

University of Washington Tacoma Oral History: Founding Stories

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Charles Williams 0:00

This is Charles Williams. And this is an interview with Anthony D'Costa for the University of Washington Tacoma founding faculty interview project. And the date is October 17, 2018. Anthony, maybe we could start by hearing a little bit about your background before you came to UW Tacoma?

Anthony D'Costa 0:17

Okay, sure. Well, you know, basically I was born in India, I pretty much did my master's in economics from India. I worked a couple of years in rural development in India. And then after that, I went for my PhD, came to the U.S. actually for the PhD at the University of Pittsburgh. So basically, while I was finishing up or in fact, I had just finished, when of course, the job ad for the University of Washington in Tacoma and Bothell came out. So pretty much I would say that's my sort of educational sort of background before coming and joining UWT in 1990.

Charles Williams

What was the position that you were hired for? Why did you decide that it was attractive?

Anthony D'Costa

Well, very interesting question. Because when I was looking for a job, since my PhD is what we call, is in development studies, which is really a very interdisciplinary field combining economics and of course, I was trained in good measure in economics, but it also deals with politics and sociology, and so on. And the central questions around development studies is about the processes and possibilities if you will, of development, both social, economic, and political in the non-Western countries. So it's a very vast sort of terrain. So I was doing a lot of interesting things. And while I was doing my PhD at the University of Pittsburgh, you know, right in front of me, I was witnessing the collapse of the steel industry. And that sort of really puzzled me, intellectually puzzled me, because I was interested in studying how to build things or how to get things done in terms of industrialization and so on. But here I was witnessing just the opposite where there was deindustrialization. So I just got very interested in that sort of a project. And the idea that, once you're up there doesn't mean you're always going to be staying up there. In fact, things do come down. And so then I started looking at it in a very sort of global way. So it didn't

sort of stop me from completely abandoning what I was thinking of doing in terms of my PhD research, but it gave me a new sort of fresh insight into, well, how might I be looking at the problem? So that sort of encouraged me to look at it in a very sort of global sort of way. So it's a very interdisciplinary subject.

So when the job ad came out for UWT, of course, they were hiring a whole bunch of people, in fact, you know, 12 or 13 individuals in the two campuses, each of the two campuses. And the description was very brief because they wanted interdisciplinary. So that was a key word. But they also had East Asia and other kinds of words, which said ... so, in fact, when my wife looked at the job and she said, "Well, this is the job for you." Because I had a very hard time positioning myself in the sort of labor market, mainly because the disciplines are fairly sort of narrow. And so that meant that people wouldn't see me as an economics major, people wouldn't see me as a political scientist or a sociologist, even though I was doing all three in various sort of combinations. Although, honestly, I also would have to sort of say that I did get offers from a political science department somewhere else, and was interviewed also for a sociology job as well. But once this job ad came out, and I said, "Yeah, okay, this is it." So this is what I applied for. So I think it was that interdisciplinarity and the breadth that they were looking for which I really sort of fit in very well. Yeah.

Charles Williams 4:12

Could you say a little bit about the interview process itself, which was fairly distinctive?

Anthony D'Costa 4:16

Yes, it was very distinctive.

So basically, we were brought in these groups of 12 people or so. And the hiring process involved recruitment for both the campuses that is at Bothell and in Tacoma. And we were, there was no physical facility in Tacoma as such at the time. So we were all brought into Seattle. And we were, you know, some people of course, had their own, I guess, lodgings because they were from the area, that is some of the interviewee candidates. Others, like me, came from outside of Washington state. I was at Indiana, Bloomington, Indiana, at the time, so I flew from there. And we were put up in a hotel near campus. Meany Tower, which I think doesn't exist anymore is right by the Seattle campus. And basically, I think for three or four days, I can't remember the exact number of days, but we had lots of activities. And these activities were, I think, designed mainly to find out not so much your academic credibility, because I think your CV would sort of indicate that, but more in terms of how you got along with people. Because it was a kind of a Greenfield project, which means that you're starting off fresh, which means that you're going to get 12 or 13 people together, and they've got to be able to click in order for this project to succeed. So that was the sort of way they did it. So then there was a lot of group discussion types of things. Lots of, you know, dinners in the evenings, but they were actually checking you out at that time in terms of how you were communicating with people, you know, what were you talking about. And how you interacted with other people and so on. And then of course, yes, there was a teaching demonstration.

Now, the teaching demonstration itself is an interesting one, because there were no students or most of us, so we were actually delivering a lecture in a room where there was nobody. But behind the sort of glass wall, there was a video camera kind of thing recording you. So it was a way to see, you know, how you actually lectured not so much in terms of the content. Because the content varied because they were recruiting very diverse sort of people in terms of their academic backgrounds. So that was pretty much the sort of the format, so I think it was the group discussions, I think, probably that was the most important because everybody sat together. You know, there were certain sort of themes or topics thrown around, and people discussed it and deliberated and so on, and I think that's where they're sort of caught as to you know, who might be, not only individually sort of able to lead something, but also to work collaboratively.

Charles Williams 7:10

So then the faculty after that, that are hired get together to figure out some of the plans for the university. So could you say what that experience was like? What role did the faculty actually play in defining the curriculum? Was there this sense of a kind of community clicking between the different faculty members that as a kind of a pretty creative project?

Anthony D'Costa 7:29

Yeah. So, okay, so but there's a little bit more background, at least in my case. We had what we call an exit interview. And at that time, you know, whoever the people were involved, and I think I remember I mean, I know the people involved, but I can't remember their names. Anyway, so basically, during the exit interview, I was told that "well, most likely we will make you an offer" and before I came for the interview, I also had communicated that, "Look, you have to make a decision quickly, whatever it is, because I actually have an offer." Right? So on that basis. So anyway when I came, they said that. And then of course, when I went back to Bloomington, Indiana anyway, within a few days, they turned around, they said, "You've got the job", so then that's fine. So then we were brought, I think, in the month of March, if I'm not mistaken, March of 1990, and we were put up at the Sheraton in downtown Tacoma—.

Charles Williams 8:29
—maybe, April, I think.

Anthony D'Costa 8:30

Well, maybe April, I can't remember somewhere around that time. And again, so basically, we were recruited so that all the Tacoma folks showed up there. Now, of course, the interesting question for me was, you know, because Bothell was also the other place and Tacoma was the other campus. And so when they also asked you, "Which campus would you like to be?" I mean preference, that didn't mean that necessarily agreed to it is a preference. So I said "Tacoma" and I searched Tacoma only because not that I knew anything about Tacoma only because I really couldn't find Bothell on the maps. And the interesting thing is that when I had come for the

interview, there was another colleague who in the end was not hired and he was from the Seattle area actually so he really wanted to move from Eastern Washington I think. We had some time and I said, "Where is Bothell?", I asked him. He said, "Oh, you know, if you have time, I'll be happy to you know, show you where Bothell actually is", and we drove in the rain. I couldn't even see through the windshield. It was so heavy rain. I mean we just drove and there were all just trees, there was nothing there. So yeah, so that information also helped me later on. But then in the end, actually, the recruiters themselves, that is the search committee, they themselves said, "No, we would like you to be in Tacoma". So it worked out just well.

So yeah, so that was the—So when we were brought into Sheraton, then we were, we had about, I think, three or four days to hammer out a curriculum, and we all sat together and basically so yeah, I was probably one of the two or three social scientists, but one with a political economy kind of background. And so basically yeah, we design, okay, "what would you like to teach?" kind of thing. So basically, what we really wanted to teach, you know, in terms of our experience, in terms of our training, we came up with a list of things. And of course, I think much of it wasn't so much the listing of the subjects or the courses, but it was designing the two tracks that we had and I don't know if it still exists—the international track and the so called U.S. track kind of thing.

Charles Williams 10:44

Not in the same way, but other faculty have mentioned that at the beginning, that was sort of the organizing [cross talk]—

Anthony D'Costa 10:48

— [cross talk] That was the organizing principles. So there would be people doing international stuff, there would be people doing the U.S. stuff. It's not necessary that one would be excluding the other but generally speaking that was the kind of division. And I think a lot of the discussions went around the so-called core courses for the two, which means that they were like compulsory mandatory title subject, every student ought to take it. And so then what would be the content when— so then there was some deliberate interesting deliberations. But the core subjects were that the other interesting thing was that they would be taught by two people. I mean, that was an arrangement. So collaborative kind of teaching, which meant that you know, somebody not from your field would actually be working with you. So I actually taught the core subject with Mike Kalton. And Mike Kalton, yes, he does East Asia, but have a very different kind of work than what I do he you know, he does more of the culture, the philosophy and those kinds of things history, whereas I do of course, political economy of development and so on. But yeah, we had a good time.

Charles Williams 11:52

How well was that course defined as?

Anthony D'Costa 11:54

It was, well, it was basically defined to basically explore, you know, the making of the contemporary world kind of thing. And so it's sort of the content varied depending on who was teaching it. And I think that was fine because in the end, what you bring to the classroom is your own experience and your training. And you can't sort of unless of course, you know, you do a subject which is a kind of a standard subject principles of something, which is really you have textbooks for it right? When these are subjects these are actually fairly innovative subjects. So there are no textbooks in fact we never had a textbook once in a while, we might adopt something, but mostly it was readings and that sort of thing. So that was the innovative part of the core courses.

The other of course, and in some ways, it was both a constraint but at the same time, it was perhaps a little bit sort of an advantage is that the curriculum was based on the last two years of the four year program. So which meant that you have to assume the students came with certain background. And, therefore you're doing upper division classes. On the other hand, of course, because you're doing upper divisions, and you could do some interesting kinds of things. But of course, the ground level reality turned out to be a little bit different because you had a hard time, you know, because that first two years was not there in the way that you would have liked. It made also teaching kind of a challenge as well. So we hammered out a program and yeah, in three, four days, there was the Liberal Studies program.

Charles Williams 13:34

What was your sense of the other faculty who you were working on this together with? Is there a certain kind of person who was attracted to UWT? Did you have a sense immediately, like, "Oh, we all come with a kind of interdisciplinary interest," or what was the culture?

Anthony D'Costa 13:46

I think the chief characteristic of the people who came in—not everybody I would say, but most I would say—was that they were in some ways, I don't want to use the word eccentric or a misfit in the places that they were in, but they were doing something different and they thought very differently. So I think by bringing those people together, I think that it made it much easier to have a shared understanding of what the UWT project would be. And I think that was the important thing. But also in terms of personalities, I think most people there were, you know, certainly there was one person, you know, there was some issues there, but obviously, it was not known at the time. But generally speaking, people got along very well, they could communicate very easily. You know, there was a great acceptance of the diversity of backgrounds, there was no intellectual hegemony, if you will, so that made it sort of a real sort of collaborative project and the first few years I remember because it was not just a university project, but it was actually a community project. Because the Tacoma business leadership, they were also very involved in it, of course, they had their certain interests, you know, in terms of development of downtown Tacoma and so on. They had their interest, but they were also very, very supportive of the entire project. So, which meant that, outside of the classroom, we were actually interacting with the community very, very frequently. There were a lot of potlucks, we

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would be invited to each other's houses, we would go and visit certain officials, government, local government officials, and so on. And I think that sort of brought out the idea that look, you know, this is a shared project, that has got to work. And also there was a certain innovative character to that because, you know, we were doing this upper division subjects. Students were coming locally. We didn't have permanent facilities to begin with. In fact, we had four floors of the Perkins Building in downtown Tacoma.

So all of that made it a very sort of exciting project because you were at the ground for virtually everything, making decisions about the library, making decisions about offices, and so on and so forth. And I think that sort of lend itself to, you know, people feeling good about it. And whatever differences there might have been, they were not an issue at all. So in that sense, I think, yeah, it made it a project that was truly not just within the academic sort of staff, but also the nonacademic staff and the community that really got involved in the project. Yeah.

Charles Williams 16:47

How would you characterize the students during the first years at UWT?

Anthony D'Costa 16:50

Well, we had very few students to begin with in the first year. In fact, I think our first year, graduation involved three students. So we had three graduates in after the first year or second year, I think I can't remember. And the graduation ceremony was actually held in the Perkins Building. But the numbers started growing and increasing. In fact, it was interesting, which of course changed over time, that I actually had one of the higher number of students in a class which, you know, which wouldn't necessarily draw on a whole lot of people you know, it was called Industrial Policy in U.S. manufacturing or some such thing, but a bulk of those students came from the Bremerton Naval Shipyard. And of course, you know, they were also concerned about the shipyard, you know, making it through this whole deindustrialization kind of thing. And yeah, and so these were adult students, and that was the nice thing about the early years, certainly, of teaching these upper division classes is that our students were working students, and so they've already had some experience. They were still working. Many of them had their, some years of college very early on. But they were basically mature students, and most of the classes, in fact, I think, in the first few years, all the classes were offered in the evenings. So you met a group of students who didn't necessarily were well prepared in terms of academic training. But on the other hand, they were very interested in what they were getting. And so they would participate and it made for a very lively sort of classroom sort of setting. But that does begin to change, of course, but in the early years here, the small classes helped. And in fact, we still really feel proud about the fact that we were a public university, but actually having or designing classes or having class sizes, that only you know, the very rich private schools could boast of.

Charles Williams 18:57

—kind of Liberal Arts.

Anthony D'Costa 18:58

Exactly. And that's amazing. See what we did is to give them a good solid liberal arts education with, public financing. So I think that made us feel very, very good. But then, so yeah, so early years, the student enrollments were low, partly because it was new. So you had to get the word out, and the word was getting out and people were coming in. So the numbers did start increasing. And there wasn't necessarily a huge pressure to increase the numbers because we only had one program at a time the Liberal Studies program, but I think within you know, I don't know maybe two, three, four years, that clearly there was an interest in setting up a business program. And in fact, I actually sat on the search committee in the initial search committee involving Seattle as well, for the hiring, well the forming of the business program curriculum and then also the hiring of the business faculty in the first round actually. So there were certain pressures also emerging in terms of whether the Liberal Studies program was adequate for what, let's say the public wanted. Now, I mean, it was a tough sort of situation in the sense that we were doing our job great, our students were very satisfied, we had very good relationship with our students. But obviously, there was some demand for other types of programs, not just only by the people who are the students who, potential students who wanted it, but also within the institution itself. So business program sort of came to be, but as you know, these are professional type of programs so, people often think that these are the professional types of programs will lead to jobs, which is a real sort of concern, no doubt. And so then the issue of diversifying the program became another part of the project. And so since then, of course, I think there has been an addition of a number of programs in Urban Studies and so on, although Urban Studies could have been part of the Liberal Studies program, but it wasn't I think, and I don't know exactly what the reason was for it. Yeah.

Charles Williams 21:26

You sort of alluded to this a little bit, but in terms of your own interest, it must have been an interesting place to teach given Tacoma's and Bremerton's and other places and cities going through some of the deindustrialization.

Anthony D'Costa 21:37

Sure.

Charles Williams 21:38

Interesting. [unintelligible]

Anthony D'Costa 21:39

I think it was interesting because, I mean, I was very, very active in terms of outreach programs or outreach activities, if you will. Even in Seattle, I was part of the South Asia program as well in Seattle. You know, so even though it had quite a large number of people doing South Asian Studies, mostly India, but they didn't have anybody who did the economy and the political economy of India. So virtually for all of their needs, I was the one who was to go up there. And then here in Tacoma, I dealt with the city government, I dealt with the World Trade Center. I dealt with, even there were certain groups of people who were talking about industrial policy at

the time, because Tacoma is kind of an industrial, not quite in the same way that I studied, but it is an industrial area. So obviously, issues of industrial restructuring, those kinds of issues became important, and certainly because of Western Washington and the place of Tacoma in world trade and so on, there were lots of occasions where, you know, I would participate, I would moderate regarding trade matters, either with the trade alliance in Seattle or the World Trade Center here or even the Port of Tacoma. So there are a lot of those kinds of things that I did so in some ways, yes. What I was teaching was also, I was in some ways imparting to the public at large. And I mean those public in the sense relevant to the public, right? So, in that sense, of course, teaching became not just a classroom activity, but it also went out of the classroom. And I think that probably it should be the way I think all teaching should be done. And certainly it is the model today. So for example, where I am now in Melbourne, it is actually an expectation that you contribute to blogs, you contribute to public discussions and public debates, and so on. And of course, just like in Melbourne, where I have been on media, and even in the past, in Copenhagen, I used to be in media on anything on India that would come up in Copenhagen, I would be the one on the media. Here also, but in a much more limited way, because we were in Tacoma, media's in Seattle. But yes, I did participate in student debates with various people, including Wash Tech [Washington Alliance of Technology Workers], I remember, which is a kind of a labor alliance for technical workers. And of course, outsourcing was a big thing. At the time issues, it still is, in fact, Trump is still talking about how to restrict H-1B visas, and so on and so forth. Those issues were also there. So I participated in these live TV debates. And so I think when you are able to teach what you want to teach, which was of course, the case in the case of UWT, but those same things you could also bring it out to the public. And I think that enriched, you know, your teaching so you could actually write the sort of practical kinds of aspects to your teaching. And that helps a lot because, I mean, yes, academics, you know, scholarship in the traditional sort of sense. You know, you talk theory and theory is good, you got to know theory, because in the end your analysis is informed by theory. But on the other hand, you don't want to sort of have a discussion only about the theory and the short and the weaknesses of it, or the strengths of it, but rather how do you, you know, apply and see the world. And that's, I think, was one of the other nice things about teaching at UWT, because there was a hunger and in fact, there was a scarcity, if you will, of that kind of knowledge in the public sphere and you were able to bring it people recognize that you could do it. And so we were sort of involved with them. So then that way, you were building a bridge as well, with both the academic community and the nonacademic community.

Charles Williams 25:46

And did being here have an impact on the kind of research you did or not so much?

Anthony D'Costa 25:51

Not so much in terms of the location sort of base. I did write a paper which was in the end, I never pushed it to publishing it. And that paper was based on simply looking out the window from my office. And that was basically viewing the Port of Tacoma. So I actually did a paper on the Port of Tacoma in terms of the goods moving in and out and the position of Tacoma in the world economy. And in fact, I presented that paper in one of the World Systems Conference in

Hawaii many years ago. But I never published there. So that would have been a location specific kind of thing. But much of my work has been international, international in the sense that talking about the world economy, talking about India, talking about Korea, and so on. But then, you know, our students needed that kind of understanding. Because by the 1980s, we were already witnessing the kind of shift in a global sense of what was going on both in the US economy, but also elsewhere, and the two had to be related, they were not independent of each other. And so then the point that, you know, we always talk about how we are globally connected, but you've got to sort of actually put it, you know, in some concrete terms, how is it that we are connected? And my subjects and courses and discussions obviously, allowed for that, and I think that the students really appreciated that.

Charles Williams 27:30

As another question related partly to the students, the campus now has a really strong sense of commitment to valuing a diverse student body, recognizing diversity as one of the kind of key institutional perspectives or values. Looking back at the early years were issues of diversity, something that came up with any?

Anthony D'Costa 27:48

Yes, definitely. Perhaps not right at the beginning because the search committee that did the initial hire of the 13 people, they themselves probably had some mandate of some sort about diversity. To what extent they were able to carry it out and what was the understanding of diversity. I mean, diversity is understood very, very differently today than it was say perhaps, you know, 20, 30 years ago. And also I think, certainly people who are from, who are of non-white background, but not necessarily from the U.S. also have a very different understanding of diversity. So here, of course, in the early years, diversity meant not having enough African Americans, right? That was one. But diversity could mean many other things. And of course, today we talk about transgender people and women and so on. Of course, women have been I mean, let me see, in the first round. I mean, we had obviously one, two, three. Women were in a minority. I don't know where it stands today. But obviously, that was not our responsibility, the hiring was done by some other group. But since then we've hired a lot of women in our program. That is the Liberal Studies program, which subsequently became, you know, Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences. So I think we've done that. And of course the issue, I guess, the way to look at diversity, and this is where I think I may have had differences with some of my colleagues is that, really where diversity matters is, I think, in the early years, which is not really university level, which is in the high school and in the earlier is how you get people of not just color, but of gender and so on, into into the whatever the academic stream, if you will.

People who come up to the university level, they've already had a reasonably good sort of upward mobility, otherwise they wouldn't have been at that. So at that point, true. If it is you know, if a program is you know, dominated by men only then clearly there is a problem. So therefore, you've got to really try hard. But I think at no time should you compromise on what is the person that you're looking for in terms of their intellectual ability and their potential contribution to the program. I think that sort of purpose should always be kept in mind. And then

yes, you work through diversity. And I think we did that in lots of cases. Through the years, you know, in terms of hiring and so on.

So diversity is important, no doubt because it makes the workplace more interesting. It makes the sort of student learning also very enriching because they see different people doing it. But it should not be the criterion by which you make academic hires. I think academic hires have to go with both a combination of both of those things whereby you look at balance, but balance is not the primary sort of focus, but in terms of what is it that you need from that person, whoever that might be, and I think that so we've did have some debates about diversity. And whatever hires remember the initial hires, yes, we were hiring. Well, I mean, I don't know if it was a lot of hiring I can't seem to remember. But yeah, we did a public history hire, we did media stuff. A lot of those hires came on a little bit later. But then when you start off with 12, I think the additions would only be incremental. The base was large enough at that point, you know, for a Liberal Studies program, but the hires were taking place in other programs. So business program. In fact, I'm very proud to say that two of my very good colleagues in the business program were both women, Jill Purdy and Tracy Thompson. So they were part of the original sort of hire in the Tacoma campus.

So I think, from that point of view, I think diversity was mentioned but then today, of course, diversity means other things. And you know how you deal with it, I don't know. And whether that should be the primary focus or not, that might be also an interesting question. In the end, of course, you want to have, you know, students experiencing a good learning environment. That's the key thing. What contributes to a good learning environment? That is up for discussion and if diversity contributes to it of course, you do it. But it's I think more than that.

Charles Williams 32:31

Shifting directions a little bit maybe, what was the faculty's relationship with administration?

Anthony D'Costa 32:37

Initially, the administration of course, was very flat in the sense that we have the director, and then we had, I believe, a dean. But then the dean, there was only one program so therefore, it was very flat in that sense. But I think once the the campus started expanding and other programs came in, then of course, there was a certain kind of administrative reconfiguration with more administration sort of administration people hired at various levels and of course. But then as you know, the tendency often times is that it becomes more and more hierarchical, as you expand, and as the work is sort of divided up a little bit more minutely, so then everybody sort of becomes a specialist of something or the other some sphere. But our relationship was good in the sense that we had direct access, you know, to the dean, and of course, the director, of course he was the intermediary between the dean and us. So he was, I mean, you know, he did whatever he had to do. Look, I mean, there wasn't that much to do in the early years only because the number of people were already fixed. There were no discussion of new programs

at the time. And basically you discharge the duties and obligations in the way. So teaching was the main thing.

Teaching was the main thing, but then there were some administrative issues, once it started expanding, of course, and then the ... so for example, I think an important relationship with the administration was, say, tenure and promotion. So that was an important thing. But I think it was much toward the end that I served on the TMP type of committee, whatever that will report it to the chancellor. But early years, I think the tenure and promotion ... well, many of us were hired as assistant professor beginning assistant professor level. So it was basically five years after which then this TMP stuff came up. But by that time, we were also maturing in terms of, you know, how to do it and so on. And we did have some senior people. In fact, that was part of the reason why you had a mix of people that is yes, mostly young assistants. But you also have full professors, and they would be the ones then to shepherd, this TMP type of process. But Seattle was involved, obviously, because in the end, it was the president of the UW system that actually, finally, approved the tenure and promotion cases. But the question, of course was, how much should be local and how much should be at that central level, if you will. I think there were certain kinds of issues of them, but the relationship was just fine. And in fact, once we had a chancellor, and I can't remember when she joined, Vicky Carwein, once she came on board as the chancellor, she of course then by the time you know, the campus had grown, we were already in this sort of facility in a new facility, new buildings were coming up and so on. So clearly the administration had also expanded. And clearly there were certain committees that were established, which would then work with the faculty and the administration to discharge whatever the university's obligations would be. So whether it would be to tenure and promotion, whether it would be curriculum development, whatever those things are, there were committees set up at that administrative level in which faculty played a role.

So I don't recall huge, any sort of major problems, though, although there were some, I suppose TMP cases where there were some issues, but that had more to do with interpersonal kinds of things. And I suppose that there might have within the administration some conflicts as well, because I do know that there was an academic director or I forget, you know, a position that basically reports to the chancellor regarding academic matters. And he was brought in and I guess, it might have been, again, a personal kind of issue, which then again, he had to sort of step down and he was gone. So, but that was within the administration, not involving faculty, but I don't really recall, you know, any kind of friction as such. Yes, there were differences, no doubt.

Number of students per class was increasing, so the load was increasing. How do you address that? And the teaching load itself is very heavy. We were hiring researchers, but they realized that well, you know, doing research with staff ... and these were concerns that were being communicated, I guess, to the administration. In fact, I think one of the first things that Vicky Carwein did was, she realized how poorly paid we were. And which was true, we were really started over a very, very low base, our salary was just not moving up in any way. And so she tried to address this compression problem and she did, to some extent, she did address the

compression problem, which is, of course, a common feature in all universities. But we started with such a low base that it made things even worse. So she did address a little bit of that, but that's something that I think she did it on her own. I don't think there was any sort of faculty sort of demand as such. People could clearly recognize that, okay, for all this work, these guys are getting a pittance kind of thing. But on other matters, I think there were certain kinds of negotiations. I suppose in the early years, we did try to reduce our teaching loads to five. But I don't think anybody bought it.

Charles Williams 39:04

—still six today for tenure line faculty inside, seven for lecturers.

Anthony D'Costa 39:11

Yeah. Right. So that I think is yeah, so I guess I mean, yeah, so obviously it's one of those things where you teach a lot. And yes, this is not a R1 campus, although we are part of an R1 university, I guess that's my understanding. So which means that research is expected, but it is obviously, it's not benchmarked like they do it, let's say in Seattle, or the expectation isn't that. But the question, of course, is are the people willing to give that up? And how much of you do you give it up? Now, some people will say "yeah, once you're tenured, you could do it as well." Okay, fine you know? There's no incentive to do the research so fine I'll just do my teaching as I'm expected, attend meetings and contribute in that sort of way, which is fine, but there are others also, we're still and that was me, in fact that I wanted to do more. And I think that was part of the reason also that I left is that because you teach nine months, and then your summer off and summer should be really off. But it was not off in practical terms, because then I was going to India, doing my field research in the heat of the worst time of the year to go to do your field research. So you're basically exhausted, I mean, really exhausted. And this I think, was a major issue. So I think the university has to make a kind of a decision that, how do you want your academic staff to perform, and how should performance be measured? But I think there could be some ways of having flexibility. I mean, I know in some of the big sort of universities like University of California, certainly in Riverside, in the economics department, I was there in 2016. I gave a talk there and I was asked to meet some people, I was there for a day and a half, you know, the young researchers and the young academics and interestingly enough, we have actually created what are known as teaching professors. So, they are not expected to do research. Their teaching load is higher than the other person, but they are not evaluated on the research at all. So, it frees them up with that kind of responsibility. That, okay, our job is only to teach, and they get tenure, these are tenured positions, so these are not like adjuncts.

So those are the ways to, I think, think about in the future in terms of okay, you can't expect everything from somebody under these kinds of constraints. And that I think is something that perhaps the administration and the faculty should talk about, but definitely I would still say that six is a lot because it does sort of limit you. And for the record, I think it might be worth considering Bothell did get it down to five. So if Bothell could do it then why not Tacoma?

Charles Williams 42:02

—Bothell's equivalent unit, the Interdisciplinary Studies at Bothell.

Anthony D'Costa 42:06

—yeah.

Charles Williams 42:07

—yeah.

Anthony D'Costa 42:07

—right.

Charles Williams 42:10

So one further question around kind of the maturing of the campus, what was it like to move to the permanent campus?

Anthony D'Costa 42:18

Well, that was actually quite exciting. I remember the day they broke the ground, so to speak. The administrators and the civic leaders put on yellow helmets or whatever non colored helmets they were in with a shovel, dropped some dirt into the ground. No, I think it was good because first of all, I think I was very impressed once the buildings were built, because a couple of things one, of course, is the historical character of these buildings, maintaining that kind of, you know, history, particularly the very much an industrial business working class kind of history in the in the downtown area. The other, of course, was that the buildings themselves were very interesting because they retained the shell, but made them very, very modern, usable, user friendly type of buildings. So I think from an architecturally sort of architecture point of view, I think there were a very good set of buildings.

Then of course, as soon as we moved in, there were talks about a new science building. So the actual science faculty were involved in thinking through in terms of well, what kind of building would they like, involving classrooms, labs, and so on [unintelligible]. I remember Cheryl Greengrove and David Secord, the first two I think, science based faculty that IAS had hired. They were very, very deeply involved with actually the planning process of the of the science building. So I think that also sort of conveyed a sense of, that you have a stake in what you're doing. So it's not just about teaching, but it's also about well what kind of classroom should you have for teaching? It's a slightly different thing, but they're all integrated. And it also involves the people. But of course, it also meant a lot of work. So not only were you teaching, but you were also looking at plans and so on. But overall, the new campus from that point of view was was very well done. In fact, I really must sort of, congratulate the architects and the visionaries who had this idea of retaining the buildings, and working around it, but completely very modern kind of thing. Library is a very interesting building in itself, which again, is something that one should admire.

So moving into the new campus, I think was for one thing, we had lots of new spaces. Classrooms were nice, you know, we had all the audio video equipment, projection. And we also had very good, I should also say, that we also had very good service providers. So whether it was the media center, or the library, they were all very, very computer centered. They were all very sort of always wanting to help. And so that's the other thing is that we worked with this nonacademic professionals in a very nice sort of way. We were almost as good as our friends. In fact, some of them still are with me.

So I think moving to the new campus allowed that to blossom. Because we were in a small premises, yes, we still had those things, but on a much smaller scale. Now it became much bigger and it allowed you to actually do a lot more, but with those people that is the nonacademic, nonacademic staff and professionals. So moving to the new campus was, I mean, at one level, I think it made you feel that, okay finally, you're part of a campus, which was not quite there. I mean, you know, can you imagine, you know, just claiming the four floors of a building or a campus? Well, it is, in one sense, in spirit at least. But yeah, I mean, it also the idea that, you would see people walking out of classrooms, as opposed to the idea that people would be walking out of the classrooms and taking the elevator to the next classroom, which is a little different. And you know, with some greenery and all that kind of stuff. So yeah, I think the move was good. And I think we all appreciated it.

Charles Williams 46:39

You touched on this a little bit already, but could you say a bit more about the relationship with UW Seattle and maybe also with Bothell?

Anthony D'Costa 46:46

Interesting question because well, I think that the relationship between Bothell was very limited, at least during my time. There was not much other than perhaps when, let's say, at least it from my point of view, when, let's say, the University of Washington decided that okay, business programs should be added in the two campuses, then I got involved. Okay? And then yes, I did meet some of the Bothell candidates as well, who were then, in fact, one of them is now, well, he wasn't in the first round, but I think he came on later, but he's now the dean of the Bothell Business School. But the interaction was limited. In the first couple of years, there were some common meetings. And you know, probably we gathered but they were more more like social than anything else. So we would meet our counterparts from Bothell at somebody's house, at the dean's house I guess at the time, potluck or whatever, dinner or whatever it is. But in terms of the actual interactions was very limited, except though I think there was a committee and I don't if that still exists, the tri-campus kind of committee in which I also was involved, I think for a couple of years maybe. So that time of course, we would see representatives of the Bothell campus, Seattle, and then us talking about topics of mutual interest, but mostly to do with governance kinds of issues. Right? So that's where some interaction but I think otherwise, other than that, I think the interaction was very limited.

But with Seattle it was a little bit different. But perhaps I think it's probably obvious because, you know, Seattle was very big relative to us. And so what that meant that there were a lot of things that we had to get from Seattle, we didn't have that kind of infrastructure or the institutional arrangements or for that matter, certain types of knowledge, university specific types of knowledge, so we had to go to Seattle. And so in that sense, I think introductions with Seattle, but also individually, we had colleagues there and so on and we would interact. But then I guess the tri-campus, that committee was the one that was important, I think for the three campus relationship. And then for individuals like me, as I said, I belong to both to the International Studies program, and to the South Asia program. In fact, I actually taught a honors class, one year, one term for the for the International Studies program. But—

Charles Williams 49:33

—so some of those kinds of relationships is really your own initiatives that you [cross talk]—

Anthony D'Costa 49:37

—[cross talk] exactly.

Charles Williams 49:38

—[cross talk]connect?

Anthony D'Costa 49:38

Yeah. Either it's your own initiative, or they want you to do it. So the South Asia program like I said, you know, they didn't have anybody talking about the Indian economy, and of course, Seattle has a large Indian community. Indian as in from India.

So, you have the, you know, the Indo U.S. Friendship Forum. Right? Then you have the Indian Association of Western Washington. And because the South Asia program like other areas studies program in Seattle are this Title VI, endowed sort of programs, which means they get federal money. So the mandate is that they've got to reach out to the public. So there are a lot of public events, and so forth. And because Seattle is one of those places where you have Boeing and Microsoft, and, you know, trade related kinds of activities, all of these things going on—business related business and commerce. So a lot of events were centered around these things. And so they I basically would be asked, you know, to deliver talks, to moderate a session, moderate visiting journalists, whoever they were, and that, of course, had to do with the fact that yes, I had certain expertise, and there was a gap. They didn't have it. So they would call on me. It didn't matter you were from Tacoma.

For they saw me as actually part of UW. I mean, that's basically it. But yes, I don't think that there is formally any kind of arrangement. In fact, I'll give you, whether you edit it out or not, but I'll give one example. There were some people on the Seattle campus who wanted me to be there, but administratively, they just couldn't do it. This kind of horizontal move, they just couldn't do it. There are several people who tried it for a couple of years and they wanted me to be in the

South Asia program basically. So which means that these are I think standalone outfits. There's no harm in it. I mean, obviously, there's no harm in it in being standalone outfits but and also, they're also different from Seattle because you know, Seattle's because it's an R1 campus. It's a much more comprehensive in terms of what it offers. Tacoma or Bothell could never be like that. They can grow, sure, and they have grown, but it can never be in Seattle, at least for the foreseeable future. So they are going to be different and their mandates are also different. I mean, I don't know, what is the proportion of international students coming into Tacoma today?

Charles Williams 52:24

It's growing—

Anthony D'Costa 52:25

—It's growing.

Charles Williams 52:25

—I couldn't give you the exact number.

Anthony D'Costa 52:27

—Yeah.

Charles Williams 52:27

—It's not particularly large.

Anthony D'Costa 52:28

Right. But Seattle is and but Seattle always has been certainly with Asian countries. And now even more so you know, computer science, all that stuff. So yeah, Seattle draws in a lot of people, foreign students and so on. And foreign students is also a good revenue earner because they pay out of state tuition. So in that sense, the smaller campuses will be different. Their mandates will be different in the sense that they are to serve the local communities, although local in itself what is local itself is changing. So you have immigrant populations coming in you have other people moving from other states moving in. So you have to obviously cater to those sort of communities, and Seattle probably won't grow as much. And therefore, these are the two places that should.

I mean Bothell has grown with this new campus. And Bothell is serving , however, very different, interestingly, some different needs because they are in the tech centers. So they a lot of their programs are very tech oriented. In fact, they're hiring all these tech, media, that sort of stuff because they're located in that part of the country, or part of the state. Tacoma on the other hand, yeah, I think Tacoma will probably represent more of a traditional but a smaller version of a regular university. Bothell might be able to do certain things differently because of their location, because being on the Eastside, and Eastside is a booming place. So that's, I think the the two sort of two. But in terms of relationships, I mean, yeah, I think. I mean, there's, well, I mean, it's like research, you know, oftentimes institutions expect that, well, there should be

institutional collaboration, and they put money for it, but research is one of those activities, if you don't have a particular interest and you don't know the people, it's very hard to build that relationship. But if you already know people who are working in the area, you've done some work with them, you know, you do it. So it's very individually sort of driven.

I mean, in Melbourne, to give you a parallel story, University of Melbourne, always wants research partnerships, and they expected me to build research partnerships with Indian institutions. Well, Indian institutions are a different beast. I mean, it's a very different beast, but it doesn't mean you can't do research, but it has to be on an individual sort of basis. So we have done that. In fact, I have done that while in Melbourne, but working with individuals, rather than at the institutional level. Of course, these individuals are well placed in the institution. So if you work with them, then yeah, indirectly you are having a kind of a, but not a formal institutional relationship. So how do you build sort of these kinds of arrangements with other campuses? Yeah, formally, I don't think you can do too much. Unless, of course, there are people with your interests and somehow you come up with a joint proposal. And then basically, let's say the two campuses decide to fund it in whatever measure. Now, that could be a small start. But it doesn't mean that you can scale it up. So it would depend on individuals themselves. But it will be good, of course, that there is some avenue by which there is some, say, cross campus conversations. That might be and it doesn't have to be necessarily academic, although academics would be one way to do it, where few people from either of the two campuses or both campuses or three campuses, and we'll talk about some mutual kind of thing. But then again, it has to be individually driven.

Charles Williams 56:03

So you're describing some of your own involvement in Seattle is having to do with community connections there and so on. And you've already mentioned a little bit about the similar things in Tacoma. So what's your sense of UW Tacoma's relationship with Tacoma and the surrounding community? What's the impact then of the campus on the community? And [cross talk]—

Anthony D'Costa 56:22

— [cross talk] Well, I mean, the immediate impact, which of course, I think, in many ways, the business leadership in Tacoma had already envisioned that if they set up a permanent campus in this part, obviously, some of the real estate owners would benefit from that development, which is normal. So obviously, that part was satisfied, but also the fact that it led to a certain, if you will, revitalization of this part of the city. And the revitalization, I mean, this was a derelict kind of place. Which meant, so you have in addition to the campus, which of course, provided a certain sort of, physical sort of infrastructure, foot traffic, and that sort of thing, meant that other things could develop, so small businesses. You know, the former sort of train station being converted into the court, the federal, is it a federal court?

Charles Williams 57:33

—sure

Anthony D'Costa 57:33

—federal court, the museum's coming on board and so on and so forth. So, in many ways, then, the university the establishment of the University of Washington Tacoma, in this part of the city of Tacoma, led to basically the revitalization and urban development or redevelopment, if you will. Actually probably urban development, there was not much to redevelop in that sense. Most of the things are fairly new. Basically created this urban space which Tacoma was lacking. When I first came to Tacoma, that is, once I had accepted the job, we arrived, I think on July 4th or some time around then I think or anyway, it was, yeah, I think it was around July 4th, I think. And it was a Sunday, I think, or a holiday or something. And basically, we were in a taxi going through the city of Tacoma. And everything at that time was shuttered, so not just closed like business on a holiday or a Sunday, but they were actually shuttered. And I looked at my wife and I said, "You know, did we make the right choice?" Right? So that was, almost 28 years ago. And even while I was here, of course, I've seen change and of course now it's much more so. So the city has grown and developed and I think a lot of credit is to the establishment of this university, which means that you give credit to the people at UW or in the Washington government that for so this idea of having a smaller campus, but also to the civic leaders of the city of Tacoma, who had some vision about how to redevelop this part of the city. And I think the university played that role.

Charles Williams 59:33

You left UWT in 2008.

Anthony D'Costa 59:35

Yes.

Charles Williams 59:36

And so looking back, what would you say was was most rewarding up to the time when you moved on?

Anthony D'Costa 59:42

I think the the most rewarding was that fellowship or the the comradeship that one developed, while starting with this sort of Greenfield project that is setting up the program and of course, the so called, you know, fourth floor sort of campus that I think was the thing because I still meet them even though, I have been out of the US in terms of my profession now for a decade, a decade plus. But we obviously live in the area, or at least we returned back to the area after five years. And every time I visited the Pacific Northwest, I get together with a lot of my old friends. Some of them of course, many of them are retired. So I think, in fact, that was the reason why we returned back to this part of the country. Because once we left Tacoma and went to live in Europe, and once the decision to return was made, we could have chosen any part of the U.S. for whatever reason, but then we decided to be here only because we knew people. So we had, aside from the familiarity of the place, but we also had colleagues and they're all founders. And of course, some are not founders, but you know, I know them. So Yonn [Dierwechter], for

example, as you know, so yeah, he came much later, but yeah, so there are people that I know here and with whom my relationship continues.

So I think that is probably the most sort of lasting and durable sort of development. So in the end, I think a project like UWT, aside from the the usual sort of utilitarian kinds of things like okay, good quality education, students benefiting from the program, developing their intellectual sort of capabilities, and so on. In addition to those basic things, I think this project has, and I call it project because, although it's an ongoing project, I should say, it's not quite done with. I mean, I'm sure it's growing and expanding, is that you build very good relationships with your colleagues and these relationships are basically lifelong in nature.

Charles Williams 1:02:04

In terms of the campus itself, has it evolved in ways that you think stayed true to the original vision? I know you haven't been here for 10 years, but what's your own sense of it's sort of trajectory and how that [cross talk]—

Anthony D'Costa 1:02:14

—[cross talk] oh, I mean, in the campus looks great, with all the additions and the layout, the—

Charles Williams 1:02:21

—expansion of programs.

Anthony D'Costa 1:02:23

—exactly expansion of programs.

But from what little I know, I don't know very much, but what little, I know, perhaps some programs need a little bit of reorganization, especially my former sort of program, if you will, the Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences probably it has become too big and therefore needs to be thought of in some other sort of way. Because large programs can be tough to manage, although, I should also add that where I am at in Melbourne at this time, and my program is also very large, but then we have very clear cut, sort of disciplines and programs, which means that each one has their own discipline chair. So the school level, we are also school, but we don't have departments. Right? But at the school level, the discussion is, if you miss it doesn't do anything. I mean, you're not impacted by it. It's all within the programs. But the thing is then why have them that school level thing, except for some strategic kinds of things? So it's a question of, you know, how the individual faculty members feel about the scale of the school. And if they feel that, you know, these large scale meetings or large scale kinds of discussions, you know, don't add very much then they need to rethink, rethink in terms of reorganization of the program.

But because it is interdisciplinary and that was the sort of original intent of the Liberal Studies program, that I think should be maintained. But you can maintain that without necessarily sacrificing the kind of specialists that there are. So political scientists could form a group of their

own, but not necessarily always doing political science. They could be doing all kinds of other things, political sociology, political economy, all of those things can be done and still remain true to that notion of interdisciplinarity. But I think it's the question of the scale of operation and how do you make it more workable might be an issue.

Charles Williams 1:04:41

Sort of staying true to the spirit without feeling obliged to stay locked in [cross talk]—

Anthony D'Costa 1:04:46

—Exactly, exactly. Yeah. Because you have to be pragmatic about things no matter what you do. You have to be pragmatic. And when things begin to not work, then yeah, you rethink, in terms of well is that what is the other alternative. And the alternatives are not that dramatic, I would say. It's just an administrative reform. I mean, yes, I know, universities are slow to administrative reform, but it can be done. You know, basically people have to be more or less on the same page. And so yeah, this is it. So I think that might be sort of some interesting kind of development. And something for the future to consider is to how to sort of reorganize the programs in some new ways without necessarily sacrificing the original mandate.

Charles Williams 1:05:40

Thank you very much, Anthony. It's a pleasure to talk with you.

Anthony D'Costa 1:05:42

Well, thank you, Charles.