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Oral History Number: 408-023a

Interviewee: George Dennison

Interviewer: David Brooks

Date of Interview: September 21, 2006

Project: University of Montana Oral History Project

David Brooks: It's September 21, 2006. I'm David Brooks, the interviewer for the University of Montana Oral History Project, and today I'm talking with President George Dennison. President Dennison, I was hoping you could start out by just talking a little bit about your personal and educational background and what brought you to the University of Montana, Missoula.

George Dennison: Certainly, I can do that. I am a graduate of the University, but I didn't spend all my undergraduate years here. I started college at what, in those days was called, Custer County Junior College in Miles City. Today it's known as Miles Community College. So it's a different institution than it was when I was there, but they still count me as a graduate. So I spent two years down there and then transferred here to the University and in two years I got a baccalaureate and then a master's degree here. Then I went from here to the University of Washington and received a Ph.D. from the University of Washington in 1967 and have been around since then. I went to Arkansas for a year, came back up there [UW] and spent a year teaching in the Department of History at Washington, then went to Colorado State, spent 18 years there and I went from Colorado State to Western Michigan University for three years, thinking I was going to be there quite a while and then someone nominated me here and I somehow got selected. So I came back here in 1990 and one of the reasons I came back is that I am a Montanan and it was kind of nice to have an opportunity to come back. I spoke at length with the president at Western Michigan, who is still an old and great friend, and his comment has always stuck with me. It is a marvelous thing when people will say, "Will you be the president of our university?" It's just quite an achievement. I mean I think it is. I didn't ever plan this career when I graduated from here and then from the University of Washington, because I really enjoyed doing the scholarship and teaching, loved it very much, had no idea of ever becoming an administrator.

DB: So your degrees were in history. Is that correct?

GD: All of them were in history, yes.

DB: So tell me a little bit about how you did make that transition or what moved you from research academics and history, into administration.

GD: In 1975, I was engaged in some research focused on the development of reservations, as a legal issue and constitutional issue and looking at all the changes and transitions that occurred there. At the same time the man who was the associate dean of the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences at Colorado State died abruptly, of a heart attack, and so they needed someone to fill in as an interim associate dean. And so I agreed to do that for one year but then

during that year I applied for a sabbatical and I was going to go [laughs]...I'm sorry I got this date off. I agreed to do this but I had a sabbatical coming and at the same time there had been a search for a new chairman for the Department of History and I was one of the candidates and when the committee was looking at those who would take the position they said, "Well, will you delay your sabbatical if we do indeed select you as chair and immediately take it?" And I said, "No, if you're going to select me, you'll have to wait until after I come back from sabbatical. Then I'll be willing to do it." They went with somebody else because they needed somebody else. In the meantime the person died and the dean came and said, "Would you do this?" because I had been chairman of the college curriculum committee, [and] a member of the university curriculum committee so I was pretty much involved in faculty government, so I said, "Sure I'll do it, for one year, as long as I can delay my sabbatical." And he didn't think that would be a problem and he arranged it. So I delayed my sabbatical, and the next year he said, "Why don't you stay in this position?" So I stayed in the position. I didn't think about it a lot. Somebody said, "Why don't you do this?" So I did it. The result is I never got out of administration after that. I moved from there to academic vice presidency and still going, and I've never gotten a sabbatical. That's the downside.

DB: So you said you're a Montanan, you'd spent a good amount of time in Missoula as a student, as well as you worked here, if I'm right, you worked at what was the Missoula Mercantile?

GD: Oh, yeah, while I was a student. I served in the Navy before I started college, and so while I had the G.I. Bill I also had two children and a wife. They were pretty young. It didn't make a lot of sense for my wife to be doing a lot of time out of the home so I worked 40 hours a week while I was going to college as an undergraduate and then I also played music in a rock and roll band. So I was working maybe three or four nights a week also, as well as 40 hours and I still did ok. I did that all the way through graduate school. Then I moved to Seattle and I did the same thing. Except I didn't work in the stores anymore, I just worked in the bars.

DB: I've heard folks who've said they went out on a Friday or Saturday night to see your band. So you had work relationship, family, social-musical connections in Missoula, a University connection and then you were away and came back. Tell me a little bit about what Missoula was like when you came back. I mean was it just the same, nothing had changed? What had changed?

GD: Well, interestingly enough, when we came back, Jane and I came back; the boys didn't come because they were older and married by that time, so it was just the two of us. But in the first impression, Missoula hadn't changed all that much. There were still most of the old places were there. We drove around and looked and I spent a couple of weeks walking around the campus and it struck me it hadn't changed all that much. There were some things that were new that I had seen before. The University Center was not there, what we have here now. What everyone refers to now as the Lomasson Center was in those days the Lodge and that was the student center. The Library was what we now call the Social Science building, but the Social

Science building was still there. The only thing about it was somebody, whoever the President was and I think it was Bob Pantzer, did an atrocious thing to the back of it by putting a concrete block structure on to it, which I would never have done. Nevertheless, it's still there so I could still recognize it. But, that was a wonderful facility when I was a student. The archives were downstairs and you had lots of wonderful reading rooms upstairs and so it was just a great place and it's no longer that great place, even though the exterior looks pretty much the same, it just isn't the same facility. I do like the Mansfield Library. Any case, the point is that, Missoula didn't seem to have changed all that much. Then after we were here for a while it became apparent that it had grown considerably and there were changes: attitude, new cultural kinds of changes that had occurred in the years that I was gone, and we were gone about 30 years. That's a long period of time. It took a little while to make the adjustment, but on the other hand I felt that it should be easy, as I told the search committee, to do all right since I went to school with half the people in Montana and the rest of them I grew up with.

DB: Talk a little bit more about the attitudinal and cultural changes, particularly on campus: students, faculties, I mean you were a student of the '60s here and now you're here observing them in the '90s, 1990s.

GD: In that regard, I don't think there has been that much change because I think the characteristic that this campus had when I was here, was that it was made up of very good people. There are a few of the faculty members still around who were around in those days. Particular my advisor, Jules Karlin, is still here, and I still see him fairly often. One of the things I'm supposed to do is interview him for this project, which I am going to do when he and I can get together. There were a few others around but I think what characterized them at that time is that they were really good people, good at what they did, but they were interested in students. That was a smaller number in those days; there were only about 4,000 students when I went here. Jules immediately took an interest in me as did other faculty members across the campus. A grand old guy in German, Horst [Jarka]: I needed to take a German course, I needed to have language capability in German and he agreed to let me audit his German course if I would agree to take all the tests. He wouldn't grade me but he would only let me in if I would do everything that everybody else did. Which I did and you know most people would. I think on most campuses you don't find that kind of welcoming attitude and assisting attitude.

So fast forward, one of the things that I tell the parents when they come here is that they'll find that still in place and it's my perception that it still is. The vast majority of faculty members will do what they can to assist the students to achieve what their objectives are. On the other hand they will insist that you do something, you can't just come in and say, "I need this," or, "I should get this." That was certainly true then, I think it's true now.

DB: You know I would agree with that as a student. I've had great personal and work relationships with all the faculty that I've really invested myself in and they've done likewise with me. The one thing though that I have heard in talking to professors, particular retired professors, is that though that student-faculty relationship remains, the faculty relationships,

amongst themselves have changed more because of growth. There used to be more congeniality amongst faculty, especially interdepartmental. Is that a fair assessment, or do you have any way of measuring that?

GD: You know I think that that probably is the case: that as the institution grows it takes more effort to remain known and maintain those contacts with others. But on the other hand when you compare this with other places, maybe of similar size, there's far more interdisciplinarity here than there is on those other campuses. It impresses me that it's still here. I haven't found it difficult to maintain relationships with all of the schools and colleges and I work pretty hard at that too, I'd have to admit that. But it does make all the difference in the world if there's a first-name basis and I don't think we're big enough for that to have interfered with those kinds of relationships.

What has happened though, over the course of those years, here as elsewhere, is people start thinking of other things, rather than maintaining those connections. On the other hand, those faculty members in history, or whatever the discipline, might be, may have closer connections, just as has happened everywhere, with people elsewhere who are in their discipline and share their interests in the discipline. They may have closer relationships there. That's been assisted by the advent of the Internet, e-mail and information technology. You don't have to go across the campus to see so and so, you can do it through this kind of instantaneous communication. I think that's had an affect as well. And then people just get older. The younger people may be interested in it but the older people aren't setting the example because they want to go home or they want to do this. I don't find that they're wasting their time, I don't think there is a lot of that, but there's just other interests that command their attention and that's not unlike what's happened across the country with regard to membership in fraternal organizations and that kind of thing: the Lion's Clubs and so forth.

[It's] what Robert Putnam talked about in *Bowling Alone* and saw a resurrection of that kind of community spirit after 9-11. I'm not sure that we're seeing all that much of it, but nevertheless his conclusion is that [it] had a very important effect upon what had been in decline, what he called "social capital." Now it's coming back.

I think that still exists here on this campus. We have Friday afternoon sessions, we call them open forums over in the Honors College and it's a changing group who show up but nevertheless they do come. One of the outcomes of a group that I convened or charged in the middle of the '90s is called the Quality of Worklife Committee. They suggested that we needed to have more of these kinds of events so that people could get together and talk to each other about various issues, whatever they might be. I've tried to be responsive to that and I think there's more of it occurring but it does take a little more effort given modern life.

DB: So you mentioned the Friday afternoon sessions. Give me another example of the way that you, as the President, try to interact with both faculty, students—try to have personal relationships on campus.

GD: Well there's a series of things. Since I've been here I have open office hours for students, staff or faculty. Those are publicized in the Kaimin and all you got to do is call, come in, you don't have to say what your agenda is. These are not decision-making sessions. They're sessions in which we can sit and talk about whatever issue you want to talk about. If we can't cover [it] in that period of time that you're here, then we'll find another time to do it. I've been very interested in continuing that process because I think it's very helpful to remain informed about what people are thinking.

Secondly, I have started—I started then, and have continued a process of visiting the faculty in their department. So I go around to the departments without an agenda and just listen to what their concerns are and they raise questions. As I say, I come without an agenda but there are no questions that are out of bounds either. You can ask whatever you want to ask and we'll talk about it. I'll tell you whatever I know about it. Those have been helpful. I do the ones with the non-academic units in the summer, because they're usually busy doing the other things and the faculty aren't here in the summer, so I use the time in the summer to do that.

I try to attend all the meetings of the Faculty Senate and to participate. I think that it's important to be there and engage in the debate. I don't mind engaging in the debate, I loved faculty government and still think it is a great thing.

Then we have regular events throughout the year. The Christmas party, the picnic that starts off the year, I have a barbecue at my house for all the chairs and department deans to come in—and deans to come in and start off the year. We have a faculty-staff recognition event in the spring. We have a staff appreciation day in the spring. We do a lot of things. Charter Day is another. A lot of things like that, which are really designed to keep people together and get them to talk to each other and they do. I think that works.

And then I meet with the student leadership usually twice a month. Sometimes more often, depending on what the issue is. We meet over in the University Center for breakfast; they have breakfast. I don't eat breakfast, and we talk about whatever the issues are. To make sure we stay together on what these things are and still don't ever keep up with it. Right now since I'm [also] serving as interim provost I'm also meeting with the academic officers, the deans, once a week and I'm meet with the executive officers once a week. Then we have a local executive board the meets quarterly with me. So there are lots of meetings.

DB: So do people take you up on the open-door policy?

GD: They do. Usually when those hours are set aside, they fill it up. Initially I think there was a tendency to come only if you had some complaint that you wanted to make. They don't do that anymore. You know it could be a student whose parents went to school here, maybe at the same time I did, or grandparents at the same time I did. They just want to come in and introduce themselves, which is good. I like that very much and I like to talk to people.

DB: So let's change to a little more philosophical or ideological position of the president here. You're a historian, a trained historian, you were certainly were familiar with this university and probably were here through at least one, if not more, presidents while you were here and likely kept up on the University. When you came did you feel like you were filling the shoes of a past president in particular? Did you try to? Did you use any of the past presidents as a model or maybe better yet, did you look at the history of the University in terms of a lesson about being the president?

GD: Well, I certainly did look at the history of the University and the book that H.G. Merriam did, which was really a history of the presidencies because he focuses on the presidents. I don't think it's a full-blown history and someday I'm going to write that but nevertheless, I did look at the history. I come at everything from a historical perspective. I knew a bit about the history of the University because I was a student here and I remember very well that period of time that I was here and I kept in touch with faculty members over the years. But I thought it was necessary to learn some of the detail that I didn't know at that time so I read Merriam's book. I've also done a good deal of other reading but I did not pick out one of the predecessors and say, "This is the model for me."

In fact if there is a model for me there would be two people. One is Charles Neidt, who was academic vice president at Colorado State and a very strong influence on me. He's a psychologist, but an organizational psychologist who really had some insights in the way that you can maintain communication, even if you don't like the person you're communicating with. He's awfully good at that. I think that's a lesson everybody ought to learn. It is, I guess, what we call civility today but more importantly he called it strategic because tomorrow you may need this person.

Then the other role model would be Diether Haenicke who was President of Western Michigan University and he, too, was a psychologist. He was there two years before I arrived and immediately after I got there he involved me in everything that was going on and provided a lot of assistance and a lot of direction. Just by how he came at issues and how he dealt with issues and what he expected me to do in support of it. So when I came here, if there were role models, it would be those two guys.

But one of the things I tried very hard not to do when I came here was to impose something else on the institution. Because I think it's absolutely imperative that anyone who takes on a position such as this one better learn the culture before you do anything. Don't make too many promises too soon, except that we are going to work on the academic excellence, that doesn't commit you to anything except doing what you need to be doing anyway. But don't get too far out on a limb with regard to things that you don't really know anything about. That was the rule. So I didn't do very much the first year except say these are the things we need to do. Many of those themes, by the way, have continued. I haven't really varied from them, their details with regard to how we do something. Those are tactical kinds of issues, but the larger

overall objectives, I think, are pretty much the same. The one thing that I didn't anticipate, since I really didn't know the physical plant very well, was the amount of building we would have to do. And that became clear within the first two or three years. You can't do what you need to do and what the faculty and students need to do unless they have the facilities in which they can do it. So, while a lot of people were and have been critical over the years: critical of building this and building that and building something else. That's not to satisfy my ego, it's to satisfy the demands and needs of the people who come here, the faculty and the students. I think they've been supportive of that, so I've had the good fortune then of having a couple of models— role models of people who came at the work from those perspectives and then a lot of good people on campus who tended to agree.

Now there was a culture here, a very strong culture of faculty governance and student governance. So you have to live with those. I wasn't sure the existence of a faculty union would change very much. I didn't spend much time on campuses with faculty unions, but Michigan had a union. And I was involved with Diether, in the management of relations, negotiations and that sort of thing. I learned a bit from him about how to do it and there is such a thing as win-win negotiation, which is much better than adversarial. But it takes a little while to get it going, but once it is going you got to be willing to talk. That's the most important thing and I think it has worked relatively well. Then identify the issues, and as you identify them don't just go do them, but lay them out on the table and talk a little bit about them with the people who can make a difference. Make sure you know who the opinion leaders are, talk with them and, as Lyndon Johnson used to say, "Get them in the tent," because it's much better if they are, as he said, "pissing out than pissing in." All of those things are really important, and it makes a difference.

DB: So let's talk a little bit more about the buildings. I mean you've mentioned twice in our conversation, once in terms of what you didn't like, changes that had been made before you got here and then the need to make more changes and how that hasn't been your motive to do that, but it's had to have been done because of demands. Obviously one of the criticisms that you've probably heard plenty of is that you are trying to grow the University and develop, but you're saying that there's an internal need, that there's growth and you're having to just satisfy that.

GD: Yeah, well there are a couple of propositions that go into that. First of all, given what's happened with public higher education, you might as well accept this premise: that tuition and alternative revenue sources are going to be what makes a place go. There's no state in the union, except possibly Wyoming, that has enough money to be able to do the kinds of things that everybody thinks needs to be done. So, from day one, it was quite clear to me, as it had been in Colorado and was in Michigan, that enrollments make a difference. And, how do you get students to come? You deliver on the promise that you make to them, and if your facilities don't quite match what you say you are going to promise, sooner or later they'll walk, rather than come. So you better have the facilities which will allow you to do what they come here to

do. Same way with the faculty: you can't recruit faculty to do the kinds of things that you want to do unless you have the facilities within which they can do it.

At the point in time when I came here this institution was doing somewhere in the neighborhood of \$7 million, not quite \$7 million, in funded research. No institution in the country can sustain graduate programs without external funding. There is no institution that does it, so it became very clear that if we were going to do what everybody agreed would make sense for us to do, we had to grow the funded research program. So, starting from 7, we're up to about \$70 million now. I had hoped we would be a little farther but that is okay. That's good progress. So you have to involve people, because I can't get the grants. I have to persuade people that this makes sense; that this is going to help us all. Because, we will have not only the money that supports the projects but we will have the indirect cost recoveries that come along with it, which help us to do other things.

One of the things the state did in 1989-1990 was to adopt legislation by Dave Brown, who was a representative from Butte, which allowed the indirect cost recoveries associated with refunded research to stay on the campus where the research is conducted. And those funds could be used by the campus however the decision was to use them, so long as it contributed to the development of the research enterprise. Well, you look at the funded research here and at Bozeman and you find the trajectory is the same. They were ahead in terms of total volume. They still are ahead today but the trajectory is still the same, it's straight up. The curve is the same. I'd like to say that that happened because I came and said, let's get involved in research. In part that made a contribution. But this piece of legislation that Dave Brown was successful in getting through the legislature is the best example of successful policy, state policy that I know of. So we built, as a result of that policy, almost a \$200 million business in the state of Montana and they're beginning to recognize that that does make a difference. So my point here is that you have to begin with an understanding that taken together, state appropriations and tuition is not going to be enough to sustain what you want to do. It just isn't. So you have to begin to figure out alternative revenue sources and then how you pay for all this. Any developmental process has to be funded and you have to control it.

We haven't grown all that rapidly, we've grown by 4,000 students since 1990, but 1,000 of those are associated with the College of Technology, which was not a part of this institution. 3,000 is nevertheless pretty good growth. That was essential and it still is today, but when I arrived the budget was 75 percent state appropriation, 25 percent tuition; today it's the reverse. The tuition is the big contribution. I don't like that very well but that's the way of the world today. So what you have to do then is to develop programs like the one we are implementing now, the Impact Program, which will help those without the wherewithal to get here. One of the things I am going to be doing at noon is talking to roughly 70 students who accepted the Impact awards. Now those are kid who would not be going to college. Now I went to college. Why? Because I had the G.I. Bill and because in those days if you worked as I worked, you could make enough money in order to pay for it. That's not the case today. So there are those two things and then if you are relatively successful at either of those two you'll

find very quickly that the facilities have got to come along. If you're going to keep students here and you're going to have parents come in and look at the place, you better have it looking right. I mean it's got to look like a place that's got some pride in itself or otherwise they're going to think, "Well, why would I want to come there and give you all this money? What are you going to give me?" And I don't blame them. So there was a process of trying to make certain that we kept the place looking as it should look. Then the specialized facilities had to come along as well. I think that's inevitable. The growth of the place has really been as a result of success and the facilities are a result of that also. But it became very clear by '95.

Now what did we do? Did we go to the state and say, "You have go to give us these facilities?" No, we went to the students and went to the faculty researchers and said, "If you want them then you got to help us pay for them." And most of the stuff has been done either through donations from the private sector or through bonds, which we can do as long as we have a revenue stream to pay it off. The state does not, and I don't say this critically, the state doesn't have the money. We have a million people in the state of Montana. How are we going to pay? And nobody wants to pay taxes, so how are you going to do it? The only way you can do it is if you are willing to make a contribution and make it work. I've always said that it's my responsibility not to complain to people but to figure out how to make it work. If this way doesn't work, this way will or this way will.

DB: Before we get to talking about private funding and the UM Foundation, which is a fairly recent creation, you mentioned making the campus look good and attractive and people have to want to come with all these new buildings. Where are those aesthetics coming from, where are the decisions? You clearly have a vision of architecture, yourself.

GD: No, well...

DB: You can point out the things you didn't like here when you first came, right?

GD: I can. There's one, the atrocity on the Social Science building, as it is called, and the other atrocity is the white elephant over here, which is the Clapp Building. The interesting thing about that is they put the plaque inside the building, wouldn't even put it on the outside, for Charles Clapp. He was the longest-serving president until me. Nobody even knew it was the Clapp Building; they called it the Science Complex. Well, now it has the name on it and we do refer to it as the Clapp Building and we should have [so] before. Fundamentally where the design comes from, is what was here. This is a historic site. This building is historic. Many of the buildings on campus are historic. Whatever we do it has got to fit that. Don't try to impose something like "modern brutalism," or whatever it is, the ultra-modern stuff? Don't do that. Keep so that it fits aesthetically with what we already have and I think we are doing that relatively well. Even the Business building, if you go over and look, that blends in very nicely compared with the Clapp Building. It [Clapp] doesn't blend in with anything.

DB: So you mentioned the Business building, obviously we can see right here the J-school, the new Journalism School...

GD: Does it fit?

DB: ...Anderson Hall, it's coming near completion, you can tell what it's going to look like.

GD: You bet it fits too.

DB: It fits. It definitely fits with the surrounding buildings. But both those building in particular are or were privately funded?

GD: Yes.

DB: The \$11 million for the Journalism School is all private funding. Talk about that development. You've already mentioned grants and research, talk about just pure private funding and how that's come about, how you've fostered that.

GD: One of the last assignments I had when I was at Colorado State before I went to Michigan, was to chair a search committee to identify a vice president for development of Colorado State. And I've never forgotten the comments made by the president, when he got us all together and said we are going to do this. He had already persuaded the campus that he needed to do it. And his explanation was that this is the fourth leg to the stool: we have student tuition, we have state appropriations and we have funded research. But that's a three-legged stool; we're going to put the fourth leg under it so it's more stable. Well, as it turned out, he was not quite ready to give up any of the responsibilities for that, so he never filled that position, but I remember that very well.

When I got to Michigan, Diether was just at the point of announcing a capital campaign. It was really the first one that had ever been done for that campus. He assigned to me then the responsibility of doing the thinking about it and writing the speeches and being the front person out there. He was willing to give that, although it was quite clear that president would go and twist the arm when the time came. I could do the rest of the work. And so when I came here it seemed like the next logical thing to do: let's do it. It just happened that when I arrived the then- as we called him then, the director of the Foundation was leaving. So we had to do a search. And it was in the process of the search that I made it clear that I thought we ought to do a campaign as quickly as we could. Well, we got to get the right person; we got to do this. The real difference in Montana from Michigan, as well as from Colorado, is that here is that we have an arms-length foundation that does the fundraising. There they were integrated, so the vice president for development was a state employee, here they are not. And that dynamic is a little different than it is [elsewhere], but I think it's probably better.

DB: And that's the UM Foundation?

GD: Yes, the UM Foundation is a private organization chartered for one purpose, to support The University of Montana. There's a very carefully orchestrated process to identify the priorities and then get those accepted by the Foundation board, the trustees, and then the volunteers who go out and help do the fundraising. All of that takes a little while to develop. But one of the things that I made clear from the outset is that we have an integrated approach to this. Whoever is assigned Dennis Washington or Ian Davidson will have the opportunity to interact with them. Nobody else is going to knock on that door. Because we are going to do this in a way that they respect and we respect and we know what we can get out of them. We have continued that. We will continue that as long as I'm around because I think it makes all the difference in the world, but it takes a while. It's just like the research process. You can't just lay this on, you got to let it grow out of the culture of the institution and I think we've made pretty good progress. That first campaign was set at 60 million. I thought it should have been 100 million but the board filled with nervous people. They didn't think you could raise that much money in Montana. Well, we came out with 72 million so I think we could have gone to a hundred if we had wanted to. This time I wanted to go to 150, there were nervous people, they said 100, so we're in the midst of a \$100 million campaign. We have got 85 to work with. We'll finish up in 2007. But that's because of the willingness of people to become engaged and if you're going to have a board like the Foundation Board, made of very prominent people, and you say you want them to provide advice and counseling, then you'd better listen to them. Same thing is true of the President's Advisory Council or whoever it is; they have to believe that you are listening and you'll really value what they have to say. They don't always accept that at first, when you first start, and it takes a little while but then you develop a trust relationship and from there it works pretty well.

DB: That campaign you mentioned, the \$100 campaign, is the Invest in Discovery campaign which you launched last year?

GD: Yes.

DB: You know in just our conversation I hear how private funds to the UM Foundation has grown, research grants have grown, student tuition has grown, state funding hasn't necessarily kept the pace.

GD: It's stable. Go ahead.

DB: Is the end of public education at the higher education level nigh, are we going to be no longer a state school, at some point?

GD: That's an interesting question and it has been a question that's been debated in the national meetings of presidents and so forth for the last 10 years. Early on there was a tendency, and I will confess that I have done some papers that make this argument of privatization, that we are moving toward privatization. You can look at some of the papers that

I did. There were other people across the country, such as Bob Zemsky from the University of Pennsylvania is one of the first to publish a book which talked about privatization. But then there's another group of presidents who made essentially the same argument, that had to do with the same argument but this group did not use the term privatization. A good example is the president of Virginia, and his term was self-sufficiency. Both of them coming from the same initial premise and that premise is that the pressure on the state dollar has reached the level today that something has to give, the taxpayers are not going to give anymore. That states simply have to deal with health care, prisons, K-12 education, and aging infrastructure and then unfunded mandates from the feds. All of those things and something has to give. The only discretionary money is for higher education, so you've seen the percentage of state budgets devoted to higher education declining, almost every year since the late '70s. This is a process that was well underway before I got here and I'd felt it in other states where I was.

It was quite clear that we had to do something, and I don't believe—well let me say it another way. I believe that the self-sufficiency argument is the one that makes more sense. The reason that it makes more sense is that it puts the public purpose or public mission at the center of the discussion and then it says, "How we are we going to fund these institutions to achieve that public mission?" rather than saying the funding source is going to determine the mission, because that's what privatization says. That was the fear that everyone had, that if you push on the privatization thesis too much what you will find is institutions responding to where the money is, rather than thinking about what their mission is and trying to accomplish their mission and diversifying the funding streams in order to do that. There is a real difference in what comes out, or the conclusions that you arrive at, depending on the original premise. So I don't believe that public education is at an end. I think there will be changing dynamics about how much public support there is and we are at the point now where I think that pendulum is beginning to swing.

A really interesting change in the national discussion and argument has come out of these debates and discussions that have gone on at the ACE [American Council on Education] and at NASULGC [National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges] and all of the national organizations. ACE now is running a national campaign which is called "Solutions for our Future" and essentially the premise behind that is that we have to find ways to renew what we use to call the social compact and the social compact, in its simplest description, is simply the felt obligation of this generation to educate the next generation. A public responsibility rather than saying, "Well you're going to get a private return out of going on to higher education so you can pay for it." No, it's a return to saying the society is the beneficiary. And that's where the major support should come from and it will take maybe 30 years to build up the level of support and maybe we won't get all the way back there, but I think we will have increasing support now for public higher education because of the recognition that it's gone too far.

DB: So you mentioned the fear of the criticism of private support is that then you are, I guess, at the beck and call of your supporters and as a University, a research institution, an educational facility, that is not what you want to be doing.

GD: No, it isn't.

DB: Students in particular have alighted on the Coca Cola contract to express that fear. How have you tried to alleviate that, and say, "Listen, that's not what is going to happen with this money; we're not going to be at the beck and call of our supporters?"

GD: Well, I think sometimes you can't persuade people who believe what they want to believe. All you can do is explain. The reason for going into the Coca Cola contract was because we had something they wanted and we had something or they had something we wanted. They were willing to put the money up if we would allow them to advertise around here and we would use their product as an exclusive. Well, we do that with any number of products. So the initial complaint from the student critics is that you shouldn't be interfering with our freedom of choice. We interfere in your freedom of choice with virtually everything that you get over here: you buy your books for the most part from the bookstore; you take your instruction from the people that we provide—you don't go out and hire the professor you want to hire. So that argument didn't go very far, but that's where they started.

Then there was the discovery, which maybe we should have known about and maybe we didn't. I didn't think a lot about it because I had a pretty good respect for the Coca Cola Company. I knew some of the people who were involved in it. But then the charges of abuse of human rights in Colombia and the difficulties that occurred in India and other places came out. Coca Cola didn't handle [it] very well. We tried very hard to say, look, our contract is with the local distributor, and anyway, as I have said over and over again, if there are issues here then the company will be called to task for it in the federal suits that are going on in the couple of the districts along the South. In each case the company was being dismissed in those suits, they were dismissed and my point was that if the company is responsible then I can responsibly terminate that contract, but you don't have any evidence. You want me to do this because you want to do it. What sort of precedent does that set? Anytime you want to complain about somebody I have to listen to the complaint and do this. No. That's not the way we operate. You have to offer it responsibly. So the resolution finally was that we would put together a group, following the model of Michigan again, and they would outline a vendors' code of ethics, and they are still working on it and I don't know when that will come out. The result of that movement, what you might expect, Coca Cola then made arrangements with the UM to investigate what's going on in Colombia and if there is something wrong there they'll correct it. Their first effort to deal with the situation was to hire an international consultant to do that work and then the consultant turned out not to be very responsible and had some bad marks in research that it had done earlier and they also hired another United Nations group to look at what's going on in India. Well, once that's done we are going to know. The company either is or is not responsible. As a result, Michigan is now back into its contract with Coca Cola and our

contract has continued and will continue until the evidence is there that we shouldn't be in it. I think the students have pretty much accepted that.

DB: Great, well I know we are at the end of our time for this portion of the interview.

GD: I've enjoyed it.

[End of Interview]