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Yael Greenberg (YG): Today is Tuesday, August 5th, 2003. My name is Yael Greenberg, oral history program assistant for the USF Florida Studies Center. We continue a series of interviews in our studio here in the Tampa campus library with USF faculty, students, and alumni in order to commemorate 50 years of university history. Today, we will be interviewing Dr. Harold Nixon, who came to USF in March of 1994 as the vice president for student affairs. Good afternoon, Dr. Nixon.

Harold Nixon (HN): Good afternoon.

YG: Let's begin by you taking us to the year you arrived in Tampa, and what circumstances brought you to the University of South Florida.

HN: Well, as you said, I did arrive here in 1994, and was recruited by President Betty Castor, who was actually just elected president almost simultaneously.¹ Interesting story is that she was actually being interviewed, however, on the campus at the same time that I was in December of 1993. But she and I did not meet, and the reason I know that we were being interviewed at the same time [is] one of the students who came to my interview indicated that she was late coming to my interview because she had been in the interview with then—before she was elected President Castor.

But as soon as she was appointed president, she made contact with me, and we began talking about whether or not I would come to the University of South Florida. I was working as vice president for student affairs at that time at Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio. And so as the conversation progressed and as she and I had more conversations, and as I visited the campus several times after that, it just seemed like a natural fit. President Castor was just getting here, and she indicated that she thought that I could help her begin her administration. And so it just seemed like a natural fit. And I liked her very much—I liked, in terms of the conversations that we were having. And so it moved on from there.

What attracted me, in addition to that, was, during my visits, the students I met with. Student government leaders and others, all seemed to be looking for, if you will, someone that they thought could be a good fit and someone who could work with them. And so I had several conversations with—in addition to the president, I had several conversations with the students themselves. And so it just seemed like it was a good fit for me to come to the University of South Florida. So I came.

¹ Betty Castor served as the fifth president of the University of South Florida, from 1994 to 1999.

YG: Can you tell me the first time you saw the University of South Florida? What did the campus consist of in 1994, as well as what did some of the surrounding areas of the university look like?

HN: Well, I—actually, the first time that I came was during the interview process, and at that time, the campus—I guess the most notable thing to me, from a student affairs perspective, was the fact that it had—in terms of its enrollment proportion—it had very few bed spaces, or houses for students. And so an institution, normally, of this size would have had, even back then, almost as many beds as we have now. But knowing that it is and was a metropolitan university, I wasn't actually surprised, because as metropolitan universities go, they are normally for those individuals, or they attract those students who are, let's say, kind of commuter types, is what everyone always says. But as President Castor and I talked, the notion was to get rid of, to the extent possible, that notion of commuter campus image and begin to turn the campus more into a residential campus.

Surrounding the campus, the thing that I guess I paid the most attention to was Suitcase City, because of its close proximity to the campus and knowing a place such as Suitcase City could in fact cause significant problems in terms of crime and those kinds of things on the campus.² And so during my visits I kind of went through the place and made some—I guess, some determination at that point that indeed it was very important for the university to do more along the lines of housing simply to make sure that the students had options to live in places other than Suitcase City.

YG: Through your initial conversations with President Castor, you mentioned the idea of the fact that the university, at the time when you came in, had a relatively low enrollment in housing. You mentioned Suitcase City. What were some other things that you and Betty Castor talked about in those initial conversations, if you will, of your—what you could do to assist the University of South Florida?

HN: Well, in addition to the housing—and I'm going to come back to that, because I think that has been one of kind of the defining times, if you will, for the university, because again, trying to make the university not be such a commuter image type of institution—but student life itself in general. There was that concern that there weren't that many activities and programs on the campus that would cause students to want to stay on the campus, that they would prefer to be off the campus, and thus we talked about how we would go about attempting to build a stronger student life program. And even back then, there was the notion that a student union, one of these days, would be necessary for us. While there is, quote, a student union—the Marshall Center—there was the notion that at some point, we would outgrow that facility, and we have, today.

And so we are attempting as one of our next, in jumping to the future, that we are attempting to now come forward with a new Marshall Center, a new student union, that will be more accommodating, if you will, of the programs and student organizations that we have on the campus. One of the other things we talked about was—in terms of student life—was the notion of how do we build a stronger Greek life program. And thus we began thinking, while it was—I guess it was in the conceptual stage at that moment in time—we talked about perhaps having some type of Greek housing to accommodate the organizations. And so we just now have those houses that we will open actually in the fall of this coming year.

So, by and large, those were the kinds of student life kinds of things. And of course, we talked a lot about partnerships with, if you will, with other parts of the university, for example, student affairs and academic affairs. Two administrative areas that must move forward hand in hand, or hand in glove in that sense, because one of the areas like academic affairs is more involved with the academic and intellectual growth of the students. At the same time, the students themselves spend a

² "Suitcase City" is an area near the University of South Florida also known as "University West."

lot of time outside the classroom, and thus the two have to match up quite well.

YG: I want to go back to a lot of the statements that you made. First of all, I want to know—you came from Wright State to USF. What were some of the major differences that you immediately noticed upon your arrival here?

HN: The fact is Wright State and the University of South Florida are quite similar, inasmuch as they are both metropolitan universities. Wright State was founded a couple of years after the University of South Florida. Surprisingly, the same colors, green and gold, are Wright State's colors, and the same with the University of South Florida—identical colors, even down to the actual directional signage. All look the same, made out of the same kinds of materials and so forth, at least at that time. So, in a real sense, other than size—Wright State University at that time was about 15,000, and of course the University of South Florida was closer to—overall closer to 30,000, but that included all of the campuses.

So those are some similarities. And of course size is different, and of course curriculum. I think the academic programs themselves, where students have more opportunity to major in more programs here than at Wright State University. But, by and large, I would say there are lots of similarities. Lots of similarities. We were also engaged in doing building of housing there at Wright State before I came here. We were engaged in building a new student union before I came here. So, frankly, again, I guess more similarities than differences.

YG: Let's talk about housing.

HN: Okay.

YG: When you came here, the university was obviously going through a period of great expansion, and yet we only had dormitories for a little over 2,300 students. What were some of the conditions of the dormitories? How did you go about creating and starting to plan for additional housing at that time?

HN: Sure. Well, now, as I said before, the proportion of students—of enrollment versus the number of students living in residence halls was very, very low in our opinion. And so we set out originally, I guess quite soon, to first do more in terms of making certain that those facilities that we already had in existence were in good enough condition to attract students. The facilities were built back in the '60s and '70s, and they were built along the more dormitory traditional style, meaning long corridors, long halls, with gang bathrooms at the end, and sometimes in the middle, of each hallway.

But that was not the type of facility that students were looking to spend all of their time in—"all" meaning that from start to finish, such as a freshman, and then moving on through the sophomore year, junior, and senior year. And so while there were some students who were interested in living on the campus, there weren't enough students to fill all the bed spaces that were already in existence, because the facilities were really not in the shape that students—nor in the configuration—that students were looking for.

So our plan had to be a comprehensive plan. First, again, we had to make certain that we considered renovating the homes and bringing them up in the condition that they should have been. Second of all, we had to think in terms of new facilities, because we wanted to not only fill the bed spaces we had already in existence, but we also wanted to attract more students. But that configuration of the new halls had to be attractive to students—had to be more along the lines of apartments and along the lines of suites. And so we put together a huge group of individuals from across the university,

appointed them to a committee, and we asked them to give full consideration to the needs of students and to those things that would attract students, and that would help us recruit students to the university. And that committee was chaired by an individual in the provost's office, Dr. Bernard Mackey. And we asked people in the college of business, such as Dr. Tom Ness, to chair one of the subcommittees.

We had student affairs individuals, such as Dr. Wilma Henry, involved in the committee, but about 55 people overall. Probably one of the largest committees that had been put together on the campus, and they worked for about a year, divided up into subgroups, and came back and presented to me at the end of all of that, and I presented it to the president. A really comprehensive 15-year plan that we would move towards in terms of enhancing our residence halls' facilities, and again, those plans called for the renovation of existing halls. And what we decided, also, was that we were not going to try to reconfigure the existing halls. We would renovate them.

For example, Alpha Hall, which is the first residence hall that was built on the campus, was completely renovated and reconfigured. But as we thought about that, the cost to do it that way was just too much for us. And we knew that we were not going to be able to complete the overall plan of growth if we retrofitted each of the halls, in terms of reconfiguring them. And so that was the only hall that we did, in fact, kind of retrofit. The rest of the halls that we have renovated—for example, Beta Hall this year is off-line, meaning that we don't have students in it. We won't put students in it. We will, in fact, not reconfigure, but we will renovate the facility and open it next year. Gamma Hall, which is now named Castor Hall, Betty Castor Hall because the—and that hall was renamed for President Castor, because of her undying support of us and the facilities that we were attempting to develop.

But I would say that what caused all of this to come together was the just significant and extremely great support that all of the people who were involved in the committees, and people on my staff, and the president, and the vice presidents—all of us came together and said we must do something better for the students. In fact, I would tell you that in going around and speaking to student groups when I first came, there were students who said, Look, we've been told that something is going to happen, the halls are going to be improved, for several years now. And so we just simply don't have any confidence that is ever going to happen. But I think one can look around today and kind of know that things have in fact changed.

YG: In terms of funding, how do you go about funding such a massive project? I assume—it sounds like, from an administrative point of view, that the university and President Castor were certainly supportive of housing. Being supportive and financing a project, as we know, are two very different things. How—I guess, where was the majority of funding?

HN: Well, that's an interesting question. As a matter of fact, I was told as I started to move around and visit the then-Board of Regents to ask if they could, in fact, help us find a way to do the financing of the facilities. I was told that our financial strength just wasn't enough to build the halls and to do the master or the comprehensive renovation and building plan that we put together. But what we decided was that if we were going to do it, we had to do it ourselves. And it wasn't—in other words, we couldn't afford to allow our halls in the condition that they were to continue.

So, what we did—we started asking individuals and working with individuals out in the financial world, if you will, the banks and so forth. And, finally, we started talking with—and we still have the group with us now—financial advisers, and they started telling us about things that were a bit more creative, in terms of financing, than the regular, if you will, financing of going through the state and through the Department of Bond Finance. At the end of the day, what we did was ask our

foundation, University of South Florida Foundation, if it would become our 501(c)(3) umbrella.³ Because we obviously knew that we didn't have the cash to do the renovation and building, and if we were going to do it, we obviously had to borrow. And so to borrow would mean bonding. And so we went forward with that request to the University of South Florida Foundation, and at that time, the chairman, or the president, if you will, of the foundation was Mr. Rick Brown. And Rick was, I would tell you—probably is as understanding and supportive as anybody could be.

When we proposed the comprehensive plan to him as the president, he said to us right away that that was something he thought the foundation ought to support. And so, as it stands now, and as it was then, the foundation serves as our 501(c)(3). We lease the land to the foundation to build, or the facilities—the Holly Hall apartments, and the Magnolia's that you see going up now, and other halls of the Greek community and so forth. The land has been leased by the—now by the Board of Trustees to the foundation. The foundation literally builds the residence halls and then leases the halls back to the institution to operate.

And so it's called a lease-leaseback arrangement, and we are—in student affairs—very much involved on both ends. We're involved as relates to the university's responsibility. We're also involved as it relates to the foundation's responsibility, all decisions and so forth about the residence halls and the bed spaces and size, and those kinds of things, flow through us to student affairs. We communicate that to the foundation leadership. Foundation leadership then approves what we've sent forward, and we then operate the facility.

YG: In terms of unique features of the housing at USF, I know that you've talked about this apartment-style living. What other unique features are the dorms offering the residents, offering to attract students to live at USF?

HN: Well, not only that, I think when we talk about apartments, we obviously have to offer the same kinds of amenities that apartments offer. One, a student wants to—if a student wants to cook his own food, or her own food, then she or he ought to have that opportunity, and so the kitchen kinds of equipment are also involved. In addition to that, if they want to have more privacy as relates to their bathrooms and so forth—as you know, many students coming to school today never shared a bed—I mean shared a bathroom, much less shared a bedroom, with someone else. So you have to try to offer the students those kinds of things.

The other thing is, in terms of the apartment, students like to have their own space to study, their own space to turn the TVs on, their own space to surf the net, without interruption and so forth. And, of course, they have the opportunity to walk to class. They don't have to drive their cars. They have the opportunity to walk to the recreation center, which is another large attraction, if you will, to students, because students are more into lifestyle fitness kinds of things than perhaps they were 20 years ago. But close proximity to class, close proximity to food service, and they can choose whether or not they want to cook or not. Close proximity to recreational places and swimming and things of that kind, obviously, is attractive to students.

YG: Are we offering married housing and different kinds of housing options for nontraditional students, if you will?

HN: Actually, we are. The second set of beds that we built—we opened the first set of beds, about 700 beds for the traditional-age students. I think it was '99. Then the next year, we opened about 500 bed spaces, and a huge number of those spaces were for married students—the nontraditional students. Those bed spaces are located over on Magnolia Drive. And, as a matter of fact, I would

³ A 501(c)(3) umbrella is a nonprofit organization, approved by the IRS as a tax-exempt charitable organization.

tell you that the married student housing filled up a lot quicker than the other nontraditional bed spaces, but I would say that we probably have maxed out right now, in terms of non-traditional bed spaces. If we could figure out a way to balance the married housing, which is—you must have larger numbers of square feet when you're dealing with married housing—if you can figure out a way how to balance the two, the nontraditional with the traditional, then it would certainly make sense for us to think about expanding married student housing.

Non-traditional housing on campus for the single student—students are not finding that as attractive as they find some of the apartments and so forth off campus. But that is changing a bit as we go down the road. Anytime you do a new type of housing, if you will, sometimes it takes a while for it to catch on and takes a while before people start to occupy it at the same level as the housing they're familiar with. But I think that at the 500 bed spaces that we have now, including the ones for married student housing, I think it's probably going to last us for a few years.

YG: In terms of capacity, when you first came here, as I mentioned, we were at a little over close to 2,400 beds. What is our total housing capacity today?

HN: What we intend to do is to move our housing capacity to 5,000. I told you about, as you recall, the comprehensive study that we did. We determined that we had a demand for right at 10,000 students—at least our consultant said that. Our demand was about 10,000, but we decided to go the conservative route in building residence halls. It doesn't make sense to, quote, build and they will come. You obviously have to have the demand, so that you don't have empty bed spaces. But what we determined was that we would cut the demand from what the consultants told us in half, and we built out to 5,000. We are approaching that 5,000 number now. We have probably about 500. I think when we are done for this this year, there's 600 beds that we're bringing on in the fall of '04. In other words, we're building those facilities now. I think we will be about 4,600—4,400, I believe it is, the number.

YG: Nine years into this 15-year plan, have we been successful? Are we on the right track? Where do we need to go from here?

HN: Well, I think we've been very successful. I think that we certainly are on the right track. As a matter of fact, I didn't mention the fact that we've taken down some old facilities that we had, what was called The Village, the wooden structures over near campus police area and parking services. We determined that it was too costly to us to continue to invest money in those facilities, and so what we decided was that we would take those facilities down, and in the place on the land, was built Greek housing—is what we put over there.

We have, and will open this year in the fall, 14 Greek housing houses for 14 organizations, and the students seem awfully, awfully excited about it. And I'm convinced that it's going to add an awful lot, an awful lot to student life at the University of South Florida. So I think, yeah, we certainly are on the right track. We will build the next five, 600 beds in maybe the next three years, two to three years. And so that will bring us to 5,000. And so what we will have done is to have built out the number that we said, the 5,000, in about 11 years. Somewhere thereabouts—close to it. And so, reach—and by the way, they're all full. Every bed that we have. This year, and we had to rent space from Fontana Hall, which is right across the street. As a matter of fact, we filled Fontana Hall. We're over 400 and some 500 students in Fontana Hall, because we didn't have the space for them. Well, as we opened the next 600 beds, those students have come back to campus. And again, I'm confident that we're on the right track.

What's next? What's next is the new student union. Students have told us over and over and over again that they want a better student union. They want more space. They want to make certain that

they have meeting rooms. They want more study space. They want more space to spread out in. They want more venues, if you will, for food and so forth. They want a larger ballroom. And so, we are now putting in place the plans to build a new student union. It looks like it's going to be in the same location, although we're not taking down—it doesn't appear at this moment that we'll be—the old facility. Indeed, we will have to renovate that facility. It's not in great shape today. It leaks. A number of things occur there, but there is room over in that area to bring into existence a new center.

What's been so rewarding, I guess, and interesting to me, in terms of this new facility, the student union, is that last year, students themselves decided that they would vote to raise their own fee so that it would be possible to finance, to bond, if you will, the student union. I was involved with them—obviously helped in terms of trying to provide guidance, but they themselves—the student leadership—Mike Griffin was president last year. But the idea of having them do that started about three, maybe four years ago. And so it has taken this time for it to come to the conclusion. So we have a feasibility study being conducted now, and so we hope that in the next year we will begin to build this next facility.

YG: I want to go back to the Greek housing for a second, because certainly in USF's history, USF has not been known to other state universities, even to itself, I think, as a Greek university. Why in 1994, when you came here and spoke with Betty Castor, why was it important that we put into place plans for Greek housing?

HN: Well, the interesting thing about that is that Rick Brown, as I told you, was president of the foundation at the time we approached them with our comprehensive plan—was also a student here at the University of South Florida, and he was a Greek. And so the thought was, and I'm confident that that was an accurate thought, that to help build student life, and to help the institution move away from the notion that it is, quote, just a commuter institution—now, there is nothing, and I'm going to say this, I think there isn't anything wrong with a commuter type of institution. I think what is not good is that there are too many negatives associated with the fact that it's a commuter institution. For example, in terms of students you recruit, many students say, Well, that's kind of like going to high school. The institution doesn't provide certain types of amenities and so forth, and they are not looking for that experience once they have graduated from high school.

So, what prompted us—I think the thought had been around, as a matter of fact, for years. As I'm told, Phyllis Marshall, who was the leader and the director of the student activities for several years—and I know Phyllis and Rick and those talked about the possibility of Greek housing. Also, land had been designated to build Greek housing over near the school, the grade school, and that land had sat there for years and years and years. The problem was the Greek organizations themselves could not find the resources to do it. In other words, some years ago, the graduate chapters and so forth kind of built Greek housing for undergraduate students. And then the undergraduate students paid for it. Well, that kind of fell by the wayside over the years. And so our students had struggled here for a long time to find a way to finance the housing. And so, as we talked about developing our overall housing plan, Greeks—the Greek plan fell into place. And so we decided that we would build them and then lease them to the Greeks themselves. So again, it had been around—the concept had been around for years, probably 15 to 18 years.

YG: In addition to your work with housing, you've aided in the increase of the freshman class of student enrollment. Can you talk a little bit about your involvement with student enrollment?

HN: Well, indeed. Enrollment planning and management is a part of the student affairs overall organization. And if I might, I'll just kind of give you an overview of how we're organized. Student affairs has in it enrollment planning and management, and in enrollment planning there is

admissions, there is financial aid, there is career services. There's the registrar's office, and now we have in it the PEP program, Personal Excellence Program. We also have advising in that subdivision. We kind of have it divided into subdivisions, and then we have what we call student life and wellness. Student life and wellness has in it the Marshall Center student government, student discipline, the counseling center, recreation—has about 14 different departments in it. And then we also have campus police.

Now, let me go back to the question you raised about enrollment. So recruiting students and retaining students, student retention, has been a huge part of my portfolio as vice president for student affairs. So the admissions office is responsible for finding, if you will, and making sure that we have the type of student that we'd like to have enrolled here at the university. And so the enrollment, let me say in terms of freshmen, grew from 1994 from about 2,200—about 2,300 freshmen, to 5,000, which is what we will enroll this coming year. Five thousand freshmen. That too is kind of like housing. We kind of put that in the plan, to say that we believe that the institution, if it were going to be the residential kind of institution that we were looking for, it needed to grow.

And I would say that—freshman-wise, I should say—that certainly has been one of Dr. Judy Genshaft's pet peeves, if you will.⁴ She has indicated, and did indicate during my first conversation with her—I talked about the first president I worked with, President Castor. But I also worked with Dr. Genshaft. And one of the things that she said to me was that she wanted to make certain that we attracted students at the number that we wanted, and we set forth the 5,000 plan, and in addition to that make sure that we attract the caliber of students. And so we've been moving, if you will, in the direction of raising the SAT scores, overall average of students, to the level that we think that we would like to have. We know that this is kind of a slow process, in terms of moving, again, the SAT of a huge class, but we are making progress. I think the SAT should move about 20-some points in about one year, I'm told, for next year.

YG: In addition to SAT students, what type of student or caliber of student are we looking for at the University of South Florida, as opposed to nine, 10 years ago? Has that changed?

HN: Well, I would say that—I'm not certain that has changed as much as—I think we have desired—if you ask me if change—if we desire to have students of, quote, higher caliber, if you will, of that time, I would say yes, we did. Did we—could we attract them is another story, however. But, yes, I think attracting more of those students—we're doing that now much more than we were then. We want a better mix, if you will, of students who are graduating in the top 10 percent of their high school class. We want a better mix of those students who are with higher SAT scores. We want a better mix of students who are National Merit quality. And so we set out and set forth each year to raise that number. So, what we want to do is make sure the trend line continues to go up, and it goes up in a way that it goes up in proportionality. Although we are recruiting more students each year, we want to see the percent of the class grow. And that's what we're attempting to do.

YG: Are we attracting enough minorities to USF? Has that been an issue at all?

HN: I think we are attracting more minorities each year. To give you an example in terms of, I think, how well we've done, last year—2000—I think it was the year 2000, we had a significant growth, one-year growth, in minority students—African-American students, we had over 35 percent for that year. Of the Latino, Hispanic students, we had over 33 percent. But that was one year. What you do—what you look at, in terms of enrollment, is which way the trend line is going on the

⁴ Judy Genshaft served as the sixth president of USF, from 2000 to 2019.

average. And so our trend line has been moving upward every year. Although, I mean we can—I mean, that was a nice thing to say, that we had a huge growth that year, the next year, obviously, we knew that we were not going to sustain that kind of growth. You can't grow 30 percent, 40 percent every year. However, when you look back at the average, our trend line continues to move up. And so in that vein, where we are, I think we can look at the numbers and say that the balance continues to occur in the right direction.

YG: Before I open—close with some closing questions, I just want to ask you about your aid, or your assistance, in creating a master's degree program in college student affairs. What is college student affairs, if you will?

HN: Well, college student affairs is a master's degree program, in concert with the College of Education—leadership in the College of Education. And the faculty decided that the University of South Florida was a good place for us to train professionals—people to become professional student affairs individuals. It took, I would say, about two years to three years before we got the curriculum actually put in place. Dr. Wilma Henry, who had been doing similar work at Wright State University in the College of Education as a faculty member was recruited to come here to help put this together. And what we do is we take in each year about 10 students—20 students, I'm sorry. Yes, about 20 students, as a cohort, and we train them in the classroom. Teach them about student affairs in the classroom, and then we provide practical experience to those students by assigning them to the various offices and various departments in student affairs.

We've graduated now about 80-some students, as I'm told, who have gotten jobs in institutions across the country. And we've been extraordinarily pleased. As a matter of fact, we always have a waiting list of students who would like to come to the program, but we don't have the space for them, and we want to keep it at the size that we're at, because we want to make certain that we do a quality job with developing them. So it's a win-win, I think, for the division of student affairs. It's a win-win for the College of Education. It's a win-win for the graduate school, in terms of the development of graduate credit hours. And it's a win-win for the students. And so we're very, very pleased.

YG: In your nine years of history at the University of South Florida, what are you most proud of?

HN: Well, I guess I'm proud of the fact that I've been entrusted with the leading, if you will, of an area that consists of a number of individuals who, it seems to me, believe that their calling is to serve students, and that's across the board. I can look at the registrar's office, I can look at the financial aid office, I can look at residence life and so forth, and say that while there can be, I think in any service arrangement—you can find sometimes some things that have not always gone perfectly well, but I think at the end of the day, if you can have 99 percent of them to go well, you ought to be extremely proud of that. And so I'd say that I'm very proud of the fact that we have a group of dedicated individuals who work very hard.

I'm proud of our students here at the University of South Florida. I think that when I look around at other institutions, and I match our students up with the students at other campuses, I'd tell you that there certainly is enough that is seen for us to be proud. Facilities development—I guess individuals kind of look back and say those are things that one can see, but I think at the end of the day, building facilities just cannot compare to helping students and individuals, if you will, develop into great human beings. And, again, what I see in terms of the graduates and so forth, I'm very proud of.

YG: Two quick questions. Where do you see USF in 10 years?

HN: Well, I am a believer that this university's song, if you will, for the lack of a better word, has not been written. I think that as we talk about the metropolitan university, as we talk about the Research I university, there is no question in my mind that a university with all of the talent and creativity that exists here in this faculty and others—and I mean, when I think here and sit at the table and understand the research that is going on—I mean, I don't believe that there is any reason why this institution can't be not just the, quote, babe in the woods anymore. We are indeed a Research I university now, but there isn't any reason why this university won't mature and take its rightful place right at the top of the Research I list. And so to do that, I think that all of the other pieces fall in place. The student life pieces fall in place, as the university takes on and yet has a wider-reaching, if you will, reputation. And so I think—again, I think the song hasn't been written.

YG: Final question. If you could leave a statement either to previous faculty and students that you've worked with, or to future faculty colleagues and students, what would you want to tell them about the University of South Florida?

HN: Well, I think I would say to them that creativity got us, I think, this far, and I believe creativity can take us to heights unknown, and always attempt to be as creative as they could possibly be. And they should work to that end, I guess.

YG: Dr. Nixon, I want to thank you very much.

HN: You're welcome.

End of interview.