

INTERVIEW with ABE MELDEN

February 14, 1974

McCULLOCH: Now, the first question, Abe, is, what attracted you about coming to Irvine?

disarray
MELDEN: Well, the reason I decided to come here was the fact that it started from scratch, unlike some of the other places. There were two others that were interested in me at the time, Santa Barbara and UCLA, both of which had accumulated their mistakes, and in varying degrees they were in a state of disrepair, and, since I was in a department that was having its troubles, I didn't particularly relish simply exchanging a new set for the ones that I'd had at Washington. And I think what excited me was, first of all, the scene here at Irvine, where there was nothing. The buildings were beginning to emerge from the ground, ^{after} and also talking with the administrators I had met and the more I thought about it, the more exciting a prospect it was for me to get involved in the development of the University from scratch and to make my own mistakes.

McCULLOCH: I remember that very well, Abe, and I can recall your coming to my house, and I knew you had two other campuses after you, and I tried to make that point, that here you had a chance to build something from nothing. I was certainly delighted you came.

MELDEN: It was an exciting period.

McCULLOCH: I think it's the best period of my life, over in that little building. No faculty, no students, and we could think up everything ourselves.

MELDEN: That's right.

McCULLOCH: Would you give me some detailed impressions of the first conference that we held, you remember, in the late summer and early fall,

and the Irvine Plan emerged and went into that purple brochure--what are your memories of it?

MELDEN: Well, I remember the way we sat around the table and, with incredible self-confidence, set about designing a university from scratch. I think we were far more brash than we had any conception of at the time, and, as I look back upon it now, if, at that time, we had had any sense of the sorts of headaches we would be involved in, I think very likely we would have been much too discouraged to go ahead. But it was really a remarkable period.

McCULLOCH: Well, can you remember questions? We sort of divided those who were more conservative, such as Bernie Gelbaum; there was a middle group, which I associated myself with, and then there was the Jim March group. And Jack Peltason would always work us around to some kind of a compromise on the Irvine Plan. But it seems that, for instance, everybody had to study something in the Northwestern World and the Conclave--all these things didn't really get off the ground, did they? But a lot of things did get off the ground.

MELDEN: A lot of things did. There were some things that were much too ambitious.

McCULLOCH: Such as?

MELDEN: Well, I think the Conclave had a very grand design, but it was really unrealistic; that is, the students' interest wasn't there--they had no conception of what it was for, and when they got into Crawford Hall, as I recall, it just didn't come off.

McCULLOCH: I've figured why, Abe. You know, I hadn't realized, until I thought about it, that the student body was composed of something like about 800 freshmen and about 300 or 400 junior transfers, and I've forgotten how many graduates, but let's say about 300 or maybe less--it had to total

1580--and I think these freshmen just couldn't, it was the 800 freshmen that I think couldn't appreciate it.

MELDEN: That's right, and they were 800 freshmen from homes which did not give them the sort of background, intellectual background, that was absolutely essential for that sort of an enterprise to come off successfully. You simply can't impose the interest of the faculty upon a group of students and hope that they will come up and grasp the bait. There wasn't that native or basic interest on the part of the students to make that thing come alive.

I think the other thing about the Eastern Studies was again far, far too ambitious, much too unrealistic. Sure, we're at one end of the Pacific Ocean, and at the other end there's the Eastern civilization, but, Hell's Bells, we first of all had to get our feet on the ground with respect to Western civilization before we begin to explore those particular areas. There wasn't enough, in other words, of a background of established University activity to provide suitable nurture for that kind of an enterprise; it was a wild dream.

McCULLOCH: Yes, well, I think we had many dreams. The 3-3-6 you remember--we hammered that out, and I noticed in this recent article that I'm going to ask you about in the Irvine Humanities Review of Fall, 1973, Hazard expresses here his feeling that really it's a compromise and it's not truly what he calls general education. I won't go into the arguments, but how do you feel the 3-3-6 has worked out?

MELDEN: Oh, I don't think that it's worked out at all successfully, and one of the important considerations is this: We started with five (was it five?) ^{divisions} schools.

McCULLOCH: Right, five.

MELDEN: We had Graduate School of Administration, and we had Engineering, and these were the professional schools, and they were in a somewhat anomalous position to begin with, with respect to the other five; that is to say, the question of how they would be involved, of course, was simply settled at that time by recognizing that they were essentially graduate ^{programs} ~~institutions~~. But then we had other things coming on the scene, like computer science, social ecology, and comparative culture, and now the question is, in what way are these to be incorporated?

When we changed over to schools and set up the Council for Interschool Curricula, which was essentially a device that would enable us to grant students majoring in these areas their degrees, since they weren't members of any of the schools, ~~as the divisions became~~ (I was involved in the Council for Interschool Curricula simply because I was at that time Chairman of the Senate) I posed the question of how the 6-3-3 requirement was going to apply to students in these areas. And, of course, as soon as there was a substantial development of student bodies in these particular disciplines, then the question arose, what does breadth really come down to?

I suppose that any sort of an arrangement designed to provide breadth for students in their training is going to work if, and only if, they're properly advised. There are always ways in which the purposes of such requirements are going to be defeated; there are always ways in which any set of rules and regulations set up for students are going to serve as challenges to students whereby, in ingenious ways, ^{they seek to breach them.} ~~these rules will fail to~~ ^{the rule of} ~~achieve their purpose.~~ Students, I think, are very, very clever, and the only rule which you've got to have is essentially wisdom in seeing how the purposes that the rules are designed to serve are achieved. And I think that, even if we didn't have the sort of special problems that the Council for Interschool Curricula posed, we would still have the real problem of

seeing to it that, within the context of the 6-3-3 rules, students would be encouraged to, and actually, obtain the sort of breadth of education that a general campus ostensibly is supposed to provide.

McCULLOCH: That's a very good answer. Now, there are two other things that touch on this, that came out of that conference. One is the Pass/Fail, which we feel we originated, though Santa Cruz also put it in, and it's called Pass/Not Pass; the other thing is the advising system.

Now, the first one--how do you feel the Pass/Not Pass has worked out?

MELDEN: I had initially a good deal of positive interest in the Pass/Not Pass system, because I thought this was one way in which some of the hangups of the students about grades, particularly when they were bent on professional degrees--

McCULLOCH: Adventuresomeness.

MELDEN: Yes, adventuresomeness and so on. But in point of fact, I think that it poses some serious questions, let's face it. Students proceeding on a Pass/Not Pass basis will let up in their efforts, and they ^{often} simply won't gain as much from a course which they take in that way as they would if they take it on a regular basis with all of the liabilities that the familiar grading system provides for a deficient or inadequate sort of work. I think that it's been a mixed experience; I think in some cases it's been bad; I think in some cases there's been a rather surprising result--people have taken courses on a Pass/Not Pass basis and have actually achieved A's and B's in their work. But I think quite frequently it provides students with an opportunity essentially to relax in their efforts.

McCULLOCH: Fair enough. Now, the next question is the advising system. If your assumption--no, you'd call it the premise--for the success of the 3-3-6 was good advising, how do you feel our advising system has worked out?

MELDEN: Pretty badly

McCULLOCH: We started out with a coordinator, namely Spencer Olin.

MELDEN: That's right.

McCULLOCH: No, I noticed in the Senate meeting last week, they've gone back to having--I guess Robers is going to do it.

MELDEN: Yes. I think it's handled by people in Student Affairs, and perhaps that's a little better than having it handled by secretaries or boy friends and girl friends on an informal basis. But what really does concern me is that, unlike the way in which it was handled initially, when there was a corps of faculty people--

McCULLOCH: And Balch supported that.

MELDEN: And supported by Balch, unlike that kind of arrangement, what we now have are, if you wish, people involved in student services, whose academic interests and qualifications are marginal at best, engaged in this kind of a centrally important function for students. I just don't like it.

McCULLOCH: Well, I don't like it at all, but we still do try, I know, in the School of Humanities. I am a member now, Abe, of the corps of freshman advisors, and I have in this drawer about, I'd say, 25 students, and I'd say they come in pretty regularly--I'd say 75 percent of them come in for advice. Of course, Hazard set that up. I wanted it done when I was Dean, and we got it moving, and then Hazard took it over and actually enforced it and said there was to be a corps of advisors. You can't declare a major until you're into your sophomore year. I think in the humanities area it isn't working out too badly. What you're referring to is this impingement of the Student Affairs empire upon the academic to the point that the Academic Senate, for the last two meetings now, has really risen up and said something about it.

MELDEN: Yes. What really does bother me about this monster that's been developing is this--that in the way in which presumably the faculty traditionally have been thought of as that group most influential in determining student objectives and goals in setting up the perimeters in which their interests are to be directed ~~and elicited~~ developed. Instead of that kind of arrangement, what we have is a contemporary equivalent of what in my days were regarded as the horrors of the academic community; namely, the educationists attempting to play the sort of role which traditionally has been thought of as being one that the faculty had to assume simply because of their competence and intellectual expertise. And I just don't like this kind of business of students being told what's important for them in a University and how to think about their careers. I think that that kind of thinking about careers has to be done within the context of discussion with, and influence by, teachers, members of the faculty.

McCULLOCH: Yes. I suppose their counter argument is that the faculty have done such a bad job that they've moved in. I don't know; I've never talked with them, but I suspect that.

MELDEN: Well, that sort of an argument seems to me like this one--that because the medical people have done a bad job in dealing with cancer, we ought to go to witch doctors.

McCULLOCH: Is there anything else from that first conference and that purple brochure that you can think of, that you remember, that particularly struck you or made an impression on you?

MELDEN: Well, yes, there were a few incidents, and they were isolated in character. I remember the discussion of how it was that we were going to get students to learn how to read and write and how to think, and there were some people who were saying, "Well, what we ought to do is to have people take logic courses so they'd learn how to think," and other people were

saying we ought to have the students take courses in English rhetoric and learn how to write, and I remember Hazard's saying, apropos of the latter suggestion, that he thought the worst thing that could be done is to use this mechanical device, since this would seem to relieve the faculty in other disciplines of the responsibility, which they had, to see to it that students wrote well, clearly, and with some sort of style when taking their courses, this being a responsibility that the faculty has to shoulder, whatever the school or discipline in which it operates.

And the same thing has to do with thinking. Clear thinking is something which isn't the privilege of a logician. People learned how to think long before Aristotle came along and set out the first principles of logic; that's an old gag, but it's a truism that people planning curricula seem to ignore.

And there were other things. I can't recall all of the matters that came up for discussion. There were some emerging horrors like the computer University, and that picture of 1984 seemed to be on the horizon. We heard some queer rumbles from, I remember, Jim March, as to what he proposed to do--

McCULLOCH: Backed up by Ralph Gerard.

MELDEN: --backed up by Ralph Gerard, who thought essentially of education as consisting of two separate domains--one was science, and the other was something that could be viewed as recreational in the broadest sense of the term. This would include such things as music, literature, art, and I suppose a good deal of philosophy, as well.

McCULLOCH: Maybe some history.

MELDEN: Perhaps history, too?

McCULLOCH: Maybe.

MELDEN: Maybe, but, in any case, the rest of it had to do with computer hardware, test tubes, and the rest of it. We did have some moments of tension when people exchanged comments that sometimes became rather personal during some of these discussions. But, on the whole, it was a very exciting and once-in-a-lifetime sort of experience.

McCULLOCH: It was, and I think, talking about education, I would like to make the point that--and I am going to talk to John Goodlad--John Goodlad had some very sound notions on education, and essentially we have carried them out with Bailey in Teacher Education. He has never wanted to start a school or a major, and he's really tried to carry out many of the notions that Goodlad started.

MELDEN: I thought that that was a very, very fine thing--Goodlad's presence there and his determination to rethink the function of people in education and teacher education. This, I think, was an extraordinarily helpful thing that prevented us from going down the usual garden path. And Ken Bailey I respect very highly because he has operated with all the intellectual constraints that were expressed by Goodlad early on.

McCULLOCH: I take most of the responsibility for Bailey's appointment because I knew him--I knew him as a principal on the Curriculum Commission, but, more important, I knew him as a PhD in history with at least three very good books, and he's still publishing, you know.

MELDEN: He's a fine man. He's got his head firmly on his shoulders.

McCULLOCH: Now, Abe, when making your appointments in philosophy, did you find the Universitywide administrative regulations reasonable, helpful, or obstructive?

MELDEN: Well, I guess I'd have to say that at times I felt very strongly that they were obstructive. I have to say that and then add to it. My first encounter with Dan Aldrich was in connection with an appointment

that I proposed to make, and I proposed to make that appointment at a relatively high Assistant Professor step, and Dan said, "How can you justify this proposal, given the man's salary, what he's published, and so on? You're jacking him way up." I said, "The man's worth it." I recall I won that debate, and then I won a much larger victory because the man turned me down, and on subsequent reflection I decided that Dan was right and I was wrong.

We had another run-in that caused me no end of grief, and that was in connection with the appointment of Stan Munsat. This time it was with Jack Peltason. And I thought that Stan deserved an Associate Professor I.

McCULLOCH: And I supported you, and I supported you.

MELDEN: And I was right as events turned out. Stan decided to take the Step III. And we didn't, in the end, suffer on that account, but it was a nuisance. It was a nuisance.

McCULLOCH: I battled that one, too, and I remember it very vividly.

MELDEN: These were essentially very minor, I think on the whole relatively minor considerations, because generally the system is a good one. I think it's a good one, it's a fair one, the criteria are publicized, the procedures are well-known, there is no dealing that takes place--wheeling, dealing between an administrator and a particular faculty man who is being recruited. It's all above board. There is full participation by the man's peers, and I think that the University of California system is really an admirable one. It imposes constraints, and these are sometimes rough, but I think that this is essential in any kind of a system, that there will be times when difficulties of this sort emerge. But there are ways of accommodating oneself.

McCULLOCH: Well, you remember having to accommodate to it when we had to get Lambert, and we had to have speed.

MELDEN: Yes.

McCULLOCH: And I think when speed was really necessary, we were speedy.

MELDEN: That was a record that I think--

McCULLOCH: Has never been achieved since.

MELDEN: --that's never been achieved since, and I remember that, as Chairman, I had to rush this one through, and I got the Budget Committee to meet in emergency session and to provide me with a certain relaxation of strict procedures which was fully justified under the circumstances.

McCULLOCH: Yes, I argued about that; I argued alongside of you, and we won that battle.

Well, therefore, you are saying that the procedures really shouldn't be changed.

MELDEN: I don't think that the procedures should be changed; I think they are very, very good ones that protect the interests of the individual, the department, and the University, but of course with regard to any set of rules, there are always emergency situations that arise, and there are possibilities for bending requirements and bending them in such a way that it will be recognized by people on up through the administration that, under the circumstances, a reasonable course was taken. We have that today; we have these procedures, but there are times when we have to move not only with deliberation, but with top speed, and we do it.

McCULLOCH: I agree, Abe. Well, then, going on, how well do you think we set up our Academic Senate, our UCI Senate, because you were on the drafting committee when we set it up?

MELDEN: Well, I recall that initially this was before the first year, before faculty and students appeared on the scene. There was a small committee--there were three of us, as I recall--Ed Steinhaus, and I have forgotten who the other person in addition to myself was. At any rate, there

we were, three supposedly wise men, delegated or asked (I think we were asked by the administration--the word came from Jack Peltason); we had to get an Academic Senate going. And I was asked because I suppose as a philosopher I was supposed to be either wise or not involved in anything important--I was asked to serve as Chairman, which meant that I had to go around and find out, by attending various meetings of statewide committees and of the Assembly, what the Academic Senate was, so that we could take the first steps in the development of a set of bylaws.

McCULLOCH: The first year, Creel Froman came onto the committee, and was he the third person, or how did that develop?

MELDEN: No, he was not the third person. I can't recall now at this time.

McCULLOCH: He couldn't have been, because he came in '65.

MELDEN: No, he came in '65. What happened--and this is a very interesting thing--what happened, of course, was that at Berkeley the free-speech movement was going full swing, and there were all sorts of explosive events reported in the newspapers, and people were terribly concerned about what was going on. We were determined that we were not going to be repressive, that we were going to do everything possible in our dealings with both faculty and students to give them the opportunity of rising to the necessary heights of intelligence and responsibility so that we could deal equally and responsibly with them--deal with them as equals and on terms of trust. Okay, we were not going to make those sorts of mistakes.

Now, we had suddenly a large group of faculty coming in, in 1965, and they were, with few exceptions, Assistant Professors. Some of them were paranoid, absolutely paranoid. They had just come out of graduate school, and they resented some of the features of the departments that they had seen, from which they had emerged, and they looked upon us as being no

better than those who had been their mentors, and with distrust. And here they found a group of three people who called a meeting, and I chaired it and offered explanations. They were called upon to deal with three people whom they regarded as bent and determined to oppose their will in setting up a faculty organization upon them, and they were literally paranoid during that first meeting we had. I have never had an experience anything like that.

I called the meeting for the purpose of asking them to participate with us, explaining that we had to get the thing started, and now that we were on the scene what we wanted to do was to work together as a cohesive faculty group. Initially, there were accusations directed at me and my colleagues of trying to impose our will upon them in a dictatorial fashion. At any rate, by the end of the meeting, you may recall, Sam--do you recall what happened? By the end of the first meeting what we had was a decision by the group as a whole--a group consisting, as I recall, of people ^{many of whom} who really didn't have any Senate responsibilities; they couldn't be members of the Senate by virtue of their titles, ^{e.g.,} some of them were supervisors in physical education. What we had was a decision to amplify our committee, and at that point Creel Froman came in.

And we then had an enlarged committee, which I continued to serve as Chairman, and so I had to organize the work and do the homework and actually do the drafting, subject of course to their suggestions, corrections, and changes that they proposed. And eventually we got a set of bylaws so that by January of 1966 we were formally established as the Irvine Division of the Senate. We had a very difficult job. It was very, very complicated because, mind you, we had started in '64 or '65, during that academic year, by drafting the bylaws. But we had on our hands the Irvine Advisory Committee, of which John Galbraith was Chairman.

McCULLOCH: Swedenberg replaced him.

MELDEN: That's right, and their function was to deal with matters in three general areas, as I recall--(1) Budget, that is to say Personnel; (2) Educational Policy; and (3) Graduate Council, which had to do with, of course, matters pertaining to advanced degrees and graduate programs. Now, they had to be phased out, and what we did was to set up initially three committees, and this was done on a purely ad hoc basis, even before we were invested with the responsibilities of a division of the Academic Senate. And we set up three committees to charge ahead with the processing of requirements, dealing with all sorts of matters that the Educational Policy was concerned with, with the review of graduate program proposals, degree programs that were being proposed, and with the processing of dossiers for appointees on the campus at large. And when that was in operation, of course the Irvine Advisory Committee was not; it ceased to function.

And when in January of 1966 we were formally established as the Irvine Division of the Academic Senate, by then these three committees had, in turn, to be phased out, and the whole apparatus of committees that we had started with, as laid out in the bylaws, took over. And it was a very complicated sort of thing, and we really had to keep our wits about us as we moved from one stage to another.

McCULLOCH: I'd like to congratulate you on it, Abe. I was particularly pleased that you were our first Chairman of the Academic Senate and I think guided us through a couple of pretty rough years.

MELDEN: Well, thanks very much, but, I must say, there were several things that worked to make all of that, I think, a heck of a lot easier than it would otherwise have been. For one thing, we were not in the main stream of large universities in which there were the commotions taking place, students involved in all sorts of activities. We had a respite of about two or

three years before the first crisis occurred, and during this period the students and the faculty at large worked together (we had a few exceptions), and on the whole there was mutual trust and respect. We also had an extraordinarily able person in the Senate Office, Eve Odell. And God, how she worked, night and day! She really was indispensable during that period. And because none of us was very experienced, I think that all of us were willing to forgive and forget any of the minor mistakes that were made, so that we worked together pretty well. If these things hadn't occurred, we would have been really in the soup, and we'd have had commotions, we would have gone to pieces.

McCULLOCH: Yes, this is right. As a historian, I have to point out that this is confirmed; for example, when I interviewed Grover Stephens, he felt that we had this wonderful period; then when the first crisis came--if you want to call it the crisis--when we had to face several tenure decisions, then it all fell apart.

MELDEN: Yes, it all fell apart. Now, I think our hiring pattern was a very, very important phenomenon. We did have, of course, some senior people, but we had an unusually high percentage of beginning Assistant Professors.

McCULLOCH: Well, I asked Jim March that question. You remember, in Humanities I asked to have a balance, and English had a good balance between Professors, Associates, and Assistants; Philosophy did; History less so because of the market situation; and Foreign Languages, again the same situation, because I tried desperately to get tenured people and there was the market situation. I asked Jim March, "Why did you appoint so many Assistant Professors?" Answer: "I couldn't get through regular Senate committees the tenured people I felt I wanted for my program." So his answer is, he just had to do it.

MELDEN: Well, I view that with some suspicion. Jim had some very peculiar ideas as to what he wanted to do, and he was perfectly prepared to bring people in who were simply not academically qualified according to the criteria, well recognized and established not only in the University of California, but in the profession at large.

McCULLOCH: Yes.

MELDEN: And he had a queer idea that, if he brought several bright young people together and rubbed them together, then there would be great intellectual sparks and one would achieve instant University of a very high caliber. I think there was disaster as a result of the hiring practices in which he engaged.

McCULLOCH: I agree. Now, the next question, Abe, is, are there any bylaws you feel we should change now? How do you feel the present Senate is functioning?

MELDEN: Well, there's one thing that has concerned me for some time as to what might happen under special circumstances. You know we have a Budget Committee, and I've always taken the line, with respect not only to the Budget Committee, but indeed to any of the other important committees on the campus, that its members not view themselves as representatives of any special discipline or faction on the campus. And my thought here was to avoid the kind of thing that I saw happen at the University of Washington, which had a Senate which was essentially representative and in which there developed a certain sort of attitude among its members; namely, of trading favors.

McCULLOCH: Log-rolling, eh?

MELDEN: Log-rolling--you don't scratch me and I won't scratch you! And under these circumstances a certain kind of permissiveness develops, and a certain sort of political climate begins to appear that makes it impossible to achieve the purposes for which the committee operation is designed to

secure. Okay. Now, I resisted, therefore, the idea that people serve on these committees as representatives and hoped that the good sense of the faculty at large would operate in such a way as to secure through a democratic election process persons serving on these committees who would combine various different sorts of expertise by virtue of their disciplines so that one would have people coming from different areas of the campus and then sensitive to the particular problems of each special area without each of them thinking of himself as representing a certain constituency and determined therefore to promote their fortunes, this being his primary responsibility.

I think what's happened is that as this University has gotten larger, then the commitment that we had in the earlier days to the campus as a whole, which was felt very strongly by all of the persons or a very, very large percentage of the persons on the faculty, that commitment tends to weaken, becomes much more diffuse, the smaller unit of which one is a member tends to substitute for the larger campus, which is outside the immediate area of vision. One then thinks of one's constituency much more than one thinks of the well-being and the excellence of the campus at large and of its purposes and the distinction of the University. I think that, just as our sense of commitment to the University of California at large is less intense than our sense of commitment to this campus, as this campus grows and becomes much more complex, the same thing happens with respect to our campus vis-à-vis, say, a particular school or a particular group which becomes fairly large in numbers, with whom one is associated. So I am beginning to feel now that what I didn't want initially--namely, that certain committees be appointed in order to secure adequate expertise among its members--I'm beginning to feel now that perhaps that may well be the way to go with respect to some crucial committees.

McCULLOCH: In other words, you feel the elections really are too haphazard?

MELDEN: I think they're too haphazard. I think that there are factions.

McCULLOCH: And they're open to manipulation.

MELDEN: And they're open to manipulation, and I can see that this has had an unfortunate development in the composition of certain critical committees.

McCULLOCH: There is no question that the critical committees in my view are the Budget Committee and the Committee on Educational Policy.

MELDEN: Yes. Well, if I may say so--I'm now Chairman of the Budget Committee--I think that the Budget Committee is by far the most important of the committees on the campus, and my reason for it is not to deprecate in any way the importance of Educational Policy but to point out that, unless the quality of the faculty is maintained and achieved, there is nobody to act responsibly and ably in matters of academic policy.

McCULLOCH: Oh, yes, I quite agree. Well, Abe, in what areas do you think you've had the greatest successes here at UCI?

MELDEN: Oh, God! That's a hell of a question to ask!

McCULLOCH: Well, I'm thinking of your own department, Abe, and how you went about recruiting and setting up your program. I think it was an excellent faculty and an excellent program; I would say that and the way you led the Academic Senate when you were our first Chairman--I would consider those your greatest successes.

MELDEN: Well, as far as being Chairman was concerned, that was a very exciting experience for me. It gave me an opportunity that is very rare, indeed--not just a function in a position of authority with respect to a faculty, but to come to know people on the faculty much more easily than would otherwise have been possible. And the opportunity to come to see what sort

of people were on this campus was, for me at any rate, a very valuable one. There was another consideration, of course--I was enabled, simply because of the associations I would have as Chairman of this Division, to meet with my alter egos and with administrators and even with The Regents for the University at large, and that, too, was a very important thing, not because it gave me any sense of power, but I think it's very important to get a better understanding of people, and I think people are what make the University go, anyway. And when you really come down to it, it's people who really count in any sort of an enterprise. So this, to me, was an experience that enlarged my own appreciation and my own understanding of the University and enabled me to gain the important sorts of values that one gains through association with fine people.

McCULLOCH: I have that same philosophy. That's why, as Dean, I put my greatest effort into recruiting and working with the Chairmen, because you can have the best curriculum in the world, but if you don't have the personnel it's not going to be any good; if you have a bad one, a good personnel will make it much better.

MELDEN: Right. Yes.

McCULLOCH: So that's interesting.

MELDEN: As far as the department was concerned, I'd like to think that I was quite successful. I can say this about the department--I brought them in as virtual beginners. There was Gordon Brittan. I think very, very highly of him. We lost him.

McCULLOCH: Dan Dennett?

MELDEN: We lost Dan Dennett. As Gilbert Rile told me in his letter when he recommended him for appointment, "He's got fire in his belly." Well, you've seen what's happened. He's quite a distinguished man, and he's really proven out beautifully, starting as Assistant Professor I.

McCULLOCH: And you lost Stan Munsat.

MELDEN: Stan Munsat--well, he's got a name professorship at the University of North Carolina.

McCULLOCH: What more can you ask?

MELDEN: And we've still got some quality, although I must say we have not been able to repair the damage that their leaving has occasioned.

McCULLOCH: Though I think the market, Abe, really, when you look at it, is better now. When you were operating and I was operating, it was pretty much a sellers' market and now it's a buyers' market. You really, if you work hard enough at it, should hopefully find a replacement that's the equal.

MELDEN: Well, this is always a guess; it's always something prospective; we hope we can do it. I was very confident about these people, and now what we have is a situation which also has its problems. This, after all, is southern California. It's a more established campus now than it was, so it doesn't provide the kind of inducement that this campus, when it was beginning, provided for the people I recruited and for me when I saw it without even any of its buildings.

McCULLOCH: Yes, that's a good question. Now, maybe I shouldn't ask the next question, in what areas do you think you have had the least successes, and why?

MELDEN: I guess you shouldn't ask that.

McCULLOCH: Well, I think I, myself, often learn from my mistakes, and I know I've made my share.

MELDEN: I've made my mistakes. I've misjudged some people. I've undoubtedly created some enemies. There are times when I feel that I shouldn't have been as heavily involved in administration as I was, and, indeed, during the last three years I have been asking myself, "Now, has it really been worth while slaving away at the budget, and wouldn't I be farther

along if I had just continued as an ordinary professor instead of just sweating it out during the summer, the only time when I can get any writing done?"

McCULLOCH: It was worth it, but don't forget, Abe, you told me you were going as a Fulbright Professor this summer to Japan, and I think that's a very high honor, and I suspect that it comes not only from your distinction as a scholar and a teacher, but from your experience as an administrator.

MELDEN: Well, thank you very much, but I really am looking forward to the end of this year.

McCULLOCH: Yes, I'll bet! I've asked this question of everybody, what problems are unique to Irvine because it's new, because it's a particular campus? Would you like to try to pinpoint some of our unique problems?

MELDEN: Yes. I think we really had some real problems here to begin with. We had initially Ivan Hinderaker as Vice Chancellor; he made some mistakes--he made some mistakes in the appointment of specific individuals.

We have Dan; Dan has remarkable virtues. He is a person who is very well disposed to his fellow man; he has extraordinary ability to understand points of view of people very different from himself. The way, for example, in which he adjusted to students and to the black students and minority groups on this campus was, I think, quite remarkable. He ^{had} not been heavily involved in academic affairs, but the point is that he took it upon himself to make certain decisions that ran counter to the advice of academics. I'm thinking now of what happened early on; I'm thinking now of what happened more recently with respect to Budget Committee recommendations. It's pretty hard when one has to wait ten years before one can make a judgment as to who is right and who is wrong, but I do feel (if you wish, this is a gut feeling) in a number of cases that he made some serious mistakes.

McCULLOCH: I should always feel he made a very serious mistake in the Kent situation.

MELDEN: Right.

McCULLOCH: Well, we don't have to wait ten years to find that out.

MELDEN: I could mention names, and I'm not going to.

McCULLOCH: I'm not going to--

MELDEN: But I'm going to mention one or two things. I think, for example, that he allowed certain areas on this campus to develop into real problem areas. I'll just mention two. There was no Dean of Physical Sciences. The Chairman of Mathematics was allowed a free hand. It's only in the last year it's quite clear that that was a disaster, and the Dean was finally appointed, and he didn't mind the store.

Social science is, I think, a key on any campus--it constitutes a key complex of disciplines, and they've had some real problems, some real problems.

McCULLOCH: That's an understatement!

MELDEN: I think that in other areas of this campus the recruiting was conducted in ways which were not in accordance with the best interests of departments and the campus at large. Some departments, some schools, have been conspicuously successful; others have been conspicuous failures, so that what one has, for one reason or another, is a campus which is faced with a future that is far less rosy than what we thought it would be like when we first sat down in '64; let's face it.

We don't have the opportunities for growth that UCLA had, which enabled it to correct for mistakes that had been made, to dilute incompetence in the way in which they were able to do this in the late '40s, '50s, and even in the '60s. We're fortunate because we have a substantial number of FTEs that have been made available to us for recruiting this year, but it's going to be

slow growth, and these scars, I think, are going to stay with us for many, many decades.

McCULLOCH: I agree, I agree. Well, then, what would you do differently, Abe, if you had to do it all over again?

MELDEN: Well, I think there were several things that happened that were unfortunate. In the first place, the Chancellor took it upon himself to be very immediately involved in academic planning, in the overseeing of all of the appointments and so on and to impose his judgment when it ran counter to that of academics, that of persons in the profession at large. He should have consulted people in the profession, not just those with whom he was concerned and whom he gave a free hand. I think that that was a very unfortunate thing.

I think that Ivan made some key mistakes. I think after that, these mistakes continued to be made.

I think very highly of Jack as a person. I think he is extraordinarily intelligent, but he's a political scientist, and he has a sense of how people deal with each other in a political forum, which is to compromise their interests in order that they get on with their work. I don't think that an academic institution is like a legislative forum; I think it is a kind of institution in which you don't make certain sorts of compromises, but insist upon, and rigidly so, the maintenance of quality. So, with all of its virtues, that kind of attitude to the academic forum, as if it were a political one, tended to a kind of permissiveness that was positively harmful, and I say this although I like Jack enormously; I have great affection for him, and I respect him for his remarkable virtues.

I think there was another thing that was very bad, and that was a splintering of the campus into separate schools.

McCULLOCH: Well, you're now taking up Question Eleven, then.

MELDEN: Yes.

McCULLOCH: Put them together, put them together.

MELDEN: Okay. It seems to me that what this did (and this connects with the organization in Dan Aldrich's own office the problems that we are now faced with) was to eliminate the possibility of an essentially high-level academic administrator, who would be a person, with a relatively clear desk, engaged in thinking about the academic organization.

McCULLOCH: I understand we're trying to get Goodlad back in that position, and he wouldn't come. That notion did emerge about four or five years ago.

MELDEN: You see, the Dean of a School of Arts and Sciences, I'm now suggesting, would have played some of the role of what might be called a Provost or an Executive Vice President or Vice Chancellor, who would have some sense of directions in the academic scene.

The Vice Chancellor right now is a person too harried with paper work, with details. He can add sixteen assistants, but his problems--negotiating FTEs and allocating and so on--that's such an enormous job that he is substantially prevented from doing the kind of thing that a person immediately under the Chancellor would do, of getting organization, balance, and direction on the campus.

McCULLOCH: But there are two answers to that, Abe. One is to have a Dean of Arts, Letters, and Science; the other answer is to have an Executive Vice Chancellor.

MELDEN: I understand that, I understand that. My point is that what actually happened is this--that since there was just Dan Aldrich and his Vice Chancellors, then you eliminated, you see, a Dean of Arts and Sciences; you had no one in the middle who would be in a position of authority and who could perform that kind of function. Now, my own view is (it's one that I

had when initially the elimination of the Dean took place) that the old conception of the Dean of Arts and Sciences was obsolete. That conception had merit when a university was a relatively small group of disciplines, but when it grows large, say something like UCLA and as Irvine is going to become, it can't be a viable office any longer.

McCULLOCH: That was Clark Kerr's argument.

MELDEN: Right. But I think that, you see, there would have been a possibility of some sort of transition, had that been continued, and we would have seen, you see, that the Dean of Arts and Sciences is a person who ought to be in a position of authority with respect to a few other disciplines on this campus, and then at once he would have been elevated into something called a Provost--call him what you will. But you would have had, at any rate, some sort of person immediately under the Chancellor, because the Chancellor can't do it. He can't do it, because that isn't his job, and this one couldn't do it because he wasn't an academic.

McCULLOCH: That's well answered. Well, I understand. Now, the next question, are there any experiences in the early years we've missed and that you'd like to comment on? And I've got this last question I'm going to ask you.

MELDEN: Well, I don't know.

McCULLOCH: Do you think an answer now, Abe, to what you've said, assuming that it's too late now to have a Dean of Arts, Letters, and Sciences, is to have an Executive Vice Chancellor who is absolutely an academic man and the three Vice Chancellors report to him?

MELDEN: Right.

McCULLOCH: UCLA, I understand, is really going great guns with this arrangement.

MELDEN: That's right. I think that this is the system at Johns Hopkins.

McCULLOCH: Right.

MELDEN: It's the system at the University of Washington. This is the direction in which large universities have to go, having a person who is in a position to allocate sums of money and FTEs and whatever is necessary in order to achieve greatness in ways that he considers possible--

McCULLOCH: Of course, I think this might come about, Abe, and I do so as a historian. I can always assure you that what one person failed to do (I am sure Hazard wanted some arrangement like this), history shows the next man gets it; in other words, I can think of Gladstone and Disraeli and many other examples.

MELDEN: Sure, and you can think of the present situation in Washington, of Cox and Jaworski.

McCULLOCH: Right, that's a good example. Well, the last question, Abe. I was interested in picking up this Irvine Humanities Review. It came out this fall, and Hazard has an article called, "What is the Role of the Humanities at Irvine at Large?" On page 57 he says, "Philosophy developed in the most academically popular analytical mode, for example, to the virtual exclusion of interest in continental philosophies. It developed an exceptionally talented group of philosophers in its own chosen areas, but I asked one of them why the department did not appoint someone in phenomenology and existentialism. The answer was that there was no way to tell whether such a person was any good or not."

MELDEN: Well, I can say a lot of things. First of all, the remark quoted should not have been made; that was flip, and I think I know who made it. Second, I think I should say that Hazard knew, when this article was published and even months before it--I don't know when it was written, it may have been written before then--but, at any rate, he knew when this was published that four or five months before the date of publication we had

appointed, as a result of a search we had undertaken for a whole year, a person who could fill in some of the gaps that he noted. We have this man, David Smith, who teaches courses in Sartre, existentialism, also Husserl, who is, of course, one of the great phenomenologists. Okay. So this is unfair.

Now, I would like to comment on the difference between this Department of Philosophy, the way in which it developed, and the way in which the one in Santa Cruz developed. Now, I will simply state it for what it's worth. You can consider this to be discounted, but, in any case, I think this is one of the most remarkably successful Departments of Philosophy in this country in respect to the way in which it started out. There is only one other department in this country with which this one has been compared for instant first-class quality--that's the one at Chicago Circle. And when Ruth ^{Marcus} Barkis left, it went down and virtually disintegrated, but I remember David Kaplan saying to me, with an air of wonderment, "You know, your department and Ruth ^{Marcus} Barkis's at Chicago were the most conspicuously successful departments that were developed." Now, with that as a background by me, and I could go back and say something about the individuals and what's happened to those who've left, which is a demonstration that quality was achieved, I'd like to contrast the way in which this department was developed ^{with} to the way in which the Santa Cruz one was.

At Santa Cruz, the man there who was in charge, Maurice Nathanson (I have respect for his scholarship in the narrow area in which he works--he's a phenomenologist), had absolutely no sense of what was going on professionally in this country, and the result is that his department is now a disaster area. It is a clear-cut case of how not to start a Department of Philosophy. Hazard and others asked me, "Why did you get some people in epistemology, logicians using this model and so on?" I remember I argued

with Bob Montgomery when he was Acting Dean. I said, "Bob, the first thing you've got to do, if you're going to have a graduate program, is to get a department which is professionally of a certain sort of quality so that other departments will look to you for appointees." Now, you start out, therefore, by getting people in central areas and then bring in people as new FTEs are made available. But Hell's Bells! We did not have a single new FTE in five years.

McCULLOCH: I know. I completely agree with you that we have a very distinguished department. When I was Dean, I said to you, "Abe, don't make the mistake UCIA has made in having just logical positivists. Go and get a department that has breadth and has distinction." And you did it. And I just think that Hazard shouldn't have put this remark in.

MELDEN: He shouldn't have put it in. It brings up a point which was touched on earlier about dealing with the Eastern civilization. I ~~don't~~ think it's important, ^{that} and in this Department of Philosophy we bring in somebody who knows something about Eastern philosophy, but for Christ's sake you don't start with that--you bring it in only if you've got the other going.

McCULLOCH: I know, I agree. You and I are on the same wavelength, Abe, and I think we can conclude on that, because I feel that when I was Dean we got the necessary mix and what I call (what's the word?) the critical mass, and you build from the critical mass.

MELDEN: There is one thing I'd like to say, and, if you wish, this is self-serving, but you remember I used to say, "We philosophers are a peculiar breed." You remember I used to say, "We need a place where we can go and talk together, because our lab is essentially a meeting place."

McCULLOCH: You've sure got a nice place up on the fifth floor!

MELDEN: Well, all right. We're peripatetics up there because we can walk around and talk, and this is what the lab for the philosophers is.

Okay. I wanted a department in which any person in the department could talk philosophy with anyone else.

McCULLOCH: Right, and you got it. And, boy, I've looked up there at the fifth floor many times, Abe, and I love that library, and I even like better that room where you all can sit and chat and you've got a little carpet on the floor and chairs.

MELDEN: Yes, we talk--

McCULLOCH: That's your laboratory, isn't it?

MELDEN: That's right.

McCULLOCH: Well, thank you, Abe.