

Columbia College Chicago

Digital Commons @ Columbia College Chicago

An Oral History of Columbia College Chicago,
1997 -2004

Columbia College Chicago Oral History Projects

2016

Interview with Janet Talbot, 2001

Columbia College Chicago

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.colum.edu/cccohx>



Part of the [Education Commons](#), and the [History Commons](#)



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-No Derivative Works 4.0 International License](#).

Recommended Citation

Columbia College Chicago, "Interview with Janet Talbot, 2001" (2016). *An Oral History of Columbia College Chicago, 1997 -2004*. 83.

<https://digitalcommons.colum.edu/cccohx/83>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Columbia College Chicago Oral History Projects at Digital Commons @ Columbia College Chicago. It has been accepted for inclusion in An Oral History of Columbia College Chicago, 1997 -2004 by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Columbia College Chicago. For more information, please contact drossetti@colum.edu.

J a n e t T a l b o t

All right. It is May the 24th, 2001. This is an interview with Janet Talbot, Director of Academic Advising here at Columbia College.

And if we could start with your telling us when did you come to Columbia and what the circumstances were?

I started in Columbia in July of 1987 and I had answered an ad in the Tribune looking for an Academic Advisor. In fact it was my sister saw the ad and said this sounds like something you'd like to do. And I said, "well I'm not really looking for a job right now." She said "well, you know take a look at it." So I did and I applied and I was called in and I got the job.

Okay. What were you doing before and had you any knowledge of Columbia before your sister showed you the ad? And if you did, what was it?

Well, I was teaching at the Chicago School of Professional Psychology as well as DePaul University. I taught literature and writing. And I was familiar with Columbia, but I didn't have a great deal of knowledge about the institution at the time.

Can you remember some of your impressions of Columbia before you came here and then as the interview process progressed, what did you learn about the school then?

Well, that it was an art school. In fact, had I had known about Columbia when I was in college I probably would have been a student here because I was an art major.

And why do you say that? Could you expand on it a little that maybe this would have been a place for you to go? Where did you end up going to school?

Well, I went to a number of different undergraduate colleges and took seven, eight years to finish up my undergraduate degree. And I was a painting major and again if I had known about Columbia and its fine arts program I probably would have been here from the get go.

And was that part of the reason as you learned more about it that you wanted to work here?

Well, I liked the fact that it was an art school and the mission of open admissions. I think that's important in giving students a chance. And it was a lively place.

Okay. If you could tell us maybe about what you remember of the interview process and what you were learning about the school that made you decide this is the place that you wanted to be.

Well, I met with the then Director of Academic Advising, Mark Kelly and Steven Russell Thomas and the academic advisors. And Margaret Sullivan interviewed me as well as Maxine Evans in financial aid. So it was a grueling morning, seven or eight people, but I was impressed with their take on the college and their excitement about Columbia. And the job itself, being an academic advisor struck me as being the best of all possible worlds. Having taught for many years, I believe that teaching is advising and advising is teaching. And that the job would just combine the best and working with students one on one in small groups and with a dynamic office.

And did that, when you talk about this being the best of both worlds maybe you could expand on that a little bit more and that idea of teaching is advising and advising is teaching. Did you find that to be the case or is that something you—?

Oh absolutely and it still is. I mean I'm in an administrative position right now but I work with students very closely. In fact that is probably the best part of my job is working with students and learning from students and one hopes students learn from you. But it's you know a dynamic, collaborative process and I think all teaching is advisement and advising is teaching.

How has the academic advising changed in the almost fifteen years that you've been here? Has it changed? Have there been consistencies? Have the students changed? Have their needs changed? If you could speak to some of those issues.

Well, it has changed and again it



hasn't. Advising at Columbia is not mandatory, it never has been. It's only required for students who are out of academic compliance, if they need to be cleared you know to register and to have their financial aid posted. One always hopes that students are going to avail themselves of the service but that remains true today as it was when I first started.

That said the office has expanded. There initially were four academic advisors and now there are eight. It's a very busy office. We see over 30,000 students, I mean recorded visits a year, conducting orientations and registration and workshops. And many students do come in to see us, not all and we do have repeat customers, which is reflected in the office visits.

But when I started the office was pretty slow. I mean there were afternoons one could just sit and read a book or work on puzzles and not really do too much because students either didn't know where we were, didn't feel the need to come in and we didn't have as much publicity or visibility on the campus so that has certainly changed and students now do know who we are and they come in, in droves, which is good. Unfortunately sometimes the students most in need of advising don't come in. We wish they did and we have repeat customers which is wonderful.

So when you first came, with the students that ended up in the office what was a typical student? Were they most likely in trouble or worried about something or needed a problem

addressed or fixed more after the fact as opposed to preventative maybe?

Well, it's always a little of each. Students coming in for academic information and wanting to know when he or she is going to graduate, requirements for a major, for graduation. Students certainly come in with problems wanting referrals. Sometimes they come in with academic questions, but the real issue, the presenting problem is that there's trouble at home or what have you. So we've always addressed both issues, personal problems, referrals, that nature as well as academic questions, problems.

We've always taken a holistic approach to students treating them as individuals even though there are, despite the individualities there are some common issues, developmental issues with college age students whether they're 18, right out of high school or 23, 24 year olds or even adult students. So there are commonalities and yet each person you know you never quite know what's going to happen in any advising session.

Are there any new issues that your department has had to face that you didn't necessarily see coming or you thought that this is becoming more common, we have to address this more formally or in a more structured manner?

Well, I think as the institution has grown an awareness of certain problems, i.e., retention issues that have been college wide have affected us. And the different initiatives or ways that we will approach student issues and problems to help the student resolve the problem and to stay at Columbia.

And are there particular areas that you like to focus on, that you're concerned with and have you initiated certain programs or workshops or outreach to address those issues? Or does the academic advisory work more as a team and kind of brainstorm you know all together?

Well, again it's six of one, half a dozen of the other. I mean we do work as a team and the advisors are specialists as well as generalists and our mission in terms of helping students has pretty much remained the same. What has expanded would be different outreach programs, workshops or perhaps our approach to workshops and going into the classroom, class visits. I mean we've always worked closely with faculty members. One thing we do now is we have advising days in the department which are very effective and successful because we'll go to the students in the departments so that has expanded somewhat.

And we do have special events that we co-sponsor with other departments. For instance the Sexually Transmitted Disease Awareness Day which is always either Valentine's Day or around the 14th of February where we distribute literature and condoms and candy, the little Valentine to Columbia students. So its educational and its also kind of fun so that's something that initiated out of advising.

That came out of academic advising, that's interesting.

Yeah.

Maybe this is a good time to talk about first the mission of your department as you see it and then how it relates or what you

see the mission of the college as being because I think that's interesting. Most people might not predict that the day to acknowledge and increase education for sexually transmitted diseases comes out of your department.

Well, when the office was established, it was a one person operation and advising was seen as part of the academic dean's office and it was seen as a service to the faculty. And when I first started in advising we reported to the academic dean, then it was Lya Rosenblum. We became a part of student services about four or five years later and its interesting because advising, academic advising in Columbia, especially it is on both sides of the fence. It is academic and yet it's also a student affairs, student service office. So sometimes the lines are blurred.

We deal with academic issues, policy and procedure requirements, again working closely with department chairs and faculty in the academic dean's office, but we also deal with student life, student development, student issues so our role is two-fold. And we're always dealing with whatever complex issue or problem a student brings, taking a holistic approach. And sometimes it's a gray area, there's no doubt about it.

And then how do you see that in your words as relating to the mission of the college?

Well, you're helping students to help themselves you know, to find their voice, to be creative, take responsibility for their art, their education, their lives in an academic and artistic sense and in a personal sense. So in terms of

creatively, innovatively helping the students grow and develop, we're right there with them, encouraging them and one hopes inspiring them at times.

You mentioned already open admissions. Does that create special challenges for your office?

Well, I think it does you know across the board whether it's in the classroom or the advising. Our students range from A to Z in terms of preparedness, interest, motivation, talent and again that's what makes it exciting. But it's a challenge, perhaps less so in advising because we're dealing with you know students on a one on one basis, whereas in a classroom it's different if someone isn't as prepared or someone is off the chart and is bored. When you're dealing with a student one on one, it's a little different.

So I'm just curious and I'd like to go in a little deeper on how maybe if you could give some examples of what workshops or programming has changed you know that has come along with the growth of the institution and the growth of your department. You've talked about you know some of the consistencies and things that have remained but maybe if you could give some examples of things that—?

Well, I think one of the things we've noticed is I mean we offer the workshops based on topics that students would be interested in. I think because our students lead such busy and complex lives, we find that they're not around to attend a number of the events of the workshops whereas in the past you'd attract a larger group of students even if you held the workshop on different days and different

times. I mean for instance I remember conducting a workshop for returning adult students and there were twenty some students in attendance at the workshop whereas we could offer one tomorrow and if we attracted one or two, we might be lucky.

So in the last fifteen years from your office's point of view, students lives outside of school had gotten even more—?

Absolutely. Absolutely, I think we're seeing, I mean we've always been a commuter college, but we're seeing students commuting from greater distances and they work you know, they have families, they have other responsibilities. So I think the time spent on campus has diminished. Now it's also true we're attracting and accepting and enrolling some more local suburban students who perhaps aren't working and they do spend more time on campus, but I haven't seem them either being attracted to some of the workshops, which isn't to say that the workshops aren't successful, they are. They're just not drawing the same sort of crowd they did 15, you know 12 years ago, and I attribute that not just to the subject matter, but to the lack of availability on the part of the students.

We just finished a run of workshops and how to prepare for grad school, how to prepare for law schools, a Meyers-Briggs personality assessment and we'd get four, five, six students which from the point of view of conducting a workshop that's a great number. Any larger sometimes presents problems, any fewer well, not that it's a waste but it was a time we'd get much larger crowds.

That's interesting. So it sounds like you're saying that geography which you think too as well earlier that students were coming from within Chicago and it was easier to attend a workshop where coming in for a workshop from the suburbs or—?

Right. Right, I think their time is limited now and I think a lot of the students who live in the residence center, that is not only their home, but it's also where they tend to congregate and hang out and that's a life in and of itself that they'll attend class, and then go back home.

Okay. You were talking about that sometimes students will arrive at your doorstep saying I'm having trouble, my grades are dropping or I'm having trouble in a class and it turns out that there's other problems that are possibly, personal problems that are affecting their grades. What happens then, I mean how is that determined and then what do you advise the student or where does the student go from there?

Maybe if you can take us through that process?

Well, I think a good advisor will read the situation and ask questions and most importantly listen to the student. We can't provide answers or make a student do one thing or another.

Right.

Sometimes students are unwilling, reluctant to talk about what really is the issue and so we don't press, but I've always found that if you take the time to listen and hear and understand what the student is saying and to ask the right sort of questions and find out if there is a problem, students are very willing to talk about it and to seek help.

And we might refer for tutorials on campus. We now have social workers for crisis situations we can refer to or we can refer off campus. We have a variety of sources from self-help groups and medical referrals, dental, legal, daycare, adult daycare, what have you.

I've found that many students, if they are looking for psychological counseling, do prefer it off campus so that friends or family might not you know be aware that they're seeking the attention. We always follow up when we make referrals to students. They come back and let us know that yes, you know I went there or they walk out with the referral and it's a security blanket and they will never actually call.

But they know—

But they know they can and they come back and let us know how they're doing. So we do refer off campus for a variety of different problems. It could be to private agencies or private practitioners, hospitals, clinics. It varies, depends on what the issue is. Sometimes you know students just want someone to talk to and listen to them and afterwards they resolve the problem themselves. So it's always different, but—

And it's much easier for them to say I'm having trouble with my grades than I'm having trouble at home so I could see it would be easier to walk in your door and then—

Right, and whenever you look at a student's transcript you usually—it's there. The transcript you know reads volumes, speaks volumes.

Okay, I appreciate that very, very much. Now what about the student who is struggling with

classes, I mean the issue really is maybe they aren't prepared for the college level work but they've got the desire you know.

What do you do then with that student or what's the process then with that individual?

Well, we always try to you know get to know the student, what the student wants to do, if the student really wants to be here in college and at Columbia, what's going on in the student's life and what seems to be the problem at least from the student's point of view in the class letting the student know that we're encouraging the student to talk to the faculty member, set up an appointment. If it's a matter of just having an assignment explained in more detail, or if there's a need for tutoring, sometimes that's the issue or could be the student has overloaded herself and is working full time and has a relationship and a number of different things and that the schedule and over-scheduling is the problem.

Sometimes we find that you know students again are not academically prepared or emotionally prepared for the responsibilities of college. Sometimes they decide on their own to go part time the next semester, or to take some time off to think about what really is important and if college and Columbia is the right choice. I work with students who are having very serious academic problems with probation and the dismissal students, and when they want to be re-admitted to the college and actually, I find I love this group of students. And it's wonderful to see the light go on and to come back and be refocused and to overcome the greatest obstacles to work on

their degree to get their education and to develop their art. It's exciting.

And often times I found and this is rather odd, in the process of dismissing students that they're grateful actually. I've had students give me a big hug and like thank you because it's given them permission to take time off to sort out whatever needs to be sorted out in one's life. Sometimes they travel, they work, they might go to another school and then they come back and they're serious about learning their art and completing the degree. So I derive great satisfaction out of working with this population.

Did you start out working with that population and maybe you can explain if not, how you were drawn into that?

Well, it just kind of evolved. I mean one always deals with the students experiencing academic difficulty but it was about five years ago Steven Russell Thomas in the academic deans office took on different responsibilities and I just kind of assumed taking over the ones that I wanted to do. So I just took over working with this population pretty much exclusively.

If I remember correctly he said that, or maybe it was Wayne, someone said that initially it was like an alphabet, you'd split up the alphabet. But now as you're saying different people have different specialties.

Right, we work with the students by major.

By major, okay.
Right.

And then you've got this population, the most risky or how would you say it, the at risk?

Well, they were at risk and now they're in hot water. But I love that group of students.

That's interesting. And you do experience a significant number of students that have been dismissed that do come back, find their way back?

Right, we have a lot of students who return to Columbia. I mean some are not dismissed, they drop out and they may attend another school, or you know they're working and it's just the schedule gets to be too much, so they'll take a term or two off. Sometimes the semester turns into several years, but they do return.

And I find that the students who return no matter what the circumstances for leaving the college they're more focused and determined to finish up. I think that's always the case when you've had to struggle for something and you appreciate it more or you realize what the importance of the completion of the degree means not only as a personal accomplishment, but it's often times what's going to get you in the door for a job so the career implications and the students who need the BA in order to go on for an MA or an MSA.

Now I want to just return one moment to open admissions because that has been an aspect of the college that there's been a lot of debate about and people have very strong feels about it. One of the criticisms is that open admissions just invites people that couldn't go elsewhere to end up here. Do you find that personally that students come here because they could be here as

opposed to coming here because they want a career, want to pursue the arts?

Sure some do, sure.

And I mean is that part of your advising too that you know this is not an appropriate place for students or—?

Well, I don't know if I'd ever say its not an appropriate place. I think that the beauty of open admissions is that everyone gets a shot, everyone gets a chance. But once you're here, I think we have a moral responsibility to help students as best we can so they can help themselves, but the students have to assume the responsibility as well. I think you know as we've grown and the institution has changed, we offer more services and we assess the students, so that we do have the proper placement and services to help students if they falter.

But on the other hand it gives the students responsibility to attend class and fulfill the requirements of assignments and whether they're in the liberal education area, a history class or you know art projects, theater projects. I mean the students bear responsibility in this as well. We're committed to helping them and providing assistance. The students have to take responsibility and avail themselves of it as well. So it's a partnership and one would hope students are committed to it, but we do find that there are some students for a many number of reasons aren't prepared or aren't interested in doing it. And it may be just a lack of emotional maturity coming out of high school, or sewing wild oats, what have you. Or it's just they're not college material and that's okay, not everyone is. But I think to give students a chance to find this out is important.

And with that moral responsibility to students and maybe addressing that issue of maturity or lack of it, is that done one on one? I mean like how is that—are there workshops for that? You know when the students come with the desire and—?

Well, we have study skills and time management and the kind of nuts and bolts workshops—

Right.

—where many of those issues are addressed, perhaps not directly. I mean we're in the business of encouraging students and not saying you know come back when you're more mature and focused.

Right.

But you can deal with those issues.

And do you find that some students have no idea how to study or the importance—?

Oh yeah. Sure, some don't. I would say most do, however, but they're distracted. I mean they're finding their own voice you know. It happens on every college university campus and well, it should at that age you know. Students should come in questioning and experiencing and a sense of irreverence. I think they should change their majors.

Returning to some of these questions, is there anything else when we talk about the students when you came, now you already addressed that when you came it might have been a more prominent older student population and that has changed?

I think they're getting a little younger.

And how have they changed, younger?

And I think you know we're seeing an awful lot of suburban youth, whether its from the metropolitan Chicago area or from out of state. I do see our international populations growing and that's always wonderful because it also speaks to the college's reputation nationally and internationally. I think that the biggest change is that we're seeing a population of students or a generation of students who view their education strictly as a commodity. And they're not just assertive, but they're aggressive and they want this and they're paying for it and they're paying our salaries and boy you'd better hop. And you know yes, higher education is a business, but I'd like to think it's the business of education. But it pains me and it worries me when students aren't here to learn for learning's sake, to grow and develop. I mean they see it strictly as racking up numbers to get the degree, to get the job you know and they don't take advantage of things, you know and it's a commodity.

And that sometimes translates into I paid for this class therefore, I want this grade.

Right, I think— and they won't stop at bullying and demanding from instructors. And if a student doesn't seem to get what he or she wants, I'm going to the president. And these are issues that are for the most part non-issues and if they are to be resolved they certainly don't go to that level. It's not like walking into you know a department store and demanding to see the manager because you didn't like—

Yeah, that's an interesting comparison because that's almost what it is or the attitude toward (in).

Right. But I don't think it's unique to Columbia, I think it's across the board. I mean I think you know you talk to high school teachers and counselors and they'd say the same thing.

Has the growth of the international population presented any special challenges or changed the emphasis in your office?

Well, not really in our office. I mean we do have services for the population. Gigi Posejpal in admissions works with the students coming in and with their visa issues. And Susan Blum-Malley in English with the ESL program, their testing and placement, and Symon Ogeto in student life, works as an advocate and advisor. But I see that there's a cohesion with the population and they have events and special programming, they're very well attended, and its just nice to see how this population has not only grown in numbers, but the spirit and their initiatives for the group.

That's interesting because those are some of the goals we'd like to see for the rest of the population. So are there any other say cultural differences or things that have to be addressed that you've seen?

Well, you know again yes and no. It depends on the individual and one's familiarity with the culture and what the presenting issue or problem is. I think one of the problems and we don't face it as much is sometimes students come in with lack of the language skills. A student may have done very well on the top of the written exam, but

conversational skills are lacking and the student might have trouble keeping up in the classroom, but that's probably the only thing we encounter. But again one on one it's very different.

Right, that would be a different dynamic. Okay, let's change topics a little bit here. Can you think back and tell us what have been some of the most important events to occur at Columbia while you've been here, things that stick out in your mind?

Well, I think the growth of the institution and the acquiring of more real estate and buildings has been very important and has affected the college. I think we've become more standardized, which on one hand I suppose there are certain areas that needed to be made more standard. But on the other hand, the beauty and uniqueness of Columbia is that there was freedom to choose and to design and to grow, and now we're you know with degree programs and we're becoming more standardized.

Do you feel that within academic advising or do you still feel that kind of freedom that as things come up it can be implemented and we can address this or is there a bureaucratization that is now part of your office?

Well, we have to be aware of all the different policies and procedures and adhere to them and explain them to students and they have to work within the framework. So yeah it has affected how we do what we do. We implement the policy, we don't establish it. And sometimes you know things change quickly or one might not be apprised of the change, so that's how it would affect us and then ultimately affect the students. So we have to keep abreast of everything and I think you know we do. We always have and we always will.

Right, and so there's still that flexibility and important [in].

Oh there's a certain amount. I think there certainly was more in years past but there's still some flexibility for students. There are choices.

Has the establishment of dorms made any difference or been something that you've had to address or do you see that as something that as down the road if more and more students are living in the dorm—?

Well, again I think you know the dorm students tend to congregate in their dorms so they become somewhat segregated. We've made efforts to go into the resident center with some programming and it has been effective, but I think you know the creation of the dorms and the expansion of them attracts a certain sort of student and not for good or ill, but it makes us more traditional like other colleges. And I think one of the things that was always the hallmark of Columbia and what made it unique was that it was a community school, and it was urban. I mean we still are that, but we're getting an increasingly, more suburban sort of student and I mean it's fine but that's what I think the—

That shift that takes place.

Uh-huh.

Right, that okay, making it more mainstream. Well, maybe you could speak to that. What do you think are the major challenges to Columbia in the future? What do you see ahead for the institution?

Well, I think we still have to come to grips with open admissions and services for students and to retain students and to make sure that they really are prepared when they graduate. Now of course no institution

can guarantee employment, but I think you know our challenge is to help the students be as prepared as possible when they graduate so that they can go out and work in their fields if they so choose.

And if you could speak to you know what keeps you here? You've touched on several things but maybe if you could expand on that, why do you stay?

I love the school. It's still very dynamic and exciting. I love my staff, the very strong, close knit team and I still enjoy working with students.

And do you think that, could you have that at other institutions or is it something that's different or unique?

Well, I think because Columbia is arts and entertainment, media communications, it makes it different from other schools. I mean I loved teaching at DePaul. I like the students there and you know I had a marvelous time, but I guess you know Columbia is home for many students, it is for staff and faculty. You walk in and there is just this vibe and you know this is the place. And you know the people who stay were (in) and you know, so it's a wonderful place. I feel spoiled that I don't know if I could ever work at any other institution, and I think it's the students here are just fantastic. And it's exciting and you know many close friends amongst the faculty and staff. It's just a dynamic and great place to work.

Well, can you be more specific about the students? I mean is it the fact that they're pursuing arts or arts are important to them?

Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely, I mean even the accounting students here different from the accounting students at DePaul. The students

here are interested in art and entertainment media management and the arts are you know life blood for many of us. So that's what makes it exciting, drawing those sorts of individuals of students but also the faculty and the staff.

So maybe you could talk a little bit about personally how the arts and being at Columbia are a part of your life, that that has made that easier or I'm not sure exactly how to put it. But you talked about an interest in the arts and that you went you know to different colleges and then when you finally came to Columbia you felt very comfortable. Did it help you reincorporate that or have you into your life?

Yeah, to a certain extent. I mean the problem which many people I'm sure would address is when you work full time you find it hard to go home you know and pull out the paint box. That's just the frustrating aspect. But yeah being around artists and seeing art you know, music, dance, theater, what have you, photography, is very exciting and inspiring.

I think that's an interesting aspect that people have touched on but maybe haven't articulated when they talk about the environment that they like here that being around that kind of atmosphere is— and that would be very different from many other institutions.

Well, and I think you know Columbia appreciates a lot of difference and it in fact encourages that and you don't find that at other schools. I mean they may say they're pro-diversity but I think we live it.

And so has your personal vision of education changed as a result of working here or is it the place you found that you could fulfill?

I think to fulfill it, it's been reinforced. I see you know education in the broadest sense and that as trite as it sounds there is lifelong learning and I think to really live and work in higher education and art schools such as Columbia you have to have your eyes open and your ears open otherwise you're not going to stay.

So you aren't staying in the same place here? You don't find that you're able to—?

Well, I think every day is different and every student is different and you know that's what the change is what keeps you on your toes and keeps you sharp.

So can you tie that into what you think the biggest challenge for Columbia is at the moment or (in)?

I think just you know with all the growth and the development and the expansion and public awareness of the school to still keep the personal touch and to offer appropriate services to students so that they'll succeed.

And do you think that personal touch can be maintained or are we going to become more mainstream or more standardized? I mean can we have both I guess is what I'm asking?

Well, I don't know. I hope so. I mean and that's what I strive for and I know our advisors do, that we're never too big to sit down and listen to the individual student.

But do you think what goes on in your office and your hope that that would be maintained? Will it be a harder job for your office if

the rest of the college can't do that? I don't know if the rest of the college and I don't know if the rest of the college would talk about that personal one on one as much you know by department as you have.

Yeah, right.

But is that going to be harder or do you worry that that's going to be harder to maintain for academic advising? I mean do you see that as a cornerstone of what you offer or are you hopeful or confident that—?

I'm confident that we will continue to do what we do best, absolutely. I don't think we'll ever lose that.

And do you feel support for that? You must feel support for that from the wider institution too for what your job does, yeah.

Yeah.

Great, well always is a hopeful. Is there anything that we haven't touched on that you would like to bring to this in regard to your work, your department's work or your experience here at Columbia?

Well, I think what we do, one might view as the simplest but it's also the most difficult job on campus. And again it's dealing with the students, helping them to help themselves.

And so that's kind of the mission of, and that fits in with being the author of the culture of your time and finding (in)?

Absolutely. Absolutely.

And before we finish, could you speak to the aspect of your job when you said it earlier and I just really like this quote, teaching is advising and advising is teaching,

that what you learned as some examples maybe of what you have learned being an academic advisor and obviously the teaching part, you're trying to help them find their own voice. But can you talk about that exchange, that dynamic that you find so important in your job or the best aspect of your job?

Well, it's listening to the student and seeing the student resolve an issue for him or herself. And I guess empowering, giving permission to the student to consider other options that you know one roadblock is not the end of the world and not to take all the troubles and woes of the world on one's shoulder and that these problems can be resolved as simple as you know taking more time and learning how to study, to successfully pass an examination or how to resolve a problem at home.

I think when seeing someone ask for help and being able to listen to the person and see the person realize that there are ways of solving the problem, you know that's the first step and it takes, just to see the courage that it takes a student. You know you can see it unfolding, you know it's wonderful to see it happen.

Is there without naming names are there examples that come to mind when you think of some of those success stories or some of those rewarding experiences? And maybe talk about what process that student went through.

Oh hundreds, thousands but I never thought about thinking about the individual cases. And you know it's so varied I mean seeing students coping with loss and

bereavement, their grief, giving themselves permission to take time off to deal with these issues and then coming back. You know it's amazing. And then encouraging them and showing them that there are options and tools to do what they need to do and its exciting when students take advantage of it, and then you see them walking across the stage.

You think of where they were. Okay, well that I think wraps it up. Thank you very much.
Well, thank you.

