

## Field Questions

**Narrator:** Prof. John S. Grady

**Interviewer:** Christopher Schwartz

**Dates:** April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2007 at 6:00 PM; April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2007 at 4:30 PM

**Location:** The La Salle University Honors Program Center located in the basement of McShain Hall.

**Language:** English

- State my name, interviewee's name, the project and purpose of the interview, interviewee's position at La Salle, location of the interview.
  - "Do I have permission to record this interview?"
- Biographical Information: birthdate, birthplace, spouse(s), child(ren), high school, undergraduate, graduate.
- What were your academic interests?
  - Why economics?
- What were your professional interests before you embarked upon your present career?
  - Why teaching?
  - Why higher education?
- What brought you to La Salle?
  - Describe the Economics Department during the Flubacher era and your role in it.
- Let's discuss the "pre-history" of the Honors Program as you understand it:
  - Who were the principle characters in the beginning and what were their ideas and goals?
  - Was it a fully-fledged, sovereign operation, or was it under the auspices of an academic or administrative department?
  - [Alternative questions:]
    - What was the structure and condition of the Program when you assumed the Directorship in 1969?
    - Why was it started? How was it organized in terms of curriculum and its relationship to other departments?
- Let's discuss the beginnings of your Directorship:
  - What were the circumstances that led to the change in the Directorship from Brother Patrick Ellis to you?
  - Why were you chosen?
  - What were your goals for the Program, short-term and long-term?
  - Did you have a vision or philosophy for the Program?
  - Was there a specific type or student(s) you wanted enrolling?
  - Was there a specific type of faculty you wanted teaching?
  - What was the decision-making process you used to determine the new direction of the Program?

- Let's discuss the evolution of the Honors curriculum, from its inception as independent study projects to the modern "Triple" (or, the Honors Program within the larger framework of La Salle University):
  - Where did the idea for this come from?
  - How and why did it come about?
  - What were/are the principles and ideas behind it?
  - Let's break it down by year and coursework...
    - *Freshman year "Triple"*: Describe their organization, the goal, and the decision-making process for the curriculum and the individual class composition (students and faculty).
      - Please elaborate upon the concept of the afternoon labs: what are their goal and the decision-making process for which are offered in a given year?
    - *Sophomore and Junior years Honors sections*: What are their goal and the decision-making process for which courses are offered?
    - *Senior Honors Project*:
      - What brought about the Honors Project?
      - It is supposed to serve as the capstone of the Honors student's undergraduate career. In what was does it accomplish this?
      - What is the process of creating an Honors Project? (I.e., does the student propose an idea or do you? How do you determine its value and feasibility?)
  - Overall, how would you characterize the relation of the Honors curriculum to the La Salle core curriculum? (I.e., "supercessionary," "complementary," or some other term?)
    - What has been its impact upon the core, if any? (I.e., the "Freshman Year Experience" – in your opinion, how has this endeavor fared?)
  - Let's discuss the Honors Colloquium: this is a facet of the Program which figures prominently in the advertisement literature of the 1970s and 80s, but seems to fade away during the 90s. I myself do not recall there being a Colloquium during my time with the Program. Has it been discontinued? If so, why? What was its purpose/goal, and design?
  - How would you characterize the Program's relationship to the La Salle mission?
- Let's discuss the students of the Honors Program:
  - In any given four-year period at La Salle, in total how many Honors students are actively enrolled?
  - Would you please share with me your candidacy standards and admissions requirements?
  - Over the years, has the entry pool changed or evolved, particularly in terms of academic ability, extracurricular activities, and demography?
    - What of the harder to quantify aspects of your entry pool, namely, their academic and professional interests, as well as their approach to education?
    - Would you please describe your educational philosophy and your concept of "diversification"?
  - [Alternative questions:]
    - Who are you looking for?

- Do you have a targeted locale or region or specific high schools? If so, why?
  - Do you have a set of targets for gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic background? If so, why?
  - Have your expectations of incoming and outgoing students changed? If so, why?
- Let's discuss **the nature of an Honors Program**...
  - In your essay, "Speaking as an Honors Program," which you wrote for *Petersons' Honors Programs* manual, you stated that the presence of an Honors Program at a college or university indicates something about the thinking of that institution. Would you please elaborate?
  - Would should the relationship between students and faculty be in an Honors Program? In this Program in particular, what are you trying to achieve with their interaction?
  - Why the focus on the Humanities?
- Let's discuss how the Honors Program measures success or accomplishment, both of itself and its students: I'm curious as to qualitative and quantitative measures, both within La Salle and the Program itself, as well as without, by such organizations as the National Collegiate Honors Council.
  - *Qualitative Measures*: Is this measured by student and faculty satisfaction? By a general sense of the mood of the class? Or some other means?
  - *Quantitative Measures*: Is this measured by the amount of prestigious scholarships, fellowships, and awards received by Honors alumni (in proportion to their graduating class size)? By the amount of acceptances to elite academic or professional schools? Or some other means?
    - What is the length of time allotted to an individual alum's career before he or she can be characterized as a "success" or "failure"?
- Let's discuss **the Directorship** over the years.
  - What have the operational relationships with the other academic and administrative departments been like?
  - How do you define what it means to be an Honors Program director? (If you were to write your own job description, what would you put in it?)
    - [Alternative question:] Am I correct in characterizing your position as an intermediary between the Honors students, their professors and departments, and the wider university? If so, then yours has not been an easy task. Would you mind sharing some of the challenges, frustrations, accomplishments, and surprises you've experienced?
- Wrapping up/Miscellaneous...
  - How would you describe your legacy at La Salle?
  - How have you balanced teaching with research and service? (Books and articles published; did you ever intend to go onto a Doctorate?)
  - What do you think is the future of the Program beyond your directorship?
  - Describe your time and positions with the National Collegiate Honors Council.
  - Would you take a moment to discuss your professorships at the War College and University of Pennsylvania?
  - Any regrets, final comments, or reflections?