bulletin forum or a president memo gram or whatever he called them for faculty opinions on certain things. So I sent a note. Well my colleague Joel Andress was in my office one afternoon and the phone rang and I answered it as I always do with my name and this voice that I was not familiar with said, ‘What are you doing?’ And I said, ‘What I’m doing depends on who’s calling.’ And then he identified himself and I said, ‘Well, in that case I’m working my ass off.’ (laughs) I think Garrity was the kind of a guy who would steam roller you if you took one backwards step. That’s just the way he struck me. I think he could probably be a - when he chose to could be a very pleasant fellow but I understand oftentimes he chose not to be. I did not have any personal experience with that.

Lowther: What is your evaluation of your own department over the years?

Jakubek: This is what I am very pleased to talk about. I came here as the first third full timer. Before I came Walt Berg had taught part time and after I had secured the job and I was going to a school that I liked I got a very nice handwritten note from Marty Kaatz signed that way - said welcome and if you have any questions that he’d answer them and so on. Then when I came I met him and Bob Funderburk, surely two of the most respected people in the whole institution. What a - what a tremendous advantage for a guy just out of graduate school to come and to work with these two superior people. Excellent teachers but in very different ways. Funderburk was sort of a Mr. Chips and Marty was and I think if he chooses to teach again I’m sure he still would be a very demanding person who would not let anybody get by him with anything. The good students over time thought Marty was just in a class entirely by himself. I think all students liked him and may I show you something regarding this.

Lowther: Yes. Please do.

Jakubek: This is the 1964 yearbook for this institution. It is dedicated to Bob Funderburk. Isn’t that a striking picture? Got it Ham?

Howard: Got it.

Jakubek: Let me read to you the dedication. Okay? ‘The staff dedicates this year’s Hyakem - or Hyakem, I never knew how it was pronounced - ‘to Dr.. Robert Funderburk. Gentleman, teacher, scholar, gourmet raconteur, and world traveler. Since 1947 Dr. Funderburk has assembled his maps and delivered his lectures in Central’s energetic geography department. His career in teaching and research actually began in South Carolina, the place of his birth where he took an undergraduate and graduate degree. After serving in the army in World War II he moved to George Peabody College for Teachers to take a doctorate in 1947’ - and then he came here in that year and Martin Kaatz came in 1952 and I came in 1959. ‘Although Dr. Funderburk’s scholarly interests center around the field of conservation of natural resources, he has over the years participated in many honorary and professional societies and on campus the Faculty Council, the Legislative Committee and others. His students know that his most significant participation and interest is with them.’ You could not ask for a nicer dedication and I don’t suppose you want to show this but pictures of the department as it existed at that time. So J came here to work with two great guys and they did me the honor in about the first week or so to say, ‘Well, you’ve looked at the offerings in the department. What do you think about it.’ And I said I don’t see how two people could have taught all those courses. Well I was right because they would get somebody in - a visiting professor from England and you’d go back for him and you’d put in a course in the catalog for that person and then you wouldn’t take it up and so I guess there were - I don’t remember how many, perhaps 30 or more courses and they said, ‘That’s right, we’ve been meaning to do that for years.’ When the big catalog came out the geography course offerings had shrunk. Worked with other excellent people, Ken Erickson came here with a doctorate from the University of Oregon. Again an excellent man, excellent teacher. It was our loss. He went on to the University of Colorado but after him came other very good people and this is not in any chronological order but I’d just like to mention them Kenneth Hammond, Dee Eberhart, George Macinko, and there have been some others
but these are the people that stand out. Real pros. Some people don’t - didn’t like some of their approaches and argued with some of them but they seldom move on. But good teachers. In fact, as I think back over the job description that the department has sent out as its tried to replace people or add people, the first thing - the first criteria is record as a strong teacher and so many schools., you see, well you’ve got to have your doctorate, you got to have so many publications and you got to do this and this and this and oh yeah, you’ve got to be a good teacher. Well, that’s important here which I think is why our department now has well, I think 120 majors when not so many years ago we had maybe 30.

Lowther: You - I think when I came here in 1965 it was known as the department of geography and this was changed to the department of geography and . Why was the decision made really to change the emphasis from just what one might call pure geography to ?

Jakubek: The aspect deals with peripheral areas in geography or you might say applied geography. One of the courses that came into the department by student demand was a course in land use planning. At that time, I was on the Ellensburg City Planning Commission and over a couple of years students would say, ‘You’re doing this. How about offering a course in it?’ Well, you know, I didn’t have any background in it. I just got into it and then I began taking courses here and there and so we began offering this course and Dee Eberhart came on board and he had been a partner in what at that time was the largest and best real estate consulting firm in the world. This became another kind of application in geography. Not just how land should be used according to regulation, that was the kind of thing I was teaching but how land might be used in order to the best benefit and make a profit and so these were not diametrically opposed they were certainly different facets of the same thing. Then there has been an increase in interest in conservation of resources and some other courses have been added too. So its not just quote where is it but its why is it where it is and what can or should be done with it. That is kind of a general description I think of what the department is now.

Lowther: Was there much debate, friction over this decision?

Jakubek: Within the department?

Lowther: Yeah, within the department.

Jakubek: No. I do not recall any friction. I know this is going to surprise academics and they probably won’t believe it but we talked about things and we could discuss things without acrimony. It was a unique situation I think and again this is why I think I was so lucky to be looking for it when I was. We had a good time, we enjoyed one another, we respected one another.

Lowther: It was a very congenial environment.

Jakubek: Yeah.

Lowther: How about the - let’s see - you also branched out into environmental studies which I guess is related to land use and was that kind of something you just drifted into? Was it because of the changing times?

Jakubek: In part but in large part – in grater part because George Macinko joined the staff. George had established considerable reputation, a very fine one while he was teaching at the University of Delaware in that ,particular field. He’s an interesting guy. In a lot of ways I think he has a bachelor’s or master’s in philosophy and a PhD in geography, so his emphasis to some extent was on the ,philosophical basis not only in our culture but in others in terms of the way the resources are used and so he came and he had this great background and so he was asked to establish a program It turned out to be a minor in that area and he
has done I think a marvelous job. It’s an interdisciplinary program. Truly participated in by anthropology, economics and biology.

Lowther: Just as a kind of a side line, someone once told me that when George finished his college career he had to make the decision whether to go on into academic life or professional football.

Jakubek: That was at the end of his bachelor’s degree program.

Lowther: At the end of his bachelor’s program.

Jakubek: At the University of Idaho. One of the people on the same team was a guy who later went on to be in the championship teams of the Green Bay Packers and who wrote a book about it which I just don’t remember. Jerry somebody. I don’t remember his last name. George is a big fellow. Another vignette just to show how things were and I hope still are in the geography department. One day George said that he wanted to move some furniture around in his office and so he called fiscal planning and asked the Physical Plant to lend him a dolly. You know the little wheel thing that can stand up by itself and that you can push under a desk or something and move it. Initially he was told yes and than later no because they were afraid that he might break the strap on it. Well, he wanted to do the work himself because he could and also he didn’t want to incur a horrendous bill with the Physical Plant. But I’m sure the Physical Plant was taking just the reversal. No, no, no, we’ve got to be able to back bill you on it. Yeah, we’re getting - running out of time here.

Lowther: Okay, we’ll take a break.

Jakubek: Okay.

Lowther: Have you finished that story?

Jakubek: No, so I brought a dolly from home to George and he said, ‘Well, this doesn’t have a strong enough strap.’ He says, ‘I might break it.’ I said, ‘George, you break the strap and I’ll break your head.’ You know he stands about a foot taller than I am and Ken Hammond says, ‘Oh, it wouldn’t be worth it.’ And Marty Kaatz says, ‘It might be more difficult than you think.’ (laughs) But I think this epitomizes the kind of relationships in the department.

Howard: We’ve got to take a break to change the tape.

Jakubek: Well, I’m probably going on too long.

(change tape)

Howard: We’re off and running.

Lowther: Okay, now. I don’t know whether you want to say anything further about your own department but if not –

Jakubek: Yes.

Lowther: Oh, okay. Go ahead.

Jakubek: It is the most honored department on campus in terms of the awarding of recognition. There have been two awards - three awards for - I’ve forgot the term –
Lowther: Distinguished Professor?

Jakubek: Well, yes. Distinguished Professor for Public Service. There’s been an award for - in the same category for teaching, Ken Hammond who also was given a similar award I think by an educational fraternity here. Macinko was awarded the Distinguished Professorship for Teaching and Research. I’m sorry, for Research and Publication. Marty Kaatz has been President of the Association of Pacific Coast Geographers. I was President of the Association of Washington Geographers. Ken Hammond has been President of the Northwest Scientific Association. Various people have been invited to give papers here and there and so on. Its a pretty well run department. I don’t know some of the new people. There’s going to be two new ones on board this fall one of whom by the way is Morris Uebelacker who is going to get his PhD. Highly, highly praised by his doctoral committee.

Lowther: Did you serve on any campus wide committees?

Jakubek: Oh God, you have to, don’t you? Lowther Which ones?

Jakubek: Well, I was on the Faculty Senate a couple of times. Another vignette, Larry. You’re in for a bunch of them today.

Lowther: Okay, that’s good.

Jakubek: I chaired - and this is I think during the - when the Faculty Senate was new. Before that there was the Faculty Council. So the Senate set up several committees and so I applied for the Curriculum Committee and was appointed to it along with Floyd Green and Helmi Habib and Everett Irish. Well, that’s when all curricular change proposals came directly to that committee. There weren’t these intervening levels of committees that there are now. And it was during a time of growth so we got hundreds and hundreds of proposals which all were investigated very thoroughly and then we made our findings to the Faculty Senate. In all cases where we said we think these should be approved, the Senate approved them. In all cases where we said they should not be approved for the following reasons, they were approved. Well, toward the end of that year, I said to my colleagues, ‘You know, this is great isn’t it? We’ve put in hundreds and hundreds of hours this year toward what result? I propose that we make a report to the Senate on this.’ And they agreed and so I - in the report I said just what I told them and I finished it by saying, ‘The committee would like some direction now from the Senate as to what the Senate believes the role of the Curriculum Committee should be.’ Ooh there was a period of silence. Then some discussion and then yeah well, we hadn’t realized how much work has gone in to this and so on. After the meeting was over one member, Ham you’ll remember him, Monty - Monty from Physical Ed.

Howard: Reynolds.

Jakubek: Monty Reynolds came up to me and says, ‘From now on anything you guys say I’ll vote for.’ (laughs)

Lowther: Did they?

Jakubek: Yeah, for the - we had one more meeting left for the year but it was ridiculous and I - so yes I was on the Senate.

Lowther: How long? Do you remember how long you were on the Senate?

Jakubek: What were the terms then, three years? Two years? Something like that. I was on two times.

Lowther: Okay. A few years.

Lowther: Uh, yes. A short one.

Jakubek: Short one.

Lowther: Was that the Teacher Education Council?

Jakubek: Yes.

Lowther: Okay.

Jakubek: There came to the council a proposal from the department of English. A bachelor of education in English and it was comprised almost entirely of literature courses. There was not one course specifically in grammar although there was one offered in the department or it was listed in the department. Nothing about what the public all across the country was crying for. ‘Our kids don’t read well. They don’t – they can’t write well. They don’t seem to understand the elements of language.’ And so our sub-committee then recommended to the council that it disapprove that proposal and these are the reasons and you know the following week I got phone calls from two senior members of the English department thanking me for that. But evidently they had not been able to squelch it at the departmental level. So, you know, if that’s a contribution it’s a contribution. You know, some people in the English department didn’t take it.

Lowther: What’s your impression of the work of the Teacher Education Council and some of the personalities involved?

Jakubek: Oh Larry, I haven’t been on that for –

Lowther: So long.

Jakubek: Probably, well 14 years. I remember it was a hard working group. Sometimes you’d be disgusted with some of the proposals that would come in.

Lowther: Were there some hot issues on the committee - council? Anything that stands out in your mind as to the tendency to debate.

Jakubek: No.

Lowther: Was it - did it mostly just take care of curriculum matters?

Jakubek: Yes.

Lowther: Were there any other committees - councils or committees that you served on.

Jakubek: I was on the Senate Code Committee and also I chaired a Senate Ad Hoc Committee on the role of the department chairman which was a very very interesting thing to do. One question that was asked all department chairmen and I think there were 22 at that time. I suppose there’s more now, ‘Should the chairman be a chairperson actually elected by the department or should they be a head appointed by the administration?’ Twenty-one said elected by the department. One wanted to be a - dubbed by the administration.

Lowther: Do you remember what the practice was at that time?
Jakubek: It was election.

Lowther: Was there an effort some where to change that to appointment?

Jakubek: I don’t know but that was one of the questions given to the Ad Hoc Committee by the Senate. I suppose perhaps at the request of the administration.

Lowther: Okay.

Jakubek: The faculty tended sometimes to be an unruly bunch.

Lowther: As you think back over your time at Central, were there significant problems or issues that stand out in your mind?

Jakubek: Well, yeah. Yes, I should say. The recurring feeling that the legislature might shut down the place. And I think that was bruited about three times during the 29 years I was here. And so there was, you know, a sense of insecurity. Also there was a time when the administration was faced I guess with economic problems as well as some problems with the faculty and it was decided to dispense with the services of some faculty and I think that in your department I think –

Lowther: Rifling?

Jakubek: Rifling. Yes.

Lowther: That took place in the 1980’s. Early ‘80’s.

Jakubek: Or was that late? Well, yeah.

Lowther: There was a rifling scare in the 70’s but I don’t think the history department was hit at that time.

Jakubek: No. Well it was an opportunity I suppose for the administration faced with having - faced with, let’s see, the opportunity to put a squeeze on some departments. To do it to select certain individuals?

Lowther: Do you think there was anything personal involved?

Jakubek: I really don’t know. There were complaints about one or two of the people who were rifled I think over the years from students. I don’t know though.

Lowther: Do you recall any significant differences in the relationships between students and faculty? Students and the administration?

Jakubek: What seems significant at the time often in retrospect is not very important you know. One thing that comes to mind is - do you remember that awful happening at a state college in Ohio when –

Lowther: Kent State.

Jakubek: At Kent State when some young people who certainly should have known better than to do what they did what they did which was to throw missiles I guess of one kind or another at the national guard and when the national guard was not well trained so they shot someone. And so just within a couple of days then all across the United States campuses were closed for a while by students. I remember coming in that
morning and here was a young lady standing at the door to Shaw-Smyser holding a sign ‘Campus Closed Because of Kent State.’ And I walked up the steps and she said, ‘Good morning sir.’ And I thought we’re not going to have any trouble here. So –

Lowther: Did the campus close?

Jakubek: It was closed for the day but then things resumed the next day.

Lowther: Were there any other things you recall about that period? Vietnam turmoil and the Civil Rights Movement?

Jakubek: One especially and this is a very short one Ham so I know you’re running out of tape. A boy in one of my classes - and I say boy rather than man came to me at the end of the quarter and he said, ‘Will you please change my grade from a (whatever it was) a D to a C?’ And I said, ‘Well, why should I do that?’ ‘Well, I got better grades in high school.’ I said, ‘Well, do you detect some differences between this place and high school.’ And he said, ‘Yes, yes.’ And then I said, ‘Well, look, here’s your total score and here’s the way the scores worked out on the 7’ and I said, ‘You’re at the very low part of the D’s.’ And he said, ‘Well, I need a C.’ I said, ‘Well I’m sorry, I’m not going to change it.’ He said, ‘You’re sending me to Vietnam.’ That was one - that was a bad thing, I think. Not just that incident but what it represents in terms of higher ed. in our country.

Lowther: Were there a lot of students who were coming to college to avoid the draft?

Jakubek: A lot of people. They were not students. I don’t blame them. As far as I know - I do not recall any adequate explanation from the government as to why the United States was involved in it but that has nothing to do with what we’re doing.

Lowther: Is there anything else that, you know, that you would just like to speak to?

We’re running out of time here.

Jakubek: By and large it was fun.

Lowther: Okay. Well, thank you very much Otto. It’s been a great interview.