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# Herbert Arnold Oral History Interview, Jun. 12, 2015

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## INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR HERBERT ARNOLD FOR THE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interview with Professor Arnold by Heather Zavod. June 12, 2015.

HERBERT ARNOLD: Doug Bennet was not exactly what one would call the world's most scintillating kind of public speaker. He would talk as if he were speaking just to you or me in a very small room; a big carrying voice....that was not Doug at all. Well, he didn't think of anything grandiose because he was so busy trying to go around and continue in his role as fundraiser, which he had had at Public Radio. I for one don't really feel that it made much of an impact educationally, internally here. By the way, on Chace, you know, not everybody knows of one positive thing about him. He began to try to address something that had been sort of let go beginning under Colin and that was campus maintenance. There had been a lot of so-called "deferred" maintenance, in other words, do nothing, and the campus showed it, so it got pretty ratty in some places and Chace started to turn that around and Bennet continued that and it is important because I clearly remembered when our oldest daughter, Tina—when we went around to visit schools we went to Tufts, and I ruled out Tufts after five minutes because of the way the campus looked. It was run down and not cared for and as far as I'm concerned if you don't care for your campus, it may be totally wrong, but that's the way it looks, do you really care about your academics? It was very different at Bryn Mawr, for example...everything was spic and span. So I think those two things, and other than that I really don't feel that there's been much of an impact. I don't recall...Then there were some little incidents during his time. There was the case of one colleague at the College of Letters who was let go because he was only teaching, and weak on scholarship, and so the students really got up in arms and they occupied the President's office. So in the middle of the night I get this frantic phone call from the new Vice President, Ms. Brown: "Can you help, can you help?" And, so I went and together with a very nice police captain from the Middletown police department we managed to convince the kids to leave the office without incident and all that. We had a young man who had just come into the administration, who shall remain unnamed as he's still here, obviously didn't know Wesleyan, He wanted to have them all arrested but that's not the way we do things here. These are our students and we deal with them and fortunately we had the police captain, who was very, very nice and I can't recall his name....savvy psychologically, and he said we have no interest in arresting anybody. He said, "I think the professor here has the right idea...he will talk to them, so let's just him and me go in there and talk to them and you stay out there." We took the guy aside and worked it all out. He was huffin' and puffin'. External interference is really not what Wesleyan is all about. It was also an indication of the kind of personnel who didn't know the place, who had no feel and really could have no feel for the place and

that's why I'm not naming the person, as I don't want to accuse individuals, as it's not an individual issue but it's something that has happened over time. The growth in size and the inevitable turnover creates a loss of institutional memory and therefore identity. People used to know how things were done. "This is simply not the way things are done here." You don't hear that anymore because nobody knows how things were done and moreover very few people care how things were done. They're only interested in "managing" it the way one manages things nowadays. That almost dates roughly from the death of Willie Kerr because he was the embodiment of the Wesleyan ethos, the institutional memory, and also he kept the faculty on its toes because if Willie Kerr said anything, and he didn't speak very often, but when he did speak he would always send half of the faculty scurrying off after the meeting to their dictionaries because they'd heard another word that they didn't know what the hell it meant [laughter], and he pronounced it correctly too. [hearty laughter] And he was such a gentleman with his little bow tie and his walks downtown. A lot used to be based on precedent and with the loss of memory, institutional memory, that precedent significance also got lost. That's part and parcel of what we mentioned already, is this change from institutional identity to professional identity as the primary mode for faculty to identify themselves. It used to be in the old days when you asked somebody, "Oh, you're teaching. What are you teaching and where are you teaching?" Now it's only, "What field are you in? What research are you doing?" It's a very, very different primary interest and a way of identifying people. In other words this is a much larger trend...it's a trend for all higher education and not just Wesleyan. These are just some particular manifestations of that trend at Wesleyan. What is the role of Wesleyan's president under these conditions? What is liberal education? Oh, nobody knows at this point. It's just a way of putting something out there. President Roth is working in a time-honored tradition. It's the way it used to be done. But it was the president of Harvard or Princeton who used to do it. They would write a book or give speeches and they were established as the flagship of American higher education. Now, of course, this is no longer the case and everything has become multi-centered or singular-centered and second-tier institutions like Wesleyan can also now make noise and especially given the fact that most presidents are primarily fundraisers and no longer educators. The field is wide open and I think Michael Roth is trying to do something that used to be restricted to a few others. What it will mean either for Wesleyan or what it means exactly for the general debate about liberal arts in America is hard to assess at this point. It depends on what the echo is, and that it may mean something for him individually in terms of career to bigger and better things, you know, more power to him. Because remember, the shelf life of a president has become shorter and shorter over my time. The kinds of presidencies that we had with Butterfield and Campbell, extending beyond 10, 12 or 15 years, I don't think will be possible any more for a number of obvious reasons but mainly having to do with the fact of (a) fundraising and (b) the complexities of higher education. The demands on a president nowadays are just so insane and he can't remove himself from

them and the story was that Butterfield said, okay, I'll do anything you want me to do as president but I won't be a fundraiser, and then he was the most effective fundraiser they had up to that point. If they found some nice old lady who had a legacy they'd turn Vic's charm on her and in all likelihood that led to some gift or other. But, he was a reluctant fundraiser and he thought of himself as an educator. Nowadays every president who comes in knows that his primary purpose is fundraising. There's also a pattern to them...it's always the same and it's what I call the CEO pattern. You come in and you're a halfway intelligent president, you follow this pattern. You come in and in the first year or year and a half you get to know the place and find out what's what and then you start an initiative trying to show that you have something to contribute...something new or different, and that's when the studies begin, everybody wants to do studies...they debate on campus on where we want to go and to define ourselves and then you go to the implementation phase, which varies at times but two or three years maximum normally and often leading to very little but sometimes creating some new initiatives here and there, and then there's the phase-out period when everybody's waiting for the president to finally move on to somewhere else so we can get a new one. So, all told, you're talking about six to eight years and that's already stretching it, and that's the useful shelf life and again it has nothing to do with the individual and that's simply the way it is. Learning the ropes, getting a new idea out there...maybe four or five because you're not going to implement more than one in any institution of any size, then trying implementation...some work and some don't, and then phase out and on.

HEATHER ZAVOD: You should write a book.

Arnold: Ahhh, I think everybody knows that and by the way it's true not just for the presidencies of universities. It's for CEOs of corporations, it's for heads of not-for-profit organizations...it depends on whoever is on the board...it's the same pattern. So, it's always hard to say what exactly the individual has actually achieved. Some of it is based on what was going on before, some really good idea never comes to anything because of ingrained local resistance. I will take EPC, Educational Policy Committee...

Zavod: Oh, were you on that?

Arnold: Oh, I was on that a couple of times; it's way back there somewhere. But, that's part of what I would call the whole governance issue. Governance at Wesleyan changed quite a lot also as the institution changed and in some ways, I think, reflected the change of the institution. When I first came there were very few committees and EPC was IT, and Advisory was okay and important, but not nearly as important because ultimately the president decided. That changed over time and the EPC, while it remained

important, tended to lose significance over time. Advisory gained tremendously in significance...it determined who was going to get tenure, or what the composition of our faculty was going to be over time, or who was on Advisory, and Karl Scheibe could speak to that because he was on Advisory for many years, and what notions of professionalism they espoused pretty much determined what the faculty would be like. So committees and their roles changed over time. One of the interesting ways in which the EPC was seemingly retaining its power but eventually lost some of it was the proliferation of subcommittees that it spawned. All the subcommittees for this, that, and the other ultimately reported back to EPC and then the EPC would report to the faculty. But it also meant the dilution of the significance of EPC and after a while EPC no longer was the educational policy committee which it used to be, focusing on what does this mean for the institution and is it educationally viable and is it important, you know. It became instead an administrative instrument manipulated more or less by the ex officio presence of the administration. It was always that the president and the vice president were ex officio members and then there were representatives of the three divisions: humanities, science, social science...one senior and one junior faculty member from each, so there were six of us plus someone in Administration, so that Administration could say I'm sending in somebody because of expertise in this field and so on. The president and vice president—the president quite often wouldn't even come depending on what was going on at the moment, and the vice president for academic affairs would be there in his place together with the chair to run things.

Zavod: Was [Nathaniel Greene] there a long time?

Arnold: Nat was there for a long time. Nat was the VP equivalent of Vic Butterfield. He was the *consigliere* of Campbell for Academic Affairs. Nat, together with the members of the Advisory Committee, determined pretty much the makeup of the departments. They'll have to carry him out feet first because he is almost as old as I am [laughter]. As long as he can function he's not going to go anywhere. Another thing has changed in the governance of the institution generally. In the beginning there were these few committees, then at some point under Campbell the University governance was running parallel to the national affairs of the '60s and the turmoil in the '60s, including the bringing in of first black students and then women, you know, in the '60s and '70s. There was also a lot of turmoil within the faculty. For a while we had something called the University Senate because we were trying to transform faculty government from the traditional one where the faculty had (1) committees in which they participated; (2) the Academic Council, which consisted of everybody with tenure, to find on tenure issues and also general educational issues; and (3) the faculty meeting itself, the faculty as a whole. Well, at some point people found that all insufficient and founded something called the University Senate,

which functioned only a very short time because as it turned out having that kind of participatory democratic institution on a permanent basis required the actual active participation of the bulk of the faculty on a regular basis. It became too much and a lot of faculty said, no, I'm not here to sit on committees or sit in this Senate and debate things. I'm here to do research or I'm here to teach, etc.

Zavod: Was this apart from the unionization attempt?

Arnold: It was at the same time. What the exact relationship between the two might be hard to say but it's, I think, accurate to say that the driving forces behind both institutions were pretty much the same personalities, the same people...a coalition of very active junior faculty and some leftist and democratically-minded senior faculty. There was always resistance from a whole bunch of senior faculty to this and there was some apathy among the junior faculty or fear of being manipulated by demagogic opportunists. And the unionization thing, of course, came to nothing officially, despite a whole bunch of possibilities. But one practical result came out of it, and that thing still exists: the negotiating committee of the faculty, which, with varying success, the administration has to deal with on the issues of salaries and conditions of employment so they essentially represent what the union would have represented but without being called a union. It varies from time to time having to do with the general economic situation, the intelligence or stupidity of the administration because they could rile up people if they are not acting properly or aren't careful of how they phrase things. So if they're careful, nothing happens, it's a sleeping dog but once wakened the sleeping dog tends not only to bark but it could bite. The ultimate end is what we made quite clear in all the negotiations, the fact that if they don't want to talk to us, we will work according to absolute minimalist requirements...no committees...all committee work will cease, we'll only be in class from x to y, not available otherwise, very limited office hours, etc. We'll restrict ourselves to what you say is our job if that's all you're paying us for; in other words, working by the letter of the law. That'll bring the institution to a screeching halt.

Zavod: So this actually was threatened?

Arnold: Yeah, oh yeah, once or twice explicitly, most of the time this was the implicit thing. This is what you go back to. And again it depended on what the administration stance was. If reasonable and conciliatory, then none of this came up. This was not an issue, but if they dug their heels in or became aggressive in some fashion then immediately it would get some people's backs up and then we would get ready to pull out of any talks. That was one aspect. The other thing it depended on was the composition of the committee as you could have some conciliatory people and you can have some aggressive people and

you didn't want to rile a Willie Firshein on that committee...not a good idea and Willie wasn't going to mince any words either.

Zavod: So, how did the faculty in the order of raising money, did the faculty feel...

Arnold: I can't really speak to that because by that time I was no longer actively involved, but my impression was at the time these were no longer issues and it became more—you wouldn't really call it an imperial presidency—a removed presidency. So the points of friction between faculty and the president didn't seem to be there as much and the layering of administration between the president and the faculty has increased as it has all the time starting primarily with Bennet. There were some attempts at that earlier but you could still get to the president; but from Bennet on it became increasingly difficult.

Zavod: So, depending perhaps on the vice president...

Arnold: Yes, that in part, but also faculty attitudes. Faculty attitudes had changed from the heyday in the '60s to the early '70s; faculty essentially thought of itself as "we are the university." Students are only here for a short time, administration is only here for a short time, but we are here for a long time, and that was stated that way. Well, that began to fade as a self-definition of the faculty over time...it became ah, you well, I'm here now but I could go somewhere else...if I get a good job somewhere else I'm out of here so I'm not going to invest and moreover I'm invested in furthering my career which I do by publication and getting out there to conferences, etc., etc., and otherwise I'll just do my job here. And then parallel to all of this and sort of an indicator of that was the housing policy at the university. When we first came nobody, but nobody, lived further away than Higganum and I think it was even a policy and if you wanted the Wesleyan mortgage help, which they very kindly and importantly provided, then my understanding was that you had to settle within whatever the radius was so many miles from Wesleyan. You couldn't get a mortgage further out. I think Higganum/Durham was the outer limits of that. Over time that softened and as that softened people began to have places in New Haven, in Cambridge, Mass, from which they would descend once or twice a week to do their classes and then disappear again. Well, of course that reflected the lack of commitment to the institution as family, er, as primary focus of you being here. This is a little indicator of the same thing that we were talking about earlier. That meant that faculty interest, faculty identification became different as it was oriented outside the institution and no longer within the institution, and that in part determined the relationship also within the faculty and the administration. Another factor we haven't talked about at all, which is huge in all of this, the inexorable growth of the administration during that whole time...right? I mean I don't want to overdo it but when I

came in '62 there were just a couple of rooms downstairs in North College where the dean of the college, Dean Spaeth, then later on the other deans were and the dean's house was still occupied by the dean, which is where the Latin American Studies program is now and the rest was the normal part of the college. It grew like Topsy. South College was always the president's office but North College was taken over by the administration entirely. The dean's office grew. The dean's office is a little different. It grew but somewhat justifiably: a) the institution grew as we had many, many more students; b) finally the dean's office decided it would take over a lot of new functions that needed to be done and never had been fulfilled, for example, psychiatric treatment. Nobody talks about that but we had at the beginning around examination times every year suicide attempts and successful suicides. Over time that ceased, in part because of mental health being provided, etc., etc. A funny little footnote...it was an all-male college and our resident doctor was a gynecologist. [laughter] Later on they didn't have a gynecologist and it took them a while before they got a woman doctor in. So the administration all grew like crazy and that, in fact, for a long time was a bone of contention between faculty and administration. Why are you telling us that you can't afford our salaries when you keep increasing the number of administrators who as far as we're concerned are totally useless and not needed? That was not fair but that was the perception and the argument quite often.

Zavod: Was it more administrators...

Arnold: No, no, no, within the administration itself, you know, it became this adviser to the president, etc. So initially you only had two or three areas in the administration, okay, under the president. There was a vice president for academic affairs, there was somebody for finance and there was a dean and that was it. And then they developed all kinds of little helpers with fancy titles and significant salaries. It took off a lot...an area where the faculty was often weakened simply by growth. The number of faculty also grew as the number of students grew from about 600 or 800 students at the beginning to 3000 including graduate students and permanent graduate students, not just occasional ones like GLSP and MAT; they don't seem to even count normally for our alumni office. They all had to be cared for and that also meant it was harder and harder for the faculty to be as cohesive as we used to be...we knew each other, we fought with each other, you know, we were constantly partying with each other, etc., etc. It was a different kind of cohesion...that was weakened, it was weakened even more by the growth of another area of the institution, which is still growing exponentially and out of control I think, and that's ITS. Because while some of the them have faculty privileges, most of them, of course, are not really faculty, and so the more you have people like that who are theoretically part of the faculty but not really and the more you have the growth which we talked about of people without benefits, part-time faculty as a huge faculty but

essentially without voice and power, the weaker the faculty gets. This is what it is. It's part of the educational industrial complex.

Zavod: Which was somewhat a little bit ahead of its time because many schools have formed into interdisciplinary departments and then...

Arnold: Back to the College Plans: And also at the beginning we had to educate the rest of America about the College of Letters program and its importance and its quality because when our students would go on to graduate school, this was the big question. Well we don't have any grades... we just give written evaluations, which is much harder to do and more time-consuming for the faculty, which is one of the reasons why people don't want to do it. At one point it was suggested that it was a possibility for all of the campus but most of the people, especially in the sciences, very quickly said, "Are you crazy! I'd have to sit down and spend four weeks at the end of the term trying to write these things," and so on, for many good reasons. So, we had that, and it was a real concern... how do we get places like Harvard to accept our students in the absence of letter grades? And we said, "How are we going to compare them to all these others?" because, remember, letter grades have nothing to do with education or intelligence. They are society's, outside society's, way of ascertaining in a quick and easy and dirty way: "Do I want this one or that one," putting people into slots... that's all it is. So it's a societal, social and economic sorting, which is pre-sorted by educational selectivity. We educated grad schools pretty quickly through a variety of things; the dominant one was the quality of our students, but once you have one in the next letter of recommendation you could say, well, this one is as good as or better than Mr. X who just wiped the floor with all your other graduate students over the last few years. The other thing of importance here, we had outside examiners, and of course you go for very good and important outside examiners from good and important institutions. So we had, for example, Marjorie Hope Nicolson, from Columbia University who at the time in the 1960s was also the president of the Modern Language Association... she was feared by the graduate students so when we invited her as an examiner, everyone said, "are you crazy?" "She eats graduate students for breakfast... she's going to shred your kiddies." Well, it was a mutual love fest between her and the undergraduates because, as she said, "I'm not here to find out how many of your teeth are rotten, I'm here to find out what you chew with the good teeth you have because I know you're undergraduates and I want to see what can you do with the knowledge you have and that's what I want to hear." And the examination as well as the teaching is a team teaching experience: two examiners, outside examiners, often from different schools and in different fields, always trying to represent more or less the literary, the philosophical and the historical foci of the program. It's not always easy but it works. The curriculum of the College of Letters and its outcome is a very, very thoughtful meshing inter-connective

kind of curriculum that has grown organically over time. It grew out of some basic ideas...team teaching, all of European culture, not national parochialisms, in orientation interdisciplinary. They formed and shaped this. It's a huge amount of material, hence the dual approach, the colloquia that everybody has to take and the seminars. The whole class works together in colloquium as a class from beginning to end, which establishes a common language and common experience that other students don't have, nobody has, and that's what the other students are always envious of but it allows COL students to quickly reference things as they go through the curriculum together. It's a core curriculum and essentially it deals in big chunks with classical antiquity, Middle Ages, early Modern, late Modern. And then you have in addition to the colloquia, the seminars where you can go in depth a little bit. A student might do a European Baroque seminar while attending the colloquium on early modern Europe or the Dante seminar while they're also in the Medieval colloquium or, you know, *Beowulf*. And so this core and additions combination gives them a pretty good framework for European culture from the Greeks to the present. Then there are two other major things built in, or three actually, and all of them are educational hurdles pedagogically...pedagogical reasons for existence: 1) they have to go abroad. You cannot be in the College of Letters and not go abroad, and you have to do it in your sophomore year so that by the time your junior year commences with what is your regular major, you have not only a language you can operate in other than English but a living experience in the language. In other words, they grow up much faster of course that way than they would here with their cohorts, emotionally and culturally, and it has other advantages. Which I had even in Germany...Bonn...I took them out to a little church near Bonn that is a so-called double church where you can look through a hole from the top down to the altar. I took them there and I said: "See this little stone with the cross on it. Stand on it. Now you're standing where Charlemagne stood in 798 and yelled down that they were singing too slowly." I took them on the boat, circumventing university policy, gave them some wine as the boat moved up the Rhine past the vineyards and I said: "There you see the vineyards, this is where your wine comes from. How long do you think they've been there?" In other words, after this I don't have to tell them that they need to know about the past to understand the present. Everywhere they walked, they walked on the past, pedagogically speaking. So, this is the other part of the equation...the first of the educational jumps; the second one comes at the end of the Junior Colloquia in the junior comprehensive examination with these outside examiners, at which point they have to pull together all the knowledge they have up acquired up to that time and present it to someone other than their own faculty, which has several advantages: a) it forces them to pull things together and coordinate them; b) for us to have an objective outside the evaluation of what kind of job we've done and so you always ask the examiners for an evaluation of the entire program and they wrote the evaluations, which were often very good. Most of the time they said: excellent this, excellent that individual student, not so good this, not so good that one. Almost invariably, depending on which

teachers they had, these students were very good when it came to history, not so great in philosophy. They asked very good philosophical questions...with a little help. There was always something missing, but we would work from that. The junior comps are the second big thing for the students and they were quite fearful because it's a three-part exam. They have to write three big essays in the course of a day and a half, then it's sent off to the examiners and a few weeks later the outside examiners come and they give an oral exam starting out from the written material and going on from there. And I kept telling them and I assured them: "I guarantee you once it's over you'll think this is one of the greatest experiences of your life," and invariably it is. And some of the experiences were quite funny, like the one where we had Peter Demetz, Professor of German at Yale, and Henri Peyre, Professor of Romance Languages and of the time *the* great Romanist for America, also from Yale, and the two of them come together and they're sitting there and in comes this guy from the class of '68 or whatever it was, one of our students, Henry St. Maurice. So he comes in and Henri Peyre looks at the name and greets him in French and Henry, who had been to France, answers in French, and they go back and forth speaking in French and after about ten minutes of this Peter harrumphs [sound of clearing his throat]: "Henri, do you realize that you've carried out the entire examination in French so far and not in English?" So Peyre turns to St. Maurice and says, "Well, if you ever need a special recommendation, young man, just let me know and I'll write it for you." It could be that kind of experience, you know, or others would come out and say, this is great, that was a fantastic conversation. It wasn't an exam, it was a conversation and that's what it is, right, because you talk about something you have thought about and you tell me what you think. So this was the second step...going abroad, then the comps, and now the third big one is that everybody has a senior project or thesis, which you can do on anything you're interested in. It doesn't have to be in any of our fields, it doesn't have to be with one of our faculty, and any faculty you can convince to help you with this and we have to sign off on it. So, for example, one guy I had said, I'd like to do my thesis on the last freight train in New England, you know, what it was, where it ran, why it went out of business, etc., etc. I asked if he had somebody, yes he had some people, somebody at Conn. College, somebody in Boston...fine. Where he wound up shows you that it might not have been the greatest idea as he became one of the city planners for Boston, given the way their traffic works...not a recommendation. But it allows you to pull together something and make it your own. This is you. So these three steps plus team teaching...it's a curriculum that over time has stood the test of time.

Zavod: It's amazing...

Arnold: There were attacks on us over, over, and over again because of that. The initial attack we seem to owe, unfortunately, to Vic because when Vic came up with the idea of this whole thing he wrote a little

memo and that got into the hands of some administrators and it's often been used against us and so on. One of the things he said was he feels, and I'm paraphrasing now, the best and the brightest students are insufficiently challenged by the curriculum of the departments as it now stands. We, therefore, need something else to keep them interested. So, by implication we pulled off the best of the brightest from all the departments and they were left with the rest...not exactly a way to get friends and influence people.

Zavod: Why didn't the strengthening work?

Arnold: That's what he thought it was going to do and he wanted to have this for the different departments, for the different divisions. He wanted to have a College Plan free of divisions and once the College Plan worked, then it was supposed to be exported...all the departments done away with...we were the sounding board, the experiment. COL worked, CSS worked, CQS went under right away because of a re-orientation of the science faculty towards PhD programs.

Zavod: And Science and Society?

Arnold: That came out of, sort of, eventually as a sop those who wanted to do that sort of thing from the sciences. "They're not really scientists but they want to do those things so okay let them do it as long as we don't have to deal with it and it doesn't interfere with our research." So this was one of the attacks on the College Plans. The other attack back then of course was on the idea of interdisciplinarity, "what the hell does that mean, and you can't possibly do that kind of thing, who could do that kind of thing"; well, that died down over time when our students did better than everybody else's and got into the best grad schools. The humanities courses, that's yet another thing and there, too, you see the change, okay, it has to do with another one of the main attacks on the college, for instance in the form of the feminist attack on what was Plato to NATO, as they called it, the COL curriculum. It's just a canon and it's the canon of dead, white men and we want to do away with that. And, in fact, it was a big battle in EPC and if we hadn't been represented on the EPC at the time they might have abolished the COL and CSS.

Zavod: Abolished?

Arnold: The College Plan. This was the great idea of some of the feminists, which was the thanks to the fact that when I was on EPC, women's studies was instituted. It was introduced to the faculty by Pete Pringle and Colin Campbell and so we got women's studies accepted as part of the curricular offerings and a program with staff and so on and so on. But again, of course, there was the opposition of some of

the older faculty. Humanities when I first came had a program for all freshman irrespective of what you wanted to be later on. It was a two-semester program and the whole thing was all set, that is, the staff was selected by Chad Dunham. The staff then in turn selected the texts under the guidance of Chad, who was a bit of a benevolent dictator, and then everybody taught the same text at the same time so if you were in your third week it was Dante, first week *Oresteia*, second week *Oedipus*, or whatever, and the staff would get together for lunch once a week on Wednesday at Downey House and one of the staff would hold forth on the material that was going to be taught next. I wound up giving the lecture on Machiavelli, *The Prince*, which might make one a little queasy when you have Ned Williamson sitting here, our Italian specialist with a very sharp tongue and extremely high standards, and you have an historian specializing in Italian history over there, and you're holding forth on Machiavelli. But, you get the feedback and everybody has sort of a framework and they can play off that. This was set in stone for everybody and it set the tone and established a common reference...selective, and, you know, maybe odd but it was there.

Zavod: So how did that affect the freshmen?

Arnold: The freshmen [courses] were required for the entire campus and we still had requirements anyway. You had the requirement of x-number of foreign languages, x-number of science, etc., etc. Then in the '60s we did away with all the requirements at the University level. The departments kept some requirements for departmental purposes. So to say Wesleyan has no requirements is really not correct. It just means university-wide we didn't have requirements and what you replaced it with was "expectations." A student was still expected to have a certain number of courses in each one of the divisions so that you came out with a liberal education while also beginning to specialize. Freshmen courses took the place of Humanities once that program was done away with as a requirement initially, and then some people said, wait a minute, we can't give that up and it is a major introduction to the humanities and then a number of things were tried. One of the more successful ones, because it reached a large number of people, was cooked up by Frank Reeve. It was a team-teaching effort and Frank was over-seeing and running it all. It consisted of giving big lectures to whomever wanted to go to from the freshman class in whatever the biggest rooms were available and then break it down into discussion groups with the individual instructors that Frank managed to pull into that effort.

Zavod: Did that have a name?

Arnold: The Freshman Initiative or something. It worked pretty well and was an attempt to replace the loss of this humanities thing and still have a common core. And it has gone through various

manifestations and transmogrifications. Everybody in the COL was involved in that, Elisabeth Young-Buehl when she was here, Frank Reeve, and so on. Different people have done different things. I was doing something with it whenever it was available. Part of it was the self-interest on part of the College of Letters because that's how you recruited people for the College of Letters. The people you taught there saw what you could do when you combined things that they hadn't thought of combining. And then they say, oh, where do you do that kind of thing, and you could say, well, you do it in the College of Letters, or we do it in the College of Social Studies, you know. So it became important. It was an attempt, repeated attempts with different kinds of curricular models to fill that same hole of giving freshmen a common core and also expose them to the possibility of interdisciplinary thought in the social sciences and the humanities. The natural sciences were a little bit outside of that, except for a very brief time when we cooked up a program in the College of Letters, called Science as a Humanistic Discipline, and we got massive financial support on the outside from the NEH (the National Endowment for the Humanities). It was a three-year program and we did all kinds of interesting things. I did one, a segment called "Uses and Abuses of Scientific Theory," and that was of course genetics and the use of genetics at Cold Spring Harbor, which was the basis of Nazi ideology and ultimately the extermination program at Auschwitz. There you go from genetics to Auschwitz. At the time, Barry Kiefer was the chair of the biology department and dean of the sciences. So I went to Barry and told him what I was going to do and is there anyone you can send over to do the genetics segment in this class, two or three weeks, basic genetics, how did it come about historically, where are we at today? He said, "Well, I can't spare anybody." I said, "Well then I'll have to do it," and he said, "You can't do that, you're not a biologist," and I said, "Give me a break, of course I can do that. Number one, I was a natural science major as an undergraduate in Germany," and we went back and forth and he finally said, "Okay, I'll come and talk to you." So he came to my office and was sitting there and he said, "Okay, what are you planning?" So I showed him my books, which he okayed and then he asked if I was going to use all the books on my shelf, and I responded that that was just for the natural science part. The history part is yet to come... those are the other three shelves. Anyway, long story short, Barry taught the segments himself and what he hadn't counted on were our students who wanted to know, okay, if this comes from science and is a scientific theory where does the scientist's responsibility for these theories begin and end and why weren't they speaking up to oppose people like Hitler. If it's an abuse of science, i.e.: This is not real, well if it's not real then who's to say it was real other than the scientists and why didn't they, and where were they, etc., etc., these kinds of questions. He wasn't used to that. He said they were tough and I said, welcome to the College of Letters, we deal with that all the time. So there were all kinds of things that have been tried to fill in and things that have been lost. Shifting gears a bit, I was an AFS student in '52/'53 in Philadelphia and then I went back to Germany and then I came over here and I taught at the College of Letters and I

had a student in the College of Letters by the name of Stephen A. Rhinesmith, class of '65, whom I mentored a bit and who did very well for himself. He went off to Pittsburgh to get a PhD. He came from the New York area and his background disposed him to stay in New York. I said, no, you've got to try a life elsewhere. He wanted to go to Columbia and be a small fish in a big pond when Pitt offered him a scholarship. He went and prospered. Well, very quickly he was used as a consultant. He was doing both practical political science and theory. He went overseas and to Africa helping to set up governments, etc. Anyway, Stephen did all right for himself and after Stephen Galatti, the post-war founder of AFS and Art Howe from Old Lyme, who was the president after that, they needed a new president and Stephen A. Rhinesmith became the new president of AFS. One day I get this phone call... would you like to join our board of trustees. I asked what it entailed, so on and so forth, and I said in order to do that I need to talk to our president because of the time commitment. So I went to Colin Campbell and asked him what he thought and he said if you can do it without impinging on your duties here you have my blessings. And so I got on to first the Board of Trustees of AFS and then became Chair of the Board of Trustees and then later on rotated out of that when AFS split into AFS International and AFS USA at a big quadrennial meeting in Mexico at the World Congress, and then I rotated out from the international one and was on the Board of Directors for AFS USA for a while and then I got off that. That got me involved for a while. I had to do a lot of traveling around because we had conferences in Latin America, conferences in Brazil, and at one time I had to take a flight from Rio to Paris to be there for some festivities representing AFS and then fly back; another time there was a big thing in Bremerhaven because that was the first American consulate that was opened in Europe. So, I had to move around a lot. I was getting involved, then got to meet people and talk about AFS a bit, but the heavy lifting and the fundraising was done by other people. They gave a lot of themselves because they could afford to and in part knew the right people to ask.

Zavod: Were there a lot of policy changes?

Arnold: Yes. The most fundamental one was this question of working out the relationship between AFS USA and the rest of the world. Because initially, of course, AFS was an all-U.S. thing... it was a privately funded, individually driven American group that started in WWI. There's the official origin account and the unofficial origin account. The official account says that before the entry of the United States into WWI in 1916, there was a bunch of young American expats in Paris (and the front was very close to Paris... you could reach it by taxi if you wanted to). At one point some of these young people, high-minded as they were, got together a fleet of cars, went out to the front and ferried the wounded back to Paris out of the goodness of their hearts. That's the official account. The unofficial version—a bunch of young expats, drunk as usual, decided let's go out and see... there's fireworks going off out there and we

should have a look at them. So they went out and while there, some local officer stopped them and said, you guys have got to take these people with you...they said, not in our nice little cars and he said yes in your nice little cars. They piled in the wounded and they were driving back and then somebody saw them and the next day said this actually is not a bad idea to do that. They got together a fleet of cars and started ferrying the wounded from both sides back and that's how American Field Service was born, and it was revived in WWII when the allies first went into North Africa, headed by Ward Chamberlain (and the head of national public radio before Bennet). He lost one eye in Italy during the war. Anyway, he was the field leader of the AFS field service unit in North Africa when General Patton was in charge and he didn't want them to ferry any German or Italian soldiers around. So Ward reportedly said to Patton, well, I'm sorry, and Patton said you're under my command. So Chamberlain went off to Field Marshal Montgomery and asked to be taken into the British military and given a commission, and he was. Next time he was being ordered around by Patton, he said you can't order me around, I'm a British officer. You have to talk to my commanding officer. And they were ferrying people around...first in North Africa and then in Italy, where he lost an eye and another AFSer lost an arm. Then after the war they said isn't it better to prevent future wars than to go into the war and ferry around the dead and wounded. So, how do we do that? We need to try to understand each other on a personal level so that's how the idea of AFS exchanges was born. What I didn't know and found out much, much later is that initially right after the war, right after '45, this included also college students. I found out by accident when I was talking to the only memorable speaker I ever heard at a Wesleyan commencement: that truly memorable speaker was Jean François-Poncet, a French foreign minister. He was a Wesleyan alum and he had been here as an AFS student. He was an AFS stipend student at Wesleyan and he was ambassador to Germany at the time. (His father had already been ambassador there in the 1930s.) After 1945 the AFS program also included places like Czechoslovakia and so on, which the Russians immediately nixed. They didn't want these kids to be sent off and then be influenced over here and come back with their ideas of civil rights and freedoms. So that blocked off the Eastern Bloc and then for reasons I've never been able to find out, the college thing was discontinued and the focus became exchanges on the high school level. There were several direct high school exchanges between a variety of countries primarily in Europe (originally exclusively in Europe at that time and that meant Western Europe) and the United States, and funded entirely by private funding and some State Department money, some, not a massive amount. And Steve Galatti, AFS's president, was always going around scratching for money. There was a story where he was visiting one of the Rockefellers and he was waiting for a Mr. Rockefeller, and as he was always on the go he was tired and he apparently fell asleep. When Rockefeller came in, there was Steve Galatti asleep on the couch... [laughter] but he gave him money anyway. So it was all out of the goodness of the American hearts and their wallets that the program was run. Everything was in New York. This was the initial

structure from WWI up until the '50s and '60s. Over time, of course, there were a whole bunch of kiddies like me who had been here and had gone back home and they said, well, gee, we have now been infected with the American spirit of let's do things, and we could volunteer and so on. So we said, why don't we get together and fundraise and find out here whether people are interested and then reciprocate so that the program doesn't just become America hosting people from abroad and sending them back but that we can say let's take some American kids to stay with us for a while. This would basically create and tie together volunteer organizations in various countries who, after a while, had to organize themselves and did organize themselves in the pattern that became typical everywhere—you started with a volunteer organization, it was self-selected and elected its own representatives and eventually you needed a staff, a permanent staff. So you always had the local director and the local representative of the various nations. Over time, some of those grew pretty big, like Germany; that became a major exchange partner but then also places like Australia and so on expanded and now the question came of what is going to be the relationship between the center and the hub and are the outliers all these others and that issue was negotiated during the time I was on the board. The increasing significance of the people around the world who wanted their own representation and a say in how the institution as a whole was run and how finances were allocated and for what, and so on and so forth, and that led to the separating out of AFS USA at the World Congress in Ajijic, on Lake Chapala in Mexico. There were a bunch of typical American volunteers, elderly ladies with blue hair and tennis shoes, what we later on dubbed "the founding mothers of Ajijic." They got together and essentially pushed through the separate entity of AFS USA. They said, look, we're financing everybody else but they also want to deal with these things on their own so they're not always seeing eye to eye with New York on this. And there were some fundamental differences on how things were run in some of these countries because of cultural and political differences. I still remember one meeting we had in Europe and we started out very well and it was about mutual fundraising and after about 20 minutes they were at each other's throats. I was just sitting back and I was looking at Ed Masback, an old volunteer who'd been in WWII who was the vice chair and we looked at each other and said what is going on. Why is everybody talking past each other? That is so self-destructive and I said, hold on, let me explain something to you. We're all in this boat together, we're all AFS and we all want money for AFS. Why are we fighting? Well, because without ever having articulated it, we were working with the models in our head of what was normal and natural in our home nations. In Europe the normal thing was, to take the German example, if you were a youth organization of any sort you were by law entitled to a percentage of a pot of money that the government had set aside for youth organizations. All you had to do was demonstrate how big, and for that we had to say we represent x-number of students, they come every year, etc., etc., and they would say okay, you are entitled to such and such a percentage of the available funds, and they would provide funding with no

strings attached based on the number of students, etc., etc. In America you don't want to go to the government because of the endless strings attached, of paperwork from here to the other side of the ocean, etc., etc. The government is not where you want to go as your primary source of income. You go to private donors. In Germany, private donors at that time didn't exist because there was no support for them in the legislation. It's not something you got to deduct from your taxes. You're working with two entirely different systems of taxation, money giving, money allocations, government treatment of youth organizations, etc., etc. That took a long time to sink in because AFS's central administration in New York, of course, wanted to treat everybody equally. But you simply couldn't deal the same way with Israel, Nicaragua, and Germany and Iceland. They all had their peculiarities and I don't even want to talk about France... a perennial problem. When I knew I had to go to France for this big celebration of the French program I needed a *captatio benevolentiae* or someone to give a speech. We had a guy at AFS who was like Willie Kerr here. Before I left he said, here, I have something that you may want to use in the speech or you may not; so he gave me the facsimile of a telegram. I read it and I burst out laughing because it was sent in 1947 and it was about exactly the same problems we just then had to deal with again, but put in telegraphic style it went: French recalcitrant as usual, nothing can be done [laughter]. So I said, I'm gonna let them have it so I went on and read it [more laughter]. We all had our own problems and issues. So there was one issue when we had the conference in Thailand, in Chiang Mai, the northern capital of Thailand. The whole shebang was controlled essentially by one man... a very nice man... and then there was this big debate of how to divide up whatever the pot of money was among the different countries in the region and it came down in the end to, to how much goes to Thailand or not to Thailand, and the Australians didn't want it and during this time our host hadn't spoken at all. He said, "May I say something? Let's regard this matter as settled, a check for that amount will appear, and I'm not going to debate this here." For that kind of money, he just took it out of his private account.

Zavod: Are you still involved?

Arnold: No, it's appropriate to rotate on and let others do their thing.

Zavod: Were you part of the Brownstone Quorum? [a volunteer organization in Portland, Conn.]

Arnold: Yea, yea and things like that... what it was... it was just a jungle by the river near the quarries... we used to go through there because our kids loved bushwhacking. They had these big sticks and they would whack their way through the bushes to the other end of the river. You know, walking down the river but it was useless. Now it's so beautiful.

Zavod: I'd like to hear about your family.

HA: My wife, Annemarie, served in the German Department in a variety of temporary assignments and the summer language program for all the languages, Spanish, Italian, etc. She ran it also and that's how she came in and taught a course or two and then more courses and before you know it she had a full complement of courses in the German department.

Zavod: And did you meet her in Germany?

Arnold: We met in Freiburg at the university. She followed me when I went from Freiburg to Würzburg where we both did our exams. We have three daughters and two grandchildren, two grandsons...they're both dual citizens. Their mother is our only American in the family...our native American. Our eldest, Bettina, is an archeologist at the University of Wisconsin, a Celtic specialist. To the chagrin of some of her colleagues she demonstrated that one of the famous Celtic graves in France was not one of a prince but a princess. The Prince of Vix became the Princess of Vix. The middle one, Corinna, is in England, in London. She works in The City. The other, Vivien, lives in Germany, in Stuttgart where she is the head of public relations for the Stuttgart Ballet Company. This is what she also did in Houston for the Houston Ballet Company. She was a professional ballerina with the Hartford Ballet Company. In Houston she met her husband. He was at Rice, getting a Ph.D. degree in soil mechanics. They'll all come to Wisconsin this summer.

Zavod: Is this a celebration?

Arnold: Yes, I'll be 80 in a couple of weeks. Contrary to some of my colleagues I don't think there has been a loss in terms of quality [of Wesleyan students] in relation to available quality overall. There has been variation but it's because there's always variation within the available pool of students and what they come in with from high school. Also, the criteria have shifted a little bit over the years. In the past, there was none of this insane expectation of having served with Mother Teresa for three years, you know, and seeing the Pope three times...whatever kind of stuff. That just wasn't sane. It was sufficient in the old days to have good grades and maybe play a sport or two and be a nice person and your chances of getting in were pretty good. Also, the pool was much, much smaller and it was a pre-selected pool because it was normally people whose parents had already had a college education. Now all of that changed over time, naturally, the quality of the pool changed and the quantity of the pool changed drastically. That's on the

one side on the outside; on the inside, the size of the incoming class of the people you took in, the number of people who were accepted and hoped that only a few would come [laughter], also grew over time so naturally that had an impact. The product itself I think hasn't changed drastically; it's still the same mold...15 percent who teach themselves and normally do, the bottom 15 or 20 percent probably shouldn't be here, and might probably be better off at some other institution that could cater to them and be perfectly all right...what the hell...for whatever reasons, parental pride, mistaken pride of somebody pushing them to be here. It's the in between that we educate. You can't do much more but you try. At some point you learn as an educator that there are some you can't reach.

Zavod: Do you think that niche has increased?

Arnold: I don't think so. To me that niche has not increased. The numbers of course have, because the total numbers have gone up.

Zavod: But you're hearing differently.

Arnold: I'm not complaining, no, I put that down to the age-old complaint. Reputedly, the oldest thing in writing we have in Western civilization comes from what is now Iraq and their cuneiform tablets they have on clay, and on one of those tablets you have somewhere around 3000 BC that the world is going to hell in a hand basket and the youth isn't what it used to be. I hadn't noticed the drastic drop-off. What you did get over time is a fluctuation, a variation in the type of inquisitiveness of students. The kind of student that was very, very actively engaged in being critical and searching and so on that we had in the '60s and early '70s, you don't get anymore. That doesn't mean that they're not there, they're just not vocal. And one of the things you learn very quickly is, if you have a class and you have some people in there who are very actively participating all the time, they are not really necessarily the best. Some are just sitting there but are saying nothing and then you get the papers and guess where the best papers come from? Oh, the fact that they were active and loud and critical and so on at one point and not at another I don't think are really reflective of the basic ability or effort. My experience has been much of a sameness over time, with slight variation over time. Well, I'd be interested to see what Wesleyan becomes eventually because we've gone through these changes since I've been here. We were the college, an all-male small college, then we grew like Topsy, uncontrolled growth and undiscussed growth as I mentioned. That led to self-examination, especially under Campbell, of what we are and the new definition of the little university, and nobody ever knew what the hell that meant except that we weren't like Amherst and Williams and that we had PhD programs and that we weren't like a real university in that we only had a few PhD

programs. Like one of my colleagues, Juan Roura-Parella, who studied in Berlin in the 1920s, always said: “No, no, no, no, no, Berlin in the 1920s, that is a university, Wesleyan is not a university, it’s a college.” It is astonishing that we could call ourselves a university. For some odd reason we did from the very beginning; it was founded as Wesleyan University and thus distinguishes itself from all other Wesleyans in America by that moniker and we’ve become the little university, whatever that means. But, what we are really nobody quite knows and I don’t think all the subsequent administrations after Campbell have contributed that much to the clarity of that concept. We’ve just grown, become bigger, have more graduate students, still do not count appropriately the GLSP as a major part of our students and above all our alumni body. Our GLSP students are very proud of being Wesleyan students, and I don’t think that is used sufficiently by our outreach people. They’re not money bags necessarily but they’re very loyal alums and they’ve made a difference over the years because many of them were teachers and so they fed a lot of students into the admissions process. I taught in that program from the beginning. I taught in the old MAT (Master of Arts in Teaching) program and I taught in the GLSP continuously over the years, and some of the best and nicest students I met at Wesleyan have come out of these programs. Wesleyan really should do much more for them and with them. They should devote somebody to these people...make sure they’re included and give out information. I get it every now and then. I run into somebody and they say they don’t really hear much from Wesleyan and they regret that; this neglect is unnecessary. We don’t have to go into paroxysms of constant navel-gazing; however, from time to time it’s not a bad idea and don’t wait for the ten-year cycle of external evaluation for re-accreditation because that doesn’t tell you much about yourself anyway, but every now and then it’s useful to run through that exercise of, you know, who are we, where do we want to go, and what do you want to do. And most administrations try to do that. The problem has always been the same...that they get people involved to think about it but then they superimpose the administration-generated blueprint of where they want to go, and that puts off people no end. For one thing it is hard to know where exactly we stand and then there comes the deluge of course, of the daily problems of just survival, fundraising, organizing. So it is a luxury to step aside and view the whole thing from the outside dispassionately. But it’s a necessary luxury and if you can’t do it as an educational institution, then who in this country can do it? Because the politicians sure as heck don’t do it. They don’t think beyond two years if they even think that far. It’s been a lot of fun. I enjoyed myself. I had very nice colleagues. I was able to pursue all the interests that I had. Anyways, it’s been a pleasure. Thank you.

Zavod: Thank you, Professor Arnold.

