

Transcripts – KPU Oral – Preet Heer – Student in Fashion Design – and later in Arts – Community Planner Surrey

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[Beginning of transcript]

Roger: We're not investigative journalists or anything like that-

Preet: [Laughs] Yup.

Roger: We're just trying to capture people's recollections.

Preet: Yeah.

Roger: Which is why we start with a recollection exercise so that it is sort of centered around what you are interested to talk about and then it may go some other places with it. But if we go somewhere you don't want to go, just say, "let's not go there."

Preet: Okay.

Roger: And then we just edit that out so that you will be comfortable with it.

Preet: Okay.

Roger: And as I said, you will get a transcript once we get about 40 interviews completed.

Preet: Right.

Roger: Then you review that and until you are satisfied with it, it doesn't go anywhere. It doesn't go in the archives; it stays with us. When you sign off then it goes in the archives and we would edit the video tape to match the transcript.

Preet: Okay.

Roger: And if there are other things that you think of that you want to add later that's fine. I mean, you just write a little addendum and then we include it. Add it to it.

Preet: Great.

Roger: So, maybe we just start by.. if you talk a bit about what brought you to Kwantlen, and when. It was '87, or '88.

Preet: Way back, yeah.

Roger: Something like that. And then we can walk through.

[0:01:20]

Preet: Sure! So, if I go back to what brought me to Kwantlen, it was the fashion program. It had a really good reputation and when I was in high school, I was doing some exploring about where I wanted to go and I was doing a lot in the Fine Arts and in other programs as well, like commercial design and things like that. So, I really had an interest there. And as happens with all high school students you do some of that career pathing to figure out where you want to end up and so this became one of the areas that I was interested in, among other design fields. But that is when I researched the Kwantlen program and I found out about it and learned that it was a really competitive program to get into. Even then it was renowned Canada-wide in terms of get in. And so, I remember my high school teachers helping me get the portfolio together and how that all was going to work out. I did a lot of sewing as well and had done for a long time so it was a good combination of the two things that I was doing. So really, that was what led me there; just exploring where I wanted to go in high school.

Roger: So that was probably 1987?

Preet: '86. Mm-hmm.

Roger: '86, okay. And then was it a two-year diploma program?

Preet: Mm-hmm, yeah.

Roger: And Julie Hobart was there.

Preet: Yeah, Julie and Mary [Boni] and Ed.

Roger: Oh, Ed yeah, can't remember their last names.

Preet: Yeah, I know.

Roger: Mary Boni?

Preet: Yup.

Roger: It doesn't matter. We can figure that out. But just thinking back to some of the people that were there for a long, long time. And founded the program.

Roger: That's right!

Roger: A couple of them anyway. So, that brought you into the old Richmond campus.

Preet: Yes. [Laughs] It was quite the interesting campus right. It almost felt temporary when you were in there. It was pretty makeshift in the lower areas. I mean, in the Fashion lab I think became home to us, so it felt really permanent, but everything else felt like you were in some office building. Yeah, it was great though.

[0:03:41]

Roger: So, it was on the second floor? The Fashion lab?

Preet: Oh gosh. I remember it was upstairs, but I don't remember what floor it was on. Probably.

Roger: Probably second. So, you got your leaks directly from the sky.

Preet: Yeah [Laughs] exactly.

Roger: As opposed to filtered through one level. So, that was an interesting program. And I should say it was quite well known, it had a good reputation and was pretty tough. And a lot of the actual people had to really do, as you said, the sewing, it wasn't just sitting and drawing on the paper and, 'oh wouldn't that be nice if someone could figure out how to do it.'"

Preet: Yeah, that's right. And I still remember this because a lot of my sewing that I had done wasn't through the programs in high school. It was something that my mother had taught me to do and I had just done all the time. So, in fact, coming into the program I had a strong portfolio going through the arts. I brought things that I had made, but I didn't have necessarily the technical training.

Roger: Mm-hmm.

Preet: That people might have had who had taken sewing through high school might have had. But it didn't matter. I did work experience with a fashion designer in Vancouver in grade 12 who helped me to polish off some of the things that I was doing, so that was really helpful. But yeah, it was really interesting. Because it wasn't just them looking for those skills, because those are things that you can learn. I think they were looking beyond that.

Roger: For the creative part?

Preet: Yeah! Yeah. Absolutely yeah.

Roger: So that was where you did the whole year of program, and when fashion was in the older campus?

Preet: It was. And I did the fashion program with the marketing option.

Roger: Mm-hmm.

[0:05:31]

Preet: I still remember because they had a couple of seats available. I think because I didn't have probably the technical sewing skills right away, they had I think it was five seats set aside, I can't remember what the number was, where you can get acceptance into the program but it was with the marketing option so what you would do was take that year of marketing programs and then you would take some of the pattern drafting, and some of the other programs to catch up basically, but you weren't having to go through that whole interview process again. You were in. And so, there was a group of us, I just can't remember the number, I want to say between five and ten of us. So that first year was, I still remember Keith Wallace {MRKT faculty member} and Paul Garneau [MRKT faculty member].

Roger: Paul Garneau, Yeah.

Preet: Paul Garneau. In the marketing program. It was great because I really learned a lot about an area that I wasn't anticipating going into but as a result of getting in that way it was an excellent addition to what I had done.

Roger: Yeah. Wow. So that was in the old lab, and then you were there when they were designing in air quotes "new lab?"

Preet: Yeah. And then most of when that actually came to our attention was when they were looking at doing some drawings of what the new lab might look like and they wanted to show us to get some feedback. But beyond that I don't remember much about it. I think at that time we were so focused on our work and we thought this is not going to affect us anyway. It's all very nice but just giving them feedback around things around the space and the design of the space.

Roger: So that was a very intensive program, my impression, in terms of workload. Like you had a lot to do and a lot of projects.

Preet: Yes.

Roger: Whenever I would go by that sewing lab it would be just people going crazy inside and working like mad.

Preet: Oh yeah. I remember many, many late nights in the lab. And I think they purposely did that to simulate the industry because they knew that the industry was like that. When you are under deadline for things you have to put in whatever hours it took to do the work. And sometimes the creative process is like that. It's not just writing an assignment, which can take a lot of time as well, but sometimes with the creative process things don't always come right away. There's a lot of going back and forth and mulling over an idea to get it to the end state

from where you began it can look quite different. So yeah, many late nights in the lab, many frustrating moments.

[0:08:15]

Especially because it is the design aspect but then when you are creating it, it's the technical piece and so as you are producing what you had envisioned and what you had done the pattern for and you made some error in the prototype or whatever. I remember a friend of mine, so frustrated, it was an assignment. I think that he was working on and I think it was a pocket on a pant and getting some of the details right and for the third time he ripped up the seams and tried to redo it and then he just was like, "I'm done!" And he took his scissors and he just started cutting up his whole thing. So it was just very emotionally charged sometimes.

Roger: I can imagine.

Preet: Just around that because you are worn out a bit sometimes trying to learn and trying to do things right. And Ed was quite a stickler for how you got graded on all of those things.

Roger: He was a very traditional sort of-

Preet: Right.

Roger: I was going to say tailor, wrong word but from that production side of -

Preet: Yeah, that's right. But boy we sure learned a lot. But you just kind of like woah, Ed. But then gosh he was such a nice man. But he kind of needed to be that way with us to have us understand the technical accuracy that we needed for some of these things.

Roger: Yeah, so did you get a lot of-

Preet: And then just saying-

Roger: Sorry.

Preet: Sorry.

Roger: A lot of interchange with the other students, like feedback and feedback to them about their project?

Preet: Yes, so the program itself other than working in the lab was an open area so as you are sewing and somebody else is sewing or drafting it was all open, so everyone knew what everyone else was kind of working on. But then we would do, I think, design "crits" and things like that where you would get feedback on different ideas. With Julie some of that process was in place as well to toughen us up, right. To get feedback and to prove an idea really, essentially what it was. But yeah, so then you really learned to build off an idea so that you can get that - it's part of the creative process too. So really, that was a big piece of what we did as well. It was

almost like a family, I would say. You know you really got to know the people, you socialized with them a lot because of all of this stress of working under some of these deadlines and helping each other.

[0:10:51]

And if somebody didn't quite understand something but somebody did, they would help each other out. So, there was definitely, a lot of collaboration, teamwork around some of that stuff even though we were creating individual pieces, you know.

Roger: Yeah. Very interesting. I guess the difference is that it isn't group projects, but you are a group and you are kind of working and stuff is flowing back and forth between you. So, the iterations of the fashion lab and the School of Design et cetera. Of course, they went into what became the permanent Richmond campus. They had a whole wing, two floors above the library was their whole area, which was fairly modern, I guess you would say, and up to date when they put it in. And of course, now, over the last eight, ten months they've been in the Wilson School of Design which is quite a different building with tons of natural light from the North, the South, and the West.

Preet: I haven't been in it, I actually would like to go in and check it out but yeah, absolutely I think it's even that comparison I think about- I just attended a fashion show last year Verian Farnsworth [PSYC faculty member], her daughter Jessica had just done the program as well and so they had the year end fashion show and it was in a venue in Vancouver because the [new] School wasn't ready to do the fashion show there at that time and I was so impressed with the professionalism and how far it had come from when we were doing the fashion shows even. And I just think about that comparison. The models were so polished, just everything felt like you were on a runway somewhere in Paris or something, you know what I mean. It just felt really incredible and I thought, wow you know I think about our small beginnings and what we did and how it worked and not being involved in any of the other fashion shows in between and then seeing this and just wow, what a difference! It was just superb. Really amazing.

Roger: Yeah, I think all of the shifts- I remember recently seeing some of the pictures from 1977 I'd say.

Preet: Yes, yes.

Roger: Some of the first fashion shows the program did. And it was like, wow. Of course, right away the fashions hit you. It's like wow, was that real?

Preet: That was fashionable? [Laughs] Okay. Right. Yeah. Mm-hmm.

Roger: So that was really fun to see. Also, I came across a photo which I shared with you, 1989 Canadian Fur Fashion Show.

Preet: Right.

[0:13:53]

Roger: Where you had to go to Toronto for the show.

Preet: Right, Yeah.

Roger: Tell us a little about that.

Preet: Yeah at that time, I mean I doubt the School would participate in it now around the ethics around fur and all of that but at that time it was a competition and annually or biannually, I don't know, students would enter in every year and really it was, I believe, in our illustration class where we were, was it Judy, not Julie but Judy, I hope I get the names right, who encouraged us to submit some of our drawings around that. And I did a men's fur coat and worked with an asymmetrical design, it was more of a bomber. And it was incredible! I ended up getting short listed as one of the ten finalists, flew out to- and so of course what happens is out of the finalists, different fashion houses will produce the design and so, gosh I have to remember back on who it was that took that design of mine, but really I flew in, got to meet them, tour the factory and the design house, and what it all looked like and all of the pelts and everything that were in there. And then attend an evening event where you saw the produced- no actually I saw the item produced beforehand and then you saw it on the runway and then there was the judging and then I believe, I'm trying to remember what the award was, if you got, oh yes I honestly can't remember. I was thinking back to the Ryerson competition, but that was in high school. So yeah, it was quite an interesting experience because it exposed you to understand just how from your illustration how all of that comes to be produced and talking to people in the industry. Really great opportunity it was. Yeah.

Roger: Yeah. So that brought you to a new stage of life. You graduated with your fashion program and then you went into the industry, or?

Preet: Yeah, I did for a number of years. I ended up doing quite a number of different things, not specifically designing clothing. So, I ended up doing visual marketing and display for a company called Dalmys for quite some time. I got into fashion buying. I ended up working with Woodward's to get into the fashion buying but before that I was with Sports Experts and doing their clothing line purchasing for them. So, it is a diverse field, so you don't have to necessarily get into being a designer *per se* but using that knowledge. And I think what got me into some of those areas was having that marketing, and having that piece of that education with it, is what got me interested in different parts of the field *per se*. Yeah, I got involved in the Robson Street fashion festival and other things to do some of the designing end of things while I was still working in other areas. But yeah, I would say that the industry was a much tougher industry to do design work in then than it is now. At that time, it would have been difficult to really break into the market. You really probably would have to go to Toronto or Montreal to establish yourself. Whereas it is quite different now. But a diverse array of opportunities from that program right.

[0:17:58]

Roger: So now you are the Manager of Community Planning for the City of Surrey. So how did you get from there to now?

Preet: Yeah, so after working in the industry for a number of years I think I just started questioning the sustainability of what I was doing and thinking more about what I was doing and was it really making a difference in the world. And at that time, I think I was really questioning the whole consumption and this creating this demand for waste almost. I mean things have changed now, but certainly then I was doing a lot of questioning, soul searching, around that. And I just felt that I wanted to do something else. I thought I want to do something and contribute in a different way. So, I decided to go back to school and then I actually came to Kwantlen and did my, gosh I think I did two years of a university transfer programs here and then from there went on to SFU. So, I still remember chatting with Ray Cox [GEOG/GEOL faculty member] as my geography teacher, because I took geography, and just having a really great conversation with him right because he was a great fellow to chat with. Because he would say- you know I was exploring different things and I was saying, I have this design background and I was thinking of architecture, but I don't know if there's jobs in architecture and where that is going to lead me and what I want to do. So, so great just sitting down chatting with him. You know a great listener but also in the end it was like he was saying don't worry about the jobs. Just follow your heart and whatever it is that you are passionate about you are going to be successful in. So, don't worry so much about what the competition in that field is like. Think about what it is that really drives you and you will be fine. And I think that was the greatest advice I ever got in doing my undergrad. So I just continued on and as I was researching about architecture, because I really felt like I didn't want to lose the design piece of what I'd done that was still essentially a big part of what I was interested in, but I really wanted to bring in the people part of that and making a difference in the world. And so, as I was researching, I got into urban planning and thinking, wow this sounds like a great fit for bringing in the design element, for bringing in the people piece and for making a difference in how we shape our environments that we live in. And so once I finished my undergrad, so I transferred to SFU to do the remaining two years that I had and then I majored in Geography and minored in Sociology and then I did an honors program and I did the urban design certificate as well, so I kind of did a few things. And then applied to UBC to get into the School of Community and Regional Planning, and again that was a very tough program to get into as well. And an interview process, needed a certain GPA and all that to get in. I got in. So that was fantastic, and that is how I ended up going into the planning field.

[0:21:41]

Roger: So that was in the era of Alan Artibise?

Preet: Yes, well he was just kind of –

Roger: Just leaving?

Preet: Leaving then, yeah. But Peter Boothroyd was still there and Penny Gurstein and a bunch of others. Tom Hutton did a lot of multiculturalism work.

Roger: I want to go back to Kwantlen, but it's quite interesting around Alan Artibise was a Canadian historian [urban history], that was his field, so I saw him in various things around the province, and we did some Canadian Studies things together nationally and then all of the sudden he pops out at the School of Planning. It was like, oh gosh Al, what did you do!

Preet: Yeah.

Roger: Yeah. So, was that an eclectic group of different things that were brought to that program?

Preet: Yeah, absolutely. So, you would have so many different fields that it would draw on. Lots of geographers, but not only. Engineers would go in there, people in political science, a really broad, broad group of people. Because I think that planning is that kind of field where you do need to have a broad range of experience and to be looking at the world that way. So yeah. It's interesting when you get there.

Roger: So, getting back to Kwantlen then, because that's sort of and there, you're into a, if it's not interdisciplinary it's at least multidisciplinary at the School of Planning, so how did Kwantlen fit into that scheme? Is that the experience you had here too?

Preet: If I think about when I went back to Kwantlen and I thought I would be doing my undergrad to get into some kind of master's program afterwards I was surprised when I actually did apply to the Planning School that it wasn't just the academic piece that I did at Kwantlen that served me but the design piece as well. And although I was interested in it, I didn't think that that would have played into whether I would have gotten into that program or not, but it actually was one of the features that got me in because I didn't necessarily make the link of clothing and fashion design I was strictly thinking about the GPA and having the requirements for those different courses. Geography was more on my mind in terms of what might help me get into the program. And I still remember talking to Steve [Dooley – SOCI faculty member and later spouse] and I was writing my letter and I thought, you have to write an essay about why you want to get into the program and your interests, and I was like, do I include the fashion piece or not? And he was like, yes, yes of course! That's going to be something that sets you apart and shows the diversity of your knowledge and so on. So, I did. And I still remember it coming up in the interview and all of that too. So, I think that because Kwantlen has such a wide array of offerings, the exposure that I got to the fashion program and the marketing piece as well as the liberal arts, I think that all played into me getting in to SCARP which was a highly competitive program. So, I think, those kinds of things will set you apart.

[0:25:04]

Roger: So, what year did you come back to Kwantlen? Was that like late '90's?

Preet: Late '90's, I want to say '96.

Roger: So, it was a university-college, or it had just become a university-college?

Preet: Just become maybe, yeah.

Roger: And your courses were on the Surrey campus?

Preet: Yes.

Roger: Right now, we have 2-3 Surrey campuses, 72nd avenue.

Preet: Yeah, there was one in Newton at the time.

Roger: That was the trades campus which is now at Cloverdale.

Preet: The trades program, that's right. So that's where it was when I came back.

Roger: So then here you took Geography, Liberal arts, Sociology as a minor moving forward to - I remember you were working on some kind of a team project at some point.

Preet: Here?

Roger: I remember Steve [Dooley] and you and maybe one other student came into my office about finding some support for it or funding, I don't know what it was exactly. It might have been kind of some kind of a community research thing.

Preet: Oh, yes. You know Roger, I'm just trying to think back. Because I know Steve and Richard Floyd [SOCI faculty member] were looking at the displaced fishermen in Newfoundland. Oh gosh, it was so long ago now. And I was a research assistant helping them with that program, it could have been related to that but I'm not sure. Because if it was looking for funding and all of that, they would have been the lead on that. Yeah, that's a good one, I totally forgot about that.

Roger: Well it was a piece that was beginning at Kwantlen, undergraduate research where undergrads would be purposefully involved in research. It may be their own, it may be along with faculty, whatever, but there would be some kind of focal point put on that. And that was getting more emphasis around North America, but then an International Association related to undergrad research starting up about that time and it kind of got built into some degrees as the Faculty of Arts started to initiate degrees to actually build that in as a specific component. To say this has to be something you do before you get out of here, as opposed to just regurgitating from existing textbooks or journals.

[0:27:49]

Preet: I think to me, Kwantlen is such a leader in that it's not just about the academics but... okay so research, they understood that to be a university you are going to have to go down the line of research but I still think that they remain today true to their past in terms of having

practical applicability. Hands on kind of learning about what happens. So, whether it is these applied programs as one piece, but also within the academic programs the service-learning piece for example. And all of that still plays a really big role. I mean, I don't know what is happening here now, I can't speak to that. But I always get this sense that it is connected to the community, connected with practical application of the knowledge as well. And so not getting too lost in the ivory tower *per se*. Where some of the bigger universities can be that way. I think that is such a great part of Kwantlen's roots.

Roger: I think it is still an evolving thing. I've been retired 12, almost 13 years so things have changed in that timeframe. But certainly, a lot of us have that image that it could be almost a community-based university and that could be a real focal point to draw linkages between the communities in the community and that you could create a lot of interesting research projects. So, a couple have come to fruition like Gira Bhat's {PSYC faculty member} Community University Research Alliance on Youth Violence, where it was very much integrated with the community, with social agencies and the RCMP, et cetera.

Preet: Yeah! Oh, you know what I'm just thinking because I know that Roger Tweed [PSYC faculty member], Gira and Steve were involved in that, did it come out of the Office of Research? I can't remember now.

Roger: Well they had to go through the [Office for] Research and Scholarship to get Gira support from Social Sciences [and Humanities Research Council SSHRCC].

Preet: Yeah, they had a name for it. It had an acronym.

Roger: Yeah it did.

Preet: Shoot.

Roger: And I don't remember it.

Preet: Something about community research and I remember that being a big thing and I remember them wanting to use the model where you involve the community but also have them help conduct the research. And you think about capacity building as part of the research model and all of that too. That was in its infancy but yeah, that's great to hear that it's still going but I think were the early days of that.

[0:30:44]

Roger: Yeah. Well there is competition, I mean everything is about the allocation of scarce resources as I'm sure you know.

Preet: Yes.

Roger: Especially with the recent headlines today from the new mayor about the 500-million-dollar debt.

Preet: Yes, Mm-hmm.

Roger: Anyways, so everything is about the allocation of scarce resources and how do we figure this out. So, Kwantlen is still lacking funding, that it gets anywhere near the level that they get per student at a university.

Preet: Absolutely. I think-

Roger: So to keep the research piece up us a challenge.

Preet: Very challenging especially, generally speaking all universities south of the Fraser are underfunded for the population, the ratio of students to population, underfunded. Underfunded for so many years. And then you think about the UBCs and the SFUs of the world that have other funding sources as well and they are already established researchers as well versus Kwantlen where it wasn't necessarily there even more challenging.

Roger: It wasn't. And there was a lot of pushback actually even in the early days of whether the university college that will allow research but the first thing we worked out was this: it can be research, but it can't involve any college funds. And it was like, well okay we will work with this, but it was kind of an attitudinal thing that was going on.

Preet: Yeah.

Roger: And at the same time Federally there was a lot of funding being put into colleges. It was more on the applied side of research.

Preet: Right.

Roger: And it was a big focus on the CAATs in Ontario and the Cégep's in Quebec but others as well depending on where the specialty was. They were really very interested in saying so what can you bring to the table around research that will be different than what is going on in the universities. So, a lot of colleges were really quick to pick it up. And it was a really a long uphill battle to make it happen in any significant way here. I mean later it did and Judith McGillivray helped it and so on.

[0:32:59]

Preet: Yes, that's right.

Roger: But it did take quite a while. So, to jump back to Kwantlen a little bit more. I think you indicated that you did actually go through in-person registration?

Preet: It is a funny memory that just sticks out, I don't know why because I just remember because in the fashion program you end up in a cohort, you don't have to go and register for any of your classes. You might have a couple of electives. But because I was in the marketing option, I needed to register for different marketing courses. And I ended up, it was the bizzarest

thing, you would have tables that were like this and they would be all around the main floor and the teacher that was teaching the course would be there and you would be lining up to register. And I thought, did that really happen? I seem to remember that was how I registered for those courses. And it was just so interesting because you get to meet the prof who is going to be teaching you and it is such a different way of doing it. And then the second time when I came back it was when the phone registration had just started, so it wasn't online or anything. So you had a time that you were given and you had to log in with this code and you had to have all of your numbers ready and it was so much more stressful, I found, to do it that way than the face to face, the way it was done when I was here the first time. And obviously now it has probably evolved to the online system or something.

Roger: Right, yeah.

Preet: But just to kind of see the evolution of how, you know what I was taking courses there the computer programs were the MS-DOS, it was just a different time. We weren't Windows-based or anything at that time either.

Roger: No. But in-person registration was about 22 years, 23 years, maybe a bit more that it was in place, from 1970. And it was a practical way to do it. And initially it was thought that students would be able to get advice about, well this is all full but if this is where you want to go in the end maybe if you take this it will lead you there. So, there were ways to help them make instant decisions because of limited spaces. So that was a long time ago.

Preet: I loved it. I just thought it was such a - there was personal connection you get, and you can kind of get a vibe if you will from the prof, and the advice and all of that. And they are all sitting together with the Marketing lot from what I remember anyways. It was just an era.
[*Laughs]

Roger: It was very different for the Registrar's office too because they would go to each campus successively so the one would be three or four days of this campus and then that would be finished and then off to the next one. And so, they had to literally move all of their equipment, cash registers and everything else, boxes of cards for the computer that they carry around. But anyway, it worked, and I think it was good to have that kind of linkage between faculty and students very early in the process.

[0:36:27]

Preet: Yeah, it was great. Probably wouldn't work these days with the volume and you know the amount of-

Roger: Could be a real challenge.

Preet: Yeah. It would be.

Roger: There's some advantages to whatever system. I mean the online gives you the ability to, if you are on top of it, I don't know what the budgets are like now whether they can add sections,

when I knew I had tons of sections as a Dean because you were able to do it with the budget available, but certainly it gives them a lot more data grabbing capacity as opposed to how it ran before.

Preet: Paper and yeah.

Roger: Benefits and disbenefits to both.

Preet: Yeah.

Roger: So, you also talked about Steve's service-learning class and Soc?

Preet: Yeah. It was a really neat class. I think it was, I'm trying to think back again, but it was a course I think through Business. I'm trying to remember. It was an interdisciplinary approach so I think students from all different faculties and different areas would come in and I think it was to expose them to social issues.

Roger: Right.

Preet: And so, the service learning was about volunteering somewhere to get that. So, Steve had a whole list of non-profits in the community where these students would go and volunteer and then share back on their experience. So, the Food Bank, or the shelter, Alzheimer's Society. There was all kinds of places, PCRS [Pacific Community Resources Society], they volunteered in all kinds of places. And then they would always do a year-end report out of what was happening, and he even set the class up in a circle. It wasn't even a traditional classroom set up, it was a different sharing, it was a different approach. I think there might have been a lot of Business students, I could be wrong, I'd have to check with him. But anyway, I remember this one year he asked me if I would help him to create a quilt with the class. And I thought, sure that sounds like a great idea. So, we did this three-hour, four-hour workshop after they'd done their volunteer experience, so they were almost done. Each of them got a block to work with and we did a little brainstorming exercise about what their volunteer experience meant to them. Or what they learned, or what was the biggest take away. Thinking about that in words and then thinking about how to translate that from words into a visual depiction and playing around with different ideas. And then we had all kinds of fabric and fabric markers and things, so they didn't have to be able to sew but it was really cutting out different shapes and we had this iron on stuff that you can get-

Roger: Mm-hmm.

[0:39:35]

Preet: And it was such an interest - so it went from paper text to paper to visually drawing something out to then cutting out fabric and buttons and string and whatever it might be to create their message. And then by the end of the class every student had created a block of what it meant to them and then they had to do a write up that explained what that was all about. And so, I ran the workshop, did that, then I went away, and I scanned each block and then we took their

write-up and created a book. So, you could actually flip through the book and every person's block was there and then their write-up of what their experience was all about was next to the block. And then there was a year-end presentation to their family and the community and wherever they volunteered, they were invited. It was like a big reception in wherever that building is there. And they did a power-point slide show and so each one of them would go up and talk about where they volunteered, what they learned, and then the block that they had done would be up on the screen behind them. And then they did a big unveiling of the quilt afterwards. So, it was just such a -

Roger: I'll bet you they never forgot it.

Preet: I'm sure hey. I know Steve doesn't forget it. And then he does different things for different years, but the quilt was the one that I was involved with. So, he was trying to bring in different ways of learning and different ways to express what you've learned through this process. But it was neat because it took my sewing skills and brought me back here to where I had a lot of my education in a different way.

Roger: So, I wonder if that was tailored originally for the Bachelor of Business Admin and Entrepreneurship.

Preet: Possibly, I don't know.

Roger: Because I know we developed a lot of Liberal Arts courses for the quote "applied degrees" that were initially developed as part of the university college. Which is interesting because now as a polytechnic there's some polytechnics that take that sort of approach to give students in their specific applied degrees something broader than just the content of their degree *per se*. So, it was very- Richard [Floyd – SOCI faculty member] kind of headed that up. Richard Floyd, the Liberal Arts component of the Applied degrees. There's quite a bit of good documentation on that. Actually, I should interview Richard about that! [*Laughs] Because it was a departure-

[0:42:23]

Preet: Right.

Roger: For Kwantlen to take that approach and say, we will make some of these things interdisciplinary. We're not sure how much it is going to cost or how we are going to run them all if there are two or three instructors.

Preet: Mm-hmm.

Roger: So, on. But that is a tack that we will take and let it work itself through. So, they did some exciting stuff.

Preet: Oh, absolutely I think they were so ahead of their time. I know SFU does with the Beedie School of Business takes the School of Interactive Art and Technology and the Mechatronic

Engineers and they come together and take the strengths of all of these disciplines and they have this class where they create this stuff. But you know that was a decade ago where they did this.

Roger: 15-20 years almost.

Preet: Right. Yeah. So just to kind of have that insight into thinking about the Business students should have exposure to some other ways of thinking and learning.

Roger: Yeah, it's 20 years. 20 plus a couple. Almost a quarter of a century, believe it or not. So, I did remember that, but it wasn't on the top of my brain, so you brought it back to consciousness for me. So, thank you.

Preet: I'm going to walk out through that building to see, I wonder if it is still hanging there. It must be. It was there not that long ago but I don't know.

Roger: And which one?

Preet: The building at the front along 72nd. The new -

Roger: Oh Main. So called Main with all the glass.

Preet: Because they had to design a special frame for it to put it up, so it was very permanent looking.

Roger: Yeah, some stuff does disappear.

Preet: Yeah. I'm sure.

[0:44:08]

Roger: I'm still looking for two huge murals that were painted at the old campus where Surrey School district headquarters is now - that way. That was the first Surrey campus at 140th. And so there were some wonderful murals that were done by Jim Adams and other people in Fine Arts of that portable, 20-year portable campus, which was roughly the same era as the first one you went to in Richmond, but nobody, I've tried 15 people now and spread over a little while and asked them to ask and nobody can put their hands on them. It's too bad because they were lovely, and they were hanging up in what was the staff lunch- room when we were there - it's now an open cafeteria space but very dramatic recollection, visual recollection of that space and that campus. Excuse me. So that's kind of brought you to this point, Manager of Community Planning. So is that of a town center or -

Preet: No, all of Surrey.

Roger: All of Surrey, okay.

Preet: Yeah, so really, it's the arm of our Planning Department that looks at the long-range plans. So, within that we have policy work around the agriculture portfolio, the heritage portfolio, we do the demographic forecasting and projections of different growth patterns in the city. We do neighborhood planning, so we have a group of people who work on different plan areas within the city where we do more detailed plans. What else is in that section? And then our official community plan which is just the whole broad city as well.

Roger: We just had somebody from the heritage piece interviewing Fraser Valley Historical Railway Society Chair who is a Kwantlen retiree [John Sprung CAAD faculty member]. So, we were talking about that and about Surrey and about the efforts to recreate enough of it with track and et cetera so people can go down to 64th-

Preet: Sullivan Station.

Roger: Yeah, Sullivan. Yeah.

Preet: Yeah, because our Heritage Advisory Commission is quite involved in that. We have a heritage planner but then we also have somebody in our Engineering Department who works with that because at the time when we were planning for LRT we were thinking about tying in the heritage rail station at Newton to see if there could be a terminus point for that to tie in the old and the new and all of that. Now we are going back to a different technology to see what will happen there, but there is all kinds of cross over.

Roger: Yeah.

Preet: Around that.

[0:47:14]

Roger: That's great. Really good. So, you are one of the few students that I'm aware of, I'm sure that there are more, but one of the few who has gone through two programs, two quite different programs.

Preet: Right, Yeah!

Roger: Where one as you say was a cohort where you get to know all of these students pretty well because you are always together working on stuff and figuring out about life and work and job and skills and whatever, to one where you are kind of individuals. When you came back here it's almost all individuals doing more or less their own thing to figure out the program and put it all together.

Preet: I think too, and I don't know what the student life experience is like for a younger person coming in to do a Liberal Arts degree but I think coming in as an older adult sometimes at that point you are not as connected in to the sports or, well the sports doesn't exist here anymore, or intramurals maybe now, or other things as much because your family life is sort of the core of what is happening. And you are working, and you are juggling, so that would have been my

experience of it coming back the second time. So, I don't know how it is for a different kind of age group or person coming back at that point. But certainly, I agree with any cohort program you get that meshing and that - I see students in the Horticulture Department because we have that annual [memorial] golf tournament for Pat [Dooley], and I have met some of the students year after year and they seem like a really tight group. We work with Stan Kazymierchuk and we organize that tournament, but those students play a really big role in organizing that and I've seen them the last 3 years anyways and I really see the relationships that they have built. So, I think you are right, any program with a cohort does really create a different dynamic. So, I felt really fortunate to be able to go through a program like that as part of my university experience. And then coming back it was such a totally different experience coming back the second time.

Roger: Mm-hmm. I mean my own experience was that university was intellectually isolating. And the intellectual engagement was outside of these huge lecture halls, it was in the Board of Publications or playing rugby, or other things that were extra-curricular to the core of your studies. And I was jealous of some of the people who were in smaller, like let's say engineering programs where they were much more integrated all day long and got to know each other much, much better. It was always a real challenge for students as well because they really end up creating isolated people. And then they say, okay now you are going to come and work in some place where you are going to be part of a team, and suddenly you have got to - have to develop a whole different set of skills around leadership and being led and how you contribute.

[0:50:53]

Preet: Mm-hm. It is an interesting perspective, right, because then how did what I learned from that cohort experience influence me in my current job. Because we work in teams all the time. That's really a lot of the work is collaborating. Whether it was work teams that are interdepartmental or within our departments or with community. There really isn't a lot of, there are times when you have to know how to be able to work independently, write a report or whatever, but a lot of the work is about being out there.

Roger: And it seems, I mean I'm sitting here looking at this poster behind you which is - [poster of rowing team - teamwork]

Preet: Right. [*Laughs]

Roger: But it always does strike me as this kind of - training of faculty is the same thing. Most faculty in an academic program go through this isolated writing reports to one individual, getting it back, multiple times over and over and over again until you are finished whatever your degree is. And then coming to work in some sort of collegial, whatever that means, collegial setting where you are going to be getting a department that works well together or doesn't.

Preet: Yeah.

Roger: All these -

Preet: All these individuals.

Roger: Yeah.

Preet: Trying to-

Roger: Yeah, basically it's all these isolated individuals and you are trying to get them to work together and in other fields, I mean somewhat in the trades where people have to figure out how to work together because their lives are going to depend on it at some point and some of them. A lot of it is getting along with people, figuring out how to work with people.

Preet: Absolutely.

Roger: Crazy, anyway, we digressed. But, thank you so much.

Preet: No problem!

Roger: We appreciate you making your time.,,,

Preet: It was fun. Yeah.

[0:52:55]

Preet: Yeah. And we're going to keep on working our way though, there's a few people we have to interview, a couple of Sociologists we already talked about who had different experiences, diverse experiences here. Different than a lot of the faculty who are here, who are here still. And other students because there are so many programs out there that are very, very different.

Preet: Yeah! Mm-hmm.

Roger: And we have only begun to scratch the surface.

Preet: How long is this project – how long do you have to do this oral history?

Roger: There's no-

Preet: The rest of our lives. [*Laughs]

Roger: Our sense of endurance or something.

Preet: Right.

Roger: Because there is no end time to it. It's whatever we can do and then hopefully somebody else will carry on. Thank you.

Preet: I mean it's great!

Roger: Yeah so, it's not that, I mean it's not that there's funding or anything like that.

Preet: Right.

[End of transcript]