



Emery Castle Oral History Interviews, October 15, 2014

Title

“Shaping the Direction of a Field and a University”

Date

October 15, 2014

Location

Castle residence, Corvallis, Oregon.

Summary

At the beginning of interview 2, Castle briefly notes his first professional job at the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City. The remainder of the session is devoted to Castle's association with Oregon State. He recounts his arrival in Corvallis, the duties of his initial position, and the research that he pursued, including his authorship of a successful textbook, *Farm Business Management: The Decision-Making Process*. He also reflects on the culture of agriculture in Oregon, his memories of August Strand, his involvement in the creation of a graduate program in Agricultural Economics, and the broader evolution of this field of study.

Castle likewise discusses his work with Extension and Experiment Stations, important faculty colleagues, his participation in the Faculty Senate, his first administrative posts, his interactions with Jim Jensen, and his work with the Water Resources Institute at OSU. The interview concludes with a detailed discussion of Castle's experience of co-chairing the Commission on University Goals and the recommendations that were issued by the commission.

Interviewee

Emery Castle

Interviewer

Chris Petersen

Website

<http://scarc.library.oregonstate.edu/oh150/castle/>

Transcript

Chris Petersen: Okay, today is October 15th, 2014, and this is our second interview with Emery Castle, and we're here in his home in Corvallis. So we finished up yesterday with you having completed your PhD thesis, and you were ready to go out into the working world. Do you want to tell me what happened next?

Emery Castle: I went back to Kansas State as assistant professor, and taught there for a year. That was a good year. I finished up my dissertation during that year, in absentia. That's not very common today, but at that time, people frequently did their theses in absentia, and it worked out well for me, to get that completed. And then one of the professors at Kansas State, Ray Doll by name, went to the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City to get up a small section of agricultural economics within the bank, and he prevailed upon me to go with him. I followed him there. Actually, he went there, and then I followed. So we lived in Kansas City for two years, before coming to Oregon State.

CP: What were your duties at the Federal Reserve Bank?

EC: I was titled Agricultural Economist, and I wrote short articles for the bankers of the area, economics in the 10th Federal Reserve District, which included part of Oklahoma, some of Colorado, Nebraska and Kansas. And we wrote articles for the banking community, and indeed, for almost anybody that really showed an interest in the agriculture of that district. And then we gave—made frequent presentations, speeches and explanations, and so forth. We did quite a lot just on economic conditions, and talking about not only economic conditions at that point in time, but some of the possibilities that might develop over time.

But I missed teaching, and began to look for another job after two years there. And at that time, there were three universities that I applied to; one was Oregon State, one was Texas A&M, one was Ohio State. And I went to both Texas and Oregon State and interviewed. They both offered me a job at exactly the same salary. [Laughs] And so I deliberated for a long time over that, and my wife finally cast the deciding vote. She said she'd rather live in Oregon than Texas. So we came to Oregon.

CP: What do you remember about sort of your initial impressions of the university? So it was Oregon State College then—the college, and of Corvallis?

EC: Well, it was interesting to me. Actually, I came here—I came here permanently in 1954, but in 1953, the summer, just a year in advance, I knew I was going to be on the market, and I came to Corvallis because the American Agricultural Economics Association was holding an annual meeting here, and so I thought that would be a good chance to evaluate the place. I knew the department head a little bit, Burton Wood, G. Burton Wood, and he seemed to be quite interested in having me come. But I did know him, and I knew one other faculty member here.

My greatest concern—and it turned out to be a valid concern, and one that I worked on all of my entire remainder of my career, remainder of my life—was the fact that the College of Liberal Arts at Oregon State University was under the allocation system, and they were positioned over in the College of Liberal Arts. I had nothing—I had no concern about being in Liberal Arts, but Liberal Arts would not permit graduate work, and we needed a graduate faculty in Economics, and that was my concern, and it was a valid concern, and one that has persisted to this very day. [0:05:00]

CP: How about the town? What did you think of Corvallis when you arrived?

EC: Both of us, both my wife and I, had grown up in small towns and rural areas. That didn't bother us, because we knew we could get to Portland if we needed to.

CP: Yeah.

EC: It didn't bother us.

CP: You were in the Northwest, though, and it was a change from the Midwest.

EC: Indeed, it was, and that was wonderful. We tried every weekend, for a long time, to go someplace in Oregon, because there was always something new and different to see that we were just fascinated by.

CP: Uh-huh. Well, what was the state of the department when you arrived?

EC: Well, [pause] not a highly sophisticated group of economists, but very professional in their orientation, and I felt nothing but support. I came in with a bag of new techniques, and some new things I wanted to offer in the courses, and my research was a little bit more sophisticated and a little different than what was customary in the department. But while there was only one other person I wanted to work with me, directly with me, the entire department was supportive. And the department head was very supportive.

CP: And what were your duties in your initial position?

EC: I was given courses in Farm Management to teach. I taught those with Manning Becker, who was in the department. I was given responsibility for developing the new area in what they called "Water Resources." Actually, it was resource economics and environmental economics, the way I labeled it, and the way I approached it. But at that time, what they gave me was just water—just take a look at the water resources of Oregon and the Northwest, and so on and so forth. And I greatly enjoyed developing that new area. I did write a book in farm management, and Manning Becker co-authored part of it. That book sold over 100,000 copies and was translated into six languages, and it's still on the market, and I still get a few bucks royalty every year. [Laughs]

CP: Yeah, this book, *Farm Business Management: The Decision-Making Process*, a textbook, clearly filled a niche in the market that had been wanting anyway before you wrote it, right?

EC: Yeah.

CP: Can you tell me a little bit more about the process of writing that book?

EC: Well, first of all, the university just established, just about the time I came, a position in Extension Farm Management, and Manning Becker filled that position. And he conducted some short courses around over the state, and invited me to come and help him, and I attended almost all of those short courses, and made presentations. And one of the things that came out of it was, I just realized when I was talking to those farmers, and teaching them, with Manning, I realized that most of the farm management books that existed were not organized the way farmers think, and the way they go about decisions. So I tried to write a book that was consistent with the way I felt they were thinking, and the way they were analyzing problems. I think that had something to do with how successful it has been, particularly when it was taken abroad.

CP: Which languages has it been translated into?

EC: Oh, can I think of them all? Of course, Spanish. It was in Spanish; that was early on. There was a Japanese professor that called and asked if he could come and discuss our book, and I said, "Sure." And he came into the office. He said, "Are there any mistakes?" And I said, "Yes, there are two mistakes." "Could you tell me what they are?" And I told him what they were. He said, "Thank you," and left [0:10:00], and he went home and he printed it, and we never got any royalties on that, at all. [Laughs] So there was Spanish, Japanese, Russian. Mm, Portuguese. Undoubtedly French, but I'm not absolutely certain of that. So I think that's it.

CP: That's interesting it was translated into Russian. This was the height of the Cold War.

EC: Yeah, that was surprising, actually, but I mentioned Earl Heady, my major professor at Iowa State—he did quite a lot of lecturing behind the Iron Curtain. The people—they had a lot of trouble with agriculture. Lots of trouble there, which really didn't make it work very well. It was largely due to their system. And the book was not written for their system, but it was in—and I don't know at what point that book was translated. It was translated at some point along the line, but it may have been that was after that economy began to get into trouble, and they were thinking of decentralization. It may have been at that point, but I'm not certain of that.

CP: At what point did you realize that the book was going to be a success?

EC: [Laughs] I'm not sure. I was always amazed every time I would get the royalty check and see the number that it sold. I was always surprised. I thought, "Well, next year, it'll slow—well, and things generally slow," but it just kept going up.

And I was absolutely amazed when I came back here from ten years on the east coast, and Robert MacVicar, who's just retired as President of Oregon State—and he went to someplace behind what would have been the Iron Curtain; the Iron Curtain was no longer in existence. But he took that book with him, I know, and got it adopted over there.

CP: Well, what were some of your early research interests once you arrived at OSC?

EC: Well, there was a committee, a regional committee, in the west, and there were some very good economists on that committee, and so I went in with that group. And after working with them for about a year, I came back and designed a research program, and it was clear that outdoor recreation—mainly outdoor recreation, but there were water uses that were not valued in the marketplace; the market economy didn't seem to have much impact. There were no markets. And so I went to work to try to design research procedures that would let us value water in a way that we could make comparisons with those resources uses that were valued in the marketplace.

At that time, benefit/cost analysis was just being developed, just coming into existence. And it was clear, if that was going to get applied, that we had to have some way of bridging market and non-market values. And so the early work that I did was to design some procedures, techniques, that could be used to place economic value on these non-valued natural resources. Probably the most well known piece of research that we did was to place a value on the Salmon Steelhead Sport Fishery, and that became a fairly well known, cited—highly cited piece of research. [0:15:00]

CP: You also did some work in eastern Oregon—the hay production and animal grazing?

EC: Oh. [Laughs] Yes. There was a graduate student here from New Zealand— from New Zealand. There was a question that was raised in the farming community about the value, or how much fertilizer should you put on a flooded mountain meadow. We had fertilizer recommendations for most things, most crops, but we didn't have anything for that. And this intrigued this person from New Zealand. He wanted to work on it. And so we helped him use linear programming, which I think was the first time it was used in Oregon. It had been used elsewhere, but we used it in Oregon to try to estimate a value for the mountain meadows. And in order to get at that, we had to program the entire ranch; in order to get use from that, certain values that were necessary in order to solve this problem.

And in the process of doing that, what fell out of it was a value that we could place on an animal in a month of grazing on public lands. The federal government had these public lands, and they let the ranchers rent it, or use it, and they charged them for that. But there was no market, and so it was just established. And so we were able to estimate what the economic value of a month of grazing on public lands was worth. Nobody else had ever done this, and it created quite a furor when it came out. But within a year, everybody was using it. And then we developed a—we didn't develop it; we applied a technique of input/output analysis on the grazing, and the Bureau of Land Management got a hold of that, the master's thesis that was written.

So we did that for the first time. Well, we provided them with a copy of the thesis. The only time I've ever seen it—went out into BLM, was passed from office to office, and when it came back, we unwrapped it in the department. It just fell apart. I had never seen a piece of research, economic research, worn out. That was literally worn out! It just fell apart [laughs] when I unwrapped it, and there's no way you could do anything with it. But those were the kinds of things that we did. It was fascinating, that first five or six years I was here, because I was discovering things I'd never seen before in my life. I just didn't know about that. But then to take those things and be able to analyze them within my framework was exciting. And everybody was excited about my doing it—the people in the department, and the people around Oregon State, and so on and so forth.

CP: Did you notice any appreciable differences in sort of the culture of agriculture in Oregon, versus what you'd known in the Midwest?

EC: Oh, [pause] that's a good question, a very good question, and it's a difficult one to answer. Did you see a revolutionary change in the agriculture of the Northwest? No, you did not. But you could see evidence that it was changing, because it was going through a process of change. And over time, it has changed. But we couldn't—it wouldn't be like coming out with a new variety of wheat, and having all the farmers adopt it. [0:20:00] Nothing like that happened in economics. The one thing that I did, that resulted in a lawsuit—did you know about this?

CP: I don't think so. [Laughs]

EC: First study that I did at Oregon State University resulted in a lawsuit to prevent publication. Do you know the Fort Rock area?

CP: Yeah, in central Oregon.

EC: Mm-hm. There was a person from California, a promoter, who got a lease on a lot of that land, the Fort Rock area, and he was trying to promote irrigation in the Fort Rock area when I came. And I said to my department head when he came, I said I really didn't want to take on a massive piece of research to start with. I wanted some smaller things that I could work on, to become familiar with the conditions, and then I would perhaps broaden the base. And this Fort Rock problem was sort of festering when I arrived, and so they said to me, "Well, here's something that's not so big, and you might like to do this as a way of becoming familiar with Oregon conditions." So I agreed. The Soil Conservation Service had a senior economist named Carroll Greyer, and he wasn't very sophisticated, but he knew the local conditions quite well. And so he and I took that on.

And we just very quickly discovered that the problem there was not ground water; the problem there was not the soil. The problem was a short growing season. And we put out a little pamphlet. It really wasn't very profound. It wasn't very sophisticated. But the experimental station editor, Bob Mason—did you know Bob Mason at all? He just passed away recently. But anyway, he saw this when I sent it over to the experimental station for publication, as a kind of a circular—not a highly sophisticated piece. But he saw it, and he was intrigued by it, and so he wrote something up just on the basis of that, before it was ever published. But he wrote something up and put it in *Oregon's Agricultural Progress*, which was a periodical. And when the promoter saw that, he came to me directly and wanted to see my data. And I said no. I said, "There's a publication forthcoming, and it'll be in there, but I wouldn't piecemeal it."

And the next thing he did, he brought a lawsuit to prevent publication. And it got thrown out of a court over in Lake County, eastern Oregon, and, I was told, filed here in Benton County. But this promoter had a pretty good lawyer, who said, "We're not going to file anything in Benton County," and so he went to Lane County. It was in Lake County first, over the eastern mountain in Lake County. We had an assistant attorney general defend us, and he went down, when it was heard down in Eugene, and came back through here, and he said—well, he said, "It was thrown out of court again," and he said that ended that. He said, "I was kind of disappointed," because, he said, "I wanted to argue that before the Oregon Supreme Court. It was such an interesting case." I told him I really wasn't interested in legal precedents. [Laughs]

I was glad to get it over with. But it was on the front page of *The Oregonian*, and I knew they were going to write an editorial in *The Oregonian*, and every morning I'd go out and pick up *The Oregonian* and turn to the editorial page. And one morning I opened it up, and I read the first sentence, and it was, "An agricultural experimental station is not a booster club." [Laughs] And well, it didn't last long. [0:25:01] I mean, it was over with. But I was worried about it, not because I—I thought I might lose my job, because I knew economists, and it sometimes happened to economists. And I wasn't concerned about getting work. I knew I could—I thought I could get employment. But I didn't want to leave Oregon. I just didn't want to move my family. [Laughs] And I didn't have to.

But I got to know Earl Price really well. He was Dean of Agriculture. And I think I became kind of his protégé as a result of that, because he called me over, and he—Burt was with me—to his office, and he said—well, he said, "We've got this lawsuit we've got to deal with." And he said, "President Strand has something else that he's going to handle, so he's given this to me, and so we'll just have to get acquainted." And I loved working with him. I mean, he was wonderful! And a lot of what I think I learned about administration, I learned from him. He was a remarkable administrator.

CP: Did you get to know August Strand at all?

EC: Who?

CP: August Strand. President Strand. Did you get to know him?

EC: Oh, I did. Yes, yes. I'm sorry. But not on this. And this was Earl Price's deal. But yes, I did get to know President Strand fairly well, fairly well. But it was his successor, Jim Jensen, that brought me over as Dean of Faculty. So I would say that Jensen and Earl Price were the two administrators that I learned the most from.

CP: What was Strand like?

EC: Strand was a—he was a courageous person. He seemed to be willing to make decisions. They used to tell the story that he was the only Democrat on the State Board of Higher Education, and I think he sort of saw himself as a kind of a maverick. I didn't think he was very—I just didn't think he was very progressive. I couldn't look around and see a lot of things that he had done. Nothing compared to Jensen.

CP: Somebody else we've interviewed for this project, I'm wondering if you knew him or know him—Andy Landforce?

EC: Not well, but I knew him, certainly.

CP: Yeah, I think most people do. [Laughs] He's connected to a lot of folks. So at some point, you were asked to start developing a graduate program. Is that correct?

EC: Yes. Yes, that was pretty much part of the deal when I arrived. I wasn't aware that they were expecting quite that much. Burt Wood, as an administrator, he liked to put people—and give them some responsibility, then create the right conditions, and then see what happened. And I did not realize, when I came, that they were expecting to develop a PhD program in Economics. I knew they could offer the degree in Ag Economics, but I didn't know that there was going to be a move to create a major graduate program. And first thing I knew, I was Chairman of the Graduate Committee of the department, and they did want a Ph.D. program. I was troubled by that, very troubled by that, largely because of the weakness of the economics program. I thought to have a PhD program, we needed some good economists, and we didn't have that there, and so I was disturbed by that.

CP: And how did the program unfold from there? [0:30:00]

EC: Well, I did work with the Economics Department, and we got a couple people in Economics that primarily we used to teach at the graduate level. We brought in two people into the Ag Econ Department, and that beefed up the program a good bit. I went off to a summer school at North Carolina State, and acquired knowledge of some newer techniques. We were having a summer session down there, and it included both economists and non-economists. So I went down, and I learned what I could in that period of time, and we made use of a lot of temporary people who we just brought in for short periods of time.

And then this student from New Zealand that had done this imaginative work on flooded mountain meadows won a PhD Dissertation Award for that, and that attracted a lot of attention. Remember that resource economics and environmental economics was in its infancy at that time. There probably was not more than fifteen people—fifteen, twenty people nationally, that could be called resource economists. But that was all over the United States. And I think that—this was around 1950 that we started—I came here in 1954—Resources for the Future, which was a national organization on resources. It didn't come into existence until 1952. That was the year I got my PhD. That gives you a feel for the infancy of the program.

And so by 1970, which was Earth Day, there was substantial literature—I mean, a good basic foundation. One other thing that happened—Harvard University had a PhD student named Noah Epstein, who wrote a book on resource economics and water resources. And the RFF people, they pulled together really a first-rate crew of economists, most of whom had never done anything on resources, but were willing to give it a shot. And they started churning out really good stuff, and the financing was no problem. Ford Foundation financed them, and they never had to look for money, or anything. They just had it. And that went along.

But as I say, by the time of Earth Day in 1970—by that time, there was a great awareness. There was a substantial literature in existence that could be used, and that made all the difference in the world.

CP: It must have been exciting to have been part of such a small community in sort of the birth of this discipline. You feel like it could—

EC: It was. And we knew one another. I mean, I don't quite know how we did this, but I knew economists, their work; I read their work, and so on and so forth, and I felt comfortable just picking up the phone and calling them. Maybe I'd never met them, but I felt that we had something in common. And they knew me. I mean, they knew me. I was surprised

at that. I could call somebody and give them my name, and, "Oh, yeah." And so we were a real community of scholars, scattered all over the place. But then it was transformed so rapidly. But Oregon State—do you know Rich Adams? Oh, he's just retired from OSU—very good resource economist [0:35:00], and graduated from Davis, University of California, and spent his career, most of his career, here. Developed a very good reputation.

But he was telling—he and Junjie [Wu] will come here once a month or so, and the three of us talk. But Adams said that he was—had a meeting some years ago in the east, and he was talking to a fairly wealthy industrialist. And this industrialist was interested in seeing resource economics done, and so Adams said, "Well, this is what they're doing at Oregon State." He said, "Well, this is not Ivy League,"—and this person straightened up in his chair, and he said, "In resource economics, Oregon State is Ivy League," he said. And this a great thing, somebody saying this, because I never thought of it as Ivy League. But he said, "In resource economics, it's Ivy League."

So that's just background by the way of saying that when I came out here, I wasn't disturbed by being pretty much by myself, but I was by myself. But in a few years, that was all—I mean, that was all over with.

CP: Hm. What was the situation with Extension and the Experiment Stations at that time? How well developed were they? And it sounds like you worked with them quite a lot.

EC: Well, yeah, I did. I always wanted to. I mean, I liked to teach, and I liked to get out and work with people who were on the ground and facing problems, and I worked through extension, and Manning—Manning Becker was one of the principal people that I worked with. He was a very charismatic individual. And the farmers loved him, because he was colorful and quite articulate, and he didn't seem to ever be concerned about my talking theory to farmers. He was perfectly willing to have me do that. And most of the farmers—maybe they couldn't understand, but it was realistic enough that they were willing to sit through it.

CP: [Laughs]

EC: Manning did something that I think was very, very fundamental. When he would go to eastern Oregon, he would use Willamette Valley examples. When we came to Willamette Valley, he used eastern Oregon examples. And that permitted him to talk about principle, and not get bogged down in squabbles about the real estate, whether his examples were realistic or not. And I can just see him, to this day, standing up at the blackboard, and a farmer objecting, "That's not realistic." And he'd say, "But we're talking the Willamette Valley. Now don't forget that." And he'd take the argument away from him.

CP: What was social life like for you, once you got settled in Corvallis—social life and family life, on campus and off?

EC: Well, my daughter was just starting school. She was in the first grade here in Corvallis, and so we had peers to our family, and we felt right at home. Our lifestyle and everything was consistent with what other people were doing here in Corvallis. [0:40:00] And it was never an issue.

CP: Who were some of your friends from the faculty, people who were important to you, important colleagues?

EC: I had a whole lot of friends at the—well, one of the things I decided early on Oregon State was—at that time, was the great strength at Oregon State was in the biological sciences. And so I tried to get to know some people in those fields—fishes and wildlife. So Chuck Warrens, who was a good friend, and he did a lot for the—he helped me with the salmon steelhead sport fishery and water quality—that set of issues. Then I got to knowing people in both soils and animal science. And I did some cooperative research with Ralph Bogart in animal science. And he was probably the best geneticist on campus at that time.

So that was no problem in the biological sciences, but if I had to do very much outside of the biological sciences, a lot of that I did off-campus, got off-campus help. We were very fortunate in Economics. The Statistics Department was just getting started, and Lyle Calvin came as the first Chair of the Statistics Department. And he was glad to see that I had an Ag Econ program coming along, because we were very interested in statistics. Most of our graduate students minored in statistics, and they were able, then, to teach fairly advanced statistical stuff in that department, because they had an audience that they could teach, offer to. And we became very good friends, Lyle and I, and I was chairing the work in

Economics, and he chairing the department, of Statistics, and we kept adding people. So that was kind of exciting to do that.

CP: Nineteen-sixty-one was an important year for the institution. Oregon State College became Oregon State University. What do you remember about that transition?

EC: Well, that was going on across the country. Land Grants in particular was doing that. I was aware of it. I wasn't terribly excited about it. I mean, it didn't make any difference to me. Some of the people at Agriculture were very excited about it. I wasn't. I mean, it just didn't seem that important to me. It was just a name. On looking back, I think now, actually, that it was far more significant than I thought it was at the time.

CP: Yeah. You were a member of the Faculty Senate around this time, too, were you not? Vice-chair, at one point?

EC: Yeah.

CP: What was that like? Was there any stand out memories from that?

EC: Well, that was pretty exciting. A liberal arts person, George Carson, ran against me, and I was elected, and it was a fairly controversial year. There were some new programs that were handed down to us from the legislature, but the main thing that happened to me was of a personal nature. Jim Jensen got to know me, and the following year, he wanted to—he wanted me to become dean of the faculty. [Laughs] And I was about as unprepared to consider something like that as anyone could be. I was interviewing at Washington State for department head, and he just called me to his house one night [0:45:00], and just offered me the job as dean of the faculty. Whoa! What was this all about? [Laughs] I wasn't prepared for this.

CP: So it was a preemptive strike by him, to keep you from leaving?

EC: Yeah. Well, and he was in a jam. He did need somebody in that job in a hurry, because he had created the position himself when he came here. We didn't have a provost, we didn't have an academic vice-president. He and Popovich were the only campus-wide administrators there were. And so he did need somebody to handle the academic side. And so he promoted the dean of liberal arts, who was a sociologist that had come here from Stanford, to actually head up a large—but he appointed him to be dean of the faculty. And he was just, psychologically, completely unprepared to do this. It just bowled him over. And he served a year and then resigned, and Jensen was in a—needed somebody.

And he had worked with me for a year, and he had some degree of confidence that I could do this, and so he brought me over. These things—you look at them in retrospect, and I did something that was probably pretty good, and I didn't think at the time it was all that great. But a week after I became dean of the faculty, there was a committee on campus, one of the curriculum committees, that wanted me to come over and tell what the job of dean of faculty was. And so I thought about it overnight, and then I had my notes, and I went over, and I told them who I was, and I had three things. I don't know if I can remember them now or not, but one was governance, and one was faculty affairs, and I've forgotten what the other one was. Anyway, I had a pretty well thought-through piece that delivered to this committee, and Jensen and Popovich got a hold of the notes that I had, and you would have thought I had written a best-selling book something. They both just thought that was great. They said, "That's what that job should be, and we've never had it written up properly," and they were just ecstatic over the thing.

I was kind of bored to tears about it. I was depressed, because I was leaving economics and I was doing something I wasn't sure that I liked, and I just rang a bell right off the bat. It didn't seem like it was that great to me. If you looked at the university, you could see what Jensen and see what Popovich was doing, and then you saw what was left that was important, and that's what I wrote up. And that's what I presented. And [laughs] it just worked. So I almost just could do anything I wanted to do the rest of that year. Jensen supported me every time I turned around. I did some crazy things, too.

CP: Really?

EC: I did one crazy thing, really crazy thing. I appointed the head of the Music Department, without asking anybody. I appointed him in this motel room here in Corvallis, about midnight one night, and I told Jensen the next morning I had a new chair of the Music Department. And he said, "That's fine." [Laughs] But, oh, I got away with a lot of stuff that first

year that I'm sure I could not have kind of continued, because I just cut too many corners, and didn't pay as much attention to protocol as I should have. But I got away with it.

CP: Tell me about Jensen as a person and as an administrator. [0:50:02]

EC: I just had great respect for him, great respect. I still do. He wanted to modernize Oregon State, but he was a cautious person. I did more sort of rebellious things than he did, and I couldn't have done it without him. I mean, he bailed me out and supported me, and made sure that I didn't make a complete fool of myself. But he was much better informed. He had spent time at Iowa State; he'd spent time in Washington, DC. He was well known academically, and he was a very good scientist. And I think there were more fundamental change that was done under his leadership than any president we've had except Edward, until Edward. But Jensen was—he was courageous, and smart, tough, but was careful. I still to this day have great respect for him. And after a year as dean of the faculty, I told him I wanted to go back to the department, being department head, and he said, "I'm not going to stand in your way any longer." And he sent me back.

CP: Well, this was in 1966, so you had been at OSU for about twelve years at this point, and you became head of the Department of Agricultural Economics in 1966. How had the department changed in those twelve years? It sounds like it certainly had grown.

EC: It had grown, largely because of the research program and the graduate students we had. We had started with essentially—I think there were five graduate students that they had. They were pretty good. They were good graduate students, and we won a thesis award with one of them, but there were only just a handful. And that way, we were able to get quite a lot of research money, and this was a field that all of a sudden captured the imagination of young people. And we had people coming to us from all over the world, and Oregon State was the place to go to study resource and environmental economics. So in those twelve years, we went from, I think, five graduate students, pretty good graduate students, to probably three times that number, easily. And we had a national reputation by that time. We were just altogether different.

And I was chairman of the graduate committee during that entire period, and then Burt Wood decided that he wanted a different chair, and he moved me over to be chair of the company [?] research committee. And so I looked around the country, and tried to broaden my view a little bit. And what happened, though, was that resource economics just carried us from that point on. I mean, we tried to piggyback, we tried to broaden the base a little bit, and tried to bring in some people that might be interested in some different things, but it's been—to this day, it's been resource economics and environment that's carried the department, and that's where the strength remains. And I lost my leadership role in the profession, as a technical person, because by that time there were powerful young people coming from all over the world that were studying it [0:55:01], and they eclipsed anything I could do in the research side.

CP: What was your agenda as department head? I mean, what did you hope to do once you took leadership of the department? Did you have a particular vision?

EC: Well, I tried to recruit really good young people, in a variety of fields. Marketing, I felt, was neglected, and had been neglected, and really should get more attention. I've always been interested in rural economics, and we didn't have much power there, and never did have until more recently. We were always considered pretty good technically, within economic theory and quantitative methods. That is, our theory was focused on some concrete problems in agricultural economics. We didn't have the support over in the Economics Department that we would like to have had. But that department settled down, and really tried to support us. We had people like Bill Wilkins and Charlie Vars and some people like that—that they were not great stars in their own right, but they knew what we were trying to do, and they were good. I mean, they read their literature carefully and worked hard, and we had a good graduate program. We really did.

I hired Gary Seevers. You may not know who Gary Seevers was, but he got a lot of attention for us. I hired him out of Michigan State, and every Ag Econ Department in the country was trying to hire him right out of graduate school, because he was a little older than most graduate students, and he wrote a thesis that was—it attracted a lot of attention. And we had him here three years. And the chairman of the President's Council of Economic Advisors called me out of the dental chair one morning, and said that they wanted to get Gary to come back and work with the President's Council of Economic Advisors for a year. And he said that he hoped that I would understand. I said, "Well, he's only been here

three years." I said, "Who am I to stand in the way of a young economist to go to the President's Council of Economic Advisors?" I said, "Of course, we'll do everything we can to help."

And he went back, spent a year, and then he called me and he said, "They'd like to have me be chair of the staff for an additional year." He said, "And I know all of the issues." And he said, "They seem to like me." And so I said, "Okay." And then he said—after that year, he said that they still wanted him. And I said, "Gary, the time has come." I said, "You either got to come back, or you resign. One of the two." But I said, "We can't do this anymore." So he resigned his position here. He's the only person who'd ever advanced from the staff position with the President's Council of Economic Advisors, and then became one of the three economists that was the council. The only person, and the youngest person. And that didn't hurt our reputation one bit. We only had him for a short time, and not time enough for him to do anything.

He then became a member of the council. He stayed with them for three or four years, and he and I commuted together when I moved back to Washington DC. We were in the same neighborhood. [1:00:00] We commuted into work together. He then became the first head of the Commodity Credit—I don't have the quite right—when they set up the Commodity Credit controlling body, they made him the first chair of that. And then, when he was there for like ten years, Goldman Sachs picked him up, and had him develop the commodity program for Goldman Sachs. And he and I are still friends, but he's the richest friend I have. He retired as a partner in Goldman Sachs. And so that's—but that got us some attention.

CP: Yeah. What was it like for you? When you move into administration, there's compromises you have to make. You can't teach as much; you can't do as much research. Obviously, that was something you understood, because you'd been dean of faculty for a year, but how did you account for that compromise in your own life?

EC: I think that an important administrative job—if it is really an important one, there's great intellectual challenge in doing it right. The saddest I ever felt for an administrator was the provost at the University of Illinois. I went back there to interview for their department headship one time, and I didn't take the job. It was offered to me, but I didn't take it. But I felt so sorry for him. This was when student unrest was pretty high, and he interviewed me as a part of my going back there. He really didn't ask me any questions, find out about myself. He told me how—he said, "I've not done anything for a long time that's any real intellectual challenge." He was the head of the Chemistry Department at Illinois before he became the provost, and he said, "I really haven't done anything, and don't do anything, that's really intellectually challenging." And I thought how sad, that a chemist, famous chemist, would let himself get boxed into something like that. And I would not do that. I wouldn't do that kind of administration.

But dean of faculty, president of RFF, department head, building a department—those were intellectual challenges for me. There's a lot more to it than just intellect, but I mean, if you didn't have the concepts—where you wanted to go, what you wanted to do, and some notion of how to go about that, you shouldn't be doing that. And I see a lot of administrators on campuses that shouldn't be doing what they're doing. You have to have an intellectual challenge to drive you. That's what gets you out of bed in the morning. And that's all I can say about it.

CP: Well, around the same time that you became head of the department, you also became head of the Water Resources Institute at OSU. How did that come about?

EC: Well, we set up that institute; I was one of the people that helped set it up. There were four of us that did it, one from engineering, one from fishes and wildlife, and one from forestry, and myself. We were the ones that created that in the first place. And we just didn't—we always had trouble getting a person to head it up that really had a notion of what it might do, and what it might become. And I took it, because we couldn't get anybody else to do it. And then I got someone that was my leg person [1:05:02], that did all of the day-to-day Mickey Mouse stuff. And I was [unclear].

CP: And what was the mission of the institute?

EC: Well, it was really to see if you could get a water resources program in the university that was university-wide—try to do that, and focus on some problems. And we went to the University of Oregon and involved the Law School, because water law is a major problem a major issue. And we were concerned mainly with contemporary problems of water resources in Oregon. And it was because of that that I was appointed to the state Water Resources Board.

CP: And what were some of the achievements of the Water Resources Institute?

EC: Stimulating research in any field, and we had some treatises on water law that came out of the University of Oregon. The sanitary engineering program under Fred Burgess was one of the major things that we stimulated, and we got some money for that from the Department of Interior. Fish and Wildlife—I don't know that we did very much for them. They had their own program. But they worked with us in Economics, and Sanitary Engineering. But those were the kinds of things we did, sort of campus wide, and, indeed, we went to the University of Oregon. Chapin Clark was dean at that time, and a lawyer himself, and he was very anxious to do some work in that area, and we could get a lot of work for our money with law schools, where they work cheap.

CP: [Laughs] Well, I'm interested in the connections that you've had with the state on kind of a policy level—the work that you did in eastern Oregon, the work that you did with the Salmon Steelhead Sport Fishery, and you mentioned you were on the Water Resources Board, the state board. Tell me a little bit about kind of your intersection between your academic work and public policy, and how that's—the state part, anyway.

EC: Well, yeah, that's a good question. The higher you go out there in state government, federal government—the higher you go, the more difficult it is to have a well-integrated, concise, rigorous, really developed program, because things are changing so rapidly, and about the time you get one thing going, and have one or two good people working on it, they come up with something else, and the politics change, and you're in a different whole ballgame. I started out on the board. And then later on became—the administration changed.

And when I became chair of the board, they reorganized at the state level, made me chair of the board. And that was just—that was not very satisfactory. I mean, I wouldn't claim anything very significant there, because I don't think anything very significant happened. I got to know Bob Straub quite well [1:10:00], and there were some politics involved, and I played a role in his politics, but I don't think there was anything very academic about them.

CP: So things just bogged down in Salem?

EC: Yeah. The farmers were fighting, the fish were—those factions, and there were politics at the state level, and if you were chairman of the board, you were involved in that. And I just don't feel that—that I did anything very significant in those roles. You don't have a staff to work with. I mean, you have your staffers over there, but you can't put together something for yourself here at the university. Your people are teaching classes, and they're—need to publish themselves, and it's just very hard to do very much. So I don't want to claim anything very significant there.

When I came back from my ten years at Washington Resources for the Future, I then went onto the Environmental Quality Commission, and worked—let's see, it was eight years in that role. There, I didn't do anything terribly important, but we had a lot of controversial issues that came up, and I had to inform myself about those issues. And that was sort of stimulating. But that was not—I don't know that I stimulated it to research. I don't know that I stimulated anything very original in that, except to inform myself.

CP: Well, an important moment in sort of the modern history of OSU, and your story, came about in 1969, with the Commission on University Goals, something I'm very interested in learning more about. So there's a few—

EC: Well, I can talk about—that was absolutely one of the most stimulating things that I've ever been a part of! Absolutely! That was great. To understand that, you have to understand Jim Jensen, and you have to understand what was going on on that university. But as Jim Jensen decided to resign and leave, I had—science, dean of science, Jack Ward, who thought that he—he said, "This is a cow college. This is not a university. This is a cow college." And he was not the least bit interested in doing anything that would help agriculture, forestry, some of the more applied areas. He just thought that was bad stuff. And he wanted those—he wanted that budget. You don't think very much of that until the deans over there in those places, they begin to—don't want anything to do with Jack Ward. I mean, that was a big problem there.

And here you have a Department of Oceanography that's bringing in huge sums of money, but they're a department. And the College of Science wants them, and they're—because they've got big chunks of money. But he wants to make it purely scientific. He doesn't want to do a lot of applied stuff, and that. So you've got all these forces pulling. Here I'm going to resign, and they're not organized, and not set up to conduct a search yet for my successor. What do I do? I know a little bit about his thought process, because after he did this, he talked to me about it one on one, and so I understand, or did

understand, what he was trying to do. [1:15:00] But he didn't want the place to fly apart while he was away—I mean, while his presidency was vacant.

And so he got the idea that he would appoint three people, on a half-time basis for eighteen months, and let them study the entire university. And by the time they got around to picking a new president, you could hand them something, and say, "This is where some people think you ought to go." But quite apart from that, it put a lid on of this—not all of this, but a great deal of this unrest that existed on campus when people wanted to do things. But in addition, that goals commission said the time has come for Oceanography to become a college in its own right. And so some things did happen during those eighteen months, but a lot of things didn't happen. And Jim Jensen said—when this was announced, Jack Ward, the Dean of Science, came over, and said, "If you're going to have a goals commission, who's going to be on this goals commission?" And he told him, and he said, "Jim, you can't appoint a commission in this university without somebody from Science being a member of that group." And Jensen said, "I've told him, Jack, I have just done it." [Laughs] But anyway, that was the background of it.

Now, we did not have—we were not told anything that we should do. What they said had some vague statements, about, "We should determine the goals for the university," or something like that. I mean, it was just a very general, broad kind of thing. So the three of us decided what we were going to do, and we didn't ask permission. By that time, Jim Jensen was gone, Roy Young was acting president, and we decided what we were going to do, and then we did it.

CP: So who were the three people on the commission, and what was your process?

EC: Warren, and Jim, in Engineering.

CP: Is it Knudsen?

EC: Hm?

CP: Knudsen?

EC: Yeah. Jim Knudsen. The three of us. And we got together right off, and said, "Who's going to be chair?" And I said, "Three people? We don't need a chair." And we never did have a chair. [Laughs] But we didn't know what we were going to do.

CP: How did you figure that out?

EC: [Laughs] Well, we had the goals commission. I mean, the goals—we had that given to us, goals. We were supposed to determine goals for the university, so that gave us some constant, that we didn't know what those goals were, we were not told how to determine them, but we were—we knew we needed to do that. And we decided that a goal was something that was somewhat intermediary between an ultimate objective, and then the more mundane kinds of things that went on day in and day out. And we worked out from that. And we looked—I think the main thing we did was to give a pretty rigorous view of structure of the university, and that let us talk about State Board of Education in relationship to OSU. We worked together very well. I don't recall a single major disagreement that we had.

We knew that in the long run, we were not going to decide a lot of things [1:20:01], but we thought if we could get a framework for deciding some things, that that would—that would be something. In my opinion, we went too far in recommending offices, and programs, and so forth. I think we went too far in that direction. That's a personal decision. And Jim Knudsen became very much convinced that we needed to make some projections as to what the enrollment was going to be, and so on and so forth. I opposed our doing that, going very far in that direction, because I knew that we didn't have the resources to really do the careful studies that would need to be made to make those worth anything. And so Jim pretty much took that over, and he just did projections. He didn't really do anything very sophisticated in that regard. I'm not sure what else I can say at this point.

CP: How else was the work divided? I mean, was there a particular focus that you had, and that Warren had? You mentioned Jim was—

EC: Well, we decided that as we went along. When something would come up that needed to be done, we would say, "This needs to be done, and who has an interest in doing it?" And maybe no one would, or maybe two people would. Then we'd say, "Well," there was two people that was interested in it, we'd say, "Well, there's something else that needs to be done, so maybe one of us could do that and let the other one do this." We just talked it through as we went along. I drew up the outline for the final report, and they were happy to have me do that.

CP: And what were your methods for gathering information? Did you go around and interview people, or was it more—?

EC: We developed a mail questionnaire that went to everybody. I can't remember exactly how we did it, but we set up a little office. We had a little money to work with, and we set up a little office, and turned over the analysis—the questionnaire results we turned over to somebody else, and told them what we were interested in, and they did all of the pick-and-shovel work associated with doing that.

CP: And did that process result in anything that surprised you—the feedback that you received?

EC: I don't know that "surprise" is quite the right thing, but no one, going into that, had a very—had a complete picture of the university. We all learned something. And there are certain parts of the university that I knew pretty well, because of my dean—my year as the dean of the faculty. But I didn't know the entire university, and the same thing was true of the other two people.

CP: What were some areas of need that emerged from that process that were very clear to the committee?

EC: Well, the first, we were very concerned with the allocation system. That jumped out at us, and I think we did a pretty good job of highlighting that. We had some concerns about the university falling—how do I want to say this? We were concerned about the university becoming overly responsive to various pressure groups—the agricultural industry, the forestry people. Then there was the industrial people in Portland. We had a feeling that they were exerting more influence on the university than probably was healthy. And there were other examples [1:25:00], but I mention those three just because they occur to me this morning. No, but I think we made that the point that the university needed to have some degree of separation from the real world, in order to have objectivity, and in order to identify new things.

Now, having said that—and this came as a bit of surprise to me, particularly with respect to Warren Hovland, but none of us wanted us to shed our pick-and-shovel responsibilities to those industries, and so on and so forth. We felt a responsibility, as a member of the university, to work on honest-to-God, real-world problems. And I don't think there was any one of the three that ever raised questions about that. And I was surprised about that, because I always expected that to come up. Jim was an outstanding scholar, and had been working at very high scholarly levels in engineering, and Warren was liberal arts, and then there was myself, so. But we just didn't have any big debates as to what the university ought to be. We were pretty much in agreement.

CP: Can you describe the allocation system that was so troubling to the three of you?

EC: Well, we went back and studied, and got the understanding of how it evolved the way it did. We disagreed with it, and I think we made that pretty clear, that we just didn't think that the allocation system that was in place at that time was responsive to the needs of the university and the state. And I think we made that clear, stated that. I don't know whether I ever would have come to Oregon State had I really understood the allocation system. I just didn't think it was that important. I thought, "These are just things that are going to be changed," and they never have been changed, basically.

CP: So there was no reaction to that, then? To that piece of the report? Or no action taken?

EC: No. No, I don't think so.

CP: Well, you mentioned the creation of the College of Oceanography as being something that emerged from this process. Were there other achievements or things that came out from it that you could directly see in a concrete way? I mean, it made 67 recommendations. I don't presume that all of those were put into action.

EC: No, no, no. [Laughs] They certainly weren't. There were some other things, and I was going to review those, and really haven't. But I thought you might ask this, but somebody told me, though—I think it was you—"Don't worry too

much about that." [Laughs] No, I haven't reviewed—I did pull that out, on the computer, and I did spend some time reading that, re-reading it. But my mind just doesn't reach out and grasp some things, in addition to oceanography, this morning, that I can repeat to you. We did make a number of concrete recommendations regarding process, as to how these different things should be brought in together, to interact. We did recommend that we have a—I think we recommended a vice-president for academic affairs, not dean of faculty. Vice-president for academic affairs. I'm quite sure we did that. And that was acted upon by John Byrne.

CP: Some years later.

EC: Yeah. But he was very much a product of this. I remember John calling me several times, when I was on the goals commission, and we talked at length about what a School of Oceanography might be. And we talked about how it would fit into the total university flow, and so on and so forth. I would say that would be one of our major things that we did. [1:30:16]