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George Grossman interview

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This is February 12th, 1997, and we are interviewing George Grossman who was here at Central between 1966 and 1991, and the recorder today is Jake, Eldon Jacobsen, and the interviewer is Jean Putnam. And so with that, I'd like to start the interview. George, with you sharing with us your background. In other words, how, where were you born, and kind of bring us up to Central.

Grossman: OK. I was born in Spokane, Washington in 1930. I was the second of three children. I had a sister two years older, and a brother who was six years younger. I attended Logan Elementary School which is on the north side of town. Kind of a, I guess, probably, lower middle class neighborhood. I graduated from Logan in 1945, very interesting time. Exciting time to be going to elementary school as it took in the Second World War years, and I have many fond memories of the things that we did during that time in our small way, you know, to help the War effort. I then attended North Central High School and graduated there in 1948. Upon graduation from high school I attended Eastern Washington College of Education, which, of course, is a sister institution of Central. I went there with the idea of going there just a year or two and then transferring to Washington State. I wanted to be an architect. Was my original plan, but as a freshman taking drafting courses, I discovered that my eyes weren't up to being an architect. I'm practically blind in my left eye, and I found that putting in many hours at the drafting table, that I was beginning to have eye problems, and so I thought, well, this doesn't make a whole lot of sense. And since I had to finish the year, I had to take something, so I thought why not take an introduction to Ed. course. And that's kind of how I got interested in Education. I thought, Hey, this doesn't sound too bad. And so I completed my degree then in 1953 with a major in, well, actually I didn't have a major. That was at the time that in Washington there were so many small schools that if you were going to teach on the high school level, they recommended that you have three minors, rather than one major, instead of a major and a minor. So I actually had three minors. I had a minor in Math, a minor in Science, a minor in Social Studies, and a minor in Industrial Education, which made me then very desirable for teaching in the smaller schools because I could teach, you know, so many different things. Well, when I graduated in 1953 we were still involved in the tail end of the Korean War, and immediately upon graduation then, I went into the service. I had been on deferments, on college deferments, and immediately upon graduation then I went into Coast Guard, and served in the Coast Guard for two years. I was stationed in Port Angeles, Washington on a patrol boat. The duties being primarily to patrol Puget Sound and keep track of all the ships that came into the Sound. And if any ships that came in that weren't on the manifest that we had then we'd radio Seattle and tell them, “This strange ship's coming in.” It very seldom happened, but that would usually entail then lowering the ship to make sure they didn't let any spies off or anything. And then we would follow them part way and then another patrol boat would come out from Seattle and follow them the rest of the way. Upon completing my two years in the Coast Guard, then I took my first teaching position, which was at Easton, Washington. Up the road here about thirty miles, a very small place, and I taught Math, Industrial Arts, and Social Studies. I also served as acting principal. I was there for three years, and would probably spend the rest of my life there if! would have thought there was any future in it, because I, it was real nice life. I liked the small town. Things were good, but I thought, well, it doesn't look like there's a whole lot of future here, so I returned to school. I had started my Master's Degree at the University of Washington, going to a couple of summer schools. Then I took time oil, and I, well, I resigned my position at Easton, and decided to go back and finish up my Master’s at the University of Washington. I had not applied for a teaching assistantship, or anything, but when I got over there, about Christmas-time, one of the teaching assistants had a nervous breakdown, and they called me in the Dean’s Office, I didn't know what for, I thought, ‘Boy, what have I done already.’ They asked me if I’d like a teaching assistants-ship, which I took, and finished the work on my Master's Degree. And I guess probably, primarily because the Professor was working for, Dr. Homer Burroughs, was too lazy, I shouldn't say it that way... Didn't want to have to break in a new assistant, so he said, “Why don’t you stay another year, and work on a Doctorate?” And the
thought had never occurred to me, and I thought, “Why not?” I was actually making more with my teaching assistantship with the G.I. Bill which I was collecting, and I was working week ends at Safeway. I was actually making more than I was teaching, so I thought, you know, “Why not?” And so I stayed another year, finished up my course work for my doctorate. At that time, then, I thought, well, I probably should go back and, you know, then get a real job, and so I took a teaching position in the San Juan School District in California. It was as large a District, as Easton was small. I taught in a large high school there, teaching Math and Science. I was hired to teach Math and Science. After the first year they asked me, “What would I rather teach, Math or Science?”, because it was more convenient for them to have me in on Department, or the other, rather than in two Departments. I kind of liked being in two Departments because when they had Department meetings, they always thought I was in the meeting of the other Department. But, anyway, I guess, being essentially lazy, I chose Math, and so I taught Math there for six years. In the meantime I finished up my dissertation and then applied for a job here at Central, and this is where I ended up for the next twenty-five years.

Putnam: Now, you say that you applied here, who interviewed you? What was your contact?

Grossman: Well, it was really kind of strange. I, again, I didn’t really, you know, look for getting a Doctorate, it kind of fell in my lap. And then when I’d about finished it up, I really didn’t know what I wanted to do. I was perfectly happy teaching high school in California, but I thought, “Well, I, maybe I should look for a College job.” But we were very selective we were applying just in this part of the country. And so I applied at Central, and didn’t hear anything, and I didn’t want to appear over-eager, but I had a friend that was looking for a summer job. He was working on a doctorate at another university, and I told him that I knew they had openings, I had seen that they had an opening for a reading person, and so he applied, and although he didn’t get the job, they offered him a summer job. And so it was, that was the 4th of July. I was finishing, this would be in 1966. I was finishing up some work at the University of Washington, and on the 4th of July I dropped by to see him. And I asked him how things were going, and he mentioned that the job that I applied for, he knew they had... it had not been filled. And so while I was in town I went up to the Department and talked to Dr. Price, who was the Chair of the Department at that time. And he said, “Yes, they were kind of disorganized, and they hadn’t filled the job. And since I was here, would I like an interview?” So I says, you know, Why certainly.” So I interviewed him, and then he says, “Well, You sound pretty good, you have to interview Dr. Schiesman.” And Dr. Schiesman was Assistant Dean of Education. Dr. Crum I believe was in Hawaii that summer, if I remember correctly. But anyway I came over the next week and interviewed Dr. Schiesman, and two days later I had a contract in the mail. So I just kind of fell into this, too, I guess you’d say.

Putnam: Well, that was different.

Grossman: Yeah, right. I think it was a matter of being at the right place at the right time. If somebody else would have been the one that dropped in, they probably would have got the job.

Putnam: Well, I don’t know about that, but it always helps.

Grossman: Yeah, right.

Putnam: So you started here then in the Fall of 1966?

Grossman: Yes.

Putnam: Can you kind of give us an overview of your assignments from the, I mean what was your rank, and what was your assignment to begin with, and how did that change as you went through your years here at Central?
Grossman: I came in 1966, of course, as an Assistant Professor of Education, and my primary assignment was in curriculum and instruction. The main courses I taught the first few years were the Introduction, well, the Introduction to Education, but even more so, the General Methods and Materials Course. That, I would teach a couple of sections of that each year, or each quarter, and then probably a section of Introduction to Education. And, you know, some other things. Then after two or three years of Roy Ruebel, who was, I don’t know exactly what his position was at that time. I think he was an Administrative Assistant for Dr. Potter who by then had become the Chair of the Department. He asked me, “How come you’re not teaching the elementary math courses?” He saw my math background. I says, “Primarily because I don’t have any, or I have limited background in elementary.” I had taught a few elementary classes when I was in Easton, but I was primarily a secondary person. But because of my math background they figured it wouldn’t be unreasonable for me to teach the elementary math courses. So I taught them for a number of years, which took quite a bit of background preparation on my part, not in the math, but in the elementary methods. So I taught them quite regularly from that time on. And then during my last few years I became involved in the Audio-Visual Courses. And in the early 80’s I became aware that computers were becoming more and more important in the schools, and nobody in the Department knew a thing about them. So I started studying in that area. I started out by taking course in computer science. I took a couple of courses from George Town and Bernie Martin, and the boys over there, and then I applied for a re-training leave, and took a year off and went to the University of Oregon that has a very strong program in computers in education. And then when I came back I became involved in developing computers in education types of courses for the Department of Education.

Putnam: About what year? Do you know?

Grossman: It was 1993-94 that I took the...

Putnam: Then it was in the 90’s that you...

Grossman: Oh, pardon me, eighties

Putnam: Eighties?

Grossman: Yeah, I had retired by ‘94. Yeah, ‘83 and ‘84 that I took the sabbatical.

Putnam: That was early on with computers.

Grossman: Yeah, right, it was early on. It was when computers were just beginning to become important. And one of the reasons that made me do this. I was at a meeting one time and a superintendent got up and said, in effect, when we were talking about how good a job are we doing in training teachers, he said that he had personally gone to great pains to train all the teachers in his district on the use of computers, as they relate to classroom use. And he said, in effect, “I’m not about to hire any teachers that I have to, you know, go through with this again.”

Putnam: Yeah.

Grossman: And so I thought. “Well, I guess we better make sure that our teachers have those skills then when they go out to the schools.” And so I became involved with that.

Putnam: Well, good, good. And then in ending you say you retired in ‘90...

Grossman: 91, yeah, in July of ‘91. As a Professor of Education.

Putnam: Right. Did you teach in any other Department, or were all your courses within the Department of Education?
Grossman: All the courses were in the Department of Education. I don’t think I ever taught, well, I know I didn’t...

Putnam: (It?) never got you into math (?)?

Grossman: No, no, right. Now, Barney Erickson and I talked about this a lot, but we never pulled it off. We thought it was kind of ridiculous really, they had Math 464.1 and .2, I think, which were math for elementary teachers. We had Elementary Math Method’s course, and we thought it would be ideal to teach a course that included both the methods and the content. That was one of the difficulties with the method’s course. Teaching such things as, how to teach the concept of sets, when many of the students had not been through programs where they didn’t even know what a set was. And so we had, we thought that would be ideal, but it never quite worked out.

Putnam: Right. Well, that’s very interesting. Now let’s kind of focus on some different areas. First of all, you were here a number of years and I wondered if you could recall some of the either some of the problems that the campus endured, or the Department, or some of the, you know, some of the highlights, some of the things that you can remember happening?

Grossman: OK, one of the significant problems I can remember was in, boy, the year, I don’t know, again would have been, probably, in the mid-eighties when the campus went through the budget crunch. The time that Hebeler Elementary School was eliminated, and Speech Pathology, I think, was also eliminated at that time, and several other programs were, you know, cut back. I thought that was a very stressful time for everybody.

Putnam: Well, it certainly would have affected the Department of Education.

Grossman: Yeah, right.

Putnam: Eliminating the training school.

Grossman: Yeah, right.

Putnam: Which was a very hot potato at that time.

Grossman: Yeah, right. And I would like to make a comment on that. I wanted to fit this in, I didn’t know exactly where I was going to fit it in. At that time, Dr. Applegate was the Dean of the Department of Education, and being on that committee and being as, you could say, sworn to secrecy, what went on at those meetings, you know, was not to be broadcast around campus. I heard a lot of talk from people in the Department of Education primarily, and some others, that Dr. Applegate was selling Hebler down the road. And that really disturbed me because I could say that he was in many cases, just short of insubordinate in his defense of Hebler. It’s something that he couldn’t do anything about. He did everything he could to save that program, and in defense of the other programs, as well, but it just wasn’t meant to be.

Putnam: Well, were there any other times on campus that you recall that there were some uprisings, or that there were concerns, either by faculty or by students, any that you might have remembered?
Grossman: Well, I guess the first couple, three years here which were at the end of the Vietnam Conflict, things were kind of unsettled, and with a few at least, active faculty and quite a few active students in their, you know, opposition to the War. I can remember some of that, but...It was an interesting time.

Putnam: Yeah. Well, what about, do you have any other kinds of events that you remember, humorous kinds of things, or anything that you recall as a situation on the campus that was enlightening, or funny, or whatever, that you might add to our history?

Grossman: I can’t think of anything that was particularly humorous that, you know, affected the whole campus. I can think of, you know, a few anecdotes that are humorous to me, but wouldn’t have any significance to anyone else.

Putnam: OK. Now, you came across many administrators and faculty during your time here, and what, if you could pick out a few of those that you felt were outstanding, and why, as you went through your years here?

Grossman: That’s...I put a lot of thought in on that question, and it’s really hard to pick out, you know, people who were outstanding. Some were I think very good at accomplishing what they were trying to accomplish, but the difficulty is, I guess, I didn’t always agree with what they were trying to accomplish. For instance, I think Dr. Brooks was a very effective leader from leading us from the point of being, well pretty much a single purpose institution, you know, Central Washington College of Education, leading us towards a multi-purpose University. I guess I just wasn’t overly enthused about the zeal with which he, with which he did that. I also think that our Department Chair for many years, Dr. Conrad Potter, you know, was very influential, very influential in, you know, defending our program. I consider him, you know, a very powerful individual, and I think other people on campus, you know, did so as well. In fact we were quite disappointed that, when a Dean was selected, you know, at a later time after he resigned as Chair of the Department, that he wasn’t given more consideration for that position.

But again, this is personal opinion, but I think opinion shared by many people in the Education Department that one of the reasons maybe, he wasn’t given due consideration was that, I believe that some of the other Deans didn’t want that strong a person in that position. He was a little threatening. He did come on pretty strong.

Putnam: Can you remember any stories about any of these administrators or faculty that you recall that were of interest? How do you remember them, or their personalities? Anything that you would share there?

Grossman: No, I really can’t think of anything along that line.

Putnam: OK. Now do you feel that there were, do you recall any problems that we had between administrators and faculty, or with students and either faculty or administration?

Grossman: I can’t really think of any problems other than some problems that I’ll probably react to in some of the other questions here that you have.

Putnam: OK, all right, good. Well I do have a list here of some of the subjects that might trigger some ideas here, so if you don’t have anything to say, we’ll just go right down the list.

Grossman: OK.

Putnam: What about salary schedules?

Grossman: I had a hard time understanding this at first. Being from, coming here with all my background in the public schools, I was a little bit disillusioned, I guess. I was hired in by Dr. Price who, I don’t know if
he exactly understood the salary schedule himself but he told me, you know, it was pretty much, you know, like in the public schools, and I got, I found out, hey, you know, it’s entirely different. There was not the automatic steps that I was used to. I was used to, hey, if you don’t do anything, you’re gonna get a raise every year. And then when I found out that I was hired in at the top of the Assistant Professor, and I wouldn’t get a raise until I was promoted, or got, you know, got merit or whatever. I was a little bit disillusioned by that. But once I got to understand it, you know, it wasn’t that bad. When I found out that, how it worked, then I guess you say, I learned how to play the game. I was also, when I first came here was, you know, amazed at how low it was. I came from teaching in the public schools in California and I took a considerable pay cut, and I wasn’t that high on the schedule down there. And I can remember that every time I’d get a pay check I would think, “Why did I do this? Why did I do it?” Until about, oh probably, sometime in early spring, Dr. Ham Howard went to a conference someplace and he asked me to take his classes fi3r him while he was gone. And so I was teaching my classes, and I was also teaching his classes and so I was meeting about four classes, or five classes a day. And then I looked back and said, “Hey, now I remember why I did it.” Because in the public schools, obviously, you had a lot more contact hours, and...

Putnam: What about the Faculty Code? Do you remember anything there?

Grossman: Yeah. The Faculty Code. I really had no problem with it. I didn’t think it was unreasonable. I did see, you know, problems as it related, you know, to the salary schedule, but again as far as the salary was concerned, I figured, you know, I don’t have to stay here. I was free to come I’m free to leave.

Putnam: Do you think that the Faculty Code had any, what should we say, did it have any power? Did the administrators look at the Faculty Code with, did they buy into the Faculty Code in any way, or did you think it was just basically faculty, originated by faculty?

Grossman: I didn’t really know the background of the thing, to tell you the truth. I didn’t spend a whole lot of time, you know, concerned with it.

Putnam: OK. What about academic freedom?

Grossman: Academic freedom, again coming from the public schools, I have a little bit of difficulty, you know, understanding this. I thought there was a tremendous amount of academic freedom. In fact, I almost believe that in, you know, some cases it got in the way. My understanding of academic freedom is that you’re, you know, free to do your job in the way that, you know, you see fit, but to me some members of the faculty (?) took academic freedom as their right to do anything they wanted, whether it was related to their job, or not related to their job, or to not do anything, as academic freedom. I found that some were lax in meeting their classes. Many were lax in following the exam schedule at the end of the quarter, which made it tough on those of us who followed the rules. We were bad guys if we had a Friday afternoon exam and made the students, you know, stay for it, but as though they could have been home by Tuesday, if it hadn’t been for that. This bothered me, but to each his own, I guess.

Putnam: Now the faculty-administrative collegiality, I had mentioned that up here before, but do you think there... do you have any remarks about that?

Grossman: Yeah, I do as a matter of fact. I thought that it was kind of strained at times, and I think it just about completely fell apart after Ed Harrington left. I can think of cases where, at, well at one of our Department meetings, I saw our Department Chair, who was Dr. Lefevre at that time, sitting there with his mouth open when he found out that the Provost had appointed someone in his Department to an administrative position that would put him above the Department Chairman in many respects, and he hadn’t even been informed about it. And I was livid about that. It really bothered me.

Putnam: Well, just related to that then, what would you say then that Ed brought to that position that was missed after he left?
Grossman: Well, he at least, would talk to you about what was going on. He wouldn’t necessarily, you know, do everything you wanted him to do. I mean, he had his job, and we had our jobs, but at least he would sit down and talk to you, and, you know, tell you what was going on.

Putnam: And he had a very good memory, didn’t he?

Grossman: Yeah, right.

Putnam: So, about everything. A (project on?).. .He was very fair about it.

Grossman: Yeah, right.

Putnam: You didn’t always agree with him...

Grossman: Yeah, right. He didn’t agree. But he was fair. And I found the other administrators, you know, the same way.

Putnam: But when you get one that’s not the same it’s very difficult.

Grossman: It was.

Putnam: What about the Faculty Senate itself”? I know you said you served on the Budget Committee there.

Grossman: Yeah, I served on the Budget Committee and I was a Senator, oh, I think, what, we were limited to two or three terms? I ran through that cycle of terms a couple times. ..I’d be a Senator, then be off then back on again. And I think they did a lot of good. My main difficulty, I guess, with the Faculty Senate was that in most cases I found that they were unwilling to recommend something that the administration was against. They wouldn’t necessarily say “Yes” to the administration, but if they would ask, “What do you want done about something.” And they would hash it around and they would say, “Let’s vote on it.” They would be reluctant to recommend something that they know wouldn’t pass. And my idea always was, “Let’s tell them what we want. If they don’t give it to us, at least the Board of Trustees will know where the faculty stands. The other faculty will know that, you know, what our position is on this.” But many of them didn’t look at it that way, so I found it a little bit like, you know, the student councils in some of the high schools where I worked. See if you can work it along round enough to come up with what the administration wants, what the principal wants.

Putnam: The big compromise.

Grossman: Yeah, right.

Putnam: How about the town-gown relationships here in Ellensburg?

Grossman: I didn’t think they were too bad. I heard a lot of people complaining about that. But I always, I never really had that much difficulty. I don’t think it was any worse relationship between the town and the gown, than between any two groups, you know. that probably had different philosophies. I didn’t find it any worse, for instance, than say between the city residents and those lived out in the country. They have different interests; they have different expectations. I think probably, the difficulty more than anything else, is for the most part, the faculty was liberal, and the town is, you know, much more conservative and this, of course, is going to cause difficulty. In fact, I guess, kind of a humorous incident. I guess, you could say, is one of my good friends, Smith Murphey, who was Chairman of the Physics Department at one time, was kind of upset with some of the things that were going on in the public schools, and so he did what any good citizen, you know, might consider doing, he says he is going to run for School Board. I says,“ Smith,
you don’t stand a chance.” And he says, “Well, why not?” And I says, ‘Well, you’re a University Professor, so everybody in town’s going to think you’re one of those liberals from up there, and they’re not going to vote for you. And everybody on the faculty knows you’re conservative, and they’re not going to vote for you, so you’re not going to get any votes.” And he practically didn’t. He ran and didn’t stand a chance.

Putnam: Oh, my. Well, I don’t know what... the time might be running out here pretty soon, but some of these others here that you might have something to say about...Now about academic organization on the campus?

Grossman: I assume you mean by this, the way that the Colleges, that. ..Again I guess this is one of the things that bothered me a little bit. As we switched from primarily a teacher training institution to a multi purpose institution, I thought that too much of this was done at the expense of the programs, you know, that were already going on. And when they finally did organize into Colleges, it was a real blow to those of us in Education, not to be designated, you know, a College of Education which, I think, most people in the State, if you mention Central, they think automatically, you know, teacher education. Now maybe that’s one of the reasons they didn’t do it. And not only weren’t we made a College of Education, we were made to, we were simply a Department in, and not the College of Professional Studies, but in the School of Professional Studies. And so we were in the least prestigious, title-wise anyway, of the Divisions, and only a Department within the Division. So that wasn’t good for morale.

Putnam: Tell me about publish or perish.

Grossman: Well, publish or perish, again, I was hired in at the wrong time. When I was hired, they said that this wasn’t important, that this was in the Ed. Department anyway, it was primarily your teaching that counted. I found out almost immediately that this was...it was not so, and this, of course, caused concern with me, and I thought, well, I’m not going to do it. I’m not going to do it. And so I didn’t do it, and although I got a lot of merit, I kept moving up on the salary schedule once I got promoted to Associate, which was, you know, in a reasonable length of time, I think after three years which was pretty standard at that time, the big promotion, you know, didn’t come. And so finally I said, ‘Well, maybe they mean it.” So, I guess, I decided, “When in Rome, do as the Romans.” And I did it. But to be truthful, I think it was a waste of my time. I wasn’t interested in it. I was interested in teaching.

Putnam: Well, that kind of leads me to this research vs. classroom teaching.

Grossman: Yeah, right. In fact, in my notes I put these two together. Research vs. classroom teaching and publish or perish are, you know, just very closely related. I think research is important, and I think keeping up in your field is important. I don’t know exactly if the research itself in many fields, you know, is that important. I guess what bothered me about it more than anything else was that it was assumed that everyone was a good teacher, and for the rewards you had to do the research. And I saw people that were getting released time for their teaching to do research, and the other people were carrying their load as far as the teaching was concerned, and the researchers were getting the rewards and the teachers weren’t.

Putnam: What about campus emergencies?

Grossman: I didn’t know what you meant by that.

Putnam: Well, I’m not sure what we mean by that either. If anything came to mind...

Grossman: No nothing came to mind. No big emergency.

Putnam: Nothing came to mind. OK. What about the hiring policies?
Grossman: Well, the hiring policies and practice, again, I guess, if’s kind of related to salary. I thought it was ridiculous, the last couple of years I was here. I was chair of a couple of committees, and we were graduating students with no experience with BA’s at that time that were starting in the State of Washington at approximately twenty, twenty-one thousand dollars. We were offering for the positions we were advertising at twenty-five, twenty-six thousand, requiring a Ph.D. or a Doctorate, and at least three years of teaching experience, and then they wondered why we were having difficulty finding someone. And then to complicate the matter, we would find someone, they would send it to affirmative action and they would say, “You don’t have enough minorities here, or...” Women usually weren’t a problem in our Department. We were over-represented, not overrepresented, but adequately represented by women. But to find minorities, you know, it was practically impossible. So then, we really had restrictions.

Putnam: How about this, pre-college prep and quality of students who entered Central?

Grossman: I think we got a fair cross-section. We didn’t get, you know, many that were going to become Rhodes Scholars, but I thought we got, you know, quite a few pretty good students. Again, I’d like to give credit to Ruth Harrington and her scholarship luncheons. I think she, you know, really did a lot as far as, you know, encouraging, giving incentives, you know, for better students to come here. Not teaching undergraduate courses, I didn’t get, you know, many of these that were here for a quarter, you know, and then dropped out. But we did have, you know, a lot of students, you know, that weren’t that serious. But we had a lot of good students as well. We had a lot of good older students. I noticed this particularly the latter years. I guess my ideal student was an older woman who had dependents, and she had real motivation, you know, to go through, and they were almost always, you know, at the top of the class.

Putnam: What about faculty organizations, and I mentioned, including faculty unions which I think is going to be brought up, the issue, by the Board of Trustees Meeting tomorrow?

Grossman: Yeah, I don’t have any strong feelings about this. I can remember once, oh, it must have been fifteen years ago, that, you know, the question came up, and faculty voted it down at that time. It was kind of a coalition, I guess between the AA,... what is it?

Putnam: AAUP?

Grossman: AALJP and the...

Putnam: AFT.

Grossman: ... Yeah, and the AFT and the WEA. The three of them tried to form a coalition, but it didn’t go very far. It might be necessary, but I really kind of hate to see it myself.

Putnam: The principle of the thing.

Grossman: Yeah, the principle of the thing. I think we ought to just get along.

Putnam: But some people say, “Well, how else are we going to get those salaries where they need to be?” It’s always the issue that administrators get the salaries, but the faculty don’t get the salaries.

Grossman: Yeah, but it’s not like the public schools or other places where you can negotiate, you know, directly. You have to negotiate with the legislature, you know, essentially.

Putnam: Right, that’s true. Well, let’s move on to asking the question, were you ever the recipient of any awards or honors during your teaching?

Grossman: No.
Putnam: What about contributions that you feel that you made to the progress of your school? How did you feel that they benefited from your being here at Central?

Grossman: Well, during the late ‘60’s I helped develop, and was in charge of a program in the student village. We called it “The Pre-Professional Preparation Program” where we brought in a group of freshmen that were planning on becoming teachers. We had a living-learning situation up there where they lived in cooperative dorms and took many of their classes right there in the dormitories. It was a very successful program. In fact the graduation rate of the two years I was in charge of those students, I think, about eighty per cent of them ended up graduating, which is, you know, phenomenal for a freshman class. And although the program was discontinued for several reasons, many of the things that we learned from that program were incorporated in our professional education options. And I think I had a big influence in developing our three options, three ways of going through the teacher education.

Putnam: Which Are?

Grossman: Well, we had options A, B, and C. One of them was the traditional campus-centered program; one of the other options was where, besides student-teaching, early in the program they would go out and put in another full quarter in the schools, so they would have some school background prior to taking the general methods classes, the Child Psychology classes, and those kind of things, in fact they’d take some of the classes while they were out in the field; and the third option, option “C” was kind of a combination of the two. They weren’t in the schools for a full quarter, but they did have an extended amount of time in the schools prior to student teaching.

Putnam: You mentioned earlier that you did serve on the Senate Budget Committee. Any other committees that you served on?

Grossman: Well, I served on the Admissions, Matriculation, and Graduation Committee, and was Chair of it for a number of years. And then the Computer Committee in the mid-eighties when computers were becoming important.

Putnam: Now what of the committees that we had on the campus, did you feel that any one of those committees, or several of those committees, were more important to, in terms of their decision making, to the progress of the institution?

Grossman: Again, I put a lot of thought in on this question and the conclusion that I almost came to is that the campus committees probably did more to hinder progress than to cause it. From my experience, the things that caused the progress were the things that were done on the Department level and on the School level. Those committees, they would make decisions that would immediately, you know, affect the programs, and it seemed to me that in many cases, the campus committees perpetuated the status quo. The Department Committee would come up with some curriculum change and the Campus Curriculum Committee would come up with all the reasons why, why they cant do it. And it was kind of the same thing on the Computer, when I was on the Computer Committee. It was probably necessary at that time, but the Campus Computer committee, the main thing we did was sift through orders of Departments... a Department wanted a computer for this, or a computer for that, they’d say, ‘No, you can’t have this computer because this would be a duplication of this, or a duplication of that.’ Finally when the.. we got away from so much emphasis on the main frame, and it became obvious that computers, you know, were the main thing then. I don’t know if this committee even still exists, but it was kind of a restrictive type of thing.

Putnam: Did you ever have an opportunity to serve on a Building Committee?

Grossman: Yeah, I served on a couple of them. The first one I served on was a classroom committee for the student village, This program that we had going up there, it looked like it might become kind of a permanent thing. Kind of a background on this, Dr. Brooks wanted something innovative in the student
village because they had those two cooperative living dorms up there, and so the Department of Education came up with this living-learning situation where we put the students into schools as freshmen, and we taught most of the courses right up there. And so we decided, well, it would be nice if we had a classroom building up there, so it was put in charge of a building committee, and we actually went as far as hiring an architect as a consultant, but at that time, Dr. Potter, for some reason, decided that we would eliminate that program, and he wanted to use the money for our Migrant and Indian Center down in Toppenish. And I told him at that time. I says, “Hey, I don’t think this is a wise idea.” See we had extra money from Dr. Brooks because of this program we had up there. He had entertained ideas and ours was accepted, and, well, anyway, he was determined we were going to do this, so we eliminated the program, which eliminated the need for the classroom building, but ironically, since the program was eliminated that wasn’t Department money, we did not get the money for the Toppenish program, so we lost that program and didn’t get it for the other.

Putnam: Did you ever serve as an administrator?

Grossman: No I didn’t. One other building committee I wanted to mention.

Putnam: OK.

Grossman: This one I think of kind of humorously because it didn’t work out the way I thought it would. I was on the Black Hall Remodeling and Renovation Committee on two different occasions. It seemed every year we would be about fourth on the priorities that they would submit to the State Building Committee, or whatever, and every year some other building would move in above Black Hall. And we were very frustrated about this, but I can say now I’m very glad that our plans were not accepted because they weren’t nearly what, you know, finally got accepted. We were talking about, you know, minor changes and minor additions as compared to what they’re doing now. I’m very grateful that nothing came of that.

Putnam: When is the new Black Hall Renovation to be finished?

Grossman: I’m really not sure as to the move-in date on that is. I would guess...

Putnam: Another year?

Grossman: Yeah, I would think, probably, in another year.

Putnam: OK, now we’ve got about five minutes left, so we’ll move down here we’ve got a few more questions. Were you ever an administrator?

Grossman: No I wasn’t.

Putnam: OK. Any programs or activities that you feel were not justified on the university campus?

Grossman: No, I haven’t really given that a lot of thought.

Putnam: Any relatives that have attended Central?

Grossman: Nobody close. I had a niece graduate with a BA in Ed. in the mid-sixties. And I’ve got a second cousin. Stacey Ogden, who is now finishing up her Master’s of Music Degree, but none of my children went here.
Putnam: Well, finally, I'll give you just a chance to make any final comments, any statements, anything you'd like to say regarding your experience here at Central.

Grossman: Yeah, I would like to say that it’s been a challenging and frustrating time, but it’s been a very enjoyable time. In fact when I came here, I didn’t, you know, know how long I’d want to stay. I thought, “Well, we can go there and, you know, give it a couple of years and then maybe move on.” And once I got here I had no desire to leave. My family had no desire to leave. In fact I’d ‘ye had rebellion, I’m sure, from my wife and my kids if I’d suggested that we went someplace else. I not only enjoyed the work here at Central. I also enjoyed Ellensburg. Ellensburg’s a great place, you know, for raising a family. I think it would be hard to beat. I also, like many, feel that Ellensburg’s also a good place to retire, and, you know, we’re not planning on going to any place else. There’s only one thing that I would suggest, if they could just get ‘em to turn the wind off in the spring. I’d he a little hit happier.

Putnam: Wonderful. Well, we thank you, George, for your time today, and the interview, and appreciate all of the ideas that you have given us today.

Grossman: Yeah, OK. Thank you.

Putnam: Thank you.