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"A Discussion"

Branford Price Millar

E. Dean Anderson

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Branford P. Millar, E. Dean Anderson
"A Discussion"
Portland State College
May 25, 1967

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RITA DEWART [MODERATOR]: President Millar, would you like to define “What is Portland State?”

BRANFORD P. MILLAR [PSC PRESIDENT]: Portland State is a rapidly growing urban institution created by the State System of Higher Education primarily to serve the needs of students in the state’s major metropolitan area, and secondly, to provide resources for that area.

DEWART: Dr. Anderson, hasn’t there been an amazing physical growth since Portland State’s founding back in 1955?

E. DEAN ANDERSON [ASSISTANT TO PSC PRESIDENT]: Yes, there has, and this is of course typical of the institutions in the urban areas, as President Millar just mentioned. The growth here has been very great both in numbers of students and staff and in the physical facilities. In numbers of students, of course, the institution has grown from about 3,000 in 1955 to about 9,000 in ’66 and ’67. That’s a really pretty great growth, especially when you think of what concentration there has been here in buildings and in land. Now, of course, we’re on the verge of a much larger expansion physically, with the recently announced urban renewal program to develop still an urban, very densely, highly-used campus, but one that will eventually be able to accommodate, by 1980, about 20,000 students.

It probably should be noted that the really important thing about growth is what's happened in programs, that is, what's happened to the curriculum here, how much better can we meet the needs of students; and I think President Millar maybe should comment on that.

MILLAR: Yes, this has been the college's major task. When the college was founded as a four-year degree-granting college in 1955, it offered only four undergraduate curricula in science, social science, humanities, and education, and that was the program until the fall of '59. In the fall of '59, we started developing the standard undergraduate majors in fields within those four general areas, such as physics, chemistry, economics, mathematics, and so on. We now have developed the faculty and resources and procedures for over twenty undergraduate majors and some special certificate programs, such as our very distinguished program in [the] Middle East. We have begun developing master's programs; first a degree in Social Work, and following that, Master of Arts and Master of Science in Teaching, in which we now offer degrees in twenty fields. And with the funds which presumably and hopefully will be forthcoming from the legislature at the end of this session, we will be able to offer Master of Arts and Master of Science degrees in some sixteen or seventeen additional fields, so that we are now turning out a large quantity not only of bachelor's but of master's degrees, and in the very near future it is the expectation that we will be turning out doctoral candidates; in short, that it will be a relatively complete university.

ANDERSON: President Millar referred to one of our certificate programs, "Middle East." In an effort to respond to specific needs of this metropolitan area, the college has of course developed other certificate programs and departments. For example, the program in Law Enforcement and the program in Urban Studies are now off to a good start, and will mean a great deal to people concerned with problems that surround us in this area. Then, I think it should be noted also that we have developed, in addition to the fields in the liberal arts and sciences referred to, a strong program now in Business Administration. And, this department, of course, is very closely tied through its staff and their interests and work to a number of the enterprises in the area. For example, recently it was announced that we have organized a study center for transportation. Portland is a hub for transportation; it's a very important factor in the economy, and a lot of attention will be paid to personnel training and to procedures to improve our competitive situation in this very vital field here in the transportation studies center.

DEWART: President Millar, with this rapid growth of Portland State, hasn't this necessitated a great deal of cooperation with the Portland business community and with the city fathers?

MILLAR: Oh yes, it has. Mr. Anderson has already mentioned the Center for Transportation Studies, which will add to our present program of core studies: research, conferences, in

training seminars, workshops, and a steady flow of activity there. We have already been involved with what we call “internships” with banking, in which students, while they’re going to college here, have direct work experience with banking institutions. We have just developed another one in retailing, and there are many ways in which this activity goes on; and it’s for this reason, I suppose, that the business and industrial community has increasingly... shown an increasing interest in the college, to the extent that it mounted a very aggressive campaign to influence the legislature to develop graduate study and research at the doctoral level here, because they feel that this is absolutely essential to the economic growth of the area, as indeed it is.

As far as working with the city itself, this has been a very happy pattern of active cooperation, because the city recognizes that any metropolitan area these days, in order to be healthy, has to have a major university in it, and Portland is one of the largest cities in the country that does not have, as yet, a major university. It is for this reason, among others, that the city and the college have worked very closely together in promoting a federal urban renewal area for this entire area, which in combination with the South Auditorium renewal area, will produce a major transformation, an exciting new part of the whole city, right close to its downtown core. This is obviously in our great mutual interest.

ANDERSON: Speaking of this possibility of cooperation with government agencies, city fathers and so on, I think another great advantage of this institution in its location is that we do have the possibility—and we’ve already begun to follow this up—the possibility of relating our program closely to that of some of the other institutions in the area. For example, we have already under way cooperation with the Oregon Graduate Center, the privately-supported center for research and study here in the area. We have plans for programs developing with the medical school, which is certainly a very strongly-based institution, and I think over a period of time cooperative programs will come into being also with some of the privately-supported colleges in this area. We have all these possibilities and all this interest. I think as soon as the dust settles a little bit from some of our early construction and other distractions, I think you’ll see a great many of these cooperative programs in effect throughout the whole area.

MILLAR: As a matter of fact, in terms of... speaking of cooperation with private institutions, in the Urban Studies area, the college is already working with several of the private institutions in the administration of a federal grant, the purpose of which is to bring the professional resources and skills and background and experience of academics in five colleges to bear directly on problems of the urban situation.

DEWART: President Millar, in addition to the degree-granting programs, what other academic activities is Portland State involved in?

MILLAR: Working with the State System's Division of Continuing Education, which has a center here in Portland, there are some 6 to 7,000 students who do part-time work at night here in the college's facilities. The total of this, with the college's undergraduate and graduate students, comes to, obviously, something like 15,000 students at work here. The evening program or the continuing education program is to a great extent part-time, both credit courses for people—for students who can't attend during the day, for professional and business people who are upgrading themselves at night, for teacher preparation and actually part-time graduate work, as well as a large variety of non-credit courses of general cultural and social interest. It's a very active program.

ANDERSON: I think anyone who comes to the campus must feel that there's a lot confusion, there's so much activity going on; well, actually, when you add our programs and the many workshops, conferences and so on sponsored by the Division of Continuing Education, you'll find a very great number of people who aren't regular students, let's say, but who are here for various kinds of educational programs, and it certainly keeps the campus busy. As a matter of fact, I think that while the state's spending a considerable amount of money for facilities here, it's getting in one way a great bargain, because these facilities are used such long hours of the day, all week, that I just doubt whether anybody else's usage could approach that. That makes it a little hard for the maintenance staff, of course; they can hardly find, really, time when they can, let's say, clear people out and clean up. They do this by closing, for instance, sections of the cafeteria for a brief time, and then rush on to the next one. Anyway, there are a lot of people here, and a lot of activities.

DEWART: Dr. Anderson, let's go back to the student. How does a student go about enrolling in Portland State?

ANDERSON: He uses the regular application form available in any high school in the state, or he can write to our admissions director at Portland State College and get a lot of information about this. It's a simple process, a little bit of paperwork, nothing very burdensome. The biggest burden, of course, would be saving up his money for fees, but even those are moderate at a state-supported school. He does have to qualify academically. To enter in the fall term, an Oregon resident must have at least a 2.25 cumulative GPA from high school. For the winter, spring, and summer terms, that drops to 2.0. The students that also apply early in the spring I would say... excuse me, for financial help, I mean, he should apply early; for actual admission, he can initiate that a little later, in around the time of his graduation.

DEWART: With approximately 15,000 students, President Millar, where do they all come from?

MILLAR: The bulk of the students at the college come from the general metropolitan area, although there is an increasing number who come from wider areas of the state and even other states. This is an attractive, metropolitan, large city, and it is something of a magnet to students from other areas. When they come here, it's clear of course that this is not primarily a residential—this is not at *all* a residential—college, and many people may look on it as being slightly deficient in this respect, but actually in the development of higher education, one thing is becoming clearly significant and that is that the lack of necessity of paying room and board is the major saving that is available to the student to make higher education available to him, and the result is, in a sense, the commodity has come to the customer; and for this reason a great many more students are enabled to go to higher education, because they have only the cost of relatively low tuition. In addition to this, we find that students living in the city, moving to and from it, tend to become much less isolated and cut off from the real business of the world. As a result of this, we feel it very noticeable that the student body here is, you might say, "urbane," sophisticated; they know what the score is, they've been around, they're living within an adult world, and don't have the illusions about it that you might have if you were pushed off in a corner and only talked with other kids your age. Educationally, this can be a great advantage, and it is I think no accident that our students show a degree of awareness and maturity that is quite unusual amongst college students.

DEWART: That's an excellent point, President Millar, however, for the out of town student who might want direction, do you have someone that they go to for this kind of service?

MILLAR: Yes, the college has a housing office, which maintains a listing of various kinds of housing of all varieties in the neighborhood, and a student simply has to write or go to the housing office. In addition to this, a good many students live with relatives. And beyond that, there has recently come onto the campus a new private dormitory, very pleasant, very attractive, which has room for 550 students, which is not yet full, and which provides room and board at an unusually attractive level, at little more than one would expect to pay at a public dormitory.

[audio ends; tape runs silently about seven seconds; program ends]