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Kathleen Heide oral history interview by Yael V. Greenberg, March 11, 2003

Kathleen M. Heide (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

Year of Arrival

Dr. Heide arrived at USF in August 1981 after accepting a position as assistant professor of the department of criminal justice (presently called criminology). At that time, the department was located in the department of social and behavioral sciences. Heide was just completing her doctoral degree in criminal justice from the State University of New York at Albany (now called University at Albany State University of New York).

Looking for a research position

Interested in pursuing a position in research and realizing that changes in funding were occurring at the government level (President Reagan had just entered office), it appeared that one of the few ways that one could do research in an academic setting was to see work in a university. In addition to USF, Dr. Heide had several offers at other institutions in Florida, Texas and in New York State. "USF seemed promising; it was a very young institution at that time and it seemed to have a great deal of promise. People that I consulted with had heard about it. It seemed like, at least in the beginning, a place to start an academic career."

Description of USF Campus

"It was expansive." In particular, Dr. Heide remembers that the front entrance of the university had no marquee and there were very few trees, "It was almost barren and stark." USF looked very different than it does today, especially in terms of the number of buildings. "It looked like there was a lot more room for growth and a lot of undeveloped or uncharted land."

Structure and diversity of criminal justice department

In 1981, the department of criminal justice consisted of about twelve professors, including one other female faculty member, Nola Allen. Nola was an African-American scholar who had also been trained as a lawyer. In terms of diversity within the department and on the Tampa campus, Dr. Allen and Dr. Heide were the only examples. In terms of diversity, Manny Vega, a Hispanic man, was the only other professor working in the criminal justice department, however he taught on the Sarasota campus. It really

depends on what kind of diversity one is looking at, in this case, women and the more represented minority groups were not greatly represented during the early 1980s. Within a few years, Dr. Allen left USF, and for a number of years, Dr. Heide was the only female professor in the department of criminal justice.

Career at USF?

Over the years, the department of criminal justice has been rather stable. “We have not lost a great deal [of faculty members]. Since arriving in the 1980s, only one professor out of the original faculty in the criminal justice department has left the university. Of course, the department has had some quick turn over in terms of recent hires having other opportunities and subsequently, did not stay at the university for a long period of time.”

Reasons for USF's stability

“There has been quite a bit of stability.” Many people, including Dr. Heide, came to USF thinking that USF would be “a starter school, a good place for a couple of years and it [the university] cut one’s academic teeth in a sense and then realized that it was a great place and a growing place.” Dr. Heide has remained at USF because of the institution’s growth and significant opportunities for advancement. Recently, Dr. Heide had lunch at the Lifsey House on campus and sat next to Provost Stamps and Arthur Guilford of the Department of Communications and Sciences Disorders. Both Provost Stamps and Dr. Guilford began conversing with Dr. Heide about their extended careers at USF and how they had only expected to be at the university for a short time; Dr. Guilford has been with USF for more than twenty-five years and Provost Stamps for twenty-one years. Thus, according to Dr. Heide, the potential for USF as an institution that offered tremendous opportunities has been a reoccurring theme and a reason why many faculty members have stayed from fifteen to thirty years. In addition, USF has been a place where the faculty have “grown in stature in their field and in their community and come to really grow up in a sense academically in the Tampa area.”

President John “Jack” Lott Brown

John Lott Brown was the president of USF when Dr. Heide first arrived in 1981. “He was a very approachable man.” As an assistant professor of Criminology, Dr. Heide remembers being asked to the presidential conference room for a meeting that Dr. Brown hosted concerning a program on children that he wished to begin at USF. Another professor who attended the luncheon was Archie Silver, a distinguished professor in the department of psychiatry. While the project did undergo some setbacks, Dr. Heide does admire the determination of president Brown to initiate a children’s program that was able to reach out across many different departments of the university. Dr. Heide was asked to contribute to the project because of her research on juvenile homicide. “I was very taken that here a president of the university knew what some of his assistant professors was doing [in terms of research interests]. By and large, as a young professor one does not have a great deal of interaction with a university president, however this was not the case with president Brown.” Dr. Heide distinctively recalls that every time she ran into president Brown, that he recalled her area of expertise and always asked about her most recent publications. “My interaction with John, we called him Jack, was very positive.” In 1985 after receiving a faculty alumni professor award, Dr. Heide sat next to

Dr. Brown and remembers him as a “charming, very involved man. He always remembered who I was; Jack took an interest in young faculty and followed what they did. As busy as a president is because their schedules are enormously busy, he would have a moment here or there to connect with a young scholar. His vision I think of this university was that it would become the university it is today.”

USF differ from other institutions

In terms of size, USF was much bigger than any university Dr. Heide had ever attended; she graduated from Vassar College, which was a small liberal arts college. She never had a class of more than twenty-five to thirty students with seminars restricted to twelve students. At Albany where she attended graduate school, Dr. Heide never had a class of more than forty students. When Dr. Heide came to USF, she was in early twenties and could not get over the enormous size of the classes. Having never attended a large class as a student, Dr. Heide now had to contend with being the instructor of a course with an enrollment of 120 students. The class was taught in the auditorium of what is now called BEH. A second difference of USF and other institutions was the casual dress of the students—students wearing shorts to class. Another difference Dr. Heide noticed was that the university was much more diverse in terms of the student populations that she had previously been exposed to. “There were different viewpoints, different life circumstances that students would bring to the table.”

Challenges of students in the 1980s

Dr. Heide taught a range of students who were always motivated and prepared on one side of the spectrum, and on the other side, she noticed that some of her students were “ill prepared for college and had some deficits in both writing and analytical ability.” In previous institutions that Dr. Heide had worked in, she feels that they were “more selective in terms of admissions” than USF. The typical profile of students at USF was rather diverse, from students who were not academically prepared to students who were “bright, capable and motivated.” Due in part to the nature and interest of Dr. Heide’s research in juvenile homicide, she noticed that she could lead students to “become engaged and become interested.” Personally, Dr. Heide found motivating her students to be a great challenge that she fully embraced. Moreover, Dr. Heide believes that if she came into the classroom excited and interested, her students were “clearly reachable and very interested.” Throughout her career, Dr. Heide has received five or six teaching awards from the university and therefore has a good sense of the role she has played with her students.

Change of students—1980s to 2003

Throughout the last twenty years, Dr. Heide has noticed several changes regarding her students, including a dramatic increase in diversity of the student population. This increase can be seen in terms of race, ethnicity and culture. In addition to diversity, students today are more “technologically knowledgeable, they outpace many of the professors. They have a much greater comfort level than even I have today.” Today the level of expectation of student knowledge of technology is much higher than it has been in previous years. A third difference in students might not be considered a positive, but over the years, Dr. Heide has witnessed “a greater level of entitlement where students at

least on this campus, have a level of expectation that things should be done for them.” This level of entitlement has also been observed in the area of student grades, where grades have become inflated. In recent years, Dr. Heide has noticed that students often feel that their opinions mean as much as a professor’s expertise in a particular field. “There is a vast amount of difference and that really is where we talk about scholarship versus just sitting around and talking about what one believes on the basis of no data.” When Dr. Heide was in college the level of expectation of empowerment did not exist. One example of the change in entitlement that Dr. Heide has personally experienced was when one of her course sections became full and a student asked her why she could not get a larger room to allow additional students into the class. “I think this level of entitlement is reflective to some extent, of this society.” Another change that Dr. Heide has observed is the phenomenon that students think of themselves as being the same as everybody else (i.e., professors). One of the primary reasons why people attend college is to learn how to do research, write, and organize their thoughts so that they do become masters of a particular subject. In a sense, the instructor is viewed as the “guide ... the mentor ... the facilitator.” Within the last twenty years, Dr. Heide and her fellow colleagues have observed their students displaying a different kind of attitude towards their [professors’] roles in the education process; this is a trend occurring nationally and not just reflective of the students at USF.

From assistant professor to associate dean and beyond

Over the last twenty years, Dr. Heide has worked through the ranks to become associate dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. Most recently (May 2003) she has accepted the position of interim dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. For the first twenty years at USF, Dr. Heide’s primary focus was in her research. Supportive of her research in juvenile homicide, the university allowed Dr. Heide to develop expertise and become both a national and international expert on the subject. This is significant because in order to become an administrator an eventually move up to the ranks of associate dean, a faculty member must have extensive experience, “credibility, and have walked the walk in terms of scholarship.” With over seventy publications and presentations, Dr. Heide has “done the scholarly piece.” Because of the nature of her research, Dr. Heide was often called as an expert witness in juvenile homicide cases and eventually received her license as a mental health professional. Service in the university and community on a national level was also an important factor in Dr. Heide receiving a promotion. The hallmark of a professor remains to this day three-fold: research, teaching and service. When Dean Renu Khator began looking for a new associate dean of faculty programs, Dwayne Smith, chair of the criminology department, encouraged Dr. Heide to apply. Reluctant to leave teaching, Dr. Heide decided to go through the process of applying for the new position. As the description of the deanship began to unfold and the job evolved, Dr. Heide became more and more interested in the position. Throughout the interview process, Dr. Heide made it clear that she wanted to retain some of her responsibilities as a professor; Dean Khator was extremely supportive of Dr. Heide’s research. Dr. Heide was offered and accepted the position as associate dean of faculty programs. Showing her commitment to the scholarship needs of an associate dean, Dean Khator asked that Dr. Heide continue her research one day a week as part of her responsibilities as associate dean; mentoring of graduate students was also encouraged as well as continued service to

the community. Dean Khator assembled a new team of associate deans in the College of Arts and Sciences.

Conservative nature of students in the 1980s

During the 1980s, there was definitely a level of casualness regarding clothing among the students. “The attitudes of the ‘80s was conservative and my students were more conservative than I was as a college student and I guess as I am today still. I was taken by this initially.” Dr. Heide recalls one of her students taking one of her mass lecture classes that consisted of nearly 400 students. In order to keep so many students interested, Dr. Heide felt that she had to “play to the masses;” in other words, the class had to “be exciting, it had to move it had to jump, it had to have some glitz.” One of the ways she kept her students motivated was to bring in leading experts in the field of juvenile violence and homicide. At one point Dr. Heide was able to get the governor of Florida to speak to her class. Many of these large lecture classes were also televised. In reference to the story—one of the speakers brought in for the mass lecture was an attorney who was considered extremely liberal and who focused on murder cases and what specific characteristics made people become murders. “He wanted to shake up the students to realize that these were not everyday people that one day woke up and sort of went bad and committed these atrocities.” After the lecture, one of Dr. Heide’s students asked to speak with her privately and wanted to know more about the speaker. He further went on to say that the speaker was a “liberal.” This situation according to Dr. Heide would never have happened in the 1960s or 1970s. This level of conservatism among Dr. Heide’s students was definitely a challenge and made her more aware of the need to “provide [students] with opportunities and take them to a point to realize that their lives and their pathways were very different than the individuals to whom they were sitting in judgment.”

Structure of the College of Arts & Sciences in the 1980s

When Dr. Heide came to USF in the 1980s, the College of Arts & Sciences did not exist. Instead, what were in place were individual colleges which included Social and Behavior Sciences, Arts & Letters (Humanities), and Natural Sciences. In 1990, the decision was made to merge all of the three colleges into a single unit: the College of Arts & Sciences. Part of the reason for the merger was that the university would have one college devoted to the liberal arts and more in line with the mission of Phi Beta Kappa (national honor society of distinguished liberal arts universities). Prior to the merger, each of the three colleges had its own separate dean in charge. Once consolidated, one dean referred to as the “Super Dean,” was put in charge of the entire College of Arts & Sciences. A national search for the dean of Arts & Sciences was set in motion and Roland Richmond was hired.

Major changes in USF—Research I designation

Within the last twenty years, the biggest change that Dr. Heide has seen was the university’s official designation as a Research I Institution under President Betty Castor’s administration. This designation is not only applicable in the state of Florida, but is recognized on a national front. While USF has been doing the kinds of research necessary for a Research I designation, we have not been receiving the same kinds of

credit that other research institutions in the state including UF and FSU. Under President's Castor's academic and political abilities, she was able to get USF into the "circles that we really needed to be in." Once USF received this designation, "we were now moving more on to the big time." USF has now made it to a small group of public universities (current number approximately 151) that are considered a Research I Institution under Carnegie policies. Considering how young an institution USF is currently, this is an amazing feat. "If we could accomplish this much in less than fifty years and really in the last twenty years, our future indeed looks bright. This is very exciting to be a part of." Within the college itself in two years, these changes have affected the funding goals of the College of Arts & Sciences, which have gone from \$8 million to a goal of \$30 million for 2004. In terms of USF, extramural funding has moved from \$150 million to now over \$250 million. In other words, the stature of the university has grown tremendously since Dr. Heide first arrived in the 1980s.

Good presidential leadership

Over the course of the years, the university has had presidential leaders who have taken the institution a little bit further. President Genshaft was a good choice after President Castor because at that point the university needed another academic who could move USF into the next position. "We have grown tremendously, we do not need to grow anymore we need to grow in terms of quality not in terms of numbers."

Research I pressures on faculty members

"I think the pressure [toward publication] was always there; it is something that is internally driven." However, if one is looking at tenure and promotion, the bar has definitely been raised. Today any faculty member who desires a hire salary must invest a great amount of their time towards conducting and publishing research in order to achieve higher dollar amounts. As associate dean of faculty, Dr. Heide always imparts to her fellow colleagues that their "success is the success of the department, the success of the college and the success of the university." While Dr. Heide does recognize that the emphasis on research has brought attention to her department (criminology), she further asserts that the new focus has brought about more visibility within the college and university as a whole. Overall, "the university is growing in terms of national and international visibility and in terms of quality and rigor and that is really accomplished through the efforts of the faculty."

Final thoughts

"I have had a very good career here, there have been many opportunities afforded to me and I hope to others." Dr. Kathleen has a sense of gratitude for the opportunities offered to her, the mentoring by fellow faculty members, and to her students who have also contributed to her growth both as a scholar and as a professor. She also is thankful to the administrators who helped to guide her through "learning the ropes" of administration. "USF is really rich with opportunity. We need to be proud of the people here—faculty, staff, and students. There are things here that do not happen typically in universities that is more established in tradition." Furthermore, Dr. Heide encourages students to take advantage of every opportunity, follow their passions and believe that whatever they desire, can be accomplished. "The best is yet to come." Thus in the coming years, Dr.

Heide believes that she will witness further benchmarks and achievements taking place within the institution. “This university is clearly on an upward trajectory, we can look at every indicator and see it. It is onward and upward.”

End of Interview