

Barbara Leigh Smith
Interviewed by Nancy Taylor
The Evergreen State College oral history project
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Part 2 of 2
FINAL

Begin Part 2 of 2 of Barbara Leigh Smith on October 12, 2017

Taylor: Here we go. This is part two. It's still October 12, in the afternoon. You were saying?

Smith: Yeah, so I think Jin [Darney] developed this idea of critical tensions at Evergreen, and how the college thrives when they're balanced well—this should all be written down—and they are all in the 1998 self-study. That was kind of a central piece of that self-study.

I think, from the beginning, the major challenge that I saw was balancing in the hiring process, and in the planning process, and in staffing, the needs of students and the needs for faculty to have innovation, flexibility, room to move. Sometimes it was quite out of whack, in terms of the enrollment we needed, and where we needed people to teach, and where the students wanted programs, and sometimes it was better balanced. But, as we grew and developed hiring priorities and more sophisticated planning structures, that was always the issue. The hiring process was difficult, because the faculty often just wanted cool faculty in their own images. That wasn't where the students were, necessarily. There was a constant push and pull against degree programs that came out when we started graduate programs first. The only reason that we got the MPA program so easily was because it was in the CPE report that we should start a graduate program—it wasn't negotiable—and upscale the part-time offerings to serve adult students.

Taylor: Tell more about the CPE report.

Smith: The CPE report was issued in about 1979. It was written by the Council for Postsecondary Education staff.

Taylor: Bill Chance?

Smith: Yes. It was very prescriptive.

Taylor: Did they know about Evergreen?

Smith: They did. They hired Bill and other people to do a study. It's about 80 pages long. They looked at enrollment trends, and yield rates, and the number of applications, and all of that stuff, and they saw

this big nosedive in students coming. They did studies of the perceptions about Evergreen in the community, and there was quite a mismatch between what people said they valued, and what they thought Evergreen did. In fact, some of the things they said they valued were precisely what Evergreen was doing. That made Evergreen, among other things, start a marketing office.

Taylor: It's ironic that it had to come from the outside, isn't it?

Smith: Yes, it did, because we just see ourselves sort of in the mirror often. They also issued 25 directives that the college needed to do. It wasn't about "consider this," it was "do this." It included intercollegiate sports, it included more sophisticated student services division, part-time studies, a graduate program in public administration. They even said start a teacher education program with a private university, or a university in the area. That's why we started with UPS. That was the agenda that Byron led us on. He had such personal pull and credibility with the faculty that they all went along. There were a few other things that were considered that weren't in those recommendations—like start a nursing school—that we did talk about briefly, but dismissed as too far outside our competence area.

Taylor: And too expensive.

Smith: Yeah. But that's what guided us from this 600-underenrollment to a period of prosperity, as the whole state pulled out of the recession. By 1984, we were back, and we had a brief couple years then where we actually became a little selective in students that we got. That was a period of boom, when we built the public service centers and a whole bunch of stuff.

But there was, I think—maybe not anymore, but certainly up till all the years I was there—a tension within the faculty about how far you go to get students, in terms of the curriculum you put in place? All the graduate programs, I think, were contested, and not appreciated by some of the faculty. It was partly because they were ongoing commitments. They were regarded as vocational education, in some ways.

Taylor: But in order to succeed, you had to have a core faculty that would teach in them.

Smith: Yes.

Taylor: And that would mean that the faculty wouldn't be teaching in the general curriculum, or else you'd have to have six of them to do three slots, and people didn't want to give up those positions.

Smith: No, they did not want to give up those positions. And we had a backstop of gaps that needed to be filled, so that was always a pressure, too.

Taylor: There was also the pressure that you would hire one that everybody would agree was fine to be in teacher ed, or to be in MPA, or MES.

Smith: And they'd migrate away.

Taylor: And you had no authority, the deans didn't. Nobody had the authority to tell people where they had to teach.

Smith: Not if they could get students. I mean, we rigidly held to the 20-to-one ratio. And if programs were overbuilt, in terms of the faculty, we reassigned them. I don't think they do that anymore.

Taylor: I think they might, but the problem with that is if you really need human behavior taught, and that person wants to teach Chaucer, or whatever they want to teach, you're stuck.

Smith: That's right. So, what we did was we hired visitors to fill all those critical gaps. That was, in lots of ways, a mistake, because that was where the demand was. We were always a little bit out, in that respect.

We tried to develop some rules to deal with that, and one of the ideas that I came up with was this silly name called interstitial hires, where we were trying to get very, very broad people that would never come up as a kind of normal definition of a faculty hire, and some of them were recurrent visitors. We hired some people within that category.

At the same time, part-time studies was booming. There was a move, led by Fred Tabbutt, partly, to give greater respect to ongoing part-time hires, and to that part of the curriculum. Eventually, those became tenure track positions.

Taylor: Was that when you were Dean, or Provost?

Smith: Provost.

Taylor: Was that a hard argument to make with the faculty?

Smith: That was . . . I don't know the answer to that. It's a hard argument to avoid, and it's so driven by special interests and marital relations, it's difficult. But I'm proud of it, in fact, that we have made a substantial investment in some of these people. It's a small number, actually, relative to the overall size of the pool.

Taylor: But to give stability to the part-time program was essential.

Smith: Yeah. And they're fabulous teachers.

Taylor: Did you start the Hiring Priorities group? Didn't you run that?

Smith: Yes. It was never the unit leaders that were the main people, but they drove the messages to the committee. And the committee, it felt, to me as a dean like I couldn't tell them; I couldn't partition parts of the hires, as must be in these need categories. Although I wanted to.

Taylor: I thought you did. My perception from the other side, you didn't come in and say, "We have to do this." But you had a heavy hand, and it was respected. I think the Hiring Priorities group was one of the more successful things in hiring, because people had to see the reality. And it was a large group, and there was a lot of self-interest in it, and they had to compromise, and they had to see what was going on. And, once a decision was made, it was honored, if you didn't fiddle around with it. Once you decided that music was on the top of the list, and then management, and you did it, I think you had support.

Smith: Right.

Taylor: But I think faculty felt involved in it.

Smith: I think that's true. I think, from the deans' point of view, you wanted even more of your way than you got.

Taylor: Oh, I'm sure that was true, but it was a pretty good compromise, because it meant the faculty bought in.

Smith: Yeah. The most recent Provost was much more prescriptive about that.

Taylor: Did the faculty accept it?

Smith: I don't know. But I think that's one of the tensions that's hard to navigate here, and it's still hard. I don't know. But I don't think you have a lot of choice that can be based on demand currently. I think it's more complex now because students are now overwhelmingly first generation. They're less well prepared. They're scarcer. I don't think the college has ever really dealt with the fact that, really, we do best with older students. And most of our students are transfer students, but we like to think they're four-year students. And that's been true for a long, long time.

Taylor: Did you have something to do with the Writing Center, and the Quantitative Reasoning Center?

Smith: Not the QR Center, but the Writing Center, yes. That should have happened years earlier. We've got such a gap between the richness, when I entered the scene of writing faculty and writing discussions, and what the faculty are like now. I think there's just tons of evading dealing with it.

Taylor: Because the Writing Across the Curriculum—you got that started, but that was implicit in everything.

Smith: That was there before I came, though. You had Mark Levinsky, you had Peter Elbow, you had Leo [Daugherty], Pete Sinclair, Steve Herman.

Taylor: Part of the notion of a coordinated study was that every program was obligated to teach writing. That was accepted, widely accepted.

Smith: Yeah. For me, the kind of culmination of my trying to get more structure was the 1996 DTF that put planning units more firmly in place; that had paid coordinators, with released-time in spring; that put a quarter of a million dollars in faculty development, a whole bunch of structural things, and money. That was completely destroyed by Zimmerman.

Taylor: Did you get resistance to doing that?

Smith: No, because there was money then. That helped. Money drove a lot of stuff. [laughing]

Taylor: Yeah, I'm really puzzled now, because, at the beginning, there were basic programs and advanced programs. That was it. Then, by year three or four, there were specialty areas. The specialty areas changed, and got more refined and less interdisciplinary maybe. They got more set. But there was a lot of programs that were cross-specialty areas. That was part of the goal.

Smith: Right.

Taylor: Then there came something called annual programs.

Smith: Right, and that was an escape place to go do whatever you wanted, in my opinion.

Taylor: That was, and it was a way of not being forced to be in a specialty area. Because, even then, specialty areas had resistance.

Smith: Right.

Taylor: And then planning units, as you set them up, were more defined.

Smith: Right.

Taylor: And more a center for planning. I don't know if interdisciplinary programs went down after that. I don't know.

Smith: I think that depends on your definition of interdisciplinary. Because now, the other weasel is this multi-level programs. Everybody wants to be a multi-level program, so they can pick and choose the bright freshmen—a few—and the more advanced students, and not be subject to writing across the curriculum.

Taylor: To me, if you have a team program, by definition, it's going to be interdisciplinary.

Smith: That's what I think, yeah.

Taylor: So, it's the team that's more important than the—because if you get three people with three disciplinary training, it's going to . . .

Smith: Right. I'm not a snob about interdisciplinary. It's not only science plus humanities. I think you can have interdisciplinary in any department. The department I went through was multi-disciplinary.

Taylor: I did, too. I think the team part is more important.

Smith: Yeah.

Taylor: Of the foundation principles of the college, which ones do you hold dear?

Smith: I think the structure is a big deal, and abolishing this notion of the course, and substituting program, just presents a platform of possibilities that is absolutely crucial. And it shrunk.

Taylor: And a program has to have more than one faculty?

Smith: But, yeah, I think it should. I think it gets too boring if it's just one person. I think structure, I think teaming—I'm not addicted to five or four or three. In fact, I think three is probably good. Five is too many, one is too little. Even then, you have to look at how they're executing it, because some of them are just pasted-together modules that have no interaction. I think the pedagogy matters tons. Pedagogy is a collaboration, and writing across the curriculum, collaborative learning seminars, group work. Experiential stuff, I think, is crucial. All that is partly enabled by getting rid of the course model, because 50-minute classes don't work for a lot of that stuff. I mean, the whole design, structurally, is brilliant.

Taylor: Evaluations?

Smith: Yeah. I'm not as wedded to that, but, yeah. That's part of personal engagement, I think, is really talking, in dimensionality, about learning and performance.

Taylor: What was the other one I was thinking of? Faculty seminar. Was that crucial to you?

Smith: I didn't have much experience of that, so I think I'm making up this answer.

Taylor: Okay, because these questions are actually more probably for faculty than to you.

Smith: People told me that that's sort of the barometer of the health of the team, but a lot of people aren't doing them that way.

Taylor: And to me, faculty seminar, evaluations and teams . . .

Smith: . . . go together.

Taylor: And all that equaled faculty development, and community. I mean, to me, they all go of a piece.

Smith: Yeah.

Taylor: And full-time. How do you feel about that?

Smith: I don't think that's necessary, actually. I think you can have really, really healthy eight-credit programs, and I've seen a lot of them, actually.

Taylor: I've seen a lot of them, too. How about one quarter versus two quarter versus three quarter? Do you think you have any concern about that?

Smith: I think that three quarters is not necessary, and it just defies behavior. But two quarters is way better than one. I started in a semester system, and 10 weeks is short.

Taylor: Yeah, and especially if you're doing an interdisciplinary, broadly-based program.

Smith: Yeah, and you want to research or service learning or any of that stuff, you need more space. How do you get that to happen?

Taylor: How did you do it?

Smith: Talking to people. But I think you need to tell people what you want, and not be such wimps about the message. And defend it, and show them good models. And faculty development. That's what that's all about, I think. I just think there's a lot of people who have strong opinions that never shared them with people, so what do you expect them, to read your mind?

Taylor: I remember Matt Smith. He designed a kind of faculty development for new faculty. The first thing that Matt taught me was we had this new faculty seminar, and we spent a lot of time. And everybody told their story—there were like 12—so, by the end of it, people knew what other people . . .

Smith: . . . who they were.

Taylor: . . . who they were. Then, I think I might have been the first, but you paid for it, we went off to Port Ludlow.

Smith: Oh, I remember that.

Taylor: And Les Purce even came, because it was his first year. And then, he came to them all. That was just so significant, because those new people got a sense of what the place was, and how to design programs. We brought a bunch of regulars.

Smith: We had buddy systems.

Taylor: We had buddies. And we did the workshop that the Washington Center developed—I think you had something to do with it—that you always used when you did retreats for community colleges of how to form programs, you know, form a program in an hour.

Smith: I wonder what Therese Saliba does now, because she did a new faculty orientation. I just offered a couple suggestions, and she wasn't doing anything like we did. No history.

Taylor: Well, what happened—this is not my story, it's supposed to be yours—when you helped design those retreats, that first one, it was faculty. By the time Rita Pougiales was doing it, it was an orientation to the college. It wasn't about new faculty anymore. It was at Alderwood, so people didn't stay overnight. Student Services came, Police Services came, everybody came and gave an hour. In terms of what I wanted to accomplish, it didn't do it.

Smith: No, that's not the way to do it.

Taylor: People said they felt left out, and it had to be about the whole college, and it was divisive, and it was faculty being elitist. But faculty lost, I thought, by not doing that.

Smith: I agree. That's not the way to do it. You've got to start with where their heart is first. That other stuff is just-in-time kind of stuff. That's one of the big losses with departments. There's a stability factor of, like, departments.

Taylor: I have a whole other question that is about stories, and it is about the coincidence of timing—maybe it wasn't such a coincidence—when the college was basically run by women. You were in the middle of it.

Smith: Yeah.

Taylor: How did it happen? Why was it so good? Are there lessons to be learned? Who were the people?

Smith: I don't know why it happened. You hired Jane [Jervis], not me. Applicant pools are random, but I think part of it was just a coincidence of good people, and Jane also came on the heels of a lot of trouble—she was a healer, and a quiet leader. She fit the times, on the heels of Olander. She brought sanity. She was very accessible, without being egocentric at all. She was like the opposite of him. I think we just worked well together. She saw me as a doer who could get stuff done, so we worked well together. We also had the coincidence of some events timing-wise that were very propitious and helpful—money, good budget, good enrollment. We were doing the self-study for reaccreditation, so I turned it into an event. We did all kinds of out-of-the-box stuff about accreditation. We did poster shows. We wrote songs, nursery rhymes. We sang that when the team came, and they about dropped their teeth. That made it fun, like the opposite of Rita's approach to the retreat. [laughing]

Taylor: Yeah.

Smith: We had really good teams over each of the chapters. Rob Knapp did just a fabulous chapter on faculty development. Jin did brilliant work—that's where the critical tensions came from. That all adds up, I think. There was a lot of trust.

Taylor: There was also Ruta.

Smith: Ruta [Fanning] was a really good personality—fun, very reliable.

Taylor: Was Rita Cooper there at the same time?

Smith: I think she was still there. I'd worked with Rita for years, way back to the mid-'80s, when we did all of that reinvesting in diversity hiring. We did training together about that, and Jin was the dean.

Taylor: Do you think it made any difference that it was all women?

Smith: I don't know if the woman factor was it, but it made a difference that those women were there, and they were all there at the same time.

Taylor: But can you think of any other time when people worked as well as a team?

Smith: No, but that's because of disjuncture in some of the linkages. If you get this organization chart, and it looks like a car that's finally tuned, because we're all together and we're not—

Taylor: So, it was just the personalities?

Smith: I think that made a huge difference. When you look at who I was with over that whole period of my life, there were a number of glitches.

Taylor: Look at the difference between the spirit in the college when Olander was there.

Smith: Yeah, or when Zimmerman was there. Or, Enrique Riveros-Schäfer. He had no energy.

Taylor: He had no energy, and his door was closed.

Smith: Yeah.

Taylor: But I can measure the health of the college based on whether there's talk about the over-present third floor, or whether the third floor merges into the second floor.

Smith: Right.

Taylor: And, during that time, there was no third floor talk.

Smith: That's partly also because I came from the second floor.

Taylor: You came from the second floor, and you came down to the second floor all the time. And people came up to you all the time.

Smith: Yeah. And outsiders never—especially the way they're non-aculturated, but not even being affiliated with programs, they have no experience of all the positives. That's what I really got out of all those class visits was a deep, deep appreciation of the people.

Taylor: That cut down barriers.

Smith: Absolutely.

Taylor: Because if you're having evaluations to find out what you're doing, and how to talk about your future, rather than how to judge you and get rid of you, it makes a huge difference. And people don't believe that unless they experience it.

Smith: Yes, but that whole system's gone, because we don't do annual evaluations anymore.

Taylor: And the five-year review thing is pretty empty.

Smith: The union thing has been a big barrier. The deans are completely invisible now. And it's not that they're not working hard. I've told [Larry Geri, I said, "We used to put out this thing that showed desk assignments. Why don't you do that?" He said, "Oh." They don't even do that.

Taylor: They don't have assignments?

Smith: No, they do. But they don't tell anybody. **Taylor:** Even the architecture of the deans' area now, you walk in and there's this barrier, and there's nobody there, so it's always silent. You walk in there and it doesn't look like anything's going on.

Smith: Yeah. What I've heard via Larry and some of the other people who are just getting back into it is the deans are terrified of the union contract.

Taylor: Does that have to be?

Smith: I don't think so.

Taylor: I don't think so either, but that was a turning point; a new structure, a new piece of the landscape that enlarges the decision-making process, and affects it.

Smith: It does, I just don't think it has to separate people, but maybe it does.

Taylor: Yeah, and that wasn't true when you were there.

Smith: Well, there's twice as many students as there were when I started. And there's way more complexity. There's all kinds of new offices, enterprises, programs, external relations. It's really different. I think they've just increased the number of deans. But that doesn't mean they're doing evaluations there. They couldn't. That whole part of Evergreen was not scalable to the number of teachers they've now got, because the part-timers, you get two for one with the part-timers, if you're going to evaluate everything. Now they're figuring how to not do them as often. And the dissolution of most of the planning units has created a different kind of instability that's difficult to manage.

Taylor: Now they're talking about something called Pathways, which seems like a duplication of effort to me.

Smith: That's the whole language nationally, Guided Pathways. It's because they're finding that more than half the students don't finish their first year, and they're saying it's because they don't have clear directions about where to go. So now, all these schools, including all our community colleges, are developing Guided Pathways, to make it really clear where you need to be.

Taylor: I wonder if those Guided Pathways are looking to replace planning units.

Smith: They're degree pathways. But Evergreen doesn't have degree pathways, except in a few areas. That's what they're aiming towards. They're looking for some of that, because the students are looking for some of that. If you read the catalog this year, it's incoherent. There's no way a student can tell what— It's random, and you don't know, if this is one year, what's the next year? The only programs that have any pathways are the graduate programs, the science programs, and the Native Studies program.

Taylor: Has that always been the case?

Smith: It was a little better organized with the planning units before. The planning units aren't operating that way anymore. If you look at like the Sustainability and Justice Pathway, it's got like 50 faculty in it. It's got Rob Knapp, it's got Jeanne Hahn, it's got everything in between, and they don't meet to talk about curriculum at all. They just put their name there, that's where they feel comfortable. And they have conversations with the unit—it's called an affinity group instead—but that doesn't help a student. And the faculty did it, I guess, because they were bored with the units they had. The arts did it, too, but now they're talking about that one coming back together, because they're starting to see it doesn't work.

Taylor: I just wonder—see, what they're missing is you, as a leader.

Smith: No, they're missing somebody as a leader—somebodies.

Taylor: So, I have another topic.

Smith: Okay.

Taylor: It has to do with national exposure, and your taking Evergreen to the nation. Start from the beginning. How did you do that? Because you ended up being Chair of the Board of AAHE [American Association for Higher Education], and getting recognized. And, to the degree that people know about Evergreen, they know about it because of what you did.

Smith: Yeah.

Taylor: Tell the story of how it happened, and the steps along the way.

Smith: Well, it goes back to that old man in Spokane who said, "We wanted you to be a beacon for the education system," so that's just rattled in my head for a long time. But it became pretty obvious, after I'd been here a little while, that this was exportable.

This first recognition was Writing Across the Curriculum, because linked classes were starting to emerge as a solution to the writing problem. So, it seemed really obvious that Evergreen could be described in terms of situating skill teaching and content teaching together, and that if you actually combine two classes, you have more stage time, and more meaningful use of skills.

Taylor: That was happening at all major universities everywhere.

Smith: Exactly. That was where it all began was with that idea. Patrick really gave language to the whole idea that courses as very fragmenting—academically, and socially and all kinds of other ways. Then, I started reading Joseph Tussman's book, [*Experiment at Berkeley*] and I came to that because I read about Merv Cadwallader and the faculty reading that stuff in those first planning years.

Smith: It's just eloquent. It really does make the case on why this makes sense. So, that was the idea that started with the Washington Center story I told you about; the visitor coming and saying that they wanted to try it. And then, three other colleges within the next four months wanted to do it, too. Because community colleges are a small group of people, and they talk to each other all the time. [chuckles] So, after Seattle Central came on, North Seattle came on, and then Bellevue came on, and then Spokane Falls came on, and UW. Then Western got jealous, so they decided they would play, too.

Taylor: Patrick must have decided that it was worth it to have the Dean, and then the Provost, spend time doing this.

Smith: Yeah. Well, Patrick had a real yen for innovation nationally. And he'd already been doing that, because there were some little versions of Evergreen that were already out there, and he was leading one of them in SUNY. That was the Federated Learning Community. (FLC's)

What we did was broaden the idea to create a typology, Jean MacGregor and I. We had FLCs, and then we had linked classes, and then we had coordinated studies, and there were other models in between. We developed materials that showed that. Then we started getting invited to do sessions on this at national conferences, and it just really spread fast then. Then these books came out.

Taylor: When did the Evergreen on-campus summer thing start?

Smith: We started that almost immediately. We featured Evergreen people; when we started doing state conferences, we would take Evergreen people to do presentations. Matt Smith came, and a whole bunch of different people. I'd been with AAHE for years. That was my training ground. Their workshops were just terrific.

Taylor: Who were some of the people that you connected with? Faith Gabelnick I remember her.

Smith: Faith, and Roberta Matthews. They were both national leaders in innovation on the East Coast. Roberta was a leader at LaGuardia Community College, which was one of the best-known ones in the country, in terms of innovation. Faith was at Western Michigan, and she was known for her work on the Perry Scheme of Intellectual Development. The other thing that we did was we joined this idea to other ideas that were out there. That's the way you get out of becoming this little silo that's all separate. We joined this idea, for example, to the Perry Scheme. LaGuardia was doing a whole bunch of stuff with linked courses in writing, so we joined it with that. Then there was a study came out called Involvement in Learning. It was a critique of traditional teaching approaches, so we brought that into this. We'd often do a state conference, and some big national leader of another idea that was completely related would be there, too. Those people would come to see that, and then they'd get us, too. [laughing]

Taylor: What's happened to that?

Smith: It's still strong. Gillies Malnarich and Emily Lardner took it in a slightly different direction. Because the structural idea was already out there and widespread, they started working on more nuanced programs development—assessment, and backward design, and diversity-based stuff.

Taylor: Is Evergreen still a part of the national scene?

Smith: Oh, yeah, very much so. Gillies left and Emily just left to become Provost at Grays Harbor, and Joye Hardiman is the interim director. They're about to start a search for a new director.

Taylor: But it's stable funding, so it will continue.

Smith: Now they do three summer institutes. One is the Learning Community Institute. These are all profit-making conferences. They run one for the Lumina Foundation, and they run another one for the Carnegie Foundation. It's very viable, and the college makes money off it.

Taylor: And the college is known in those circles?

Smith: Yes, it's very famous in those circles. It's even wider, I'd say, than it was under us, because Jean and I were pretty focused on Learning Community and Diversity. There's a huge pool of people that run teaching and learning centers nationally. Any of those people could do this.

Taylor: It sounds like there is talk of reinvigorating the whole teaching and learning idea at the college.

Smith: Well, what Jen Drake is going to do, I think, is recommit to internal Evergreen faculty development.

Taylor: That's good.

Smith: That's what I told her.

Taylor: Because that got lost.

Smith: And it got lost because of the personal relationships.

Taylor: Absolutely. Things like that, it's a very easy answer, but from the outside, you don't realize that.

Smith: Yeah. And the college is so chaotic that it could have gone back and picked it back up, but, out of sight, out of mind. [laughing] This is one of the big disadvantages of all this turnover that the place is sort of addicted to. Do you remember, there was Peter Tommerup who wrote a dissertation about Evergreen?

Taylor: I do.

Smith: His whole thing in his dissertation was "The only idea here is reinvention, reinvention, reinvention."

Taylor: It started with no program should be taught again, and then the rotation of deans. But I think the rotation of deans, it hasn't always been a success, because it depends on personalities. But in terms of peace in our time, it worked. I'm not a part of this world, but I know that it's true of academics. There is a natural animosity towards authority, and so they don't want anybody there.

Smith: Yeah. But they also wanted the trains to run on time. And they liked me, and I was there a long time. **Taylor:** I know they did, but you're different. But it's about people, but they didn't like others, and the instinct—I mean, the whole reason for the union is that instinct, I think.

Smith: Yeah.

Taylor: They didn't trust.

Smith: I thought the union issue was more decided by the part-time issue.

Taylor: I don't think so. But I do remember, early on, it took us forever to even have a faculty meeting. We never wanted a faculty senate, but to even have a faculty meeting was . . . which seemed counterproductive. But for the longest time, the faculty meeting was chaired by Byron Youtz the Provost.

Smith: I remember that.

Taylor: And people used to say, "What kind of a faculty is that?"

Smith: The one you want.

Taylor: It was because people said, "Why not?" But then, the ones that wanted a union even then said, "This is wrong. You've got to have difference. You've got to have animosity. You've got to have two sides."

Smith: I don't agree at all with that.

Taylor: I didn't either, but that's where it came from. Now where do we go?

Smith: I don't know.

Taylor: Well, here's a big question, but it sort of overlap with what we've talked about a bit. What do you think is your legacy? Or, what do you want your legacy to be?

Smith: Well, there's some things. What did you do that has enduring value? Not about me, but about the thing. I think it's the Learning Community idea. But I don't think that's dependent on me. It's like it got picked up, and it became other people's, and that's why it's enduring. Certain people were certainly a legacy in their time, but a lot of them are gone now, or about to be gone.

Taylor: Who were some of the most important people that you hired, or the people that made a big impact?

Smith: Tina Kuckkahn. And the Longhouse. That's a piece of my legacy. She's one of the most effective staff people I hired. She's doing fabulous. She's building an Indigenous Arts Campus now. Sally Cloninger is a person I really value that I hired. There were lots of people that got hired that it's a coincidence that I had a hand in it, but they're good, and it's as much you and other people on the hiring committee that deserve the credit.

Taylor: I always think it's funny about hiring people. They say, "Oh, you've got power. You get to hire." You don't have that power at all.

Smith: Yeah. [chuckles] And you have little to do with the outcome after they come. [laughing]

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Taylor: Who else can you think of that you . . .?

David: Walter.

Smith: Yeah, Walter Niemic is one of them. He's been a real important person.

Taylor: Yeah, he has. Dee Van Brunt—did you hire her?

Smith: She was there before. Yeah, I loved Dee. I'd have to look at a list. There's a lot. Jean MacGregor. Big deal. Wonderful person.

Taylor: Did you hire her after Rob [Cole] was hired, or did you hire them together?

Smith: No, I hired her after. He came the second year. He was a really good hire.

Smith: I don't know. There's a big, long list.

Taylor: Did you hire Betsy Diffendal?

Smith: No, Betsy was here before. She's great. Usually. [chuckles] She was part of the big Native American program that had 10 percent of the enrollment my first year.

Taylor: Yeah, we had a hard time with that.

Smith: It was all rolled together—Tacoma, Native Studies, and Mary Hillaire and Maxine Mimms and Betsy and Rainer Hasentstab. They had about 160 students but there were very few Indians.

Taylor: What happened to that program?

Smith: It's still around, sort of, in some semblance. Yvonne [Peterson] is sort of the caretaker of that approach, and she's still here. Native Studies is more split into three different camps now.

Smith: Sherry Walton was a great hire. Teacher Ed. She really navigated that program well.

Taylor: She did.

Smith: Yeah. Then there was even some people, like Ken Dolbeare—fabulous. He didn't stay forever, but did real yeoman service while he was here. Big national reputation. And smart.

Taylor: He was fun, because he came out of great controversy when he was at the University of Washington. Sometimes those are our best people.

Smith: Yeah, like Stephanie [Coontz].

Taylor: Yeah, like Stephanie. You said earlier—and I think this is true—when you look at the faculty, women and people of color has gotten stronger and stronger . . .

Smith: It's not stronger and stronger.

Taylor: I think it has.

Smith: It's about the same on diversity, because I looked that up last week.

Taylor: I was thinking, in terms of women, the early women that were hired were people like Betsy and Maxine.

Smith: Joye [Hardiman]. [Ginny Hill]. She was great. Susan [Strasser]]

Taylor: People that had alternative educational backgrounds.

Smith: LLyn [De Danaan].

Taylor: They may not have had a Ph.D., but they'd had work experience. They were more involved in community efforts and social justice things than they were pure academics. It was really true of the women. I don't know if it was true of the people of color.

Smith: I really value that, and it feels to me like—Michael wanted only Ph.D.s, and I think that's a huge loss if you're not going to really go after exceptionally skilled community organizers. If you look at some of them—I mean, Russ Fox and Carolyn Dobbs—give me a break.

Taylor: Right. And I think because that became possible with the hiring, we got a group of people that changed the tenor of the place.

Smith: Absolutely.

Taylor: And to say that we've never been a leader in that alternative view, or in terms of hiring women, or hiring people of color, or worrying about social justice, I think it's been there since the beginning, pretty close.

Smith: I do, too.

Taylor: The statistics might not be wonderful, but the inspiration was there, I think. People say, "Not now."

Smith: I don't agree. I think sometimes people say things that they don't have really . . . like certain presidents we've had, they don't have knowledge of the data. When I think through just the arts faculty—Anne Fischel, Laurie Meeker, Lin Nelson—all of them are community-organizing type of people. There's just a lot of that, in hidden places. You can see it in how they teach, too. The whole Tacoma faculty is like that.

Taylor: The other area that I think we probably have been a pretty strong leader is in the gay community.

Smith: Yeah.

Taylor: From quite early on. Especially women

Smith: There's gay men, too. Greg Mullins . He was another good hire.

David: Kevin Francis.

Smith: Kevin. He's a good hire.

Taylor: Yeah. There's a lot of good ones.

Smith: There's a lot of good people. They got another 13 or something this year, so we'll hope.

Smith: . . . you have to have acculturation, you have to welcome them, you have to teach them more, help them see the joys of what's here. It's pretty hard right now, I think.

Taylor: You didn't go to the retreat this fall, did you?

Smith: Oh, no. I haven't had anything to do with any of them for five years. Eight years.

Taylor: It was all focused on equity. The people that went said it was really good. It was good someone was paying attention, because everybody's feeling very hurt about the last year.

Smith: If you were there this year, would you know what to be doing?

Taylor: I don't know. I'm glad I'm not there. Too many things have happened that I can't change.

Smith: Yeah, I don't think I would want to be there.

Taylor: Yeah. On the other hand, things have cycles, and they can do comebacks. We saw some of that. [laughing]

Smith: Yeah.

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End Part 2 of 2 of Barbara Leigh Smith on October 12, 2017