

Interview with Steve Reed

1995

[TAPE CUTS IN ABRUPTLY]

TAPE 1 SIDE A

Interviewer (I): Any base information on how many different programs you offer?

Steve Reed (SR): Okay, give me the brochure that would be on the brochure. And the brochure has a big section on what we offer.

I: So the supporting staff of your department, what does that consist of?

SR: It consists of the director, again these are all listed in that brochure, and you got an associate director.

I: And what about the job duties of each, of the directors?

SR: Well the director would be the overall person overseeing the entire program, the entire department.

I: And then the assistant director?

SR: Associate.

I: The associate.

SR: The associate is student positions, you're basically the right hand man of the director and you are second in the chain of command and he takes on the tasks, there is a list of tasks that he would take on.

Unidentified Man (UM): Some of the things that I do is I oversee on a daily basis, the operation of this facility PEIF, and scheduling programs in the _____, and also take care of the recreation membership program, and I didn't mention... I supervise the staff that is over in this facility and this department.

SR: A number of assistant directors.

I: Okay.

O: [cannot be deciphered]

SR: An assistant director of a program.

I: Okay.

SR: And my ___ job is intramural sports. And anything that the program related, intermural sports, instructional sports, a number of special events. It actually goes into areas like ___ recreation sometimes, it goes in areas of dome related events.

I: So is it more of, instead of 9 to 5, more of a being here when things are going on?

UM: I don't think there is any 9 to 5 jobs.

SR: No none of them are.

UM: Or 8 to 5.

SR: When you look at what we do I mean you can say that your regular day is 8 to 5 but you're going to spend extra hours here in the evenings, weekends, all of us do.

UM: Big change, big difference in our department most on campus. So our programs and services start regular at 7 in the morning, and at night most weekdays, and we operate Saturday and Sunday. And this is normal habits of the ____ for example here, then you take a look at the dome when the dome goes, with a variety of events in the fall semester with football games____ and in the fall semester, and then in the winter with all the trade shows and special programs they are operating again Saturday Sunday where staff is here we are also here so it's totally different than your typical university department that operates 40 hours a week Monday through Friday.

I: Now you probably will find on Friday night no one's gone, because I always know that there is someone here and usually a couple people here.

UM: Well you worked here, you worked in intramurals for a brief time period so you know that happens.

I: Okay so I'll probably talk about that in my paper too, just it's a wide range, it encompasses a wide range of, is that correct to say, a wide range of duties and responsibilities?

SR: To be honest there is so much crossover with it sometimes it's difficult for us to tell you exactly what we would do on a daily basis, it changes so much.

I: So kind of like, whoever is available to do that duty at that time kind of steps up and...

SR: Either that or it is organized to the point where we know where our general areas are but yet there are many times we all have to jump up and pitch in.

UM: Yeah I think ____ trying to say that everyone has to be flexible, not only in the commitment to the task which they will be doing on any specific day but also flexible knowing that you don't have a situation where you only have to worry about 8 to 5 Monday through Friday, you have to be flexible know when you have students here working in the evenings or on weekends or there are events occurring or programs occurring, as they happen every weekend, you have to be very flexible and know that you are going to be called upon to work some very odd schedules. I think the other thing you find with us as a department is that academic departments primarily, I'm not saying exclusively because we do have spring and summer sessions here, but our department is open twelve months a year, with very few days closed. We are closed Easter Sunday this semester for example, we are also closed Christmas and New Year's day, and a couple of holidays around there for everyone's sanity. You know students and staff alike, but you look at virtually we are operating almost every day of the year with the exception of a few holidays because our buildings are heavily used by different clientele during the summer months as they are during the academic year. Your traditional academic department on the other hand is when it is very busy with classes during the 15 or 16 weeks of each semester, but they do have semester break periods that are slow, they've got spring and summer sessions that are much slower as far as the number of classes taught, and whether the staff over there or the faculty intend to work those time periods. You know what I mean? There is a lot of faculty that only teach days out of the year, then there are others that work on into the summer you know there are individuals like Dr.

Magnaghi that based on an assignment as a historian which means he's more time committed than a typical... its much different when you are working for a full 12 months seven days a week than what you find in those departments.

I: Okay. Are all the names that are in the brochures secretaries too or?

SR: There are some that aren't, there have been some new hires since then.

UM: Alright I can re-do that for it.

I: Okay...

UM: I don't know if it is necessarily a focal point in _____ means a whole lot in the context of the paper.

SR: Because they basics are the director, the associate director, a number of assistant directors working in a number of different areas and then you get a support staff of secretaries and that is pretty much it.

I: Okay. Yeah I think he is going to want to know names and just you know, just because it's going to be kind of like a historical document to go back on. Is there any, like personal, anything you could tell me about the personnel department. You know what I mean? Just like little stories or anecdotes or just any human interest type information that you could tell me? Something to like bring a human side.

UM: I guess I would almost rather do that with some of the programs and students that have gone through our program and where they are at right now today. I think you could find some interesting ones there. For example, years ago this, I can say years ago, but I can say early 1980's we had an individual student Linda Potter. Linda was an outdoor recreation major, she was very actively involved on campus and the activities office programs and programs offered in our department in intramurals. And she had done a lot of different jobs from officiating sports, to being a sport supervisor, to, like I said all kinds of rolls. She, since that time period, she graduated from Northern she, I'm trying to think where did she go to school, I think it was Miami, Ohio, but she went there for school... I think that's correct. And then Linda now, is an assistant director very similar to what you might perceive us, at Vanderbilt University. And so she has gone right into another college program across the country. We had another individual earlier, in the early 1980's. At that time her maiden name was Cathy with a C, Prowpregd. Cathy was involved very much as an undergraduate student primarily in the intramural program, I'll take you back there because there is a time period before the dome, intramurals were conducted indoors and outdoors right there. And Cathy again was a recreation student, heavily involved in building jobs and intramural jobs, that was her most busy assignment, that she organized and a number of the student programs and intramurals and after she graduated she also, she went to California and she's assumed a vocationally significate position with the boys and girls clubs of America, all of which are in the Los Angeles area. And I think why I'm pointing out these two individuals as I thought back over the years I can think of other students that have gone on, I think we have provided an extremely valuable service on campus for students in that we offer a lot of work opportunities and those work opportunities many times pay the bill you know for tuition or food or apartment rent, or what have you, and so none of us here take lightly the role that we can provide, by providing those student labor dollars, which was all the reasons to have a job and go to school. But we've also had many other students, that not only done that but they have a professional interest so they have the opportunity here at Northern, unlike some of their bigger universities, to get some significant student work experience and they have done it at an undergrad level, where as many of the big 10 schools or your

large universities don't offer these work experiences until you are a graduate student. So they have been able to do that as an undergraduate and then move on professional to really jump into a great professional opportunity. To an extent, and to a very significant extent from those work experiences we've provided right here within the department.

SR: It is surprising how many people I've called for references and students in the workforce for a variety of jobs that they are applying for, and they are not just recreation students, there are students in management and finance, teaching, I mean, biochemistry.

UM: We've got, we've had students that work here as ID checkers and building supervisors who all now have positions some of which have returned to small communities in the U.P. and we have another individual that I can think of that is in charge of the southeast region of the United States micro-computer systems for a health insurance company. So I think that our role in assisting students with that educational process outside of the classroom is one that is very significant. That could be a very good focal point to bring out in your paper, you have to imagine you know we have always looked at probably the average number of students that we've hired is somewhere in the range of 300 per year. Now you take a look at that just since 1980 or even that since 1976 when PEIF was opened, you multiply that times those 16 or almost 20 years. Look at the number of students that are benefited through those employment opportunities here and I don't think students of today are any different than students when ___ and I were going to school. Everybody has to have, most of them need a part time job to be able to afford to go to college and have us further professional opportunities for whatever field we want to do.

I: That's good. Is there any other areas that you guys feel are overlooked by your department or that you, because I don't think most people realize that they still you still look at it as the HYPER, as everything under one.

UM: That's an interesting comment you made right there. Everybody says the HYPER, I'd like for you or anyone else to show me where the word HYPER exists except in our terminology.

I: Yeah see I just came in this year and I never knew, my roommate said lets go to the HYPER and I'm thinking what is that?

UM: When you look at, it's not listed anymore, this building has always been known as the PEIF since it opened, the dome is always had a name other than the HYPER. Hedgecock is never known as the HYPER and it is an interesting term I guess.

I: So anything you'd like to say about how your department is different than, just a lot of people consider like maybe this office is in charge of the collegiate athletics too, you know what I mean they view it all as one, all in one basket. And really in a sense it is but it isn't because you know what they do is totally different from what they do.

UM: And they are all separate departments too which is important in your athletics as each department has someone, HYPER is a department in its own and recreation so...

I: And also that you guys are pretty much self-reliant and you have more of a, instead of a physical budget you get money, you're pretty much taking in your own money and using it to pay back debts for the dome or, is that a true statement?

SR: Well, some of it is. Some of that money goes back to debt return for things that are taking place in the dome, but they also do other things too, program support, student finance support, we generate our own way basically.

I: Right and then besides, to pay for programs you are doing now let alone trying to immensely retire debts, is that a part of your theory you know, your goal?

UM: I think, you can find the same statement true in food service and residence halls and what have you. So I think it's just a different way of funding, rather than receiving state funds you have self-generated funds and you know there is a variety of sources for those funds and even when you are talking about self-generation and that. I think whether it pays for present programs or longer term cattle projects, I think it's a pretty common situation to find at almost any university.

I: You are obviously counting not as many programs as you had but undercover, is that part of what you do is trying to balance what you can do with how much funds you have, is that your decision or does that come from above? Is that the decision of your department?

UM: Obviously we have a loan within the university and that loan is something that, in general terms, is established through proposals that we would see that to the higher administration and as long as they view our loan and see what we are proposing them, we have the ability to generate that, but obviously they have the right to say we either do it or we don't do it. And then when you say about numbers of programs and services you're always going to balance out the number of things that I can do in my job and Frank [SPELLED PHONETICALLY] can do in his job and what we can do with the students figured out. And you got to realize without the students that are working for us and their abilities the number of programs we even offer would be much fewer.

I: Okay what about declining enrollments? You see a trend in enrollment not just here but everywhere it's kind of declining, is that affecting what you're able to offer?

SR: Well it will affect the numbers that participate in the programs that you offer.

I: Like intramural sports, has there been a drop in intramural participation?

SR: There is always a fluctuation depending on the semester, depending on the people that are here, the fact that we are becoming more of a nontraditional university with an off campus commuter population, that affects things. The people that come here are no longer residence hall based so that affects the type of organization that you have on campus, I mean you look at the number of students on campus compared to say, five years ago. Well that is going to affect you know your residence hall divisions. The numbers we have in residence hall divisions right now are difference than they were five years ago, or three years ago.

I: Do you think that is sheerly based on numbers or do you think it's a change, students just...

SR: ... in the residence hall, it's based on the number of students living on campus, so that effects the decrease or the increase or whatever, it will affect based on the number of people that we get.

UM: If you look at the intramural program for example, you know that we have a residence hall division and an independent division for people that live off campus so we may lose people in the residence hall and gain people in independent.

I: Does that seem to be the trend then?

SR: Again, you know I don't know if that's a trend. You look at it every semester and it is different depending on what you are offering, there are a variety of factors that effect it too not just operations. It could be other activities that are taking place on campus. You know everybody is trying to do everything so that has an effect on what you claim and on the way you approach things too so, there is a variety of factors that play into how many people we have. The trend right now is a lot to individual fitness types of things, some people don't look towards structured competitive experience, females for instances that's a national trend in intramural sports, you participation is down in a number of different areas but then you look in areas of fitness with the aerobics, weight room participation and things like that, that's on the increase. So depending on the program and depending on the current trends you're going to have differences in participation.

I: Overall are you satisfied with the participation? You are always looking for more I guess.

SR: Yeah you are always looking for more, there are some things I'm disappointed in and there are some I'm very happy with. There are things that you try one or two times and you really want them to go and for some reason they don't go. But then there are things that surprise you.

I: Could you tell me some things that you are happy with?

SR: Well yeah, I'm not sure is that really something that you...

I: Well yeah I kind of, since this department is so new...

UM: But that is the wrong focus.

[Many voices speaking at once]

UM: It is not a new department it is not a new service it's been going on here for years.

SR: The structure is new, in saying it's a department versus being a program or a division department. That's the only change, everything is, nothings really changed in terms of programs and services. There are things that we have added of course over the years, but the basic things are still the same so its not...

UM: There's been an intramural program since before I came here...

[CUT SHORT BY PHONE RINGING]

[AUDIO CUTS BACK IN]

SR: Campus and with a table and sign for rec passes. Everybody thinks we are just trying to sell rec passes but that's not true. We are trying to inform you of what we have to offer you and for a very minimal fee here's what you get, so it's not just the effort to sell, its publicity, letting you know what's going on. We give you brochures we give you little calendars or little pocket folder things that tell you all the hours, so that's a very important part of what we do.

UM: Sales are increasing important parts as you do get people moving off of campus where you have to have more one on one contact versus...

I: So again getting out to those nontraditional or off campus students, is that becoming an expanding part of your duties then, obviously since the students are moving off campus just to adapt to that and spend more money trying to get to those students.

SR: In some cases you do. In some cases you're just trying to be as creative as possible to get the information out there. Like I said, a flyer on a bulletin board, you always see it, it's the most effective way of doing that. He says what TV 12 I've never seen it... But the non-traditional student thing is not just that they are living off campus, you look at the ages and the types of students that we have. Those people, just the types of people they are do not lend themselves to coming down here to use our facilities and programs. They are mothers with children, or fathers with families, they don't necessarily have time to come down and play intramural sports.

I: They are still open for a job in recreation.

SR: That's right, that's why some of that stuff is so important whether it's just being able to buy a walking pass at the dome so you can walk everyday with your kids and your family and do things like that. See that's where the increases come I think at this campus with those types of students where we see a decrease in the types of students that would live on campus. You know the age has gone up, the average age on campus, and in 1976 what would it have been versus what it is now, there's a big difference. So those are all, what you do, and again that's where we have to be very flexible and versatile in a way that you program and the things that we do and the types of things that we can do.

UM: You can't do the same thing every year. There are certain things that we are always going to do, there are core things. Same as in your academics major yourself. But then there are also the elective courses and in our case it's the elective programs that you try to adapt to better serve the population that's here for that upcoming year.

I: Like things that aren't getting the support venue, try to open up a new program to try and stimulate,

SR: You evaluate everything you do each and every year and you look at what worked and what didn't work, look at reasons it didn't work, why it did work, and then you decided whether you can try it again or if it worked trying again.

I: And that's a big part of your department. Not only you are ornamentally organizing and running buildings, once you get the programs going, but to decide what programs to get, obviously you have to give good programs before you can operating a building. I mean you got to get the people in there...

SR: You got to have a good building facility operation before you can do the programs. That's got to be something that remains consistent and pretty much standard, but then once that is something you have, then you have all the other opportunity to offer programs. They go hand in hand.

I: One's probably not more important.

SR: No. You can't do one without the other.

I: So more and more challenging part than even deciding the programs, everything else is king of standard? Not standard but...

SR: No see that's not what I mean by that, there's really nothing more challenging, I don't think that's, everything is a challenge, everything goes hand in hand, everything's got to balance out. Alright, to say that one thing is more challenging that's not...

I: No I'm not trying to place value on...

SR: Right because again, to add that word more to it, I mean...

I: But that is a challenge you are facing?

SR: Everything's a challenge when you look at it.

I: So you are more that, add to your focus as an administrative department, just to, I don't know what I'm trying to say here but...

SR: Well what you are trying to say is,

I: It's more of a competition almost to get these students, not a competition but,

UM: I wouldn't say that but what I would say is this to you, if one more were to assume that you merely open the doors and people will come, that to come to a small group of people that are ready to come and they are organizing themselves, okay. There is also a large population that needs to be led, that needs to be informed about things that they can do. They can't do aerobics by themselves but if we had an aerobic instructor and they know that we have step aerobics which they have seen on TV or heard about it than they will come and try it, and once they have tried it they enjoy it so they continue to do that because it is important to their daily lives and I think that's what the challenge is. To say we need to provide programs as well as just opening up a building for people to use.

SR: In some ways it's just providing the expertise and being there as a resource to groups. In a way sometimes we don't do everything for them but we are very involved in what they are doing. Why does a residence hall program try to offer a volleyball program by themselves and then watch it not really happen the way it should happen?

[END TAPE SIDE 1]

[BEGIN TAPE SIDE 2]

UM: A hockey team and they will all come down and we'll put all those individual teams together into a league and well provide some ice time well provide lockers and well provide equipment and officials and schedules and everything and all of the sudden you have an intramural hockey program.

SR: And nobody has to do anything except,

UM: Other than show up and play.

SR: When you go out on your own and do it you have to try and do all that stuff ____.

I: Also I noticed too with the facilities being there like you said, just the fact that they are here gets people like me to try to do things. Like I've never played racquetball before but I see racquetball courts you can call and get a court and a racket for like a buck, and then you're off. And know you like play racquetball every week, or once every other week.

UM: You'd be surprised over the years, since this building's been open its still true today, I guess you are a prime example, I'm not sure where you are from Steve originally, you'd be surprised how many students come here and try racket ball or wally ball that have never been in a court before they came up to campus. So don't, I think one of the other messages that I'd like to see you put in somewhere in your paper and discuss a little in context in our discussion is the fact that a student's education is not within the walls of the classrooms, obviously that has evolved, but I think equally critical to their education process is the activities that we provide because many of those will be lifelong interests that you develop while you are on campus, lifelong friendships possibly, social interaction, individuals that you meet here the campus is a greater market community, you may end up working with or for them sometime.

I: Forming contacts too.

UM: Right, contacts with faculty, consider that the contacts that you form with a faculty member in a social setting versus sitting in his or her class I think you see a different person totally and a different type of relationship it can be extremely important in that rewarding education process that you are going to have over the years here.

I: Also the point too that you said about giving students experiences that they never had probably most of the students here that are from the Upper Peninsula come from smaller towns where they don't have, like you said they've never been in a court before where they don't have...

UM: They don't have a 5 meter diving platform,

I: Yeah where downstate I see all of this stuff and it's like yeah there's just another rec and health center, with another Olympic sized pool where if you don't have it I think...

UM: Superior central, the school system being located in Chatham a few miles south of here were are right on the border of the county out that way with Alger County and you have neighboring students in here every year during winter semester as a reward for grades or attendance or other incentives and they do it to get them from their rural school setting into a major facility and opportunity and experience some of those exact things that you were talking about, you know that.

SR: You're talking a 150 or 200 kids each time, we've got 5 or 6 schools that do that right now.

UM: They bring many of them, either middle school or high school students in as a reward for their hard work throughout their school year.

I: They just bring them in and,

UM: We work with them for whatever program that they want.

I: See that's something that I would never have thought of.

UM: So the dome, the dome and PEIF plans for Marquette high school, they have for the last several years had their all night senior party, which is supposed to be an ending celebration for all their senior class member, they have been held in our facilities for the past several years. Sort of a lock-in experience.

SR: Non-alcoholic.

UM: And that program is attended by very very very close to 100 percent of their students each and every year. Were we are seeing handful of students from the class of _____.

SR: And these are all parents that do the work, volunteer, organize activities and things but again there's a case of a program where they look to us for facilities they also look to us as a resource to direct their efforts to make sure they are doing things correctly, to provide the best experience they can for their kids.

UM: A lot of reassurance to say that this program is a good idea.

I: Okay so the experience is then you had running of facilities that can help other people that want to do something but aren't sure like you said.

SR: Right facilities or developing and structuring programs.

I: Well the parents then can show up and be directed what to do kind of. Whereas if they just went it on their own and rented it and no one was there they would just kind of look around and now what.

SR: See there is a lot of people that think the jobs we have are basically a bunch of P.E. teachers step out on a court, and I shouldn't say P.E. teachers, but some recreation person, steps out on the court throws a few balls on the court and everything just happens. Like you said you just open the door and everything takes place. But we go through a heck of a lot of training and I mean, this is a profession. We may not be an academic person teaching you know an education class are something like that, although all of us have tied. So there's a lot that goes through, goes into this, from a management personnel standpoint, programing, facility management.

UM: Budgeting

ST: Budgeting,

I: That's kind of why I picked this department to do because I knew there was a lot more that meets the eye. So I have gotten a lot of information that I can use.

UM: Use your own experiences too. As a student you came in here and to officiate floor hockey.

I: Floor hockey, Ice hockey yeah.

UM: You probably played some of those activities but did you actually know how to blow a whistle or did you know where to stand on a court or did you know the exact rules of how you should call a penalty so it was the same each and every game?

SR: You can use your own experiences to think back on all the little things you were taught and it may not sound like a lot in itself but it was very critical to the success of the experiences some player had or some team.

I: Yeah.

UM: You impacted a lot of other individuals too, the training that you received yourself.

SR: Yeah if you said too if you have zero what goes on around the building watch what the workers do, watch the types of things that they do. I mean that will give you an explanation in itself right there.

Stand up on the second deck and watch what goes on on the floor, look at the types of people that are in the programs that are taking place, you can see people doing the lap swim, but in another section of the pool you may see aqua-aerobics taking place and in another section you may see swim lessons being taught. There's a variety of things going on and a variety of people doing those jobs.

I: Well I think that kind of wraps things up definitely, thank you guys for your time.

UM: Do you want any, we can give you any...

[END OF INTERVIEW]