Jean Putnam interview

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Smith: The date is June 7, 1995 and our interview today is with Dr. Jean Putnam. Jean, why don’t we start by you simply telling us something about your childhood, where you were raised and how you eventually made your way to Ellensburg.

Putnam: I would love to do that. Well, let me try to be brief. My mother, who came over from Sterling, Scotland in the early 1900’s, met my father at the University of Wisconsin and they married. Went to Lexington, Kentucky to start a clothing store. I was conceived there in Lexington, but it was during the Depression, 1930. So, he had to move back. They both moved back home with mom and dad in Harvard, Illinois. I was raised in Harvard. Graduated from Harvard High School. Had a sister and a brother. It’s a farming community. We had a dairy there, Putnam’s Jersey Dairy. So most of my spending money came from bottling the milk, shoveling the manure, feeding the cows. It was a very small town. We are - were known and are still known as the milk center of the world and have a milk parade and a milk queen and I ran for the first milk queen. I didn’t make it but I was the runner-up. (laughs) At any rate, from Harvard - I graduated from Harvard High School in 1948 and went to Illinois State Normal University. At that time it was a Normal School with only about 2,000 students. Today it has about 25,000 so it is relatively larger than when I left it. When I was in seventh grade, I knew I wanted to be a teacher. I wasn’t sure what kind of a teacher I wanted to be but the two things I liked the most at that time were sports - I was very good in sports - and I also liked art. Now my grandfather told me that it if I went to school in art, he would pay my tuition and my way for four years but he didn’t think physical education was a very likely livelihood for a woman so he would not pay my way. Well obviously I chose physical education. I felt that with my art, I enjoyed it. It was my hobby. It was an avocation but it wasn’t something I wanted to get paid to do nor to teach. So I went to Illinois State for four years. When I graduated in 1952 I went to teach - my very first teaching job was in Batavia, Illinois, which is in the Fox River Valley about 70 miles west of Chicago, Geneva and let’s see - St. Charles were the three towns along that river. I taught seventh through - seventh grade through twelfth grade and had a wonderful experience there but I wanted to go on to do other things. So I left after three years and went to Smith College. During the summers in Batavia, I had been hosteling in Europe as a leader on my bicycle and got very interested in international affairs and cultural kinds of interests. As a result, I chose Smith College because the head of the department was the President of the International Association for Girls in Women’s Sports and she knew and had personal contacts with just about every country in the world that had an association and did my - did my research with her. When I left Smith, about a year later, she encouraged me to do an exchange program in Guatemala. I worked with the State Department for about six months almost to a year and went down to help the Guatemalan teachers. At that time, I was only about 27 years old and I thought I could do everything. What I was supposed to do was to develop curriculum for grades one through college, because they had no textbooks. So we did some interpretation through an interpreter and through translators or with their help I devised a file - a card file for elementary, a card file for secondary and a card file for college in terms of the units that they could teach and brought down music and chords and the dance units and that sort of thing. So that was - I don’t think at this point I ever would have tackled it had I known how difficult it was. However, I left there and came to - went to the University of Colorado in Boulder in 1958 and taught there for seven years - at the university. One of the reasons I chose that was somewhat selfish. I enjoy skiing, hiking and I had never been in the mountains before because I was a farm girl. So I had a chance to see mountains and be in them for the first time. So I spent my seven years in Boulder teaching in the major program, which was one of my goals in life was to see if I couldn’t improve the quality of physical education teachers in the public schools by teaching curriculum. I found out very quickly at the University that you could not teach major classes nor serve on any academic committees unless you had your doctorate. Since I only had my master’s degree I left the University and went to the University of Southern California to get my doctorate in physical education majoring basically in history of philosophy of physical education. That was my major emphasis with a - and my research was done in the classics. I left the University in 1967 looking for a job. This brings me to Central. I was at a conference when I graduated and it was our national conference of the American Association of Health Physical Education and Recreation and I met there Abe Pothenroth and Everett Irish. They had been sent down by the department specifically to look for women with a PhD
because they were involved in wanting to upgrade the academic portion of the major program at Central and they wanted to do a curriculum revision so they needed somebody in curriculum. I was not too interested in Central. I didn’t know where Ellensburg, Washington was and I basically was trying - I had interviewed for Ohio State University, for some of the larger ‘universities in the east, but they convinced me through sharing the salary schedule. It was the highest salary schedule of all the universities in the United States and I - not of all the ones in the United States but those that I interviewed for. So that was somewhat of a lure, so to speak. They also indicated that there was very good skiing, very good hiking, very good fishing. All of the kinds of things that I enjoyed and rather than going back to the University of Colorado where they paid in scenery rather than in dollars, I did come to Central in 1967 and had - and was there for 25 years, retiring in 1992. One of the questions I think that you were going to ask me, they did hire me as an associate professor when I came into the department and I was very lucky. I had done a lot of work in the national - national associations and some research and so within three years I had my tenure and by the fourth year I was a full professor. So by 1971, I believe that was, I had the full professorship and my tenure, which I think was a very nice thing for them to do.

Smith: All right Jean, did you ever teach in any other department while you were here at Central?

Putnam: No other department. I did teach within the department. We have four programs. We have physical education. We have a leisure services or recreation program. We have a health education program. And we have a paramedics program, at this point. I taught in leisure services program. I was also head of that program for several years. I did teach some health classes as well, But basically my contribution was in physical education.

Smith: Now other than limited budgets which seem to haunt all of us all of the time, what problems do you recall in physical education, leisure studies, any of the areas in which you were involved? What problems do you recall that were of any significance?

Putnam: Well, other than budget, which I believe for all of us was the main problem, I tried to jot down a few notes here to remember some of them. One of the problems with physical education has always been facilities. Not having the kinds of facilities we needed for our programs. I remember one of our big problems, when I came in 1967 they put me on what they called the Building Committee. At that time, we needed new office space and classroom space for our major programs. I served on that committee for 15 years and we never got past the point of putting it on the list. We did finally get on the list in the - on the campus and we got ourselves up to the number one priority. However, there were - there was a visit if I recall by some legislators who had come over to look at the campus. They came into the pavilion and they - they looked at everything they saw as being athletics and so everything - all of our facilities were viewed as athletic and they felt that we didn’t need any. So we were on hold for 20 years. We had that committee and I have to laugh because it never got beyond phase one because of the fact that it was connected to athletics and they were not about to spend any money on athletics. So it was not until 1987 that the new addition was finally approved and built and moved into and it now served the academic programs for our department with specialized classrooms, laboratories for physiology, kinesiology, anatomy and in the health area as well as leisure. That was one thing that I felt was a big problem was facilities that served the purpose of the department. Another problem that we had in our department was the combined roles that we all played as coaches and as teachers. Now when we - when all the women were hired, our contracts stated that we were to teach in the academic program. All of the contracts for the men, I think with the exception of?, and ? and a couple of the rest of them, all had combined contracts for teaching and coaching. In other words they were - if - they could not get out of coaching nor could they get out of teaching unless you rewrote the contract. As a result of this, one of the big problems that we always faced was the women versus the men. Even though we were all required to coach. We each coached. In fact, I coached field hockey for 12 years, from 1968 till 1980 when that sport was eliminated in the NAIA competitions. But the big problem was that when we had a department meeting and there were more men than women the vote was always the men against the women and the women were always voting to upgrade the academic program and the men were always voting to upgrade the athletic program. So we did have always a split. We also definitely had a split in organization when I was hired. We had a women’s section and a men’s section. Wilma Moore was the women’s section chair and at that time Everett Irish was the men’s section
chair. They had their own - we had one curriculum but we had our own advisors. We had our own clubs -
major clubs and everything was separate until about - I believe it was probably 19- the mid 70’s when we
began to merge into one department and as a result I think we lost a lot. The women and the men lost a lot
of what they had to begin with when we made the merger. So I see that maybe as somewhat of a problem as
well. Getting back to the problem of the coaches versus the instructors, we had a - an agreement that when
you coached you had - you got credit - so many points for coaching. You had so many points for a major
sport, so many points for a minor sport and if you recruited you got points during that quarter to recruit and
so forth. We had it worked out very systematically so that during those quarters when you were coaching,
you did not teach as heavily as otherwise. Part of our problem was that most of us were in curriculum and
we taught the graduate courses. We taught the major courses and many of the men taught in what we call
the activity program, which was required of all the students and that activity program to some of the
coaches was not very important. So we had some problems where a class didn’t meet or they put the class
in charge of a graduate student or they just would dismiss the class if they had any out of town competition.
So that built, the problems built until - really until about the late 80’s at which point there was finally an
agreement that they would separate the budgets of the athletic department and the physical education
department. And this was done after an audit of the department in terms of our funding and our resources
and our bank accounts and all of that sort of thing which I can come back to in another respect. So now, the
contracts for the men and the women who are coaching are separate contracts. If an individual wishes to
coach and to teach they have two contracts and two separate salaries so that they can negotiate in either
respect. This allows the physical education department to monitor and control the quality of the teaching in
the major program and in the activity classes and, of course, it also allows the athletic director to monitor
the coaching effectiveness and make sure that they are doing what they need to do in order to renew their
contract. Since I’ve left, I don’t know how well that is all working but it seemed to make a little more
sense. For years, I think I’m speaking for myself, one of our big problems has always been that athletics in
- had been viewed in its early years as academic and that it was a learning experience and, of course, those
students that wished to move on into coaching. Well, I’ve always thought it got us into a lot of trouble.
Whenever we had a vote in the department I always voted against it and spoke against it because I feel that
the athletic program, although it is educational in the sense of young people learning through that
experience, you can not force an athletic experience into all the criteria that one needs to follow in a regular
- in a regular class, in a regular academic class. For example the grading is extremely difficult and there has
always been a problem, do you give just because they are on the varsity team, do you give them all A’s.
That has always been a discussion in our department and I’ve always felt that if they’re an average varsity
player they get a C. That has never passed and it was usually only the women who ever gave anything but
an A to a - to people on their team. So I have never been in favor of trying to force athletics into that kind
of a mold. Just because it gives them a credit. It gives them an A. It adds to their grade point and I have
never been supportive of that concept.

Smith: Well Jean, it’s obvious now that physical education is a lot more than just fun and games. There
appears to have been some chauvinism, some budget problems, concerns and problems perhaps with dual
assignments of coaching and teaching. Amidst all of those concerns, can you think back to any humorous
things that happened. Those moments that gave you a little bit of lightness in the midst of all of the heavy?

Putnam: Oh yes. I don’t think we have time on this tape for me to mention any of those, but I do want to
recall a couple things that I think would be of interest to future generations and that is and I think you all
can remember that when we had our registrations in the field house when I first came. The field house had
a dirt floor, which was sprayed with some kind of a - smelled like an antiseptic that kept the dust down. We
would spread - try to spread tarps out and we’d put all of the tables in the field house. At that time, all the
faculty would go into the field house and sit behind the tables and give out the cards so that the students
when they registered could go and talk to the faculty members and try to convince them if the class was
closed that they wanted that they could get in. So they had a face to face contact with faculty, which was
wonderful. However, always the faculty complained when they went to registration because as soon as they
left the field house they smelled like the field house and everybody knew they had been in the field house.
The same thing happened, of course we were teaching in the building, you could smell it and also you
would track the dirt from the field house into the building and so we were forever smelling each other if we
had been in the field house. So that was kind of a humorous sort of thing that people remembered about
registration during those days. Then along came computers and other things and we did finally get a floor in the mid 70’s. We got a floor in the field house which was absolutely wonderful and I think we held the registration on the floor for a while before it was finally moved over to the registrar’s office. Another humorous event in the department was because of budget problems we did not have a copy machine and that was in - also in the early 70’s and we felt that some other departments had copy machines and that we needed a copy machine. However, because we had no money, we had to figure out a way to raise some money. So we had our first jog-a-thon. I still have the t-shirt. And it was - the reason that it was rather humorous was that what we had to do was to gather funds from our friends, or wherever we could, then each time we went and circled the track we got the quarter or the fifty cents. That was back in the beginnings of those kinds of money raising events. You would think that in physical education we would all be very fit. No we were not. When we started out - well when we first started out I remember Lana Jo Sharp, she’s our dance teacher, and she didn’t want to be out done. So we were jogging slowly around the track to start with to sort of save ourselves because we knew we were going to have to keep going for a long period of time and she thought what she would do when she went by - this was, by the way, done out on the track of the football field and people were sitting in the stadium watching this event and every time she would come around where the stadium was she’d increase her speed and then she’d walk on the backside. Well, she increased her speed coming around on the second lap, pulled a muscle and absolutely could not move one more step. She was so embarrassed. So she had to sit out. I kept going and I noticed some other members of our department kept going maybe for about 10 laps. We were kind of going slowly. We could walk if we wished or we could jog but, of course, you felt sort of like you had to jog to earn the money. So we jogged and I began to feel a little tight in my legs and I thought, ‘Oh gosh, I’ve got to go another 25 laps. How am I going to make it?’ So I ended up walking and limping around the last however many laps that I did and I looked around and there were the men, same thing, very few of them ever made it past about 10 laps because they were all limping and out of breath and you name it. So when we got through, however, we were very pleased because we did raise I think about $3,000 in order to buy our very first copy machine which we were so proud of. We now had a copy machine like everybody else on campus. So that was one of our humorous events.

Smith: Now isn’t it interesting that people outside the institution assume that the institution always has all of the latest equipment in great abundance. They don’t know that sometimes the faculty gets in and earns it.

Putnam: That’s very true.

Smith: Now Jean, among all of the people that you worked with through the years that you would depend upon and who exerted influence over you and the programs you were apart of, which administrators and faculty come to mind as important leaders while you were in a teaching capacity?

Putnam: Well, many of the people that I might mention were individuals that I was associated with when I was a dean and maybe I should save those or I can answer that separately. Within our own department, I think, I would not hesitate to say that Dean Nicholson probably - he didn’t influence me but as I look at the members - many members that we had in the department, Dean was, in terms of the coaches, was probably one of the most idealistic coaches and was the nicest gentleman in our department. Of all of the people, and I taught with him for about 20 years, he never spoke badly of anyone. He was kind to all of his athletes. He was kind to his students. He never shirked his duty and as a coach and as a teacher he always fulfilled every requirement that was ever expected of him and more. And I say he was the perfect gentleman. I think often times when you know someone for that period of time, you know, you see their - the negative sides of individuals but there wasn’t anyone in the department and many of the faculty and students that really felt that he had done an outstanding job. I think as you look at Dean and his father, Leo, who still hold the record, by the way, for the most number of wins as father/son combination coach. They, I think, made a great impression and made good contributions to our community over a long number of years in the athletic area. So I would have to say that Dean was one of my favorite people to teach with and still is today, of course. And I think I’m going to save some of the others for maybe getting to the time when I was a dean.
Smith: Well, let’s move into that area then. Not to leave the other entirely because we will come back but eventually I know that because of the capabilities that you had demonstrated on our campus, you were elevated to a deanship. Which deanship was that Jean, and what were the duties that it entailed?

Putnam: Okay, that was the Dean of Extended University Programs but let me give you just a little bit of history. When I was in the department, I was encouraged to become a chair or to - because I had been serving on some campus committees and that sort of thing and I said no. I said, ‘I will never be an administrator.’ I didn’t want to sit behind a desk. I liked my students and so for about three years I said no to a lot of people. I took a sabbatical in 1980 - well it was two quarters. I was able to take winter and spring quarter off to do some studying. So when I came back, Bill Benson was the Vice-president for I think Extended Degrees. I’m not sure the exact title. I should look that up. Bill said to me, he said, ‘You know we need a Summer School Director.’ And I said, ‘Bill, I have told other people no. I do not want to be an administrator.’ He said, ‘Well, I’ll make you a deal.’ He said, ‘Why don’t you be the Summer School Director and that will be half time and then you can teach half time and then you can decide whether administration is something you’d like and feel that you’re effective with and we’ll just not ask you the next year.’ So I thought about it and I thought, ‘Well, I need to do this. I need to see if I can do a good job of administration.’ So I did in 1981 became the Director of Summer Session for the University, which was a half time position, and I taught two courses each quarter as well. Well, I found out that Summer School Director was a full time job and teaching the two classes was a full time job because I was also on a lot of committees in the department and so I was very frustrated. I didn’t feel I did well at one and I didn’t feel I did well at the other. So Bill said, ‘Well, why don’t you -’ So I left the department temporarily and he said, ‘I will make 5you full time Summer Session Director and I would also like to have you take on some responsibilities of Continuing Education. You’ll be full time in administration.’ So I said, ‘I’ll try it.’ So I did that year and I found that there were so many things as a faculty member that I felt needed to be changed that I wanted to have time to do that. So I did begin to make some changes. I was also asked to develop what we call non-credit programs. I started Elder Hostel in 1982 and we had courses in the community and we began to develop that area. It was that year that Bill Benson decided that he wanted to retire as a Vice-president, so he left and went back to teaching. Well, actually he did go over to Seattle to Normandy Park, which was one of our centers, and he taught there for a year or two. So Dr. Harrington, who was the Vice-president for Academic Affairs in 1982, asked if I would be interim or acting Director of Summer Session and Director of Continuing Education credit programs and Director of Continuing Education non-credit programs. I said, ‘Well yes, I would be willing to do that.’ So for a year, my title was Director of Summer Session, Director of Continuing Education credit programs and Continuing Education non-credit programs. Now that was a big bundle to talk about. So the deans that I worked with at that time were very upset that the Vice-president had not given me the title of certainly of vice-president, which is what I was doing at that time nor did they give me the title of dean. So they went to him and they said, ‘You have got to at least make her a dean. Just because she is a woman does not necessarily mean she is not doing the job.’ And I also, by the way, was doing all of the degree programs in the five centers in the state. So he did agree that it would be better not to have me as Director of all of these four programs. So with the support of the deans, I became a dean. I became the first woman academic dean or related to academic programs. I felt very proud that my cohorts, my other deans, were supporting me. And I do want to name them because during the 80’s I thought were - and well I would say that yeah, it was the 80’s that I was a dean. I was a dean from 198- officially from 1982 through 1987-’88. At that time Larry Danton was the Dean of the Business School, Burt Williams was Dean of Letters, Arts and Science and later Bob Brown. He stepped down about a year after I moved in and Bob Brown took over for him. Jimmy Applelegate in Professional Studies, Don Schliesman as the Dean of Undergraduate Studies, Dale Comstock as the Dean of Graduate Studies, Frank Schneider was the Dean of the Library and Jim Pappas was not considered a dean at that time but was Director of Admissions and Registration. So this was our closely knit group of deans that worked very hard on campus, I thought. I do recall in terms of some humorous events that occurred during my reign, as a woman, in the realm of a male dominated deans council that Dr. Harrington had a little problem with me in the beginning. He wasn’t sure how to deal with me because he - the men had certain language. They had certain ways that they conducted their business. So during the first couple meetings he would always recognize me as lady and gentlemen and whenever there was any issue he always made sure that he was addressing me in addition to them. It only took about six months before they forgot I was a woman and used whatever language they wished to use. There was never any reference to
me in any other respect and as a dean and I felt very good about the support I got from all of the areas. They were strongly supportive of the area and I never felt that I had any problems as a result of working with those wonderful gentlemen. In fact, if you asked me the question about who were some of the people that I would recognize and I think the first person that comes to mind is Dr. Ed Harrington who was the Vice-president at the time and I served under him. In fact, we came the same year and we left the same year. We served the same 25 years at Central. Ed was a wonderful person. I think sometimes people didn’t understand him. We did not agree with some of his decisions. We did not agree with the way he made the decisions but we did agree, and I don’t think there was a dean who did not agree, that he was very fair, he always listened and he was extremely knowledgeable about the budget of every department, where the money came from, where the money was going to go and I don’t believe that in those 25 years the University ever went in the hole or - I mean they had their problems and we were constantly having to pull back and not order the equipment that we needed and that sort of thing. But I do feel very good about the fact that he was a strong, stable Individual for the department over those 25 years. We didn’t have the kinds of problems that I think other universities had with him because he had been there for a number of years and really held us together in the times - in troubled times. So Ed was - I would say was one of the people that I looked up to. Another person was, let’s see - well I think that Jimmy Applegate was another one that I really appreciated, mainly because he was in my area, in physical education. He was the Dean of Professional Studies and I would have to say that one

of the things that I admired about Jimmy, he was one of the few administrators who gave the decision making to the department chairs and the departments. When we met in - when we had meetings, he would allow his chairs to determine procedure. They would determine ultimately the decisions that were to be made. They voted and whatever those were Jimmy supported. He shared his budget. The chairs determined who got what money if there was additional money the chairs would discuss it and they would decide that this year they were going to support business education and give them X number of dollars maybe for their copy machine. So it really was a very open administration. One of our problems in higher education, and I think at Central, has been that some of our top administrators have not been very trusting of those below them. Therefore, some of the decisions that have been made, or not made, held us back. We - the deans were perfectly capable of making decisions. I recall an incident when I was a Dean when President Garitty, who came in 196- I think about ’78- ‘79, in 1979. He was extremely closed to suggestions. Therefore, he influenced Dr. Harrington in that same respect. When we were - when the campus was going through a time of determining what we were going to do with our off-campus programs the legislature, the higher education committee in the House and Senate turned to Central and said, ‘You are the only institution in this state that is doing off-campus work. You have the experience. Can you help us? Tell us what you think we need to do to increase the offerings. How do we need to do this? What’s the best course?’ Well, we were excited. I wanted to tell them but we were told specifically that when they came to visit the campus, we were to say nothing. President Garitty spoke, Dr. Harrington spoke and offered no suggestions and the political - the political direction that was taken at that time was that we’re doing a good job so let them give us money. We’ll wait till they give us money and they tell us that we’re in charge. As a result of that delay in the late 70’s, we were cut off completely and - from funding and also Helen Summers and some of the other legislators who were very anxious to get some extended degree programs going said to the University of Washington, ‘You have done nothing. You get out there and you offer courses and we are going to build you a branch campus to do it.’ University of Washington was very upset. They did not want to go off campus. They did not want for the offerings to be made. They felt that it would belittle their programs but because it was the legislature that told them they ultimately had to do it and they still to this day, I feel, still do not feel that their branch campus north of Seattle and they also have one down in Tacoma, are up to the quality of their main campus. So they have drug their heels. They dragged their heels right from the beginning. Then they also said, ‘WSU, you’ve got an enrollment problem, so we’re going to bolster your enrollment by giving you money to build branch campuses in Vancouver and in Tn-Cities.’ So they took over Tri-Cities and took over Vancouver. I to this day remember that when we went to the hearing many times in Olympia, we had to write out on a piece of paper what we would say if people asked us. So we wrote this on a piece of paper and when we got in there - of course Dr. Harrington was always one to have everything very precise and under control so he told us where to sit and he would tell us if we were going to testify, we had to read only what was on the paper and he would look at the paper ahead of time, would make the changes to it and then we’d have to make those changes so he actually did write what we were to
say. So a great deal of control and I felt that was one of the big problems with our whole history of off
campus programs. Well, that was a big spiel. I got carried away - (end of side one)

Smith: Now Jean, let’s concern ourselves with an area in which you have been directly concerned and
involved but about which we have said only indirect statements. Let’s concern ourselves with students for a
moment. Do you recall during your period as a teacher, as a coach, as a dean, any particular problems that
students voiced versus the faculty or versus college policy? Let’s talk about students and your relationship
with them.

Putnam: Well, I’ll try not to be too specific. I’ll be somewhat general. I think when I first came to Central
in the ‘60’s - late ‘60’s you recall during that time we had quote the hippie movement and we had the
students revolting and we had sit-ins. We also - remember coming up from Los Angeles in 1967, we had
the Watts Riots. So we were beginning to have a lot of civil rights demonstrations either as students, basic
individuals, the racial problems at that time. So in my very early years at Central there was some discontent
and there was I think a split on campus for students and faculty of those who kind of wanted to stay with
the old guard and stay with the standards and stay with all the things that we’ve always felt were important
to teaching and those who wanted to move off into a new direction of freedom to say and do as they
wished. I do recall, and I don’t know whether you can remember what years those were, but it must be into
the early years of ‘68 and ‘69 we had student sit-ins. At least in my department I recall the students
discussing it with us and the students - the Faculty Senate had decided what would happen if students did
not go to class and what we were to do as faculty. How we were to handle it as a whole if the students
didn’t appear in class and they didn’t - decided to do this. I think there were two or three day there when
they were supposed to do sit-ins and some of my students came to me and said, ‘Now, we don’t really want
to miss your class but we do believe in the principles of the freedom to express our own selves and to
demonstrate and so what should we do?’ I obviously had to tell them that was their decision to make but I
do remember that I also remember, one of my very first faculty meetings, I think the Faculty Senate called
the meeting. It was in McConnell - no it was in Hertz. We had - it was all the faculty gathered at that
particular time and we were trying to decide what direction to take as a faculty about this whole issue. I
remember the sociology department faculty sort of split off from the rest of the faculty and I even recall
them standing up in a meeting or two and calling the rest of us faculty fascist pigs. That got into the paper
by the way. We were furious. We felt that they were - that they were abandoning all of their academic
responsibilities and in fact that they not only abandoned their academic responsibilities but they - their hair
grew longer, they dressed like the students and I think this happened throughout the nation. The sociology
professors were some who felt that this issue was a very strong issue. So that was something that I
remember very early on as it related to what we were going to do about the students at this point. In
addition to that particular uprising of students, I haven’t seen a lot of change in the students other than that
they kind of go up and down and that there are always the students that do what the teacher says, they never
question anything, they - all they’re there for is to get the grade so just go through life and then we have
those who are going to question everything. They are going to challenge the teacher and that sort of thing. I
was always very thankful that I had some students in classes that challenged me. That didn’t accept
everything and I think there were ups and downs through my 25 years when the students, at certain times,
they were more challenging than others. They asked better questions. They didn’t want to know just how
many pages I had - they had to write for the paper but they wanted to know something about, you know,
could they choose these kinds of topics and how could they research their papers and that sort of thing. I -
one of the things that I always did in my classes, in my graduate classes and in my regular major classes,
was to - I usually would give them an assignment. The assignment always had many openings. They could
choose their topic. That was a little difficult for some students because they didn’t like to choose their own
topic. They could write a paper of any length, which was difficult for them, and I said as long as the quality
of their writing was there one page was acceptable if the thought was complete. I called these thought
papers and a lot of the thought papers - and they had to be an original thought. Their original thought. I got
more questions and more challenges from students about those thought papers. They said, ‘Well, how can
you grade them. These are my thoughts. You can’t grade my paper because it’s not your thoughts.’ And I
said, ‘Well, I’m not going to grade you on the thoughts or on the topic. I’m going to grade you on how well
you expressed them and whether they were clear and if it was logically done.’ So, my thought papers were
something that students have always remembered as they come back but did say that they were challenged
perhaps for the first time to have to write something of their own. An original thought and not just get it out of a book. I don’t know about other problems with students other than another issue that I think is - kind of tails off on this and that has to do with Title 9 as it related to our department and students. Most of us are aware of Title 9 in terms of equality of funding in athletics in physical education in school programs. Right from the beginning of that Title 9 I knew we were in trouble. I knew - I knew that it had to be done but I knew we were in trouble right from the beginning because there wasn’t enough funding and where was it going to come from? So I knew we would be tangled up with the men’s program and the biggest issue that we had as women fighting against - actually fighting against Title 9 was that in order for there to be equal funding and equal programs and equal opportunity, the only measuring stick we had at that time in athletics was the men’s model. We did not want to accept the men’s model. We fought that but we were not successful as women as professionals because we had our own association. Instead of it being the NAIA it was the AIAW, which was the Association of Intercollegiate Athletics for Women, which was our national group but eventually NAIA and the NCAA took over for women. It forced the women into scholarships. It forced the men to reduce sports in order to give the money to the women so that there would be as many sports programs as there were for men. There were some good things about it however the women, even as you look at them today, are being used just like men are being used in athletics. They’re being bought and sold. The focus is basically on the team and winning, which is the - which is what I consider to be the male model even though as a coach I did want to win. But the focus was not on the individual athletes and so we had problems, I think, with that. I said to Bink Beamer, who was the athletic director at the time in 1975, I remember sitting in - listening to him and I said to Bink, I said ‘Why don’t you and I or why doesn’t Central make a model in which we take the best of both worlds of men’s and women’s sports and let’s just revamp our whole athletic program?’ And he sat and he laughed at me and he says, ‘You’ve got the right idea.’ He says, ‘But if you think I’m going to be the only male athletic program that does it, you’ve got another guess coming because it will put us behind.’ He said, ‘Now if we could wave the magic wand and every institution automatically at the very same day would make all those changes, I would go along with it.’ But it never happened and we’ve struggled a bit, I think, on this campus and on other campuses in order to do what we need to do in order to make programs more equitable for both men and women.

Smith: Well Jean, would you care to predict just a little bit. We read in the papers so much lately that football and basketball for the men helps to finance virtually all the women’s programs because they have so few that draw attendance, paying attendances. What do you see for the future? Is this going to continue? Do you anticipate that women’s athletics will gain in stature with the public and start growing? I know, for example, that in the state of Iowa women’s basketball is every bit as important as men’s basketball. Is that apt to happen out here in the west?

Putnam: I think it will only happen if we have really good teams. Participants have to increase their skills and the women have to - particularly here at Central. I know Nancy Katzer is coaching the women’s basketball, until she gets a winning team, we won’t have people coming to the game. We build a very strong winning tradition in men’s sports and practically every one of our men’s sports ended out at the top of the league and many of them went on to national. So we have a very strong following among the men. The women’s program, which is just now coming into it’s own because of recruiting, we don’t have scholarships at Central, athletic scholarships so we cannot compete for some of those really good women and since we can’t compete we’ll just be lucky to sort of hold our own, I believe, Now the men have held their own basically because of past tradition. Now whether that continues in the future I’m not sure whether it will.

Smith: Now, let’s move to our list of short subjects. React to these, if you will, as you think you might have reacted while you were active on campus and we will spend a short time on each one and move on. Salary schedule?

Putnam: Before we do that, I think we’re just about out of tape. So let’s cut this tape and –

Smith: Okay. Now Jean, with these short subjects that we’re going into now, will you please make your reaction to these topics, and there are 15 of them. We’ll not spend long on each one but we do need to
record your reaction to these topics as of this date and try to give the reaction as you would have when you were physically active on campus. The salary schedule at Central?

Putnam: Well, it’s gone through many revisions and I remember being on - in the Faculty Senate when we were trying to - when we had tried to revise it. It’s been revised numerous times. I have felt that there has been - they’ve tried to make the salary schedule very equitable. My biggest problem with the salary schedule is that the salary schedule has always - the steps in the salary schedule has always tied into merit. So that if you were lucky enough, either politically or however to receive merit, you automatically went up at least one step, sometimes it was a two step merit raise and therefore you were rewarded for the rest of your years at Central. I was always of the opinion, and there were several others with me, that felt that if you were meritorious in any one year either for your writing, your research, your public service, your teaching, that that should be rewarded in dollar amounts for one year and that that should just be a separate item. Now that - that idea has come about numerous times during my stay at Central but it has never been accepted by the administration nor by the majority of the faculty who see the advantage if they do get merit of continuing to receive that additional pay throughout the rest of their days at Central.

Smith: Jean, an item that is not on our list that you just mentioned needs to have your reaction recorded and that is the merit system. Have you ever been able to decide who is and who isn’t meritorious when it comes to teaching, research, public service?

Putnam: No. I will have to say that I was on the Personnel Committee for our department for about 15 years and I think we came closest as a department to trying to work out an equitable system for merit. Now our faculty didn’t like it but they ultimately voted for it and many other departments have wanted to do this. We had a point system. It was a little objective but it was the only way we could do it so that there was absolutely no question that the person at the top of the list with the most points should receive merit for that year. And we had - it was very elaborate. We had all the committees they had ever served on nationally, regionally, in the state, local, on the campus. We did everything. We had the teaching evaluations that we turned into points. We averaged - they had to - they were required to have all classes evaluated and then by that points system was turned into a certain number of points for teaching. The public service, the same thing. So we had points and we had a committee. We had people looking at records so when you got through each individual who wanted merit, and by the way, only those individuals who turned in their materials for consideration received merit. This was also a big problem because many people on our faculty felt if they were meritorious somebody else should tell somebody that they were meritorious. Not - they should not be the ones to ring their own bells. So, those people who were on the top of the list who had the most points then, the chair agreed that he would also turn his list in that would be the same as the list that the committee turned in. However, during the history of our department several times certain times chairs would turn in names in addition to that of the Personnel Committee which made it extremely difficult because we did have several people in our department that received merit for reasons that we felt were not appropriate. I feel that the merit system itself is extremely difficult to measure and is pretty subjective and certainly if there is no standard across departments and across schools, you cannot issue merit in that respect so - and I remember during the early years in many departments what they did was they passed merit around because it was a form of getting a raise on the salary schedule so you just waited and this year we’re going to give merit to these three people and now - next year we’ll give it to these three people. So it went all the way through the departments so everybody would get their step or two raise and then we’d start over. That’s not merit.

Smith: Now Jean, do you recall any instances on campus when academic freedom became a matter of question or a problem?

Putnam: Well, with several of the faculty I remember some incidences about when

- and I think it was again back in the late 60’s, early 70’s when several faculty felt that they were - that they would do it their way and the institution had their own policies - we had our own policies about how things would be done and they felt that it infringed upon their rights to say what they wanted to say. This was
back during the, as I said, the late 60’s. I don’t recall, academic freedom - our department had no problem with that as I recall. I don’t remember any instances but I do remember several departments having some problems with that.

Smith: Okay, now, on the Faculty Senate there were several instances that I recall, there were lots of concerns with collegiality and concerns with whether the faculty code of policy and procedure was equally binding on the administration and on the Board of Trustees and on the faculty. Will you comment on the faculty code?

Putnam: Well, what can I say? I think from the very beginning of the time that I came to Central there was an attempt by the faculty to be recognized as a legitimate body and to have some say in the direction of their hiring and firing policies and all the other things that the faculty code represents and I do believe that its been undergoing change throughout those 25 years. As we reach new - as we identify new problems we have to change the code. I will - I would have to say that I don’t believe that the administration has ever really accepted the faculty code. I mean they’ve accepted the faculty code, to a certain extent, but have not been real serious about its importance to the faculty. Although I do think as the years have gone by, there has been more legitimacy placed on the faculty code than there had been in earlier years. I recall that the faculty code hearings, there haven’t been - hadn’t been or never has been a lot of input but that the administration when changes are made that might affect budget in some way have been extremely concerned about that. Now, I recall as a dean that some of the changes that were made in the faculty code affected the contracts and my budget to the point where I wasn’t certain that we could carry out some of those issues in the faculty code. So I do know that from the administrative point of view, particularly with budget and salary kinds of things, that if there wasn’t enough money, could we still follow the faculty code. Where would we get the money? So that there was an issue - that was an issue several times.

Smith: Jean I’m sure you’re aware that recently a number of faculty members from Eastern Washington over in Cheney came over and spoke on our campus here concerning actually unionizing the faculty so that it can make legal and within policy demands. What is your feeling about unionization of academic faculty?

Putnam: Well I have to kind of sit in the middle of maybe - sit on the fence a bit with this one. I am an idealist and I believe that faculty should not need to have a union in order to represent them in terms of their ability to be paid fairly and that sort of thing however, I have seen throughout my years an inequity and particularly, my friends who have stayed in the public schools whose salary far exceeds mine. I have spent, you know, up to eight years longer in my formal education, my formal training with degrees in order to get where I am. I have always felt that the - there was an inequity and its partly been because the public schools do unionize and they have been fully supported by the legislature in terms of the raises that they give them and higher education, only four year institutions I’d have to say, are the only employees that - teachers, faculty are the only employees that may not collectively bargain. In fact, the community colleges can - are unionized. So we’re the only group of five institutions in the state that - that they have not given this privilege to. So I have fought for that as well just in terms of equity. I feel that ever - for the last 15 years or more we have attempted to get that collective bargaining bill through and it has never gone through. They can see the writing on the wall but if it happens that would mean big bucks would have to be put into higher education in order to increase and make more equitable the salaries of faculty in higher education.

Smith: Now Jean, can you make any comment concerning the differences that you may have observed in the preparation of students from the time they came to Central from the time you arrived and the time that you left. Were students better prepared, ill prepared?

Putnam: I feel that they are better prepared today only in a different way. I feel that during my early years at Central the curriculums tended to be more practical. Things - we taught them things that we knew they had to do when they got out. I think we moved over a period of years into what I would call a more scientific background or a more academic approach to the major programs. As a result of that academic approach, at least in our department, where the students now are physiologists, they are kinesiologists, they
are people who are well versed in anatomy. We now have, which we never had in the early days, we now have cadavers. They work - definitely work on pre-med - in a pre-med level in all of the scientific programs in physical education and in the fitness area. Same thing in the area of health. All of it is very scientifically and technologically advanced and therefore the students as I see it are extremely knowledgeable about their field. I’m not sure, however, that our students today have the people skills and have the ability to be successful as - as professionals when they go out in terms of their teaching methods and their ability to relate and their - and ways to reach students. I think that may be lacking more now than it did in the early days when we were focusing more on those kinds of things.

Smith: Would you comment on hiring policies and practices as you saw them being used and developed while you were faculty and an administrator?

Putnam: Hiring of new faculty?

Smith: Yes.

Putnam: Oh.

Smith: And perhaps administrators from off campus.

Putnam: Well, prior to the days of affirmative action, I think we were pretty - still pretty - we were pretty equitable. I would have to say that during the time I was at Central during the first 15 years we were pretty stagnant as a faculty. Not stagnant in a negative sense. We had very little turnover. Most of the faculty stayed because there weren’t jobs and you were afraid if they left they wouldn’t find something some place else. So most of the faculty during those years were - had been around. In fact that’s why you see today such large turnovers because it’s the holdover of all of those of us who remained at Central for 30 - 25, 30, 40 years and have finally come to retirement age. It wasn’t this natural come and go to different campuses that you’re beginning to see now. So the hiring practices - I had very little to do with hiring. I don’t believe we ever hired anybody. I can’t even remember a new person who came in. Finally we had a couple people retire and if we were lucky enough to get to rehire or fill their position we filled it with some young people but I usually wasn’t involved in our department with that hiring. When I was a dean and began to increase my faculty - mean my staff I was involved but that was basically staff and not faculty. But then I was involved in terms of serving on several faculty committees - search committees. After affirmative action took its role on the campus. I was for affirmative action but I do feel that it has gone a little too far in what one has to do to meet all of the criteria to make certain that a minority is not overlooked. I served on maybe eight or ten committees all over the campus for administrators and faculty chairs and that sort of thing and I just felt that - I think we did ultimately get probably the best person but it took an awful lot longer because we had to justify every time we dropped a person from the pool. We had to justify it through a very long procedure and I’m not sure that was all necessary because I think for most of us, we wanted the best person and if you’re going to get the best person, it’s not necessarily going to be a minority.

Smith: Now I’m going to ask you to blow your own bugle now and please do not be hesitant because this needs to be recorded. The question is what specific contributions do you feel that you made to the progress of your department or to the school? For example, the development of new courses, the revision of curriculum, the revision of majors and minors. Think back to contributions that you made. Maybe you even had to argue hard to get some of them pushed through.

Putnam: Oh dear. Well I think I was instrumental on the Personnel Committee because I was chair for many years to finally get a procedure for determining merit and promotion. I did feel that I made that contribution. Early on in the department I was brought in to develop curriculum. I did. Dr. Betty Hileman was hired at that time and there were a few others. There were about four of us. Key people that completely revised the curriculum. Some of the old timers felt that it wasn’t - we weren’t going in the right direction but I think they finally did except that new approach to physical education in terms of our whole interdisciplinary approach to physical education and I felt that I did make a contribution there to the major
program, to the development of the courses and I did - I developed some new activity classes that still exist today. I started the bicycling class and all of the outdoor sports classes. The hiking and orienteering class and the snowshoeing class and the cross country skiing class. I started lacrosse here. It has since disappeared but I did have a few of those kinds of courses which hadn’t been in the curriculum in the past and I’m not sure - I’m trying to think of what other contributions. I feel that I have been a - made a contribution as a department representative on the campus. I did serve for the Faculty Senate and was on the Executive Committee and served as most of us do for major committees on the campus and I feel that I did make a contribution there as I represented my area.

Smith: Now I’m going to ask you a question that could cause you to see red. Have you ever been confronted by those academicians who feel that physical education and athletics have no place what so ever in a degree granting institution?

Putnam: Well yes. Well particularly athletics but physical education has since its very beginning has been a difficult profession to defend. Partly because it’s looked as as quote a gym class, playing games, throwing out a ball and that it’s fun. You don’t really need four years of anatomy, kinesiology, physiology and the rest of it to teach that. I don’t - I feel like I had more problems in high school teaching than I did since I’ve been here at Central but I do think that I have had problems when we sit in meetings, academic meetings, and they want to know what department you’re from and the feeling that you get when you say I’m in the department of physical education. Now I’ve been taught, coming from the University of Southern California, to be very proud of that profession and I am. But you’re bucking about a hundred years worth of people’s opinions about physical education. I have always felt that if I can do anything as a representative of this profession to increase people’s esteem regarding that it would be helpful because we as in - as you all know in your professions, you always have people that do not represent you well and we probably had more in physical education partly because people teach physical education who have had no academic background in that area because they figure out that anybody can throw the ball out kind of thing. So that approach, yes I have had those kinds of problems and have had to defend it. I will have to say though that when I first came here we had six credits required in physical education. Then it went to four. Then it went to two and when it went - and probably legitimately so because there were some other things in the general education and required core that needed to be there however, I do recall in the late senate meetings in 80- about ’88 or ’89 and maybe even after that, they were trying to decide whether to eliminate physical education. We as a department have discussed this for a long time and felt that yes, maybe this is what we need to do. What we need to do is to eliminate it as a requirement because students are taking many many more credits than they are required to take and if we have a curriculum that meets their needs, they will be there taking it on an elective basis but what we’d like to do is to substitute that with a course that is what we call a wellness course. A required three credit course where we do a complete personal inventory on every student. Their diet, their fitness - a fitness inventory. A complete inventory so that they-we have done a service to them and what direction they need to go personally in order to increase their wellness. I will say that the Faculty Senate in this discussion when we were ready to give up those two credits of physical education, the whole Faculty Senate and all the faculty stood up and defended our program and our department and were behind us and they weren’t going to let anybody give up those two credits because we had done a good job and they saw this as very important. So now what do we do? They’ve defended our program and so we’ve - even though we had suggested that we replace it. So at the present time, we’re still in limbo. There is still a two credit requirement. We still have on the books with the General Education Committee a proposal to have a two or three credit wellness class required of all students before they leave Central. So that’s my story.

Smith: Good. Now Jean, are there areas that we have not touched on or things that you’d like to comment on to get them recorded on the tape? Are there subjects that you feel especially interested in that we have not touched? Go ahead and simply at random –

Putnam: No, I’m just kind of running down this list. One year it was building naming policies on the campus. Usually what has happened is you have a committee appointed by the president to name various buildings and what they’re supposed to do is to determine what the building is going to be named and usually, in the past, it has always been named for a person who has - is deceased and that is related to that
area. Well, when we got our new building in 1987 we thought, good, we will ask for a particular name. Well, the president at that time, Dr. Garitty, determined that we weren’t going to have a building naming committee and that it would be called the P.E. building. Now we have for years tried to get away from the word P.E. but it was the P.E. building and we attempted to tell him at that time because we had had problems in our department up until the mid 80’s we had separate groups. Our faculty were so isolated. We had the leisure services people were over in a little house next to what we call the chicken coop or the McCabe building and then next door to them were the health people in another little house. Then we had - then leisure moved down to Edison for a while and so none of our department people were together. Well, when we finally convinced all of our programs to come together and identify as one solid group, it took a lot. People were angry with other people. They were upset. The leisure people did not want to be associated with P.E. The health people didn’t want to be associated with, you know. So we had a terrible time but finally got everybody together in that building. It didn’t take but a year or two to really see a cohesiveness among all of them but in the process the building is still today called the RE. building. Now you can imagine that people in health education and people in leisure and paramedics people all of them and the athletics, which is also housed in that building, feel a little slighted. We have requested that it be changed or that at least you just list all the people in the building but as long as Dr. Garitty was here he said absolutely that the decision had been made and there would be no change in that building. So we know how difficult it is to name a building or to get a change made from a building that has already been labeled. I don’t know, let’s see what else? One year long range planning, the only thing I was going to say about long range planning on this campus is that when I came 25 years ago we were long range planning and there was never a long range plan that ever got completed and never a long range plan that ever was put into action and committees just changed throughout the years and it was just something one did and spent a heck of lot of time on in every department submitting your long range plan. Until finally when President Nelson recently decided that we would have a long range plan and that it would be used to make all of the decisions, budgetary, hiring, that kind of thing. Although I left in ‘92, about the time that the long range plan was - his long range plan I call it his long range plan was completed. I think there is some indication that finally we have a long range plan that is being used to make decisions. Now, faculty haven’t been real happy with those decisions because some of the things that they put in the long range plan they didn’t feel were appropriate for decision making purposes. So that’s my comment on long range plan.

Smith: That reminds me, Jean, of a problem that arose when Dr. McConnell was still President of the institution when he talked of long range planning at one time and he invited it and invited the faculty to become involved in long range planning as long as it didn’t cost any money. (tape ran out)