

PRESERVING MEMORY: NEWARK AND RUTGERS
IN THE 1960'S AND 1970'S

An Interview with

JAMES SCHLEGEL

Conducted by

Gilbert Cohen

August 19, 1991

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GILBERT COHEN: This is Monday, August 19, 1991. This is Gil Cohen. I'm meeting with Professor James Schlegel in the Dana Library. [Break in recording] Back again. Dr. Schlegel is professor of chemistry in the Chemistry Department here in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences in Newark. He has been on the faculty since 1962. And, Dr. Schlegel, if you could give us some biographical background of your academic career, that would be most helpful.

JAMES SCHLEGEL: Well, I'm originally from California. I did my undergraduate work at the University of the Pacific in Stockton, California. Then I went to Iowa State University in 1959, and received my Ph.D. in 1962. And at that time I came out to interview here, and took a position as assistant professor of chemistry in the fall of 1962.

COHEN: You mentioned your various positions in committees. You were chair of the Chemistry Department?

SCHLEGEL: I was chair of the Chemistry Department for nine years, from 1974 through 1983 or '84, thereabouts. After that then I stayed on as the graduate program director for another six years. And I've just stepped down from that position this year. I'll be advising undergraduate chemistry majors now.

COHEN: And you were on some committees?

SCHLEGEL: I was on the Scholastic Standing Committee, I was chair and co-chair of that committee during the 1966 through '69 period, which was a very challenging period at that time. And I was on the Budget and Finance Committee later on. And there we discussed how many faculty lines different departments should have. And that was very trying during those times. That was when Norm Samuels was the dean of the college.

COHEN: Let's go back to the old days on what I call the Rector Street campus. And I'm sure that you were—the Chemistry Department having been at 40 Rector Street, what were the facilities like in those days?

SCHLEGEL: Well, when I came on board in 1962, most of the administration and many of the departments were in 40 Rector Street, which was a converted brewery. And I had an office across the street in what was called a razorblade factory. And I think all the sciences were in 40 Rector Street. The arts and humanities were spread throughout Newark in rented buildings, if I recall.

COHEN: Mm-hmm.

SCHLEGEL: And we had all of our laboratories on the first floor of 40 Rector Street when I first came. Then when the new campus was built, chemistry was the one department that stayed behind, and they then occupied 40 Rector Street alone. I think the library was in 40 Rector Street at the time the Chemistry Department was housed in 40 Rector Street, and we were the only department in that building at the time. And then when the library was built on the new campus, then we renovated the library into a large lecture hall, and that was the beginning of having very large sections of chemistry classes, general chemistry and organic chemistry. We'd have several hundred, you know, 300 students in general chemistry and 250 students in organic chemistry at that time.

COHEN: How would you compare teaching and doing research on the old campus compared to the new campus?

SCHLEGEL: Well, on the old campus the facilities were not very good. And I recall that we did not have an air-conditioned building. And many of the labs, the research labs as well as the laboratories for the undergraduate students, were not air conditioned. And each lab or office required an individual unit in order to air condition the building. And so you were on a Q list, depending upon how long you'd been there and how important it was that you should have an air-conditioning unit. And I recall I was doing experiments in which it was called "malt and salt chemistry" at that time. And so I would take something like table salt, put it in this container, and heat it up to a high enough temperature where it became a liquid. So there was a lot of heat generated in that lab, and I did not have an air conditioner for a while. And during the summer that got very uncomfortable, and I would work at night rather than during the day because it was not a very comfortable environment.

COHEN: How would you compare, if you could, research productivity on the old campus compared to research productivity on the new campus? Personally or your assessment of your colleagues' work.

SCHLEGEL: Oh, I think the research productivity went up dramatically when we went into our new building. The facilities and instrumentation we had were a very big improvement over what we had in the other building. And the quality of the research really improved dramatically, too, I think.

COHEN: Right. And you're attributing—

SCHLEGEL: And I'm attributing that to the new building. And whenever a new building is built, they set aside a certain percentage of the cost of the building for moveable equipment. And those are items such as chairs and desks and tables and test tubes and that sort of thing. But we didn't spend the money on that. We would take that large amount of money that we had, and we would then purchase— We purchased—Gil Panson was chairman at the time, and we purchased very expensive equipment that was needed to do quality research. And so that was how we acquired our what we call a nuclear magnetic resonance spectrometer and a mass spectrometer. These are units that cost several hundreds of thousands of dollars, which we would not have been able to purchase except for the fact that we had this new building, and now we had moveable

equipment moneys that we spent instead of on chairs, we spent it on this sophisticated equipment.

COHEN: How much input, oh, let's say, did the chemistry faculty have in the planning of the new facility? How much participation?

SCHLEGEL: Very close participation. We actually designed the building. Hugh Thompson was sort of in charge of the designing of the building. And so we had an idea of how we wanted the labs built and the fact that we wanted a positive flow of air in the building so that any fumes that were generated in the laboratories would not be contained in the building. Because there was always outside air coming into the building and mixing with the inside air and being exhaustive. Of course this does present its problems; because if the air-conditioning unit does not work and it's hot outside, you're bringing this hot air into the building. And we've had those problems over the years of trying to maintain a cool building during the summers. And after two or three years, the air-conditioning system really did not operate efficiently. And we're still wrestling with that problem now.

COHEN: We were talking before we started recording about the changes in curriculum. Well, curriculum and teaching methods. If you could maybe start with curriculum, what was taught in the sixties, middle sixties or thereabouts, basic courses, advanced courses.

SCHLEGEL: In chemistry you have a fairly traditional curriculum that has held over the years. There are four areas of chemistry that are addressed in the undergraduate teaching, and that is: analytical chemistry, inorganic chemistry, physical chemistry, and organic chemistry. As the years have passed by, biochemistry has become a very important area. And so that has been introduced into the undergraduate curriculum. Also, as time has gone on, we have gone from small classes of 30, 40 students, teaching to a class of three or four hundred students in a lecture. And that presents its problems because then you have to break these large lecture sections down into small discussion groups or what we call recitation sections. And when I came on board, they started these large lecture sections. And then the faculty themselves—we were able to divide up the lecture into small groups—and the faculty then would teach the discussion groups. But as the years go on, it turns out that the demands on the faculty to produce a lot more research that can be funded made it such that one had to reduce the teaching loads, especially for incoming faculty so that they would have the opportunity to build a research program so that they can be competitive with other faculty at other universities. And as a result, we then started using our teaching assistants—these are graduate students—as leading these discussion groups. And initially we would have very talented, seasoned teaching assistants take on these recitation groups or these discussion groups.

But over the years what has happened is that the number of American students who apply to our program has dropped very dramatically; and in place we have many Asian students, Chinese students, who are very talented and very well-qualified scientifically, whose English language is not very good. And those students then are the ones that we are attempting to educate, learn the English language, so that they can lead these discussion groups. And we're at that position now where we're trying to use the Chinese students as recitation instructors. And that does present a challenge.

COHEN: Before briefly, again before we were recording, we talked about how chemistry is taught through the various textbook versions of the field, depending upon the specialty of the people who are writing the texts: physical chemists compared to biological chemists.

SCHLEGEL: That's right.

COHEN: If you could get into that. I mean how the shift has been apparently to mathematical....

SCHLEGEL: What has happened is the first-year chemistry course has become less and less qualitative in nature and much more quantitative and more theoretical in its approach. When I first came, the chemistry textbooks were written by inorganic chemists, analytical chemists, who were interested in the qualitative nature of chemistry. And in a way it was quite interesting. And the laboratory part of the course is a very meaningful part of the course, and the students learned a lot through the laboratory experience. And you tied that into your lecture. And the laboratory and the lecture were taught together as a unified four-credit course. What has happened over the years is the textbooks themselves have changed their direction, and this is because physical chemists were the predominant authors of general chemistry textbooks, and they wanted to present the theory of chemistry: atomic structure, molecular structure, and quantum mechanics, that sort of thing, and introduce that in the general chemistry course. And as a result, the students who did not have a quantitative feel really could not do well in the course. And over the years, students who could do very well in the laboratory and make very good chemists out of industry with a bachelor's degree were not interested in taking chemistry because they could not perform well even though they would make very good chemists, I think, as a bachelor's degree chemist.

Now we see a trend towards making the laboratory a very important part of the freshman chemistry course. And in order to address this at one time, we separated the lecture part of the course from the laboratory part of the course, so that the laboratory course was a one-credit course in its own right, and the lecture was a three-credit course. And even now I believe there is a movement to make the laboratory an even more important part of your beginning courses and put more emphasis on the laboratory than the lecture. Of course this is not a very efficient way of running the course because you need a lot more manpower, you need a lot more equipment and chemicals and supplies, and that costs money.

COHEN: What changes did you see in the general curriculum in the years late sixties, seventies, that you could address?

SCHLEGEL: Well, the general curriculum of students in the college was very structured. We required a language, we required so many credits in the humanities, so many credits in the social sciences. Students really needed to have one or two years of a language. So many years of natural sciences, the lab sciences, and so on. And then there was a period in time when these requirements were relaxed quite a bit, and the language requirement was dropped altogether. Then several years ago we adopted a curriculum that was a little bit more structured. And now we do require a certain number of credits in each of the major areas of education.

COHEN: Again staying with curriculum and programs, why was the graduate school established?

SCHLEGEL: At that time the chairman of the Chemistry Department, Gil Panson, felt that chemistry was not really getting a fair share of the resources that were coming into the university to support a graduate program. And so he felt that if we established an autonomous graduate program in Newark, that the resources would flow; there'd be more resources coming in to support that program in Newark. And so he was instrumental in setting up the graduate school in Newark. But in order to do this, in order to make it a realistic approach, he brought together all the professional schools, as well as the arts and sciences schools, under one umbrella called the Graduate School in Newark. And this is rather unique because we have the law school in Newark, we have the business school in Newark. We did not have those professional schools in New Brunswick; so that gave the critical mass to justify having a graduate school in Newark. Of course then that presents its own problems because the qualifications required of the faculty in the professional schools is slightly different—or quite a bit different—from the qualifications for appointment and tenure in the arts and sciences. And he was a very talented person and was able to pull this together. And I believe in 1975 is when the graduate school in Newark was established, and he was then the dean of the graduate school.

COHEN: Now what's been the impact of the graduate school? Has it resulted in securing more support?

SCHLEGEL: Yes...yes. Not enough. But we have been able to, especially during the Kean Administration as governor, there was a lot of money that went into education. And as a result, this university, especially in the sciences, this university was able to recruit very talented faculty in the sciences by offering them a package of equipment and start-up funds. And if we did not have the graduate school in Newark, surely we would have not had this opportunity. And also it has enabled the library to expand its collection. If you have a graduate school, you need an excellent collection of books and journals and so on. And that would not have happened if we didn't have this graduate school.

COHEN: What in fact does the graduate school have on offerings, courses?

SCHLEGEL: Courses?

COHEN: Courses, options that students have for part-time work, compared to the situation before the graduate school was established?

SCHLEGEL: Well, what happens, if you have a graduate school, then you are able to attract much more talented faculty, faculty who are on the cutting edge of research. And faculty who can then talk about new developments in the sciences to the undergraduate student. And so it really lifts the quality of the student body as well as the faculty in having a graduate program. This sometimes backfires because then the graduate school requires a lot of resources. And this may be at the expense of undergraduate education because then you teach large sections of undergraduate courses to support the small enrollments in the graduate courses.

COHEN: What can you say about that question of the presumed conflict between emphasis on research and teaching here in Newark, through the seventies? I mean how can you deal with that?

SCHLEGEL: Oh, I think that as time has progressed, the research has become a much more important evaluation tool for faculty to gain tenure than their teaching abilities. Even though on the promotion package they say that the category for teaching has as much weight as for research, it's very difficult to judge teaching than it is to judge research activity and productivity. A faculty member may come here and want to—has a gift for teaching and really wants to do a good job at teaching; he soon gets the message that unless he produces the research and gets the funding for the research, at least in the sciences, his chances of attaining tenure are very slim indeed.

COHEN: So how would you assess the impact, the effect of the emphasis on research on the quality of teaching on the campus?

SCHLEGEL: I can only speak for chemistry.

COHEN: Sure, sure.

SCHLEGEL: Okay? And in terms of chemistry, what we've tried to do is we've tried to identify those individuals who have the tenure and enjoy the teaching and are excellent teachers to teach the introductory courses in chemistry. And the new faculty who come on board, we get them involved in teaching the graduate courses right away, their specialty. So this is a twofold thing. They're learning more about their specialty, as well as teaching incoming graduate students their expertise. And that's the way we've been able to address this problem. Now as soon as they have received tenure, then there is the possibility that they will be involved in the introductory courses.

COHEN: Frequently you hear complaints about the differences in the resources, material resources, laboratory resources, library resources, on this campus compared to New Brunswick. While at the same time the university expects the same level of productivity of the faculty here.

SCHLEGEL: That's a problem.

COHEN: Is this a problem? Is this a fair complaint?

SCHLEGEL: I believe this is a fair complaint. Whenever the resources flow from the state to the university, we benefit quite a bit. In the future years, I don't know what's going to happen because the amount of resources that comes to the university is going to diminish. But I think we've been able to develop a quality faculty in the graduate operation here, that we can sustain the inflow of enough resources to maintain quality work here. I think that with the introduction of the Institute of Neuroscience, the Neuroscience Institute, that this will enable us to request and obtain resources that are badly needed on this campus. And I think that that's what the provost and the deans here are banking on. The Behavioral Neuroscience Institute will be a very high-

quality institute here and command the respect and what is needed in order to get the university to support quality research on this campus.

COHEN: I want to talk about the student body; we talked about faculty. The student body in the sixties, how would you compare the changes in the student body, say, the middle sixties through the seventies, on the campus generally, specifically in chemistry?

SCHLEGEL: Well, the number of students in chemistry at the undergraduate level has been declining over the years. When I came—

COHEN: In chemistry?

SCHLEGEL: In chemistry.

COHEN: Yes.

SCHLEGEL: And this is largely due, I think, to the fact that many of our students who come here are first-generation students. Their parents have not going to college. And so they're very much interested in obtaining a degree which will support them later on. And so they're very focused on where the jobs are once they get the degree. And in the sixties there was the idea amongst the students that they'd get a degree in the sciences, and they will nail down a very good job; the future is bright for them. And if they don't go into the sciences, they can go on to medical school and so on. Then over the years what has happened is that the ideas that the student has that he has a good job in the sciences has diminished, and more and more students have gone into the business—as business majors and accounting majors. Such that maybe half the student body now attending Rutgers is either a business or a business and accounting major. And that means the number of science students, science majors, has dropped fairly drastically. It's something that we're beginning to see a change now; we're finding that more and more students are now majoring in the sciences. And I believe that within the next ten years we'll have the same number of majors in chemistry that we had maybe 15 years ago. Typically we would have graduated 30 undergraduate students in chemistry. Now we're down to about eight to ten majors. And I would hope to see that ten years from now we'll be back up to 30 to 40 chemistry majors graduating.

COHEN: Do you feel that this decline in the enrollment of the students that you just talked about in the sciences was the result of a faulty perception or was there a real lack of labor-market demand for people in the sciences. I don't understand that. I always thought that there was.

SCHLEGEL: We had a lot of chemistry majors at one time because the sciences was a popular field to go into. They had a job when they got out. And the better students would then go on and go into medical school. I guess what has happened, over the years, the students...that the demand for science majors has gone down, and at the same time the students feel that they have to work so much harder in the sciences than in the other areas like business and accounting, that they—it's true; they can go and work in industry as a business major or an accounting major, and demand as good or if not better salary than the sciences. And in the sciences you have to spend—it's a much more difficult area of subject material; it's much more difficult.

COHEN: Do you feel that that business alternative was there to the extent that it is there now, let's say, 15 years ago, 20 years ago? Just a shot in the dark.

SCHLEGEL: Well, I don't think so. I know we had a very strong Accounting Department at the time. And the students were not flocking towards accounting or business. Then I guess during the eighties, when students found that they could go work in the financial district; and I guess the legal profession, the salaries paid to lawyers, started to increase. The word gets around. Students know where the big-paying jobs are. And the students that come to our school are not so much interested in getting a general education as the students that may go to your Ivy League schools. They're more interested in what kind of job they can get once they get the degree. And that's mainly because they are the first generation. Their parents did not go to college. Part of the reason.

COHEN: Yes, it's fascinating. Again, staying with the students, what can you say about the level of preparation of the students in, let's say, the sixties through the seventies, the comparison between....

SCHLEGEL: The level of preparation of students has gone down over the years.

COHEN: Yes.

SCHLEGEL: And I don't know if it's a combination of... [Break in recording]

COHEN: Getting back to the question of the level of preparation of the students, I was asking if this had anything to do with ethnic background of students or just the fact of the high schools and their level of preparation. Could you deal with that?

SCHLEGEL: The students that we recruit, I think it's the level of preparation. I think these students are not getting the material that they should get when they're in high school. And they graduate from high school probably with good grades. But they do not have the level of preparation that they should have.

COHEN: Are you saying across the board?

SCHLEGEL: Across the board. It doesn't matter whether the student is black, white, or Asian, I think. Because we have a wide degree of ethnicity of students in our student body. What I think is kind of interesting was during the trying times of the late sixties when we had the Newark riots and so on, that black students who applied to our school and got in, were not the best black students because they were being attracted by colleges throughout the nation, the better black students.

COHEN: Yes.

SCHLEGEL: Even if we could attract the better black students, I don't think that the families who were really interested in the education of their—the black families—education of their sons

and daughters, I don't think that they wanted their sons and daughters to come to Rutgers-Newark because of the stigma attached to what was going on. They wanted to not be attached to that. And so initially, in the early seventies, the black students who attended school here were very ill prepared, not well motivated, just a poor student body as a whole. But over the years I've seen that the black students who've entered in, and especially now, we have a number of very good black students. They're well motivated and have a good grasp of material that they should have when they enter. And that's the difference that we have now as compared to then.

COHEN: We were talking before briefly about at the time of the takeover of Conklin Hall, which followed the riots—the riots were July '67, Conklin Hall was February '69—there were questions about scholastic standing, admissions standards. If you could just address that to the extent that you can...

SCHLEGEL: Yes, I was chairman of the Scholastic Standing Committee at that time, and I co-chaired it with Warren Manspeizer. And at that time Talbott, who was the dean or the acting vice president or vice president—

COHEN: He was vice president also serving as acting dean of the college.

SCHLEGEL: —of the school here, was actually negotiating with the Black Organization of Students, BOS, in developing standards for entering black students. And this revolved around the faculty having to vote on at what point in a student's academic career he should be evaluated for being maintained as a student or dismissed from school. And this rule that the faculty debated long hours on was a rule that was called "the 16/32 rule." And the way I remember it, I think that the student could take as many as 16 credits without even being evaluated. His record would not even be looked at. He could have flunked all 16 credits' worth; he could still maintain status as a student in the school, maintain his matriculation. And it wasn't until he attained 32 credits before we could decide whether we should dismiss the student or not. And this was a very hot item that was debated amongst the faculty. And it was adopted, 16/32 rule. And it did not work. It turned out that many students would take as few as nine credits of coursework each semester, and so the student could be in school for two full years and not even be considered for dismissal from school. And they were trying times then. And subsequently we rescinded that, that rule.

COHEN: Any recollections of the episode, the actual takeover of the building? Any vivid pictures in your mind?

SCHLEGEL: Well, the vivid picture I had was Malcolm Talbott was very intent on helping the black students in terms of the demands that they were making. And as a part of this committee, Warren Manspeizer and ourselves on the committee as a whole, we were pivotal in presenting to the faculty the 16/32 rule. And the committee was divided. And Warren and I felt very strongly that this should not happen. And there were times when we would meet late at night and into the early morning hours with Malcolm Talbott in his apartment on Prospect Avenue. And there was something like a negotiation going on between faculty and the Black Organization of Students. And he'd actually have the leadership of the BOS in his apartment. And he would come in and talk to us about the demands and then go back and talk to them. He was a lawyer, and he felt that this was a very important thing to happen. I don't know what his ultimate motives were in this.

Because he was a very strong personality, very personable guy. I really liked Malcolm except for his intent on bringing the 16/32 rule to fruition. I think that it did not work. It proved that students would not...it was poor to have students in school that really weren't motivated and were only there to fill a spot if they came to class.

COHEN: Mm-hmm. Do you remember any of the people who were involved in the negotiations?

SCHLEGEL: I cannot remember who else was on the committee because Warren and I were about the only ones, aside from maybe one other person—you know it was a committee of six or seven.

COHEN: Do you remember any of the students?

SCHLEGEL: I can't remember the names of students involved.

COHEN: How would you assess Malcolm Talbott's overall role, contribution?

SCHLEGEL: I think probably he was very instrumental in establishing the new campus and bringing the campus to Newark. And I think he was envisioning that ultimately we would have a campus in Newark that would compete with the New Brunswick campus. The New Brunswick campus is very large now. But at that time it wasn't so large that we couldn't have a large operation in Newark. And perhaps maybe the major campus would have been in Newark.

COHEN: Do you have any idea why he didn't get the job as provost?

SCHLEGEL: I think possibly because he was a very strong individual and very.... The administration in New Brunswick were actually afraid that he would build a campus here that would overshadow New Brunswick ultimately. And of course that's just my perception.

COHEN: Yes. Sure. Well, that's what we're looking for. Talking about another sort of background issue at the time, of course, was student activism, particularly around the war in Vietnam. How did that affect your position here as a professor of chemistry, teaching, let's say?

SCHLEGEL: Well, there was a time when students felt that.... There was an incident that happened late in the semester of the spring term: the invasion of Cambodia, I believe.

COHEN: Hmm, 1970.

SCHLEGEL: Yes. And the students felt that they were out there demonstrating and that they should not be penalized if they didn't take final exams or finish their coursework. And this was two weeks before the end of the term. And they...at that time I was, I think I was still part of the Scholastic Standing Committee, and they said that a good portion of their courses they could take on a pass/fail basis at that time. And of course we felt that this should not happen; it would be unfair to the students even though they didn't realize this. Many of the students were premed students. And if they took courses on a pass/fail basis and the bulk of their courses were on a

pass/fail basis, when they applied to medical school, the medical school would not be able to evaluate a passed course because of course they could get as low as a D in the course and still pass the course. And so we said—at that time we stood firm and said that they could not use more than one course on a pass/fail basis. And I remember the president of the student body was so incensed at this because this was his platform, that three or four courses could be used on a pass/fail basis. He stormed out of the room and said, “You’ll regret this!” And nothing came of it. And I’m glad we stood firm because ultimately it was for the benefit of the student that they get a grade for their work and not pass/fail.

COHEN: Alright. Again, any recollections, any further recollections that you may have of the student activism during the war in Vietnam?

SCHLEGEL: Well, that one episode was the one I remember very vividly. And the president of the student body just getting up and slamming—walking out slamming the door. And he was—that was his platform, to make sure that everybody could wind up with not having to work very hard at the end of the semester. And most of the student body I don’t think was in favor of this. And I’m glad as a committee we stood up to that.

COHEN: You’ve been here for many years, and you’ve worked under various administrations. I was wondering if you could give me your perceptions of the administrations of various deans and the... Well, let’s start at the top. Let’s start with the presidents. Your comparative perceptions of the administrations of Mason Gross and Edward Bloustein.

SCHLEGEL: Well, Mason Gross was a good president, I think. I really remember Bloustein more than Mason Gross. Bloustein was a person that really wanted to make this university one of the top public institutions in the United States; and he took on Alex Pond as a vice president, who was a scientist and realized that in order to make this university a university of note was to improve the sciences. And we in chemistry and the other sciences benefitted greatly from this. Mason Gross was more interested in the humanities and social sciences and so forth. So I think even though Bloustein was not a scientist, I think when he came in and brought Alex Pond in as vice president, there was a move to really improve the quality of the science departments across the university here. And we benefitted from that, I believe. Okay? Of course some people feel that we’ve gone too far in terms of graduate research and that sort of thing, and the undergraduate student body has suffered from this in terms of the quality of the instruction, the fact that there are very large lecture sections of various introductory courses. And this was new to Rutgers University because a lot of the courses were taught in small sections. Now there is the—they’re going back and saying that maybe undergraduate education should be addressed, and this is a national trend now. So that this is going to be the year of the undergraduate, the year 2000. [Laughter] And hopefully I think the new president, President Lawrence, is serious about this. I’m not sure that Bloustein was at the time. I think it was rhetoric on his part.

When I first came, Woodward was dean of the Rutgers-Newark campus. And his office was located in 40 Rector Street along with all of the natural sciences: physics, chemistry, geology. So the administration was very small. You had the dean and the secretary and the chairmen; they maybe shared a secretary. And over the years the administration has grown by leaps and bounds for reasons that are not quite obvious to me. Okay? We have a dean of

instruction; and now we have a dean of retention, somebody hired to improve the retention of our undergraduate students here.

COHEN: Is that recent?

SCHLEGEL: That's recently.

COHEN: I haven't heard of that one.

SCHLEGEL: Yes. I don't know if that job title's been changed or what. I know they advertised for a dean of retention. I can't even remember who that individual is now. So we started off with a very small administration. We were all housed in one building essentially, the administration and all the sciences. And then when the new campus was established and unfolding and so forth, the number of deans increased over that period of time. And we moved from, I guess, Dean Woodward. Then we had Dean Blumenthal who became dean. And I remember him more than Woodward because when Woodward was dean, I was more interested in obtaining tenure and getting the research out.

COHEN: Mm-hmm. Yes.

SCHLEGEL: And I remember Blumenthal as being a very open person. His office was open to all students and all faculty, which is good, but it has its negative aspects, too. And I think that that led towards more of the student unrest and so forth in a sense.

COHEN: Do you have any perception of Blumenthal's predecessor, William Gilliland, actually, who was....

SCHLEGEL: Oh, William Gilliland came in....

COHEN: After Dean Woodward.

SCHLEGEL: After Dean Woodward. Gilliland came in. He was not particularly popular with the faculty, I recall. And he was especially not very popular with chemistry because chemistry was the last department to move off the old campus. And we came on the new campus with our own building. But of course when that building was being designed, Gilliland was very much in the acting area. He was an actor, a buff actor. And so he envisioned a performing arts center. And probably Gil Panson has addressed this.

COHEN: I think so.

SCHLEGEL: Yes.

COHEN: Yes, I think.

SCHLEGEL: Gilliland wanted to make the chemistry building, or the resources going into chemistry, to build a performing arts center. And he did not get his way, thank goodness. And we

were able to build a complete chemistry building. And in the meantime Gilliland then since left and went back into geology; I think he was a geologist. And that was when Blumenthal came on as dean.

COHEN: Gil Panson was Henry Blumenthal's successor as acting dean for a year. Any remarks about him?

SCHLEGEL: Well, I think that at that time Gil felt that something—this was a period of time after the unrest that this open admissions policy was developed by the university. And Gil had to figure out a way in which we could accept very ill-prepared students coming from the Newark high schools. And so he was instrumental in developing a new department, an Academic Foundations Department, a department in its own right. And students then would come and take courses; they were really remedial courses. But in some cases give credit to some of those remedial courses so the students could feel like—that they were a part of the student body at least and felt like they weren't being singled out as failures right from the start. And so that was the birth of the Department of Academic Foundations. And since then I think that department has been played down, and I don't know if there is a department.

COHEN: There still is.

SCHLEGEL: Still. But the number of faculty involved there is rather small now. And this has evolved into the EOF.

COHEN: Has chemistry been getting any students who came through the Academic Foundations Program that you know of?

SCHLEGEL: We've had students come from the Academic Foundations Program, and I cannot even recall any student who successfully completed a degree in chemistry coming from the Academic Foundations. Some of them have come through taking courses in chemistry and done well and majored in biology and then went on to medical school. I recall a couple of those students. But what has happened I think now is the quality of the minority student, the black student, coming in has improved over the years. And so they are better students in their own right.

COHEN: Gil Panson's successor was Richard Robey. Can you comment on—your assessment of his deanship?

SCHLEGEL: Dean Robey was a person who did not think much of the sciences [laughs], I recall, and in particular chemistry. And at that time Carroll Wilde was chairman of the department. We hired on two very talented new faculty: Paul [?] and Frank Jordan. And it was about the time when they were up for tenure that Dean Robey was looking for cutting lines from the sciences in general and from chemistry. And it was at a time when the enrollments in chemistry were starting to decline somewhat. And so it was a very difficult time for Carroll Wilde at that time to insure that these talented scientists would be appointed to tenure, associate professor with tenure. And of course then Frank Jordan has gone on to be one of the top faculty

members in the university here, professor, too, and chairman of the department. And I'm glad to see that we were able to retain those faculty members.

COHEN: Why did Robey leave the deanship?

SCHLEGEL: Why?

COHEN: Mm-hmm.

SCHLEGEL: From what I understand, he was involved in activities outside the deanship where his decision-making was most probably determined by his relationships with other faculty in the university. Playing cards late at night and things of that sort. Now, this is only hearsay that I'm giving.

COHEN: Yes. Sure. Yes.

SCHLEGEL: And that he was involved with other women faculty within the school. And these revelations came about, and that was when we established a committee on governance. And it was the establishment of this committee on governance that wound up in removing Dean Robey from his deanship. I was not directly involved in any of that.

COHEN: And his successor was Norman Samuels, now the provost.

SCHLEGEL: And Norm Samuels is a very excellent dean, I think. We had our disagreements, Norm and I, while I was chairman. And he would listen, and he was a very good spokesman for the college. There's always been tension between the undergraduate college and the professional schools, and the provost has resources, and most resources had to be divided up amongst the law school, the business school, and the School of Arts and Sciences. And I think Norman was very effective in giving us our fair share of faculty and resources from the provost at that time. Of course now Samuels is provost [laughter], and he has to address that problem. And in a way I only hope that the dean we have is as forceful as Samuels was when he was dean and Jim Young was provost.

COHEN: Yes, yes.

SCHLEGEL: But that's the way it is.

COHEN: Yes. You mentioned Jim Young, another popular administrator. How did things fare under Jim Young?

SCHLEGEL: I think that the.... Jim Young was a very humanitarian-type person, I think. And he had a tendency to support the professional schools more than the arts and sciences. And if it weren't for the fact that Norm was dean at that time, we probably wouldn't have retained the faculty that we have because resources do get tight. Now I think that probably Norm is a very good spokesperson for the college in Newark as a whole. And we need that because the major campus is in New Brunswick, and there's only so much of the pie, and they divide it up. I think

Norm has moved in the right way, trying to establish an institute here that addresses, you know, that shows that there is quality research going on and to help bring more resources in to support the other parts of the campus here. That may be a difficult task because if the institute itself—this is the Institute of Molecular and Behavioral Sciences, Neuroscience Institute—if they're not able to bring in large grant money to support their operation, then I think the provost is going to have to make a decision about how much he's willing to go and support them. If he does that, then of course the other sciences are not going to get the resources that they need to sustain their operations. And I think that's something that's going to be facing Norm Samuels or whoever else is going to be provost at the time. Because the funds for supporting research are diminishing steadily, too. Well, time will tell.

COHEN: Yes. We're getting close to the windup. Are there any topics I haven't brought up, we haven't talked about, which you'd like to address?

SCHLEGEL: Well, I think we've probably talked about all the topics that we can.

COHEN: Anything you want to go back to that maybe footnote, elaborate, that we've already talked about?

SCHLEGEL: Well, I think this is a great idea that Gil Cohen has. And I hope that it will be of enlightenment and benefit to people who come to the library, listen to these archives.

COHEN: Oh, one thing I forgot...when you mentioned the library. Yes, I forgot going down my list here. What can you comment about library services, collections number one, and services number two? Let's take collections first.

SCHLEGEL: Well, we are quite fortunate, I think, because we have our own library collection in our building. And this was a sore point with other departments within the university because chemistry was unique in having its own collection in its building. And we still retain that collection in our building. Over the years we've had to make a decision about the journals that we could subscribe to, and I think a wise decision was made. As the journal subscriptions become more and more expensive—and that's probably the bulk of the budget for chemistry is in sustaining the journal subscriptions—we have decided that there are certain journals that we did not need to continue because those journals were being continued by New Jersey Institute of Technology, which is the engineering school across the street. Because chemistry is divided into different areas: There's the area of polymer chemistry, which we do not have any expertise in our faculty; they do perhaps over in NJIT. And so they retain certain areas of chemistry, the journal subscriptions. And then we can go over there if we need access to those journals. Of course in the future I hope to see that all of these access will be online. And the day will come when we can, in our office, be able to look at an article on our.... [End of Tape #1]

COHEN: You were saying about the....

SCHLEGEL: Well, I think at one time that the university would support those libraries that were designated as research libraries. And I think that that was a point that a lot of people on this campus were addressing.

COHEN: Yes.

SCHLEGEL: If this library was not categorized as a research library, then the resources that would come to it would be quite a bit less.

COHEN: Well, we're categorized as a research library for business administration, business management and, I believe, nursing because of the nursing program being centered here.

SCHLEGEL: Oh, I see. Okay.

COHEN: Unless that's changed lately, I'm not aware of that.

SCHLEGEL: Well, of course we don't have the budget that we would like to have to support a quality library in the sciences. And oftentimes if I have an article that I need to look up, I go to New Brunswick and Princeton and so forth. But interlibrary loan makes it very easy for us to acquire those articles out of journals that are not being subscribed [to] at this library. But in general our requests for monographs and books and so forth have pretty well been met. Some years there's a bigger budget for it than other years. But the main concern, I guess, is maintaining journal subscriptions of the quality journals.

COHEN: What can you say about the quality of the services at Dana Library: circulation, reference, public service?

SCHLEGEL: I've been quite satisfied with it personally. The people in the library have been very helpful. And if I need anything, I can be assured that if I order anything through interlibrary loan, it gets here within a couple of days. It depends on how long it takes for them to identify the source. And then I think that we can...we're now online so that we can access the publications through the computer. Of course that costs money. And it's maybe not used as much as it could be by chemistry faculty at this point in time because the moneys are used more for other resources that are needed in the laboratory, instrumentation, chemicals, and supplies and so on.

COHEN: Well, Dr. Schlegel, thank you very, very much. [End of Tape #2]

[End of Interview]

Edited by Gideon Thompson