INTERVIEWEE: MICHAEL A. GOTTFREDSON
INTERVIEWER: Spencer C. Olin
DATE: March 30, 2005

SO: My name is Spencer C. Olin, Professor Emeritus of History at UC Irvine. Today I’m interviewing Michael Gottfredson, Executive Vice Chancellor of UC Irvine and Professor of Social Ecology, specializing in criminology. Dr. Gottfredson came to UCI in the summer of 2000, having previously been on the faculties of the Claremont Graduate University, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, the State University of New York at Albany, and beginning in 1985, the University of Arizona. At the University of Arizona, he served in several key academic administrative positions, including Vice President of Undergraduate Education and interim Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and provost.

Today’s date is March 30th, 2005, and our interview is being conducted in the office of Executive Vice Chancellor Gottfredson in the UCI administration building. Thanks very much, Mike, for agreeing to be the subject of an oral history interview. I am personally grateful for this opportunity to discuss your experiences at UCI, including your viewpoints and opinions regarding a number of significant issues related to higher education.

MG: My pleasure. And welcome back to the EVC office.

SO: Thank you very much. Before turning specifically to UCI, I wish to inquire more generally about the possible relationship between your extensive and ongoing scholarly activities on the one hand and your educational values and leadership
You are a highly regarded research criminologist. This specialty has involved you in contemplating theories of crime and delinquency, as well as the criminal justice system. Further, you have been a frequent consultant with state, county, and federal governments concerning criminal justice policy. Quite obviously, a major research university is seldom the site of criminal activity. Nonetheless, it is a bureaucratic structure in which people interact, and quite often interact conflictually. In what ways, if any, has your scholarly expertise influenced your performance as an academic administrator?

MG: Well, thanks for the opportunity to talk with you. I’ve thought about that, and I think actually not very much. But what has influenced me a lot, as you’d appreciate, Spence, and what’s critically important for this job, is coming up through the ranks as a professor. Being a research scholar, being a teacher at the university level, trains you in fundamental ways and has you appreciate the world in certain ways that I think people who have not had that experience have a hard time appreciating. It’s the attitude of mind and the values that you develop over the course of an academic career that are central values and attitudes for this particular position. It gives one an appreciation for the kind of work that people do, the hardships involved in that kind of work, the joys involved in that kind of work, the intimate relationship between scholarship and creative activity and instruction, which I think a lot of people don’t fully understand who aren’t in our business. And it’s essential to have that kind of appreciation.

My own scholarship is in roughly two parts. One is the causes of crime and delinquency and the sociology and psychology of why people have higher or lower
rates of criminal behavior and associated kinds of conduct. The second focuses on the criminal process. There are aspects of the latter which I do think from time to time come into play in this job. I was trained in part in criminal law and in criminal procedure, giving me some appreciation, I suppose, for the different roles that are played in a bureaucracy when individual rights and collective interests are pitted one against another. Not just in a criminal way. We have issues like that throughout the institution, and we try to balance individual rights and responsibilities, on the one hand, with collective interests and responsibilities, on the other. I’ve spent a lot of time thinking about and writing about those kinds of matters in the criminal justice system and the criminal process.

Basically, where you end up in that is that you’re always in some balancing act where you try to articulate what the interests are and figure out who has the more fundamental interests and how to strike a balance where very seldom are things black and white. And you try to strike that. I think we do that all the time in this job, and you know that well, where you could sit down at a table and say, you know, everybody’s right here and it’s a matter of what’s in the best interest of the institution and trying to articulate that. And it’s a balancing act. You learn that in the criminal law and in the criminal process and, to some extent, I’ve been bringing that to this activity.

SO: Your answer is somewhat similar to that provided by Jack Peltason, who studies constitutional law and the political process. He had some observations similar to yours. My second question is related to the first one. In what ways did your previous university experiences, most especially those at the University of Arizona,
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help shape your educational values and your general sense of the appropriate
missions of a major research university?

MG: Well, very fundamentally, of course, and along the lines of what we were just
discussing. There's no job that I think I would rather have than a job as a professor
at this university. I think all of us in this kind of position have that view, and we
take on these jobs in large part to try to nurture and sustain and enhance the
professoriate, keeping what we think is valuable in the research university and in
being a scholar teacher. Nothing has been more influential in my life than coming
up through the ranks of a research university, taking on the challenge of doing
independent scholarly work, a very challenging exercise but also one where the
rewards are inestimable. There's pure pleasure in what we do, and you come to
know that and learn about that as you do it.

SO: How many years at Arizona were you a research professor or a professor before
becoming an administrator?

MG: Well, let's see. I became the chair of my department – gee, it must have been
around '88 or '89, so I was only there maybe three or four years when I –

SO: Had you had administrative positions in your previous universities?

MG: Well, no, but right out of graduate school I directed a not-for-profit research
corporation. Just as I got my Ph.D. we started a research organization in New York
called the Criminal Justice Research Center, Inc. We incorporated. Got to be
sizable. We had, oh, probably at the largest we might have had fifty people
working there. I learned a lot about administration just being thrown into it, both
research administration and then corporate. We had a board of trustees. I reported
to the board, had fiduciary responsibility for the organization and staffing. But I was also a principal investigator in research grants. We did grants and contracts, particularly the Department of Justice, National Institute of Mental Health, on the causes of crime and the criminal justice process. I did that for a number of years, learned about things that I never thought I would learn about, how to qualify a pension under federal law, and so forth. That was my first experience in administration. Then I joined the faculty at State University of New York at Albany. So I had that experience.

SO: At Arizona, for example, did you find yourself lured into administration by colleagues who viewed you as a potentially effective administrator, or did you decide you wanted to be a chair and sort of reached out for that job?

MG: Well, I guess more the former. I never made a decision (laughs) that I can remember. But in that system, people took turns. My turn came up to be – it’s a headship system at Arizona, the chair system. It’s not that big a difference, I think.

SO: Rotates every three years?

MG: They were five year terms, I think. And it just kind of became my turn and I did it. Then I served a short time filling in as the director of a school for one year and then was really recruited in a way by the central administration to take a new position, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, which had just been created at that university at that time. No, there was not a conscious decision – and of course it sort of sneaks up on you, because, as you know, being a chair, you don’t see yourself as being an administrator. In many ways, you’re not. You’re still more a
full-time faculty member, and you’re teaching and able to have a full research and scholarly set of activities at the same time.

SO: The reason I ask is sort of personal. I’ve always found myself more comfortable with those chairs, deans, and vice chancellors who, in a sense, did not seek the position but were sought for the position.

MG: Well, I think I would probably fall into that category.

SO: Mike, I have a question next regarding university structure and organization. If I’m not mistaken, you came to UCI from a campus with a College of Arts, Letters, and Sciences, or at least from a campus that once had such a structure. For historical reasons, as you know, UCI from its beginning rejected that structure and opted instead for a structure based on semi-autonomous Schools. Now that you’ve served for nearly five years as EVC, what is your considered opinion regarding the relative strengths and deficiencies of the school structure when compared with the more unitary College of Arts, Letters, and Sciences structure?

MG: That’s a very good question, and I don’t think I have a settled opinion about it. I change my mind back and forth. At Arizona, when I first arrived, there was a liberal arts and sciences college structure and then some professional schools. It was dismantled early on when I was there, and four schools were created in lieu of the arts and sciences.

SO: So it became more like UCI.

MG: It became much more like UCI: School of Social Sciences, School of Humanities, School of Science, School of the Arts. That went on for a while, and then a new provost came in and said, you know, I think that we should aggregate up a little bit.
That provost created vice provost positions—one for professional schools, one for the arts and sciences—and at the same time kept the deans and kept the school structure. That was a disaster because it was so obviously a waste of time that it didn’t last very long. Of course, School deans, and the Schools themselves, didn’t want to go through another layer of administration.

I think where I come down on this myself is that the organization is much less important than are the people, that what we want to do is have an organization that allows for reasonable levels of management and reasonable sizes of aggregates to be managed and budgeted for, classes assigned, and so forth. At the same time, you want to have a very permeable structure so that people can affiliate for research purposes and instructional purposes without having strong barriers.

In that respect, I like the UC Irvine model quite a lot, because I think—I would say is really great about UC Irvine isn’t the structure that we have at the moment, but it was the attitude of mind that was present in the founding faculty, in the founding administrators at Irvine that basically said, let’s be flexible and let’s really value interdisciplinarity and people who come together and organize in a lot of different ways.

Parts of that have been relatively permanent. Other parts of it have changed a bit. But I think that disposition characterizes this university. It’s very healthy. I think it’s very advantageous and doesn’t characterize a lot of other universities that put a lot more structure in place right from the beginning. Those structures tend to become reified, as you know. They are difficult to change. But there’s much more willingness— even now, we have hundreds of faculty who weren’t here at the time
this university was created, and yet that idea about Irvine persists. It’s a very
strong concept here, and I think it’s great. Actually, we could do different
organizational structures at Irvine, and do them from time to time, much more
readily than at some other places.

SO: As one of the early types, it’s gratifying that those sentiments and dispositions did
prevail.

MG: There’s just no doubt. Now, we do struggle with some issues. We do have
organization, we do have structure, and we have divisions. I guess I’ve come to
believe that, in some ways, all divisions are divisive, so they do create some
hurdles and we need to work on those pretty diligently here. But by and large, that
flexibility – and the idea that structure is open for conversation. The structure
should be in the service of the interests of the faculty in the university rather than
the other way around. Going back to the University of Illinois, in the early part of
my career I was in a liberal arts and sciences college in the Department of
Sociology in the Division of Social Sciences in the College of Arts and Sciences,
and we just felt like we were completely under layers and layers and layers. I don’t
think we ever got beyond our division director in terms of penetrating the
university structure.

SO: That’s the structure from which Jack Peltason came directly to UCI.

MG: That’s right.

SO: And within a few months after he arrived, he found that the job for which he was
hired evaporated, when UCI abandoned the College of Arts, Letters, and Sciences
in favor of the Schools.
MG: Of the Schools. I’ve talked to my colleagues at the other UC campuses and other provosts quite a lot about these kinds of things. And wherever a university is presently, it is contemplating change. I mean, that’s the standard rule that we—they don’t change much, but they always contemplate it. I think that aggregates much greater than a hundred and fifty faculty, or a hundred and seventy-five faculty, become too large and heterogeneous. Faculties need to be an appreciable size and interest level to have a reporting line to the provost. But in chunks about that size, with people that we refer to as deans or directors but who have budgetary responsibility, including the budgeting of faculty, is about the right organizational chunk in our business. If you get much larger, those divisions manifest themselves anyway. The provosts are dealing with those levels also.

I think that Irvine has done very well. There are tensions that exist here presently. There are some faculty who want to collaborate more with faculty in different Schools and find that problematic. Some folks think that we would be enabled if we could combine the Schools together at that level. It may be true. I would hope we could find a way to do it without combining the Schools. We may not be able to do that.

SO: While appreciating your opinion favoring the people rather than the structure, I still want to ask one more structural kind of question that grows from the issues you’ve just been discussing. I claim no expertise at all regarding the theory and practice of bureaucratic organizations, but I recall one expert’s assertion, perhaps Lyman Porter himself, that the optimum number of reporting relationships to an executive is approximately ten to twelve. When I served as acting executive vice chancellor
eleven years ago, I once counted more than twenty people who had a direct 
reporting relationship to the EVC, including other vice chancellors, associate 
executive vice chancellors, deans, university librarians, directors of institutes, 
budget officers, as well as staff members in the Office of Academic Affairs. Is this 
feature of your job within reason, or do you find it to be as overwhelming as I did?

MG: Oh, it’s overwhelming, and I do appreciate that too. I would say this about the 
number of reporting relationships, and I’m sure you’ll appreciate this too. I would 
have to say it depends. If there are twelve units that are functioning marvelously 
with leaders who are capable, autonomous, and collaborative and are enjoying their 
jobs, and the people who are working with them are enjoying having them in those 
jobs, no problem. This is terrific. You could have twenty of 
those. On the other hand, if even two or three are problematic, it can capture all of 
your time. So I think we always have to say, well, it sort of depends on the state of 
affairs within the organization and how things are operating.

One problem with this job, as you know, is that it’s the point where the final 
word can be spoken. Ultimately, everyone in the university wants to get to that 
decision point.

SO: Get to the person who makes that decision.

MG: Makes that decision.

SO: Not necessarily becoming that person.

MG: That’s right. Our interest is to delegate as much as possible, which we all believe 
and try to do. That, and how much one can delegate and what parts of the job are 
able to be delegated, also plays into this number. There are positions in this
institutions that report to me who are really so autonomous my contact with them is very irregular. They also report somewhere else for some purposes. It’s not a big part of the workload.

SO: You don’t have a concern about any sort of governance slippage then?

MG: I do, yeah. I’m always concerned about it. It does also go back to the organizational structure a bit, because of course the way that you can reduce the number of reporting relationships is to increase the structure, so there’s a tradeoff and a balance there.

A couple of things are critical in my mind. One is the issue of delegation and the capability of the people in these positions and the vice chancellor’s position. We have good, strong, capable, outstanding managers, and have very significant delegation of authority to them. I would delegate more than the University of California permits me to at the moment, by the way, but I think we would be advantaged by that because of the academic personnel process. But that’s the key, and I guess I kind of keep coming back to the quality of people. The most important job that I’ve got is the recruitment and retention of people.

SO: Well, sometime, maybe not today, if we had a chance, I would like to return to that issue of academic personnel and the relation of EVCs and deans and chairs to that process. Forgive the rather long-winded nature of the following question, but it’s a bit complex and I think it’s important.

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SO: One assertion made by several thoughtful analysts regarding problems now facing higher education relates to governance. For example, James Duderstadt, former president of the University of Michigan, has argued in his book, *Beyond the Crossroads: the Future of the Public University in America*, that current academic governance structures are too rigid to accommodate the realities of the rapidly expanding interconnected bases of knowledge and practice. He is especially concerned about the respective roles of lay governing boards, which at the University of California is the Board of Regents, and shared governance with elected faculty bodies, such as the UC Academic Senate. In this regard, he believes that such structures prevent academic administrators from moving nimbly and unhindered as they seek to address pressing problems and achieve much needed change. Do you share these concerns, and, as executive vice chancellor, have you found yourself constrained by the practice of shared governance in the way Duderstadt and others have identified it?

MG: That’s a good question. I share the concern but I don’t come down in the same way as he does, because at the same time, shared governance and lay boards complicate our job, they are also part of the essential strength of the institution. I think that vastly outweighs the difficulties.

Let me maybe explain that just a little bit with respect to governing boards. I believe very deeply in the idea of a public university. If you believe in the idea of a public university, you have to believe in the idea of public boards. We have a particular kind of mission and a particular role in higher education, actually in American history. You’ve probably heard me say this and I think it’s a little bit
over the top, but I happen to believe that the public research university and the public policy that created it is perhaps the most important piece of social legislation and social engineering in the history of the country. The Morrill Act of 1862, which people tend not to read anymore or care much about but which was passed the same year as the Homestead Act and signed by Abraham Lincoln in the middle of the Civil War, is an essential democratizing force in this country. It said that we are committed to providing the highest quality educational opportunities to the citizens of the United States without regard to their ability to afford it. It made public what was up to that point only a private privilege. The rest is history and actually still being written. But without that, and I think we could easily demonstrate it, the public research universities that were created under its auspices, including this one, and that flourish today, have contributed more to the development of this country in every way, every way, not just health and welfare but also to the idea of democracy. Absolutely, absolutely essential.

When you have an idea of a public university that is supported by public resources in a democracy, it is only appropriate that the governing board for that organization be a public body. When you commit to a public body, you’ve got to buy the whole deal. You don’t always get the answers that you or I would want to have. What you have to have is faith in the long-term idea of a public university and a public board. Certainly some boards will take positions and advocate certain things that I personally would disagree with. If the public board is appointed in a truly public way, in a democratic way, and is the steward of the public purse, then that’s the right way to do it in this organization. They’re a part of the university,
they’re a part of the colleges, they have different missions, different auspices, organized for different purposes.

So I would say I disagree with James Duderstadt very fundamentally about lay boards. They’re like lay legislators. They’re like lay judiciaries. They are like lay governance in a democracy. I think our long-term interests, the history of higher education in the United States, the history of the contribution to the university is on my side of that argument. We have a duty and obligation to try to persuade our boards about the merits of certain things the way we see them, and they have the right to say, “Guess what, EVC, you’re not working here anymore. We disagree with you.” And that’s fitting and that’s proper for this kind of organization.

I think as you can probably tell, I have the same view about shared governance within the institution. It’s the idea of the process, not a specific outcome. Well, maybe I will make that analogy to my own field that started this interview. It’s like due process in the criminal justice system. It ain’t necessarily pretty and you don’t love due process because you think every specific answer is going to be correct. It’s because it’s better than any other alternative, in the long run. And it is. The presumption of innocence, where the burden falls, and so forth, is an idea of how you govern in that process.

So why do we have the idea of shared governance in a research university like ours? It’s because in the long run you think the values of the institution will be better guarded and better shepherded and better nurtured and executed by that kind of governance. I believe that. Do I always agree with the Faculty Senate? Oh, no.
We have our arguments and disagreements about specific matters all the time. I’ve got a role to play where I need to come at particular issues from an administrative point of view and the senate from another, but the faith you have is in the long-term outcome of those deliberations and those decisions. The strength of the institution will be better guarded. And there’s just no doubt in my mind that it is.

The public university in the United States, the University of California, they’re the best universities in the world, have been for a long time. There’s reason to be nervous if they’re not – I mean, there’s concern about funding, there’s concern about rapidity of response to certain issues, and so forth. For my money, if being able to flexibly and rapidly organize ourselves to get after something of consequence is an important problem for us, we will be able to resolve that in this kind of organization. There’s nothing inherent in our organization that says that we can’t do things in a responsive way, rapidly. Look! Every major accomplishment in this country can be traced in one way or another to the accomplishment of the faculty of research universities. Whatever field you’re in, the proof of the pudding is in the contributions of our faculties and our research capabilities. It’s sometimes frustrating. You kind of want to know what’s right and say it is right and kind of let’s get on with it. But that’s not this kind of organization.

SO: It won’t surprise you that as a former chair of the senate and a senate loyalist, I share your view and also sat in your chair and shared some of the same frustrations. This is not something I had planned, but as I listen to you in this most recent discussion—and I did not want to personalize this interview too much—but you and I have a common close friend who was once at UCI with it’s position of shared
governance. He went to the University of Arizona as its provost, where you worked with him, and he sought there to install academic senate institutions and positions at Arizona. He was immensely frustrated in his efforts and found that the faculty at Arizona who became initially involved were not always the most distinguished. Let me therefore ask you this question. Do you find at Irvine, with the senate leadership with whom you interact, that the faculty, in your opinion, are themselves respected scholars and highly regarded within their disciplines?

MG: Very much so. And I think that is one of the real advantages. A shared governance system does presuppose that the faculty side will meet its obligations and expectations too, and that means that all of the faculty shoulder some responsibility for being involved in participating in the governance. That’s true in the University of California. I think part of the reason’s it’s true is because it’s more than lip service. People don’t want to participate in something that doesn’t matter. So when it does matter and you make it clear that it matters, then people will participate. You’ve got to do both. I think the University of California does that and has done that well over the years. As a consequence, we have a strong, active faculty involved in the senate at all levels.

Do we have too much senate process in the University of California? Yeah, I think I would argue that, too. But my view there is too much university-wide process in the entire University of California, not the Irvine division. I think that this is a big, strong, active research university of national stature. Thank you very much, we can manage our affairs without always having to take the advice of all of
our colleagues throughout the system. I think we burden ourselves that way too much.

SO: Another question that flows from the previous one. During the 2003-2004 academic year, you and Chancellor Cicerone established six major strategic planning committees with a total membership of faculty and staff approximating ninety people. These committees were charged with examining several aspects of campus life, including UCI’s public role, academic breadth, campus life, physical facilities, research and graduate studies, and resources. Were you pleased with the recommendations of these various committees, and what is the process by which certain preferred and widely endorsed recommendations will be implemented at UCI as the campus engages in one of the most ambitious expansions in its forty year history? For example, would you briefly discuss The Strategy for Academic Development at UCI and the new Programs of Excellence.

MG: Sure. I’ve been pleased by the process so far. We are still in the middle of it. It’s a difficult thing, as you know, for a university to have as much participation in the creation and development of a strategic plan as one would like. That process does take some time. We have a very good start, but we haven’t finished the project. Where we are today is that we have a generally agreed-upon set of principles that were assembled after these committees did their work. And [Associate Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Planning] Michael Clark has just done a marvelous job of doing this.

SO: Mike and I have chatted a lot about it, and I’m very impressed with what Mike’s been doing on behalf the campus.
MG: Absolutely. I agree. He’s done a superb job, there and in other respects as well. But we all agree that there are certain principles that are articulated, that will guide us to grow – for example, the preference to grow disproportionately at the graduate level versus the undergraduate level, to make sure that we maintain an appropriate balance there. There are also some principles about campus life—that we want to continue to enhance the quality of residential life and working life on campus, the environment here and the like, that will guide resource allocations. I mean, those are things that tell me and tell the budget vice chancellor where we should be putting marginal new resources disproportionately. So it will have effect in that way.

Yet the process we’ve gone through up to this point does not involve a particularly focused or strategic plan regarding academic development. It talks about growth generally, the proportion, the balance between graduate and undergraduate. It doesn’t tell us with enough richness right now where our particular strengths lie and where we should invest disproportionately in the next six to ten years to enhance those strengths and capabilities for this university. That’s a hard step, but we are determined to take the step.

We’ve made an initial foray into that by putting out a call to the campus for proposals for additional faculty positions where we’ve restricted it for this purpose by saying to people, “Bring forward the excellent programs. Bring forward the programs that with some significant investment of resources could be the very best.” We have a campus call out for that, and a campus-wide committee that’s
going to identify excellent programs. We're receiving lots of proposals, because it’s a very good university and we’re getting lots of good responses to that.

SO: This is the plan in which twenty-five percent of the faculty who leave for reasons other than denial of tenure will be returned to the EVC office for redistribution?

MG: Well, that’s part of what's planned as an addition to the resource base. We have two principle resources bases. Actually, that’s the smaller one. We also have a lot of growth resources to allocate yet. I mean, we still have five to seven thousand students to add to the base.

SO: That produces how many faculty?

MG: Well, maybe three hundred and fifty or four hundred. Yeah, there’s still a lot of growth and as of yet unallocated resources. We’re still in a very privileged position here of being able to allocate to strength according to a programmatic plan. The Dean’s Council is active in these deliberations. The Dean’s Council is a very active group on the campus in policy setting and strategic planning. They said, you know, there’s going to be an end to this, an end to growth resources. We can actually see the end to that now. Where we want to be positioned as a university is that we can continue to develop, we can continue to make strategic investments, we can continue to change, even when we’re not growing.

So there’s a very conscious decision made today even though we don’t have to make it today, frankly, on a resource basis. We have said we’re going to discipline ourselves and return to this focused excellence program a portion of those turnover positions to rebudget and to put that in as a disciplined part of our process in the future, to force ourselves to ask the question, Is this the highest and
best use of this position, to return it where it is now or to reprogram it? So we’ve started that process. What’s impressive to me is that the campus is willing to do that. It’s a difficult thing to do, because wanting to do it even now when we don’t absolutely have to on the resource base.

But again, it’s one of the kinds of features of this university that I really appreciate very much. As you know, there’s a joke about what UCI stands for: under construction indefinitely. People think about the capital program. But we think about that also in an academic sense, and it goes back to the very origins of the campus. We’re a university that wants to think of ourselves as being under construction academically indefinitely. And we want to have the resources to be able to do that.

SO: You’re making a kind of anticipatory move.

MG: Absolutely, yes.

SO: In that regard, I recall serving as dean with Ralph Cicerone when he introduced to the then Dean’s Council—I don’t remember what we called it then—the notion of quality indicators. And for a period of years the deans agreed on eight or ten of these (faculty citations and awards, GRE scores and so forth). I remember keeping a binder and updating it each year. We shares these outcomes with each other as deans. I asked Ralph in my interview with him what happened to those, and he said that they haven’t been maintained as publicly as they might have been. This “quality indicator” approach, I might add, was not unanimously endorsed. I happen to have found it a very good idea and a very helpful idea, in order to achieve
general agreement on at least some indicators across units which would then become the basis for resource allocation, faculty positions, and so forth.

MG: Let me amend that a bit. We do continuously keep those, and we do use them in our resource allocation. The instrument we now have is the Academic Planning Group, which advises me on the allocations of FTE. That group has a set of agreed-upon ten academic institutions that provide these benchmarks. We refer to them as our –

SO: They’re now called benchmarks?

MG: Benchmarks, our “aspirational peers.” We try to pick a group not just at our level but one step above our level, and we do keep those actively. We have the big binder and we look at them all the time.

SO: You and Chancellor Cicerone have been strong proponents for the establishment of a law school at UCI, as well as the building of a state appellate courthouse on campus. How would those outcomes benefit UCI, in your opinion, and what kinds of arguments have been raised in opposition?

MG: Well, I’m a very strong proponent of the law school proposal, and additional graduate development at the same time. Many reasons. Some of my reasons have to do with the provision of professional education as part of our mission and responsibility in the University of California. Going back to our auspices, which is that we are meant to provide opportunities for the citizens of the state to pursue the highest quality educational experience at an affordable cost. Quality and access are part of our mission. We’re not meeting that mission in professional education in the state of California, and one area in particular we’re not meeting it is in legal
education. So there’s a demand for and an obligation that we have, I believe, to provide that educational experience that we’re just not meeting.

The last seat in the University of California for legal education was established at UC Davis, I think it was in 1967. Well, the state has added many millions of people to the population, I think in excess of fifteen million since that time. If we had the proportion right then, we’re now way out of balance. It’s particularly out of balance in southern California, where there is only one public law school. Actually, as we say in our proposal, there’s only one public law school south of Market Street in San Francisco, and that’s UCLA. So we’re not providing the access to that part of higher education that we should. That’s a University of California deficiency. I think we should correct it.

To UCI, a law school is important for intellectual reasons. The faculty at a law school, and the students who attend law school, bring to a campus like ours an intellectual richness that is missing here. There are topics that are taught, there’s research that takes place, there are speakers that come, there’s an interaction with the rest of our faculty that we cannot now well express at UCI. Law is a very general discipline. We have faculties throughout the university whose scholarship is intimately connected to scholarship of the law. There are faculty in the social sciences, in the humanities, in the physical sciences who would benefit greatly from having colleagues to interact with in their scholarship.

Also, as a major comprehensive public research university, it would benefit the reputation of this university, which is a very important aspect for all of us to attend to. Frankly, because of the career paths that graduates of law schools take—
they find themselves in law firms, in public service law, they find themselves
elected to legislatures in a leadership position throughout the state—it would
benefit the University of California to have our alumni in those leadership
positions. There are many, many good reasons.

What are the arguments against a law school? Well, there are several. One
of course is resources. To the extent that we invest our resources in the faculty and
students and facilities such as a law school, we will not be investing them
elsewhere. So there are resource arguments made that those resources would be
more advisably spent on other programs. People have serious and legitimate
arguments to be made about that.

SO:  We call that the Merced argument.

MG:  It’s the Merced argument. (chuckles) There’s the argument that people make,
particularly outside the university but sometimes in the university, that gosh, don’t
we have enough lawyers already? Why do we want to make matters worse by
creating even more at UCI? Well, the answer to that is, in my mind, there are too
many lawyers, there just aren’t enough UC-trained lawyers. A part of our
obligation is to staff the bar with people who are trained by the best legal minds in
the world. That’s the people we will have affiliated with our law school.
Obviously, I think there are counters to those arguments, but they’re legitimate.

It’s an argument that this campus had. We actually nurtured the argument.
I mean, we had a faculty group look into it, create a proposal. We then took that
proposal and we purposely put it on the campus to debate, to comment on. We had
public forums, we had Dean’s Council conversations. We took it to the Faculty
Senate. We had an assembly vote, which turned out to be a unanimous vote in favor of the law school. So there’s no doubt where the faculty stand on the issue..

So we took it upon ourselves as part of this process to stimulate the kind of conversation – does everybody agree? Of course not. If they did it wouldn’t be a university, we’d be in trouble.

[end tape one, side B; begin tape two, side A]

SO: Next I have a couple of questions regarding undergraduate education, which, in my judgment, is a kind of Achilles heel for the University of California. No less a figure than former UC president Clark Kerr once called attention to what he termed “the cruel paradox,” that a superior faculty results in an inferior concern for undergraduate teaching. Kerr called this paradox one of our most pressing problems, and you could argue that in the years since Kerr wrote his well-known book, *The Uses of a University*, in 1963, that problem has actually gotten worse. While at the University of Arizona, you served for many years as Vice President of Undergraduate Education.

I recall being invited in the mid-1990s by Paul Sypherd, then provost, to give a talk to the Undergraduate Reform Committee about UCI’s Humanities Core Course. I believe that was the first time I met you. I came away highly impressed with the evident commitment to the importance of and the improvement of undergraduate education expressed by members of that Arizona committee, which included deans, department chairs, other faculty, and academic administrators. I
also understand there were some very positive outcomes from that committee’s deliberations. Have you found the same commitment to undergraduate education here at UCI, or have you been somewhat disappointed in that regard?

MG: The latter. I don’t find the same commitment as we had at Arizona. But in fairness, I think Arizona had bigger problems, too. I’ve thought about that quote from President Kerr, and at the risk of disagreeing with such an important man, I disagree with him. I think that there’s a dilemma for a faculty at a research university. I don’t find that the faculty at this university, or any research university I’ve been associated with, dislike undergraduate education, or that don’t strongly believe in it, or would very much like to spend more time and do it better. I think they feel frustrated by the reward structure that we have and by the other demands on their time, energies, and talent.

I think one of the real advantages of a research university, as opposed to liberal arts colleges or other kinds of higher education, is that it does blend people who have an interest in creativity and scholarship and in research, who have those interests and who also have interests in teaching. I think that our struggle is that we have not been able satisfactorily to balance those two roles in the life of the professor, and this is very frustrating to all of us.

There are, of course, individual faculty members who would prefer not to do very much teaching, or undergraduate teaching, or prefer graduate teaching, but by and large, people enjoy doing both. The vast majority of faculty enjoy doing both, but they feel extraordinarily frustrated by not having enough time to do both well. Our reward structure in research universities, not just public research
universities but in all of them, preferences time and attention toward individual scholarship and accomplishment and less so toward undergraduate instruction. Our dilemma is to try to find ways to satisfy both of those very strong interests that most faculty at this kind of institution have. Again, I don’t speak for—we all know individual faculty members who would prefer not to spend any time at all teaching.

I also think that a lot of our colleagues feel frustrated by the fact that they can’t spend enough time enhancing their instructional activities, and keeping up with that is an increasingly difficult part of the job. It’s essential that we get this right, however, because it is the special competence of the research university. I mean, the fact that we put the two together. And if we believe in anything here, we have to believe that the quality of instruction that we provide, the kind of instruction that we provide, is different from the kind of instruction provided by higher educational institutions that do not have active scholars as part of their faculty, that there is a connection between discovery and instruction that characterizes our operation and that is distinctive. I’m absolutely convinced there is. I’m sure you are, too.

You can’t be an active classroom teacher and not realize that what you’re doing is informed and is shaped and is characterized by your research, your scholarship. There’s not a person who’s made a significant scholarly contribution in a university who doesn’t realize that their instructional activities benefited their ability to think about those problems, shape them, and to come to the conclusions that they did. There’s nothing more challenging, there’s nothing that enhances the creative process to a greater extent, than trying to explain to someone else what it is
that you do and why you do it. In doing that, you discover the limits of your own knowledge, and it’s by discovering the limits of your own knowledge that you know where you have to go next.

So there’s an absolute intimacy between these two functions that we have at a research university. We just have to struggle to balance the two better than we have, reward people for both parts of the job, and provide the support. I think that one of the critical things at which we’re deficient here is enabling people to do the undergraduate job particularly well.

SO: Let me ask you to be even more UCI specific, Mike, in this regard. In April of 2003, you formed a Joint Senate and Administrative Task Force on Undergraduate Education, and its final recommendations are being extensively discussed and debated during the current academic year, I believe.

MG: Yeah.

SO: What concrete improvements and changes do you perceive for undergraduate education at UCI in the coming years?

MG: Well, I think there will be greater involvement by the professoriate in the early part of the curriculum, and I think that’s especially important. And we have drifted away from that especially.

SO: In other words, by relying too much on lecturers and TAs?

MG: Yes. After all, it almost replicates what goes on in K through 12. The earliest part of the educational experience is formative and is extremely important. Yet we’re not naturally inclined to pursue that, so I think a return of the professoriate to the freshman and the sophomore years is called for. We’re doing that and we’ll do
more of that, I’m sure, in the years ahead in the freshman seminar series. Actually, what we asked you to come to Arizona to speak about and which is a highlight and hallmark of this institution is the Humanities Core Course.

SO: Which now enrolls more than a thousand students.

MG: It’s unbelievable, yeah, and it’s just superb, and it’s a model that would benefit from being replicated in other parts of the university. In fact, that’s what we took out of the visit to Arizona, and we set core curriculum type structures in place in the other sectors of the campus on the basis of that. It’s done very well here. So I see that.

There’s another aspect of this project that I think is beneficial to us, and that’s this. A university like ours should continuously be talking about, arguing about the general education program, the breadth requirements, whatever we want to call them. That should be right at the top of the agenda all the time for a university like this. We drift away from it, we’ve got to come back to it.

The curriculum is our idea of what educated people should have experienced. I mean, it’s the rules that we set in place and say, “In order for you to claim that you are a graduate of this institution, you must have experienced this curriculum.” It’s what we believe in. Well, we don’t talk about it enough, and we forget about it, and not in those terms. So we’re going to have that conversation very actively. It’s an argument, it should be an argument. What kinds of courses should our freshmen take? We should ask the question of every student who graduates from UCI, what should they have experienced in the sciences and the arts and the humanities and the social sciences? Sometimes that can be what should
they have learned, what should they have been exposed to, what kind of thinking, what kind of ideas in order to claim that they’re a well-educated person ready to enter society.

How do we convince ourselves that when people graduate from UCI they are lifelong learners? I mean, that’s our aspiration. We want them to have the tools, techniques, attitude of mind that says this is for me. I’m going to continuously invest my time and energy in learning. That’s what we want. Have we assured ourselves that our curriculum does that? The answer is no. We did at one time, then we kind of drifted away from it. We need to continuously come back to that, and we’re going to have that conversation very actively here, force ourselves.

For my money, we incrementally drift away from this in our departments especially, in our majors. We add requirements. We say, “Wait a minute, a person can’t be an educated person in the sciences now unless they’ve had three more courses in the following area.” Pretty soon we’ve locked up the curriculum. A student who majors in our field can’t have any electives, they can’t—all the breadth requirements have to be a certain course in order to move them in the right direction. And we’re too much that way now. We have to come back and liberate our curriculum.

SO: I wish you well in that difficult endeavor.

MG: Well, it’s difficult, but it’s also a lot of fun. People have to realize that curriculum wars are the stuff of a university. They’re not incidental to it. Also they have to realize that they can have arguments about that, should have arguments about that,
and not demean or disparage fields, and so on, like that. It has to be the right tone, and you can do that, should do that.

SO: Well, the other side of this important discussion is the graduate students. One of the stated goals of your strategy for academic development at UCI is to increase the number of graduate students relative to the general student population in order to reach 24 percent by 2014. How optimistic are you that this goal can be achieved, and achieved without a reduction in the overall quality of graduate students at UCI?

MG: Well, it’s a very ambitious goal.

SO: We’re now at, what, eleven or twelve percent?

MG: Probably a little higher than that, fourteen or fifteen percent.

SO: But almost – somewhat less than a doubling.

MG: It’s a very ambitious goal. It cannot be achieved unless we create some more programs, because those figures would include professional graduate programs, too. If you look at the Michigans and the Berkeleys and the UCLAs, and so on, they only achieve those numbers because they have very large graduate professional programs. It’s predicated upon that as well. If we don’t establish relatively large graduate professional programs, that number should be readjusted. If it’s only talking about arts and sciences, it would be different. So that’s issue number one, and if either the University of California decides we’re not going to be allowed to develop those programs, or shouldn’t develop those programs as we’ve decided, then that number has to be readjusted. It’s not sensible to try to get – it might be very desirable, but we would never make it. It’s difficult to do for a
number of reasons. One, it’s very competitive. All research universities are in pursuit of the strongest academic graduate students.

SO: Resource thirsty?

MG: Very resource intensive. Right now, the University of California is not competitive. There are structural things in our university that we have to overcome and actually change, in my mind, for us to be competitive. Provision of graduate waivers. We have almost a punitive policy with respect to non-resident graduate students, particularly foreign graduate students, which is not wise policy for the University of California, it’s not wise policy for the state of California, it’s not wise policy for the United States of America. All research universities have always been beacons to attract the best and the brightest around the world to come and work here and stay here and contribute. That’s a positive aspect of what we do, and right now, because of the political situation, because of resource constraints, there’s been a turning away from that. That just needs to change for the best interest of everybody.

SO: I have a colleague in engineering who says that they’re facing real problems, that they are to a large extent dependent upon foreign graduate students, and they’re coming in fewer and fewer numbers.

MG: That’s right. I’m sure at the same time we want to do a better job of getting domestic students prepared to be able to study in the engineering disciplines, and that’s a project we have to work on too.

I’m optimistic that we will increase at the graduate level. We have in the last several years, we have disproportionately
grown. So even though we’ve been growing very rapidly at the undergraduate level, we’ve grown even more rapidly at the graduate level. So we have been meeting this aspiration in the very recent past, but it’s expensive, it’s hard to do, it does require a shunting of resources toward this problem. I take it, since it is such a high value in our strategic plan, that that is a directive by everybody, to pursue that. So that’s what we’ll be doing. We have to do it with our eyes open, because that means we’ll be doing less of some other thing, which will go unmentioned here. But we will have to do less of other things.

SO: Just a couple more questions, Mike, and I will relieve you of this interview. Would you wish to offer two or three of your most notable achievements during your five-year tour as EVC, and perhaps two or three of your major disappointments during that same period.

MG: Well, I’ll leave the achievements to others. I would say one thing, I think we have a very good spirit on the campus, a collaborative view, and I think that people – I hope people feel like they’re participating, they have a chance to participate in what’s going on. We have a kind of transparency the way we do business, I hope, that people can appreciate.

By far and away the biggest disappointment so far has been the failure to get approval for the law school. It’s a major issue for this campus, it’s a major issue for the state, and I’m disappointed that we have not been able to convince the office of the president and the regents that it would be in the best interest of the University of California to do it. I had hoped that we would have been well on our way by now, and we’re still waiting a decision about that matter. It’s a
disappointment because in order to build our graduate professional programs, we need to do it during the period of growth. If we don’t do it during the period of growth, it will be extraordinarily difficult to reprogram resources toward that objective.

I have to be extremely pleased by the quality of the university and the people who are coming to work here and choose to stay and work here. Just a phenomenal quality across the board of students, faculty, staff. I would say a word about staff, too. It is a big disappointment that we have not been able to reward the staff sufficiently here, and keep up the numbers of staff that would be appropriate for our organization. In periods of budgetary downturn, the burden tends to fall on the staff disproportionately. That’s been true here, and it would be good to be able to redress that at some point when resources come back.

I’m extraordinarily optimistic about the future of the University of California. I’m a fourth generation Californian, as is my wife, Karol. We’re both alumni at the University of California. It is just a tremendous university, and will be in the future. I think the support that the state provides for the University of California is unprecedented, still is. It’s an extremely well received institution. And the measure of that, for example, is the demand for access. As we struggle with that, and it’s a big problem for us, I keep reminding people that it’s a problem that you would like to have. It means that we are very highly regarded.

SO: It is itself a quality.

MG: Absolutely. And the demand is extraordinary. The support for the institution is extraordinary.
SO: You mentioned your wife. I wonder if you could describe how you and your wife, Karol Gottfredson, who is a lecturer and intern program coordinator for the Department of Education at UCI, have managed to blend two very different professional careers into such an excellent partnership as you have served as EVC for UCI.

MG: Well, I appreciate that very much. It’s because Karol is such an accommodating, reasonable, and enthusiastic person that we can do this. It’s a very difficult thing, as you know, to be a partner of someone in this kind of position, where the burdens of the office can’t always be confined to these four walls here, so I have tremendous support. I would say it’s because of this. I think it’s true. If you ask Karol, she believes in the same things I believe in. She is a product of this system, too. Actually, both of our parents are as well. Both of her parents are Berkeley alums, as are mine. Our daughter went to UC Davis. So that makes it three generations.

SO: Seven, so far.

MG: And if you threw in some brothers, you’d have a lot more because we both have large families who made it through the University of California, too. She believes in the mission of this institution and what we’re doing. She works harder than I do at it, to the great advantage of the institution, I think, and certainly to my advantage.

SO: A willing rather than a grudging partnership.

MG: Absolutely.
SO: Well, Mike, I very much appreciate your spending all this time. Have I missed anything you would like to say?

MG: I don’t think so. It’s been a terrific opportunity to talk with you.

SO: Thank you so much.

END OF INTERVIEW