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Jack Fernandez oral history interview by Yael V. Greenberg, March 4, 2003

Jack E. Fernandez (Interviewee)

Yael V. Greenberg (Interviewer)

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USF Florida Studies Center
Oral History Program
USF 50th History Anniversary Project

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TOPICS OF DISCUSSION

Dr. Fernandez came to USF in 1960 as an assistant professor of chemistry and physical science.

Background information

Dr. Fernandez was born and raised in Tampa. After receiving his Ph.D., Dr. Fernandez realized that he would probably not return to Florida, as there were few opportunities available for Chemistry majors.

Circumstances that brought Dr. Fernandez to USF

Conducting post-doctoral work at Duke University in 1956-1957, Dr. Fernandez first heard about the University of South Florida. Immediately, he began following the University's developments by obtaining copies of the *Tampa Tribune*. As soon as USF appointed its first president, John Allen, Dr. Fernandez wrote a letter to Dr. Allen and applied for a position at the University. About a year later, John Allen had appointed Sydney French as the academic dean who coincidentally was also a chemist. Sydney French interviewed Dr. Fernandez in 1957-1958, who by then was applying his knowledge of chemistry in the industrial field and working for a division of the Eastman-Kodak Corporation in Tennessee. Dr. Fernandez recalls that the interview with Sydney French went well and the following year, USF had hired Russell Cooper as dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, or the College of Liberal Arts as it was then called. By 1960, Dr. Fernandez was offered a job at USF. When Dr. Fernandez told his supervisor at Eastman-Kodak that he was leaving, his supervisor asked Dr. Fernandez "Are you sure there's going to be a university there when you get down [to Tampa]?" Dr. Fernandez's response to his supervisor was, "Well I hope so because the state of Florida says so."

Dr. Fernandez arrives at USF/Registers students

Dr. Fernandez initially came to USF for a three-week period in mid-July to assist in registering new students for their courses. "What we would do is to sit down and talk with each student that registered to try to figure out a schedule for him/her;" in September, classes began.

First references of USF/Location of USF

Prior to his appointment at USF in 1960, Dr. Fernandez kept informed about the progress of the University and was interested in learning all he could about the institution. The first major controversy that Dr. Fernandez recalls was where the university was going to be built.

Should USF be located in Tampa or Pinellas?

Residents of Pinellas County wanted USF to be built in their county, while information was spreading that it was to be constructed somewhere in the Tampa Bay area. Others wanted USF in the city of Tampa, or between the two—Pinellas and Tampa, which would have been viewed as a compromise for the residents living in either place. The Florida Legislators finally decided on building the university in Tampa, near Busch Gardens, “Some of the propaganda against [building a university] was it would be called ‘Beer Can University’ because of its proximity to the beer plants.”

“Dollars for Dorms” program

Once USF began its construction, one of the first projects to be initiated was the “Dollars for Dorms” program, which was funded by the city of Tampa. In other words, residents of Tampa would donate money to the University in order to build student dormitories. This was necessary, because there was not enough appropriation funding in those early days for construction of dormitories. The “Dollars for Dorms” program went off quite well, as residents in the community were excited to see the University begin to take shape.

Fond memories of first year at USF

Dr. Fernandez has fond memories of his first year at USF (1960). “It was very exciting, it was very different because nobody had tenure, including the deans. Everyone felt a little bit more freedom in spite of the fact that non-tenured people [faculty] are not supposed to have freedom, but no matter who you talked to they did not have it [tenure] either.” The majority of professors who came to USF in those early years were young. Dr. Fernandez recalls that he was thirty when he came to USF, “I was past the average.” He remembers a faculty member in the department of Philosophy, Max Holcutt, who was twenty-three when he got his doctorate at Yale and began teaching at USF.

Interesting aspects of working at USF in the 1960s

In the 1960s, all of the professors in the Chemistry department for example, knew each other. Today, there is not much contact between other departments and areas on campus; this is not at all unusual, but very typical. On the other hand, when Dr. Fernandez first came to USF, there were only three buildings on campus. Dr. Fernandez’s office was located in the Chemistry building, which housed biologists, psychologists, sociologists, and philosophers. Professors from multiple disciplines were working in close proximity to one another in those first three buildings, which included: Chemistry, the University Center, and the Administration building. The “old library” which was then part of the Student Activities Building was built a few months later, after December.

First office

Dr. Fernandez's first office was in the Administration building, as one of his first responsibilities at USF was to advise students in their course offerings; the Chemistry building had not been completed yet.

Early interest in USF

One of the main reasons that Dr. Fernandez decided to apply to USF for a position was that he was a native Tampan and had strong ties in the area.

Physical appearance of USF and surrounding roads—1959

"Well, I feel like I don't ever have to see the Sahara Desert, because I saw it that day [the first time Dr. Fernandez came to visit the campus]." Dr. Fernandez recalls seeing the campus in 1959 for the first time. "Fowler Avenue had not existed before it was cut for the University. It cut across an airfield." There are still traces of the airfield on the south side of Fowler Avenue. The airfield had been located near a beer bottling plant and ran through where the new CIS building currently stands on campus. Fletcher Avenue was a county road just as it is today. At the time, "Fowler [Avenue] did not really exist. It was really a big sand patch with ruts in it, and when we entered the campus it was the same thing. It [the campus] was pretty startling; the buildings were going up, nothing was completed." These descriptions were some of Dr. Fernandez's early impressions of the USF campus and surrounding areas. When Dr. Fernandez came to visit the campus in 1959 with his wife, he remembers hearing that one of the biggest complaints at the time, was that the staff, faculty and students, were losing the paint off of their cars because of the sand that surrounded the newly constructed buildings. Because there was sand all over campus, "when it was breezy...the sand would just sand-blast the car." People did complain about this.

Change in appearance of campus and surrounding areas

By 1960, the "desert-like" conditions of USF and Fowler Avenue that Dr. Fernandez had witnessed previously were no longer; the main road into campus from Fowler Avenue into the Administration building had been paved. The parking lots were also paved.

Instillation ceremonies

State Senator Sam Gibbons presided over the instillation ceremonies of USF as well as Governor LeRoy Collins, President John Allen, and other dignitaries including the faculty. The ceremony was held in September of 1960.

Chemistry and Physical Sciences—"Interdisciplinary thinking"

Dr. Fernandez was hired to teach Chemistry and Physical Science at USF; there was no Chemistry department as of yet. The original intent of the University was not to have any individual departments. Members of USF's first administration (John Allen, Sydney French, Russell Cooper), believed that "departments were divisive and they wanted people to have free-flow of ideas—interdisciplinary thinking and so forth." In order to reinforce this idea, departments were not called departments, and instead were known as programs. Dr. Fernandez was part of the Chemistry Program.

College of Basic Studies and College of Liberal Arts

The College of Basic Studies offered six classes; “CBS” was the prefix used to identify these core courses, which consisted of: American Ideal (Government course), Physical Science, English, Math, Humanities and a Biological Science class. Each professor taught in the College of Basic Studies as well as in his or her own discipline. In his first year of teaching, Dr. Fernandez taught a course in physical science and in general chemistry.

Physical Science and Biological Science

Physical sciences consisted of Chemistry, Physics, Geology and Astronomy. Biological sciences consisted of Botany and Zoology, etc.

Opposition of faculty members in USF’s decision to not have departments

While the majority of faculty members at USF were “politically liberal,” “all are very conservative when it comes to how a university should run.” Most of the faculty opposed the administration’s position to not have individual departments. This issue definitely caused some discussion, and many meetings were held in which faculty members voiced their concerns. One of the major concerns brought to the attention of the administration was how could USF compete with other institutions if it did not have the structures that was expected of a university. Eventually, and after much debate, the University did move toward a university structure that included departments. After that, professors had to choose whether they would remain in the College of Liberal Arts or the College of Basic Studies. Dr. Fernandez ended up choosing to stay in the College of Liberal Arts.

Early initiatives of President Mackey (1970)

One of the first initiatives that Mackey carried out as president of USF was to disband and abolish the College of Basic Studies.

Problems with the College of Basic Studies

According to Dr. Fernandez, the College of Basic Studies did not “work out” in the manner that it was initially conceived. This was due in part to the “conservative” nature of how faculty members thought certain disciplines should be arranged. Once disbanded, faculty who were in the College of Basic Studies had to decide which college and department they should move into. This initiative took place during Mackey’s administration. Overall, Dr. Fernandez believes that the decision to close down the College of Basic Studies was a good one.

Registering first students at USF

Some of the first students who registered at USF in 1960, graduated from local high schools in 1959, and actually waited a year before the University opened its doors so they could be part of the charter class. “It was pretty exciting to be in a first year university, to be the first graduates. Many students wanted to come to USF.

Commuter nature of USF—1960s

In 1960, the majority of the first students who attended USF lived in the area and lived at home. The commuter nature of students caused some problems particularly in the area of student life. Unlike other universities in the state, USF mostly attracted students from the local population. “There were downsides, I remember cases where you would see kids having lunch in their cars.” These students were not taking advantage of the university according to Dr. Fernandez. “There were no traditions, there were no standards set-up, and there were no guideposts. Traditions had to be built, we had to sink root.”

Close-knit university

In those early days, the University was a close-knit community.

Faculty senate

Dr. Fernandez was part of the All University Senate, which was another group that was “a burr under the saddle of many faculty members.” This was because it was not a faculty senate, but represented everybody on campus from plant and grounds workers to the deans.

Dr. Fernandez pays a visit to see Dr. John Allen

Dr. Fernandez recalls a time when he was upset about something that was taking place on campus, and how he went to see Dr. Allen to complain. Today, professors do not generally visit the president of USF when they have a problem. “It was a little bit different and less formal environment.” Dr. Fernandez retired from USF in 1995 and has therefore not had personal contact with Dr. Genshaft, the current president of USF. In those early days, it was possible for faculty members to have more interaction than they do today with other departments.

Educational strategies of USF science courses

In Chemistry, Dr. Fernandez and his colleagues were free to teach classes based on what they deemed important. However, courses such as physical science required more of a detailed curriculum. C.C. Clark was chairman of physical sciences when Dr. Fernandez first began teaching at USF. Clark had a rank equivalent to a dean, despite the fact that no deans were appointed in USF first years. Dr. Clark organized the course and chose the books for the physical course prior to Dr. Fernandez’s and other faculty’s arrival. He was considerably older than the average age of faculty members hired at USF (he was in his 60s). Dr. Clark would lecture once a week and Dr. Fernandez would hold two discussion sessions (one hour each) and a lab (two hours) based on Dr. Clark’s lectures. Dr. Fernandez and his colleagues would run the lab and discussions portions of the course. The discussion courses allowed no more than twenty-five students, “It was a very idealistic time, people had great ideas on what to do. Everyone knew that small classes were better than larger ones, of course that would change.” Dr. Fernandez and his colleagues tried to be well versed in other disciplines of sciences in which they were not specialists, such as astronomy and geology. In chemistry, all of the faculty members as well as the director of the division of natural sciences would decide collectively on what textbook should be used.

Students

Dr. Fernandez recalls that there were between eight and ten chemistry majors who graduated in the charter class; over half of these students went on to get their Ph.D.'s in chemistry. "We had no graduate students, we had nothing but freshman the first year." In general, science departments depended on graduate students to assist professors in research in their laboratories. For this reason, and because of USF's unique situation, freshman students were recruited to assist professors in the science labs. Dr. Fernandez recalls one student that worked for him, Joanna Siegfried who ended up co-publishing three or four scientific papers; she ended up getting a Ph.D. and post-doc in chemistry. Presently, she is a renowned organic chemist. "The students were good, they were serious. They felt the same freedom we [faculty] did in a way, they were able to express themselves a lot more than later students."

Changes in Chemistry department—departmental vs. outside funding

Around the eighth year of working at USF, the chemistry department and administration decided to move toward a focus on research, and organized a Ph.D. program; the department also began applying for funded research opportunities. Prior to this funding was provided by the department for research and equipment. When Dr. Fernandez accepted his faculty position at USF, he remembers receiving a call from Dr. Clark asking him if he needed any equipment, as there was money available. Afterwards, the department purchased instruments for use in course study, and not for the purpose of research. If a faculty member wanted equipment for use in their research, they had to find funding in order to purchase needed materials. The idea was to bring additional money into the department; this change in funding became increasingly popular as the years went by. The push for outside funding gets even stronger when there is a lack of money available for research opportunities and equipment.

Current status of the department

Today, the chemistry department has at least six new professors since Dr. Fernandez retired. The year before retiring, Dr. Fernandez was chairman of the chemistry department and was responsible for hiring several of the most recent faculty members. The difference in research in those early days was that professors could work on what they wanted to work on. Today Dr. Fernandez believes that "one has to work on what [research] will bring in the cash, it's a big strain."

Tenure in the 1960s

In the 1960s, most faculty members received tenure after being at USF within three years. In fact, if the chairman of a division/department did not write a letter to the president of USF stating specific reasons why a faculty should not receive tenure, it was automatic. "That's the way it was always done, it [tenure] was not strenuous as it is now. Even if you have a long list of publications a foot long and grant money, it may not be the right kind of grant money. There is always some pressure."

Class size

The organic chemistry department decided that they did not want to teach more than forty-five students at a time as the classroom was only capable of holding this specific number of students. Even if it meant that the professors in chemistry had to teach an

additional course section, the professors in this department refused to teach more than forty-five students at one time. Classes ultimately increased in size as professors felt pressure to produce more research rather than teach multiple sections of the same course. Increased class size occurred throughout most universities.

Diversity of students and faculty in chemistry

In terms of gender, Dr. Fernandez notes that there were many female students who enrolled in science courses particularly in the charter class. Dr. Fernandez recalls a time in the chemistry department when the faculty was looking to hire another professor. Two candidates, one man and one woman were interviewed and the committee thought that the woman was the best choice for the position. The director of the program said, 'You guys just want a harem.' "There was always bias and prejudice." Unfortunately, the woman was not hired. In terms of other diversity within the chemistry department, there has only been one African-American professor, Ben Aikens, who came to USF in the late 1960s/early 1970s. Dr. Aikens made tenure at USF and went on to the National Science Foundation (NSF) and eventually on to another university.

Segregation at USF

According to Dr. Fernandez, the first year USF became established, it was "still racially segregated." Segregation policies were dismissed by USF in its second year when the universities became racially integrated. Dr. Fernandez does not recall any instances of violence or problems pertaining to USF's decision to become an integrated institution. During some of his freshman chemistry courses, Dr. Fernandez remembers having discussions about segregation and how some of his students did not "like the idea very much."

First office

When Dr. Fernandez came to USF, his first responsibility was to help register students; therefore his first office, which was only for a short time, was on the first floor of the administration building. Once the chemistry building opened, Dr. Fernandez received the first key issued, and was given office number 310. Eventually, Dr. Fernandez moved his desk closer to one of the chemistry labs since he was spending the majority of his time conducting experiments.

Chemistry building—physical structure

The chemistry building today looks like it did in the 1960s except that the third floor has gone through some changes. Both the east and west sides of the third floor mirrored each other, with a large hall down the middle of the building and laboratories on the sides. In order to be more efficient, the administration decided to fill in the large hallway or corridor to make more space. The hallway was an excellent feature in the chemistry building for if a spill or accident occurred in one of the labs, students could exit the building immediately via the hallways. In other buildings, the hallways were located on the inside. In the chemistry building however, the hallways were constructed outside allowing students and faculty immediate entrance and exit. Dr. Fernandez believes that this particular feature was "a good safety feature and more humane."

Lack of windows in first buildings

One of the features of the new construction at USF that Dr. Fernandez openly criticized was the lack of windows. Today, this building feature has changed as most facilities on campus are built with multiple windows. “It was in the interest of saving money with heating and cooling” that the early buildings of USF did not have many windows constructed.

Dr. Fernandez remembers having a discussion with the dean regarding why many faculty members were concerned about having a window. Dr. Fernandez replied back to the dean that he was not sure either what all the fuss was about, however, “It must be something, because every dean has one. There was a submerged anger that people had about that.”

Faculty interaction

Faculty interaction was much greater in the first years of USF than it is today. Interaction between different departments was due in part to the close proximity of buildings and offices. “You could go to lunch and get the guy next door and he might be a biology professor or English professor and you would have lunch together and talk about other things. I felt that the greatest education I have ever had was in those first five years.” Throughout the years, Dr. Fernandez has had many good friends who were professors in other departments. “I have had a full graduate program in evolution I feel, just from being a friend of Glen Wolfenton who was an Ornithologist.” “It was a very exciting time, there is no time for that now [faculty interaction]. I think, now you have to get those bucks.”

John Allen’s initiatives to USF

John Allen set the tone for a general education program, which Dr. Fernandez felt was a good idea at the time. Unfortunately, the idea of general education got “submerged in the end.” Throughout the interview, Dr. Fernandez has been talking about the importance of general education and learning about other disciplines. Dr. Allen was also responsible for the establishment of the medical and engineering school.

Layout of campus

“He [John Allen] helped the University grow, he was responsible for the lay out of the campus. At first it was criticized a lot, but if you look back over it and see where everything is, it makes sense.” One of the biggest complaints about the initial layout of the campus was that buildings were spread so far apart, “You had to walk so far to get from here to there.” Since Allen’s tenure, most of the spaces between buildings have been filled in. Dr. Fernandez believes that if the University had been constructed with buildings all clumped together, it would have been more convenient to the first professors, however this was not John Allen’s vision. Today there is plenty of room to expand and build additional science buildings for example, in the designated areas on campus.

General education

One of John Allen's primary interests was to promote the idea of general education, in other words, that every student at USF would have a basic education in six areas. In European universities for example, students only take courses in their required disciplines; they are not required to enroll in general education courses.

Mackey vs. Allen

President Mackey abolished the College of Basic Studies, which was one of Allen's first initiatives. There were problems with the College of Basic Studies, including the fact that the average salary of faculty was much lower than in "corresponding departments in other colleges." If a professor was teaching physical science in the College of Basic Studies, they were making less money than they would if they taught Physics, Geology, or Chemistry in the science department. Once Mackey abolished the College of Basic Studies, the remaining faculty had to compete for jobs within the other departments on campus. "There is a difference between implementation and theory sometimes."

Social gatherings for faculty and staff

When Dr. Allen was president, the university held a "President's Ball" at the University Center; tuxedos and formal attire were required. There was no liquor permitted at the President's Ball, as Allen did not allow it to be served.

No sports permitted under John Allen's presidency

In addition to liquor, Dr. Allen did not allow football or other sports on campus. Physical education and activities, however, was provided for students. At the time, Dr. Fernandez agreed completely with Dr. Allen's policies regarding sports. Dr. Fernandez's tune quickly changed as he realized, that "To many legislators, the guys who pay the bills, we were not a real university. A university is a place where football is." Dr. Fernandez is pleased at USF's recent decision to incorporate football into their program, and ultimately believes that the sports program will help the University overall. Within six years of initiating the program, USF is already competing for one of the bowls. Football brings "fast recognition" except with respect to recent political situations [Al-Arian] that have brought a lot of outside attention to the University.

President Mackey

Within a year of taking over as president of the University, President Mackey knew every faculty member by name. "He was a good politician, he knew how to get things done."

Distance from personal residence to USF

Dr. Fernandez initially lived ten miles south from the University, near the Hillsborough River, what is now called Martin Luther King (then called Buffalo Avenue). Prior to the construction of the interstate, the drive to USF was long. In 1972, Dr. Fernandez moved within walking distance of the chemistry building, one block east of 50th Street between Fowler and Fletcher Avenues; he and his family lived at this residence for thirty-one years. Dr. Fernandez would carpool with other people sometimes in order to get to work. The construction of the interstate made it much easier for Dr. Fernandez to get to USF in those early days.

Dollars for Dorms/Community animosity toward USF

Dollars for Dorms was a “popular movement where people were donating money to get the University started.” Dr. Fernandez does not remember much specific information regarding the program except that the citizens of Tampa became angry with USF from time to time regarding issues such as the Johns Committee and certain faculty members who were teaching inappropriate curricula. At times, there “arose an animosity in some corners of the town against the University. At first, there was a great friendship, a great desire to have the University here; it was pretty widespread.” At the present time, Dr. Fernandez believes that, “They [community members] are glad we are here, but there is no big fuss about it.”

Working at USF in those early days

Dr. Fernandez feels that the most important feature of working at USF in the early days was the associations between faculty members in different disciplines. As a prime example of these close associations, Dr. Fernandez refers to the theatre departments’ production of *A Midsummer Nights Dream* (summer of 1961), which was open to all faculty and staff members. Dr. Fernandez participated in the production and, consequently, got to interact with additional faculty members from different departments. “It seemed like we [faculty and staff] were part of the University. I think people tend to feel part of their department now more than the University. I think this [feeling of disconnect] is what the early founders were trying to avoid.”

Faculty tensions in early years of USF

In those first few years, Dr. Fernandez notes that there was a great deal of tension felt among the faculty because rules were being written. As an example, Dr. Fernandez remembers sitting down with a committee in the first year to write down a curriculum. Many faculty members had different ideas about the kinds of things that should and should not be taught. Many arguments took place about specific curricular requirements. Hiring of faculty also became a major concern of faculty in USF early days. For example, some professors only wanted to hire faculty who would primarily dedicate themselves to teaching, while others wanted to hire faculty who would focus their efforts on research. As an institution, the University was “migrating” toward an emphasis on research rather than instruction. “People felt very empowered to express themselves at that time.” Dr. Fernandez remembers many meetings where faculty would stand up and directly argue with the president of the University. “It was not a time of bliss and peaceful and idyllic study and research. It was a very tumultuous period for everybody I think because we were setting the stage for this University what it was to become, for better or for worse.”

Community support for USF

Dr. Fernandez does remember an issue that involved a student who objected to what a professor was teaching. The student was spurred on by the opinions of his parents who used their child to voice their concerns. This is one example of a situation that “rallied the faculty because one of the things that faculty believe is that they should be able to determine what they teach and that their orientation is correct even though it differs from somebody else. This is the meaning of tenure.” There was a lot of outcry and

complaining by the community in trying to have the professor fired. The faculty member was not fired.

Johns Committee

Dr. Fernandez never really closely followed the Johns Committee as no faculty in the sciences ever became involved in the situation. The Committee initially held their meetings at the Hawaiian Village Hotel on Dale Mabry, just south of Columbus Drive. “Apparently they [committee members] were looking for homosexuals in the staff and faculty [at USF], and they were complaining that there was rampant homosexuality and this was affecting the students.” When John Allen was made aware of the Committee, he invited them on campus to conduct their meetings and interviews of USF faculty and staff. Allen’s actions helped to “tone down” the situation by creating a feeling of openness. In total, four to five professors left the University permanently because of Committee’s actions. Of the professors that left, Dr. Fernandez was acquainted with two of them; one had been in the faculty/staff/student production of *A Midsummer’s Night Dream*. Prior to the interviews conducted by the Committee, it never occurred to Dr. Fernandez that the two professors he was friendly with, might be homosexual. “It [the Johns Committee] was a bad time in the history of the USF. Things like that, just like the present flap about Al-Arian really polarize people. It’s another element of polarization which we don’t need much.”

Dress code for students in early days

The USF administration did not “formally” designate a dress code, however students “applied their own.” Shorts were not permitted by either sex. Professors were asked to wear suits and ties, yet a few refused, citing their “civil right not to wear a tie if they did not want to. It was that kind of era that added to the tension, there was always something to be angry about.” In terms of the student body, most were rather conventional; boys wore their hair in crew-cut fashion, while the girls dressed as they had in the 1950s. Major changes in student clothing came about the time of the Vietnam War, according to Dr. Fernandez. During the Vietnam War, students walked around campus barefooted, with t-shirts, jeans and flip-flops. Because of the possible exposure to chemicals, Dr. Fernandez did not allow his students to wear sandals in the chemistry lab; they also had to wear safety glasses.

Dr. Fernandez recalls one lab session where one of his students forgot their safety glasses. Not having additional pairs of glasses, Dr. Fernandez told his student that if he wanted to participate in the lab, he had to get his pair from home. Complaining to Dr. Fernandez that he lived all the way across town, the student had no choice but to retrieve his glasses. Rushing back to campus, the student received a traffic ticket for speeding. “In terms of dress, anything goes during the 1960s.”

Student composition in early days

Most of the first students, who attended USF in the early days, were Floridians. Today, while a high percentage of students are still in-state students/locals, the demographics have changed to include out-of-state students.

Students in the 1960s vs. students in the 1990s

Students in the 1960s were more career-oriented than they are today. “Most of the students of that day wanted to get their degree and do their profession.” In the 1990s, Dr. Fernandez still saw his students as being serious and career-oriented, but not nearly as much as his students were in the 1960s. “Students now are more preoccupied not with fulfilling a dream of some kind of work they want, but of making money and of getting a job.” From Dr. Fernandez’s perspective, the latter position appears to be what parents want for their children.

Dr. Fernandez also taught in the Honors Program for many years. He remembers one time asking his students to introduce themselves with their name and major. Interestingly enough, more than half of his students declared that they were accounting majors. Questioning such a high percentage of accounting majors, Dr. Fernandez further queried his students. Eventually, one student raised their hand and said that she had decided to become an accountant because her “parents said there was good money in it.” Furthermore, Dr. Fernandez believes that students in the 1960s wanted to do chemistry for he believes there is a clear distinction between wanting to do chemistry and wanting to be a chemist.

Food service on campus—1960s

Morrison’s Cafeteria was the first food service provider on campus; they were located in the University Center on the east side on the first floor. Students and staff would frequently eat in the cafeteria-styled eatery. In 1960, the first year the University opened, there were only 1900 students attending USF; 1500 of those 1900 were full-time equivalent students. The remainder of the students enrolled at USF on a part-time basis.

The Oracle

In the 1960s, there were two newspapers, the *Tampa Tribune* and the *Tampa Daily Times*; one day a week the *Tampa Daily Times* would publish a USF edition. The *Tampa Tribune* eventually bought out the *Tampa Daily Times*. Eventually, USF began its own newspaper, which highlighted university news. “There was no football to talk about in those early days.” The Vietnam War, change in status of students, and tuition increases were some of the features that the *Oracle* wrote about. Admittedly, Dr. Fernandez did not read the *Oracle* frequently.

The Vietnam War and other political issues on USF campus

In addition to the Vietnam War, political elections were also hot topics of discussion among USF faculty, students, and staff. During the Vietnam War, there were many “fiery speeches held on campus.” Dr. Fernandez believes that Abby Hoffman even spoke on campus during this era. Occasionally there were professors who were highly outspoken about political issues. Bruce Williamson, a biology professor in the 1970s, would put on a beret and make a speech, “He would get up and make a speech and you would think it was Lenin; he was a devout Communist.” Williamson’s speeches on campus caused a lot of problems. Dr. Fernandez recalls that one of his friends at a Rotary Club meeting in Ybor City remarked that Williamson should be sent back to Russia.

When Dr. Fernandez heard this comment, he said that Williamson was an American and should be allowed to speak freely. The Johns Committee as discussed previously was also an extremely controversial situation that took place on campus.

The All-University Book

During the first two-three years of USF's establishment, students and faculty throughout different disciplines were required to read the same book; the University would then hold various forums to discuss the book. While Dr. Fernandez thought that the All-University Book idea was good, many students in particular felt some resentment, "Why should this guy [faculty/administration] be telling me what to read?" One of the books that Dr. Fernandez remembers reading was Clinton Rossertor's, *The American Presidency*, which discussed the history of presidential epics; Vance Packard's *the Hidden Persuaders* was another example of an All-University Book. "This idea was an effort to get people to come together." The entire University was involved in this approach, not just individual departments.

Race Relations and other political events at USF

Integration at USF occurred during the first year of USF's opening, "It went over very smoothly." The Vietnam War and Dr. Martin Luther King were some other examples of political events that both students and faculty were concerned and protested about. "Race relations were not a problem here." Dr. Fernandez does not recall any instances of demonstrations for/against race relations that took place on campus; he did not participate in any demonstrations. He was however on several panels which discussed certain issues.

Dr. Fernandez does recall one instance where he was on a panel with a history represented who represented the conservative side and on the other side was a professor who was considered extremely radical; Dr. Fernandez was charged as the being the moderate person on the panel. The panel was deliberated in front of various student groups who ultimately ended up attacking Dr. Fernandez who held the moderate position. The other two professors seemed to protect Dr. Fernandez from the students.

Final thoughts

Prior to coming to USF, Dr. Fernandez had never had the opportunity to teach students; he feels that he was a good teacher and researcher. Now that he is a Professor Emeritus of Chemistry, the only thing that Dr. Fernandez misses is the teaching. "Research was such an up-hill battle, it is kind of a relief not to do that anymore." In addition to teaching and research, Dr. Fernandez was also chair of the chemistry department for one year. "The University is such a resource that people barely realize what is here." Throughout the years, Dr. Fernandez has taken many courses in different disciplines. "Anybody over seventeen years of age can avail themselves of the opportunities that USF can provide."

End of Interview