

Transcript of Interview with David Lee Smith by Noel Ologo

Interviewee: David Lee Smith

Interviewer: Noel Ologo

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Transcriber: Kevin McPartland

Summary: David Lee Smith is an Emeriti Faculty member specializing in Architecture. In this interview we discuss his experiences at UC, and particularly his teaching philosophy. Smith pushed especially hard to give his students an education, not training, making them well-rounded and dynamic individuals.

Categories: DAAP, Faculty Relations, City School Transition, Gender

Tags: faculty, education, teaching, Dennis Mann, design, campus architecture, co-op program

Noel Ologo: Hello, sir. Morning, everyone. My name is Noel Ologo. Yeah. And today we're going to talk about, we're going to use the experiences you have as like an emeriti to help and have like a case for the, the histories to come. So we're going to ask a few questions and hope is as lively as possible.

David Lee Smith: Okay. happy to oblige.

NO: All right, so, so firstly, we want to know, when did you come into the university? And why, like, Is there any small story?

DS: Well I came in 1965 to teach in the architecture program. And I came from the east coast, you still will hear an accent. Yeah, I have not lost it. After—over 40-50 years now, right. I came because I liked what they were doing. I had been doing some part time teaching at Harvard at the Graduate School of Design. A couple of universities inquired if I was interested in teaching in one was Rhode Island School of Design. And I knew the person who was running that program. I was interested. But I grew up in Providence, my wife said, 'We're not going back to Providence.' I was also interviewed here in Cincinnati. I was very impressed with what they were trying to do. And we came to Cincinnati, I promised my wife two years. And we've been here more than that. we really like Cincinnati. We'd like to university and the architecture program was one of the best, throughout my tenure at the university was one of the top programs in the country.

NO: And he said, You've been in Cincinnati for fifteen years, right?

DS: Fifty.

NO: Fifty? Oh!

DS: Five Oh.

NO: Five-zero [Laughs].

DS: 65. We came and we thought about leaving several times. We just enjoyed the city. It was a great city to raise a family. We had a lot of dear friends here in the university. The program, particularly in the architecture program was very dynamic and very interesting to be part of.

NO: So just a little bit before we delve into Cincinnati stuff. I saw that you attended Harvard University.

DS: Well the college and Harvard Graduate School of Design. I'm not a doctor. You referred to me as Dr. Smith in our telephone—When I graduated, the terminal degree actually was a bachelor's, which is similar to what used to be for the lawyers at that time. You got an LLB. My bachelor's was converted to a Master's. Doctorates in architecture didn't really become prevalent until the late 60s, early 70s. So my terminal degree is a Masters. I'm not a doctor.

NO: Okay, so I want to know a few things you are passionate about to help lead the conversation. So just a few things.

DS: Well, I said, I came to Cincinnati in part, I remember going home, telling my wife that I was impressed with what they were trying to do in Cincinnati. There were a number of faculty who I had met, I got along with them very well, right. And on my interview, they had a new thought about education. And I had felt, although I went to a school that has an extraordinarily good reputation, that I had not been educated. I had learned through osmosis through my association with other very competent, talented young people. But I don't think they taught us about architecture, in particularly architectural design. You learn by like an apprenticeship program, you learn by following what— [coughs] excuse me—the teacher told you to do, or try to emulate what he might or she might have done. But they didn't really teach you. And when we came out to here, we were talking about education. And I was very impressed with that. And I spent a lot of time thinking about education, because I had gone to an undergraduate liberal arts college and then go on to graduate school for my professional education. And Cincinnati was an undergraduate professional program and I had to spend some serious time thinking about how could I participate in a program, which was not what I felt was appropriate for me. And I realized that not the same type of education is not appropriate for everybody. And I look back now and I realized that we don't spend enough time understanding why people go on beyond high school to get additional education. And I believe we have diminished the value of college education because we talk about college without, without necessarily talking about why. What do you there for? An undergraduate education in the liberal arts college is to become, quote, unquote, a 'philosopher,' to think about the great things, not to train you for a job. And our undergraduate professional program in architecture was essentially job training, jobs, job preparation, and we needed to expand the education of the young people to increase—really expose them to literature, philosophy, history. I think today, we don't, we don't do that. We just—everyone goes to college, but most people go to college because they

want to be professionally trained. We haven't really clarified that. Long answer to—but it's a very important question, is why I came to Cincinnati, I spent time thinking about education. And I wish we would spend more time thinking about it. And throughout my tenure in the architecture program, the faculty was a team. And we talked and we discussed, we argued. We really spent time working together doesn't happen as much anymore.

NO: My previous interview with this, there was Dr. Frank, and I think he also shared the same view about like, the reason why we are supposed to be in college. That is training and not necessarily preparing you for the for the job market. So you say that, yeah, you think that really?

DS: Yes, I know, Frank.

NO: Yeah.

DS: But they—but it's we—we—we're not we're not developing the educational program with a clear understanding of what the intentions are. And I have three children. And one of my youngest, actually went to an industrial design. He did not want to go to college in the sense of getting a General liberal arts education. My oldest child went, we sent her to Barnard, because she was very interested in the liberal arts education, and different strokes for different folks.

NO: Yeah.

DS: And you should understand it, but right now we because everyone should go to college without understanding what that means.

NO: Okay, sir, can you take us through your hiring process? hiring? Yes, the hiring process?

DS: Well, actually, I was recommended in Cincinnati by a former employer, who was actually my—a professor of mine, who I had worked with after I graduated—actually, when I was in graduate school. And then after I grad—after finished graduate school at Harvard, and I actually taught classes and I often was teaching his classes he was in. He was an engineer in practice. And if he couldn't make the class he would send me to go and teach. So I was teaching classes and I was teaching my own class at Harvard. And I was really enjoying it. Although I had never intended to be in the academic field. I was going to be a practicing architect. He had recommended—he and I together jointly wrote an article that was published in one of the architectural magazines, and my particular area, he was an engineer is environmental control systems, heating and air conditioning, lighting, acoustics. And he was—came to Cincinnati and gave a lecture. And they asked him does he want to come and teach here in Cincinnati. He said he wasn't interested. But he said, if they wanted a young person, they should contact me and they did. And at that time, I had as I said, before, I was talking to someone about teaching at Rhode Island School of Design. I was starting to seriously think about it. I talk a lot, so I'll tell you what the

issue was, I was very upset with what I had experienced at the habit, Harvard Graduate School of Design. It wasn't education. And I complained a lot. I complained a lot. I talk a lot, I complained a lot. And I realized that I, when I was given the opportunity to teach, I either had to shut up and stop complaining, or try to take up the challenge and see if I could do better. And when I came to Cincinnati for the interview, I immediately found people who were seriously questioning what an architectural education should be. And I was very impressed with that. And we carried on those conversations for most of my tenure here as a professor. So the interview very early on, was involving in talking about architectural education. I was impressed by their commitment, their camaraderie. That doesn't mean that we didn't argue or they didn't disagree, but they were willing to talk things out. And that's an interesting thing, too. I call it East Coast brashness modeling. These people spend time on the East Coast versus Midwest cordiality. In Cincinnati, people don't like to argue, where sometimes arguments are important. That doesn't mean that doesn't mean when you argue that you have thing a fight, you're disagreeing on an issue and you're trying to understand each other. And, unfortunately, Midwest cordiality, as I've called it, sometimes everyone says yes, yes, yes, doesn't mean they agree with you, and you walk away not understanding with what their position is. I found out that with the people that I was going to teach with was an open discussions, I enjoyed that. So I came.

NO: I said, Can you talk to us about a typical, your typical, like class setup? Like, what did you hope like your students took away? And were you able to impact—as you weren't too happy with your with what you were experiencing? Were you able to like? You said earlier, only one is to do better? Were you able to, like do better? And do you feel good about that? [Both laugh]

DS: I, I hope I was able to in terms of I had our commitment. As I said, I had worked for an engineer, I was teaching engineering. The approach to my classes, the engineering classes was not to make them little engineers. Oftentimes, students would take Heating, Air conditioning, structural classes, this is the technology classes, and I would say to make them little engineers. So that if it was a small project, they didn't have to hire an engineer. I wanted to make them mature designers. So my approach to teaching these classes was to introduce students to the technical issues as a way to inform their design. The other thing was, I was teaching engineering classes, but I am an architect. And I also taught the design classes. And so the intention was to introduce them to design methodologies. And also to get them to explore, hopefully, the technical things I introduced in lecture as to how they might inform their designs. Design to me is a problem solving endeavor. And I will try to get students to understand that you explore the potentials of the problem that are presented by the design intention. You explore the potentials with—inherent within the problem you're trying to solve rather than impose a pre-digested solution. At—towards the end of my teaching, for 10 15 years, I taught the introductory design classes, because that was something I was very committed to how do you introduce a young person into the thinking as a designer, and it's not to, 'oh like this thing' you know, it's imposing. I want to find out what the nature of the problem is and let the solution evolve from the problem from a response to the problem, rather than just be a cop. You know, forced to fit into us freaking—. And, and I think that's one of the problems of architecture today you see a lot of buildings that not response to the problem. But, you know, in the expression of the design is personal feeling. We have a building on campus. Number of buildings done by significant architects, called a signature architects and the Frank Gehry building is the one that's on

the Medical Center, which is a building that doesn't work well, but it's got this kind of form that somewhat looks like Frank Gehry. And you wonder what does the form have anything that he's used as bulbous form, and what does that have to do with the problem of the occupants? That was—that was what my intention—so I spent all these years as a designer and teaching the technology, but the technology is to understand that in again in terms of concepts and principles, rather than solutions. And that to me is—even though an undergraduate professional education is there, it still should be founded on understanding concepts and principles, not solutions answers.

NO: So, I want to know—I also want to know like, what was like your, relationship like with your colleagues, like those in the same department or outside?

DS: Well, relationship in the architecture, which then ended up architecture and interior design. I, I loved it. We got along, as I said, we would often be having intense discussions. One of my closest and dearest friends was Dennis Mann who I talked with for almost 50 years. I met Dennis vicariously, when I was at Harvard as an undergraduate, because two of my roommates in my last year at the college, came from Cincinnati, and they kept telling—talk to their friend Dennis Mann who was studying architecture in Cincinnati. Well, then there's an I taught for together for almost 50 years, and we became dear friends. We would argue all the time, and some of the younger faculty would get upset. And we would be arguing about architectural issues. But we weren't fighting we were arguing different interpretations and positions, and we generally agreed. But we—that was just the way we went. And that's the kind of dialogue that I had with most of the colleagues. It were very intense and open. And we shared ideas. We didn't necessarily agree at the beginning. But we generally reached consensus. And our program was built upon the consensual model that we would discuss things we would work together. It broke down towards the end of my tenure here that things. We weren't faculty. To me, a faculty is a group of people who interact, not just the people who teach. And that kind of community was not as strong as I had throughout most of my tenure here, which I really appreciated. Then, I also got involved with the university. I became involved in university governance, and I think I'm still the only person who served two times as Chair as university faculty. So I served two terms. And I got involved with broader university issues. And—it—I served time also, as an administrator, I was the chair, which is a little different in our program, the chair of the architecture program was more in terms of trying to organize the faculty collectively than being an administrator per se. But one of the critical issues, really, which I think is a problem today is, I believe, a subject should be taught by the academic discipline that that falls into. When I was chair of the architectural faculty—wasn't performance based budgeting, which is now what happens. It was just an attempt to factor that we were needed to increase our revenue generation. And I was also working very actively on the general education program. So I was no longer Chair of the university faculty chair with the architecture program. And I had been one of the members of the team who wrote the finally AP accepted general education program that we developed in the university. We had a math requirement. In architecture students, according to general education had to take a math class—course. And Math Department couldn't handle it, because we would send over 100 students and they didn't have faculty teaching. They said, 'If you send us those students, we have to hire adjuncts.' Well, I'm thinking, 'if I send my students to math, then all of the income that they generate is lost to us. Why don't I just hire a math, adjunct professor and teach the math in an architecture that will generate

more income for architecture?' But then ran against my principle that the discipline should be taught by by that discipline, that subject should be taught by the discipline represented by that. And that's happening right now with the university cla—Arts and Sciences is suffering because a lot of other programs to generate income, teaching classes, I don't think they should. It also diminishes the education for the students. Being an undergraduate in a liberal arts program, I spent four years with other young people who are going to study other things. medicine, law, business, and I know how they think. When you're only with people studying your field, you think everybody thinks that way. We don't think alike. A dear friend of mine, David Mann, who happens to be on city council here,

NO: You said David Mann, is he related to Dennis Mann?

DS: No. [Both laugh] good. But David Mann actually was a classmate of mine, at Harvard, who I didn't know he was from Cincinnati, but I didn't know him. I knew some other people from Cincinnati. But one time I was doing some work with Dennis, and we were talking and his comment to me, this was a number of years ago, he said, 'David, I enjoy listening, observing how you think, because you think differently than I do.' Because I was approaching a design issue. And I was talking about some things which he had never thought about. And that's true. And I think we should all have that kind of exposure. So when you taking your math class, or history class or whatever, with everybody else from your program, you think everybody thinks the same way you do, in a sense. And you really shouldn't be exposed to people having different, completely different ways of approaching and, and learn from that and appreciate that. So I think there's a value not only in terms of financial support, and the whole other thing, but for the students, that you should be going to take a math class in the math department, and not only with people from your discipline. You don't get that if you take a you know—there was a class that when I first came, it was Physics for Architects. And it was taught by a professor from, I think, was Arts and Sciences. We didn't want them to take Physics of Architects, you want to take physics, think about physics, Physics for Architects is not the way to approach things. Long again.

NO: But right. If also, I think like with regard to like, some subjects, I think like if they take like just raw physics doesn't it's like teach things that don't that's not like really necessary for like the course at the moment or?

DS: Oh, yes. You're not you're not again, education isn't training. Okay, training is you learn how to do the thing you need to do. In reality, if a person has been educated versus a person who's only been trained, simply, the person who's trained is probably better off doing the job immediately upon the end of the training. And they won't ask questions. The person who's educated will be asking questions and will be able to develop and mature over a period of time. Training, I know what to do. Well, I also were in that working for an engineering firm. As I said, when I worked for my professor, as an engineering firm. Heating, Air conditioning, plumbing, lighting things. I realized most of the people, in fact, all but my boss, my professor, were not college educated, they were all trained. They could solve the problem, the way they solved the problem before. It wasn't, they didn't solve the problem. They could do, what they did what they could repeat it. And there was a—an example of that where you could see they didn't understand the concepts and principles, and therefore they could only repeat. And they couldn't evolve

and develop. So I believe that education is important. You learn things, and you don't necessarily learn only the things that are applicable to what you're doing so that again, architecture, Physics for Architects, not to me, I think it's physics. That's, that's exciting, and learn to apply it. And of course, when you're working as a designer, or anything the people you're working for aren't architects either, it's you have to design for them and understand them. Okay,

NO: Um, what did you What do you like, feel about like the interaction with like, administration, like, you're?

DS: Well, I worked with the administration, that was a government—governance, as I said, when—I really got involved with a, I was on the Faculty Senate, and then I became Chair of the University Faculty with very little real understanding of what it all was. And I had a meet with him at that time, President Steger, Joseph Steger was president of the university. And I had to meet with Joseph Steger, when I got elected as chair of the university faculty. In my first conversation with him, and I was that I was not prepared, he informed me that the administration had rejected the request that the Chair of the University Faculty would become part of the cabinet, the President's Cabinet. At the time President Steger had a cabinet where he had the heads of certain programs to Provos that there was a provost for the Medical Center. They're separate, there was the head of facilities, they had all these people, had his cabinet. And he told me that they wouldn't accept the fact that the chair would sit as a member of his cabinet. I wasn't really aware that one of the issues, but I realized that I thought that that was a bad mistake, because first of all faculty had voted. The Faculty Senate had voted and my thought they should respect that. And I said, like what I was saying before, I thought it would be valuable for the cabinet, the President's Cabinet, the University Cabinet, to have the input from faculty on issues. And I argued that point and I also said, I realized that there would be some issues that the faculty should not be part of. And if I were there, I would have to recuse myself. You know, salaries, certain things and financial, but, but you should see the perspective of the faculty. And at that point, he said, 'Well, I'll go back and discuss it, could be an intense discussion on this thing.' And a week later, he called me and he said, 'we're going to try it.' So I guess I argued the point, the point, and he, at that time, had a new assistant, who was a former military man, and he was, I think, I can't remember his name right now. He was very unhappy about this. In the military, the troops don't make the decisions, and I'm part of the troops. And after two years, and he was retiring, and I was retiring, he wrote me a note and said, he was wrong about having me there at the table really helped because I would present the faculty point of view. Doesn't mean that I won, but I would present the faculty point of view. And that's another issue and throughout the cabinet and most of the things I've been involved with, when when you work with people, you express—you give input and you discuss. But there's so many boards now where all you—want all they want is your money and sometimes—and your affirmation, yes, they don't want your input. And I think the better decisions are made when you discuss things. I sometimes refer to it as argue and I can't really argue, discuss things, present your opinion, and through that, hopefully come to a better solution. And that's compromise. You know, my—a colleague of mine said the least worst, the least, worst the resolution compromise. You come to a point where you say, 'hey look, that's pretty good. Everyone can agree Let's move on.' Not Will you know, not right and wrong, compromise. Time? [NO laughs]

NO: No. Were there any incidents or events like in the school, that really interested to you or like disappointed you? I know they're going to be a lot.

DS: There were a lot of things that interested me. And so a few things that disappointed me. What interested me most is becoming a better architectural program. I jokingly said, throughout my tenure, here, we were one of the top architecture programs in the country, listed the top five often number one. Since my retirement, we don't get listed anymore. Part of the thing is that what frustrated me is when you're trying to do something just because it's the thing to do or expedite. One of the things that bothered me, and again, one of the reasons I retired when I did, because I felt I was still enjoying what I was doing was the conversion of the university to the quote, 'semesters calendar.' Because we're co-op, we're a trimester system, we're not a semester system, we were told we had to call it semesters. Well, we're not semesters in I think, as an academic, I don't call something a semester, if it isn't a semester. And yet—so I refuse to use the term semesters terms, we have three terms. But there was no real discussion about the three terms. The idea that you could compensate for the shorter length of the term, almost by adding a few minutes, the end of a lecture is ludicrous. All lectures went for an hour. And you might argue was an hour an hour and a half lectures, is that the right length of time, but still, you have a topic that you can cover in an hour, maybe two topics. But adding a few minutes doesn't mean you can introduce a new topic. So our students are short changed. So yes, they get the same minutes of instruction, but they don't get the same instruction. That's ludicrous. And yet this university was willing to go along, because I guess we had to the governor said we're going to semesters, but we didn't go to semesters, we went to a trimester program. The intention of the trimester—semester, was that every university state run University and two year colleges would all be on the same calendar. We're not. So why did you demand that you do that? In a co-op college, which, to me is an extraordinary educational system. And its unique initial—well, it's not unique anymore, but it started here in Cincinnati, it's an extraordinary way to get an education, if that's the way you want to go. It was much better under the quarter system, and doesn't work as well. And it also changed the quality of education in my opinion. Because when you're in the co op program, the number of students were divided to up to 10. Now you have all the students together. Teaching a class with 50 students is quite different than teaching a class with 100 students in terms of particularly lectures or that kind of formal presentation. And it really was no real discussion about that because it just got to do a lot of things like that really frustrated. We in architecture made a big decision. We went to a graduate program from an undergraduate program and we never really discussed, this is towards the end of my tenure, we never really discussed why, or how we thought we were doing it. Then the program was implemented, and there was nobody there to guide us to make to give us the direction. Now they're talking maybe about going back to an undergraduate program. So I mean, was it—it was, to me the frustration is, we didn't have those kinds of discussions. I came here because we did. I stayed here with the discussions on the President's Cabinet, wonderful discussions, they were open discussions. And now it seems let's just move ahead and do what simple in the conversion—calendar conversion, I think was, was an issue. Even in our own university, we have schools that don't follow the same calendar. That's okay. That's okay. We're not all the same. It's a university. It's a big system and to assume that we're all alike. that's to me one of the fundamental principles that really aren't, we assume everyone's alike, and whatnot, and we should we should embrace that difference, rather than fight against, or even put blinders on assume that we're not different. I like the difference. [Both laugh]

NO: Are there other events that things stick with disappointed you, or it's just

DS: The state, that was an example. I think the the open dialogue that we had was the semester. And post semester system in architecture was the change of a degree you without really thinking about what—there were changes in terms of administrative organization. Years ago, when I was chairing I was talking about teaching a math class, I spoke to my brother, who was then acting provost at another university. And I was actually asking him, what do they do? We have a lot of universities, if you have your students, and I say, your students, your majors, if they go from your college to another college or another unit, you share the tuition. So there's an advantage for you, I don't have to teach them. So the cost of teaching is not carried by me, but I get a certain advantage because I attracted the students. So there's—if—you want to running a business, so you've share. The Universe of Cincinnati doesn't do that. Your departmental income will say is based upon FTEs. Students, scholarship and full time equivalent students. So you, you get your budget based on that. So the fact of the matter is, there's no incentive to send a student elsewhere, because you lose all that money. Whereas when you have a mutual—students go back and forth. And I think that's what universities should be about. Students interacting with other students. This university is not financially structured that way. And we do not have the administration that tries to really understand what what do we do. The one of the things that Cincinnati was often, which I fought against, was called silos, each college stood on its own. And we used to join together. But one of the problems was in in, in the form—before we went to the quarter system, you had co-op colleges on the quarter calendar, and you had other colleges on the semester calendar. So all of the classes in the co-op colleges were taught in that college, the math was taught in architecture, because you were on a different calendar. When we went to a common calendar, then we had—we started to break down the silos, and I believe a university by its name is joining together of different units. And we should encourage that and what we're doing is not encouraging collaboration. They talk about interdisciplinary, but interdisciplinary systems need a structure that really supports it. I don't believe we have that, so I can—that's a frustration. We fought against the side mentality. I think we, we did. And I think we're going back to a silo mentality more than we should. And one of the things that really upsets me is the strength of Arts and Sciences, that the Arts and Science program is the core of the university in which people don't see it that way. Arts and Sciences, not a service unit. It's the core of the university. It's where you study philosophy and history in science. And we should be strengthening the Arts and Science colleges, and they were I don't think universities doing that. effectively. What is your major?

NO: I do environmental Science [unintelligible] Yeah.

DS: What college?

NO: It's in its own college, like, environmental science. It was introduced, I think about four years ago. It's a new, new one. Yeah.

DS: So it's just by itself.

NO: Yeah.

DS: It's not in a college?

NO: Yeah

DS: That's very important issue. And especially in this, you know, in this time when environmental issues are so critical. always enjoyed when they built the EPA,

NO: I think it's under Arts and Sciences, though. It's still outside by just that they have like, it's solo department like, Yeah. [unintelligible] Yeah.

DS: When they would use the chemical spray on their lawn. I thought 'that's kinda interesting the spraying chemicals, and here's this place, supposedly taking care of the environment.' If you look, architectural II at the building, how non environmentally responsive they're building design is, you know, it—the sun has a path that rises in the east and sets in the west, it doesn't hit from the north the same way as it hits from the south, yet the building doesn't reflect that at all. So it's in a building that's not environmentally responsive. I always find that very interesting. But

NO: Yeah, so um, sir. Let's talk about how the university responds to your needs. Personally. Like

DS: To my needs?

NO: Yeah.

DS: Well,

NO: Whether they still do like how you want it?

DS: Did it very well as a as a retired faculty member. One of the jokes I always had was when I came for my interview, the central administration interview was with Ralph Bursik shows you he was Vice President of the university, head of Finance. And here I am a young kid coming and I'm getting my interview, and I have sit down in Ralph Bursik tells me what's good about the university's retirement program for the faculty, you know, I'm thinking, 'who cares? I'm 25 years old, I'm here for two years. My promise my wife, we're here two years, well, who cares? Who else? I care very much today? Yes, indeed, they had a very good retirement program. The university—Well—I've talked a lot about what things I see wrong with the university, I enjoyed the opportunity to work with administrators who are willing to dialogue that I enjoyed. As I said, haven't been there, I've been retired now for seven years. And I've been out of that kind of discussion for probably 15 20 years. So I go my own way. Like, I don't have much of a response to that.

NO: Okay. All right. So let's talk about how—since you started working, like how has like the students, how do I say, how students change over time?

DS: One of the things that, as I mentioned, you that was really an advantage of my graduates program wasn't the educational program from the university, but was the association with good students. How to be a good student together at Harvard get into the Graduate School of Design, they often joke that the most difficult thing about going to Harvard was getting in. Because of our reputation, and we had a very good reputation in architecture, we attracted very good students. And that was, to me, a very important thing. It's interesting that times have changed. When a woman, a young lady wanted to come and talk and pictures, they would direct it to interior design. And so we had an interior design program that was almost totally female and architecture was totally male. We changed that. We struggled and worked hard. And there's still the interior design program is predominantly female, but architectures on basically 50/50. And we brought education together, we did the introductory level, the interior design students and the architects study together. So when I was teaching the first year, introductory design, which was a combined program, we were predominantly female. And that that changed. Quite—a quite a different situation. But I think, again, that's the people or women were directed to go into interior design. I mean, there, there's preconceptions, you don't want to, you know, I was told that, that architecture was and for me, because I'm Jewish, and they said, Jews don't go into architecture. Now, there are some but today, there are a number of well known, but it was, was just not what you do, you know, those kinds of things. It's ridiculous. Do what you interested in and you're capable of. So that's students. I was—the students were very good. Students are inquisitive. Unfortunately, as I used to say to the students, when I taught the introductory level, what got them here is what they have to know, as a designer. What gets you to the university with selective enrollment, is knowing the right answer to a question, you know, SAT, questions. In design, as I said, you don't impose a solution to the problem. You explore the problem. And if your thought is, I mean, this is why we rarely had to get them to change the way of thinking, when you take the SAT, you're going to know which is the right answer. To be a good designer that you get to say, well, under this—under certain circumstances may be A isn't the best answer. But C could be if I just stopped thinking that way, you won't do well on the exam. But if you want to do, I think almost anything, that's how you proceed. Wait a minute. Now those kinds of questions, so then wrong, think about it. So we spend time actually getting the very smart. Our students are smart but getting them to, to benefit from their intelligence to explore other possibilities, rather than merely give me the expected answer, which is what people appreciate. You give me the right answer you do smart. No! The guy, the guy who's arguing, under certain circumstances, the wrong answer could be right. And maybe it would be better if we could do that. And that's the kind of person I appreciate so but I think if you nurture your students, and they wonder the great things about architectural education, we have studios in the studios—well they got they actually want too many students now. In the studio, you had about 15 students, and you one on one with them, and you're doing a design project. So you have a real close interaction with your students. And the students with you. In first day, here, I am an older guy, teaching kids coming in from high school. And I asked them, What do you want to call me? You know, Professor Smith, Mr. Smith, some would say Br. Smith, and I say, No, you call me David. Because I have more experience, but I don't have the answers. We're not here to find the answers. We're here to explore the possibilities. And that's a very important thing. You come to the University to explore possibilities. You

don't come to get answers, that's training. That's brainwashing. So, really work with students and our first year students in a close intimate relationship and we had projects that were intended to do that. We got to be learners together, co-learners with our students. That to me is very important. And I didn't understand that when I started to teach, I remember, President Warren Bennis of the university was a friend. And one day I was talking to him actually, I was building a deck on my house in Clifton, and he stopped buying his way home. And we were chatting, and I told Warren, that I was getting, I was still a young kid, I was, I was getting tense by trying to be correct. And he's the one who said, David, as a professor, you don't have to be correct. You're exploring ideas. And that's how you should approach—and that to me was a very important thing, that I wasn't a—put as a professor to be correct to give the right answers. To give truth. I was there just because we were exploring, and I don't think that's done enough. In our design, that's what we were trying to do. I'm not certain I was able to convey that feeling in my lecture classes, as much as I would have liked to in the design studio, let's explore possibilities. I think I was able to do that.

NO: Alright, and also still on the question of, what are the things that changes—that changed? Want acts, like, what are the things that changed, like in terms of like, diversity between two faculties as my students? How did that change?

DS: Well, there are more women, which is a good thing, the more women the faculty, as well as the students. I come from a somewhat unique background, my mother was a doctor. Most of my mother in fact, my parents, friends were, many of them were professional women. I didn't realize it I've got aunts and—with lawyers and judges. I didn't realize what was going on in, you know, the glass ceiling? No, it just to me, I just it wasn't part of my—the position of a woman. I didn't know what the heck that meant. But I realized and looking at—yes, there was a male dominated society. And we've, we've changed that, I think, and that's for the good. We—minorities. We have very few blacks, we brought in some. And I think it's important. I mean, one of my colleagues would park in Burnet woods, African American, and he would get stopped by the police often walking up to the campus, 'what are you doing here?' 'I teach,' you know. And, and, and to, to be able to understand that and have people open, have open discussions about those kinds of things is I think important. And the students, I think, need that exposure in I think, but I don't think we've, we've done enough. I think our kids today have a much better understanding of things, I hope, I know my kids have grown up in a much more integrated society and have friends of—they have women friends, girl friends who want girl friends and in the notion that I say. They have different interracial experiences, and they're just friends. And I think if we can build upon that, things will be a lot better off. I grew up when that wasn't particularly the situation. And that's, and that's one of the things that bothers me so much about our society today is that many of us have thoughts that are inappropriate. But we know they're inappropriate, in me, because we have different exposures. But times have changed and we shouldn't have those thoughts. But today, because in our society, they're okay to say. No, they're not okay to say there are things do you know, that we need to understand. So I think the university is moving in the right direction. We're not moving fast enough. But you know, it's a very serious issue. Sometimes I joke about it, about women and, and some of my female friends aren't so happy with me. and I say 'no, no, no, you know, I was trying to make a joke.' And I'm told 'you don't

joke about those things.' And they're, right? You don't joke about those things because they're serious and

NO: Okay.

DS: Timekeeper [NO laughs].

NO: So um, so moving forward. Okay, I want to ask the question about—you can all these questions together. Like, how do you see their interaction between like, Cincinnati and its neighborhood? In the sense that since it was once like a municipal University moving into—

DS: Good question. Cincinnati was a municipal. Cincinnati itself was one of the reasons why I'd like to Cincinnati and I've stayed here. It's true about the University of Cincinnati too. Cincinnati is its own city. It wasn't trying to be an eastern city, it wasn't trying to be a Western, it was its own city. It does what it does, and does it well. We were a city school. But one of the—it was really impressed upon me, John, Wenyay came in was one of our direct—school directors during my tenure of architecture, interior design. And he came from England. And when he came, he said something which I thought was very interesting, which was something that I had done too. What is Cincinnati? Let's not be, you know, the Harvard of Ohio, no, or whatever. Let's be what we are. And, again, it's the same approach that I had to design, figure out what the nature of the problem is, and resolve it. So Cincinnati was a municipal school, we were committed to the community, the urban fabric to serve this community. When we became a state we worrying about competing with Ohio State. Who cares? You know, I don't give a damn. Ohio State's Ohio State, we're Cincinnati, let's do what we do. And it's the same thing. We were an undergraduate co-op, professional architecture program, let's do what we do and do it as well as we can. Let's not try to compete with anybody else. In that sense, let's try to do—compete with ourselves be the best we can be. And when you do that, you become very good. You know, when you're trying to compete about something that somebody else tried to be somebody else. I used to tell my students, you know, 'I might think I'm gonna get up, hit the ball of baseball and hit the home run, but if I can't, I won't.' You know, just do what you do as well as you can then if you've got it, you'll succeed. And we for oftentimes, we did succeed Cincinnati had some extraordinary programs. We weren't competing, we work with anybody else, we would just do ourselves. I used to get very frustrated with, with hire somebody. And that's say, 'well.' You could even say, 'well, we're at University of Mississippi.' Wait a minute. You're not ranked? Who What are you? If it's a good idea, but don't have the you know, talk about a good idea and not that they used to do it, and we should do because they do it? Let's do what we do. We have extra—you know, this, the city has become extraordinary. It's getting better. But Cincinnati, this little town has one of the greatest orchestras in the country. And it has all the time. It has great theater. And that was great restaurants we used to have three five-star restaurants. No other city in the world had so many good restaurants that Cincinnati did. Now we have a real new scene the Over the Rhine and it's extraordinary. So go with the things have changed. I think it always does frustrate me that when you do what you do to compete with somebody else, rather than do what you do, because that's what you do. Do as well as you can. So I, I don't like that. You know, the competition with Ohio State is not to me, value. It, it—have good competition, but be as good as you can be. Don't try to be play

someone else's game. And I think that's a good lesson for life, be who you are doing what you can if somebody else does something else, that's fine, that's okay for them. And don't be threatened. You shouldn't be threatened by someone else. It, I mean to me—kind of principle because of a variety of things, but somebody else's opinion doesn't threaten me. Opinion that—because I know what I know because I know it or I want to know whether it's something you don't threaten me. Oftentimes, when someone has a different opinion you think you're threatened because you're not sure of your own position. You know, if someone else believes different than I do, and I feel threatened and, there are some things if someone hates me, threat [Both laugh], but I mean, if someone's position is different than mine, it doesn't threaten my belief. I mean, there are a lot of people who are threatened in terms of religious belief by someone believing else out. Why? that's okay for them. I, I know what I believe in. They don't threaten my belief system. But people don't see it that way. If you believe this different than me, then you threaten my belief. No, not at all. And we don't have to agree on these these issues. So, again, that's back to consensus. It's not that one position has to dominate. I disagree. You can do what you want, I can do what I'm not, let's not fight against you don't threaten me nine believe in something else. And again, in design is the same thing. You want to do this? Okay, fine. Let's find out how you do that. Feel good. You know, see that—if you think about a problem in design, this is life too. If you go in this direction, is one way of going no, you can go in this direction. The real measures, how far out do you go? How far do you take that idea? Now, you might take it out here and then say, 'I was wrong. I should have gone this direction.' But what the—in an academic environment, which is an environment in which you can afford to fail, the academic environment is an environment, you can afford to fail. You take a good idea and you study it. But you should also at the end position, say 'was I right? Maybe I was not right. And just because I got out here doesn't mean I was right, I should have maybe gone in this direction.' So it's again, a way of thinking.

NO: Okay, sir.

DS: My mind.

NO: So what is what do you hope to see in the future of UC? And also, is there anything else you want to talk about?

DS: The future of UC? To me is that you see, should be proud of being its itself. Here in Cincinnati, Southwest Ohio, serving the population that it serves, and serving the population. I don't mean just that, you know, bringing students in serving the population. We can bring students from all over the world. But we do have a responsibility, I think, to our community, because that's where we live. And I wish that we were a little bit more—less, less looking to impress other people. Let's, let's be true to ourselves. And again, that's true, but that's what I would hope a student would have is understanding what he or she wants to do and be true to their selves. That's what I hopefully in reverse. I'm not certain it's going in that direction politically. You know, it's it's—things are different, different running. We are a state institution. We had to become a state institution. I was involved somewhat when we made the transition. Warren Bennis was President then. It was nice being a municipal school. But I think he—the funding may be comes from elsewhere. Now, the interesting thing is the funding from the state, well it used to be

much higher percentage than what we're getting now from the state. And yet we seem to be more dependent on the state in terms of what we do and what we don't do. I, I don't think you I think you're going to be true to your principles, in Cincinnati, Ohio. I've always enjoyed it. It's a great place to live. I've enjoyed Cincinnati as a place to be as a university to teach and it's a place to live. It's been a great, great time. I would never have thought about it. Because I grew up on the east coast. And my wife made me promise two years and I'm very happy with the experience. [NO laughs]

NO: Alright,

DS: Anything else?

NO: No, it's really. Yeah. Is that any one you recommend for an interview and quiet like, just briefly

DS: To recommend for an interview?

NO: Yeah.

DS: Well over my friend Dennis man I always think of but he's done in time. John Hancock, who was a colleague who I think is in town, and he's got a very good sense of things. He's still very active in what he's doing. I have walked away from my university role. Recently, a lot of people who have Bruce Goetzmann, as a colleague of mine, he's in town, he's in Clifton. He was a person you might come talk to. I don't know how Bruce is doing. He's—haven't seen him for a while. It might be that as well. So it's a you're talking about faculty from the

NO: Yeah. Basically.

DS: Jay, Oh well, Jay Chatterjee, who was dean of the college and was a planning faculty. I don't know who you have on the list. You know, Jay? [NO laughs] You're not here. have to give it some thought those those names that come up. It'd be interesting also to talk to people who may be not faculty exact, but some of the Cincinnati people. Like if you could David Mann, who's in city council. He's going to congressman friend Jim Tarbell, who is an interesting character from Cincinnati, who has been the Councilman Bar owner, Ludlow Garage is a very interesting person. Those are friends of mine who Cincinnati-based. There's another one that just comes to mind and I don't know if you but Yula Bingham. Eula Bingham was from Provost from the medical center. And I don't know where she was a brilliant woman, faculty person if she's very interesting to get her input.

NO: Thank you. Sir,

DS: My pleasure. I enjoyed reminiscing Thank you and you can make sense out of what I've said.

NO: [Unintelligible]