

Interview with Judith Puncochar

Interviewed by Russ Magnaghi

November, 12<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Russ Magnaghi (RM): Interview with Judy Puncochar, November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2013, campus of Northern Michigan University. Okay, Judy, we're going to do this interview focusing on "Uniting Neighbors In The Experience of Diversity", the UNITED Conference, which it comes out to. The first questions I ask, if you don't mind, what is your birth date?

Judith Puncochar (JP): My birth date is January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1951.

RM: Okay. And you said that you would like to pronounce your name for the record.

JP: The American pronunciation of my last name is "p-un-ch-a-c-a-r" like "kick-a-truck." The pronunciation is actually Czech and there are three accents on the name. The Czech pronunciation is "p-oo-n-ch-a-c-a-zsh" which means "maker of stockings" or "stocking maker." The "Puncocha" stand for "stockings" and the "r" is the "maker of stockings."

RM: Okay, interesting. Could you give us a little, as we get started here, a little of your back and where you were born and grew up then your education and so on and kind of how you got to Northern.

JP: My background is in farming. I grew up on a family farm in central Nebraska, near St. Paul, Nebraska. The farm has been in the family for over 112 years. My great-grandfather bought the farm from the first homesteader in the area. I lived on the family farm and grew up speaking

Czech, lived on the family farm until I was nine and a half, at which time my parents moved to California, when a big influx of people migrated to California for jobs. My father worked and it was difficult to make a living on the family farm with two families. My grandparents still lived on the farm and then my family lived on the farm and I had two sisters at that time. So, I grew up in California from the time I was nine and a half until I graduated from graduate school, actually.

RM: Where did you live? Where did they move to and why?

JP: We moved to northern California where my father worked on several dams. He worked on the Shasta Dam project and worked for the Bureau of Reclamation and then for the Department of Forestry. Then we lived in Yreka, California which is just south of Medford, Oregon where I graduate from high school in Yreka, California in 1969 and I went to the University of California at Davis from 1969 until 1973. I graduated with a degree in zoology and a minor in chemistry and I barely had enough credits in the liberal studies to graduate. I mean, it was just down to the wire. So, I left and had so much science. I was really into the sciences and I left the University of California-Davis and spent the next year at Mount St. Mary's College in Los Angeles on Chalon Road, studying with the nuns and listening to their beautiful music and I studies philosophy because I figured that I needed a little more rounding out and I also taught algebra to the nursing students and I like the teaching and I started to get a teaching credential. I went back to the University of California at Irvine and got a teaching credential and taught 7<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade sciences in California and south central Los Angeles. Then I moved back to Nebraska where I had this pull to be back to the family farm with my grandmother and I taught in Nebraska in Omaha. It was a college preparatory school, K-12 and I taught in rural Nebraska in a middle school, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade art, science, and PE. Then, I had two sons, five days apart. I adopted one son who is Native American, who is Omaha, and gave birth to the other that night.

So they shared the same crib. I left teaching to do child rearing for about five years and during that time, my husband died and I had two three year old sons and had to get myself back on my feet and I decided to go back to teaching and to renew my teaching certificate, I needed to have a couple of courses. So, in one of the courses I was taking, it was taught by the person who started the Human Relations program at the University of Minnesota and he said, “Judy, you owe yourself a doctorate,” and I thought, “Well, what’s that?” He said, “I will write a letter of recommendation for you if you need to go to the University of Minnesota and get your doctorate and they’ll never let you go.” So, I went to the University of Minnesota and I got my doctorate and he was right, I stayed there teaching as the director of the Human Relations program until my boys graduated from high school at St. Paul Central High school in Minnesota and when they went on to college, I decided that I wanted a tenure line position, rather than what I was doing, which was a professional administration, special administration position. I threw out my applications in February and I ended up with four interviews, four job offers and I chose Northern because Northern reminded me of Northern California. They have very similar terrain and I really fell in love with the area and I also fell in love with the leadership. I like the leadership. There were two other schools, well four schools that I had job offers, two of them I didn’t even consider because I didn’t like the leaders. I liked the leadership here and I liked the terrain. So, I came to Northern.

RM: What year was that?

JP: That was 2004 that I came to Northern. I really was so excited to have a tenure-line position because, at the University of Minnesota, I was the only woman in my department in Educational Psychology. The Educational Psychology department is huge but in my division, I was the only woman and so I had—when I left, I had either been on or completed 46 doctoral dissertation

committees where I was reader and also some Master's committees where I was also chair and/or reader and so I was doing a lot of committee work for the students, to support the students research but not having the tenure-line position which I really wanted. I was teaching, I was doing research, I was getting grants, I was mentoring students and I thought, "Why not give me the title?" They said, "Well, Judy, we don't hire our own." Research-run institutions don't hire their own. I mean, they hired me, they wanted me forever to do the teaching but as far as giving me a tenure-line, they value outside perspectives which I understand and I also agree. I left and they said, "But you can always come back. We will give you a leave of absence. You can come back." Well, you can never go home again. You know, you change and the river changes and so I got here and just felt like this was just a tremendous opportunity. Anything I wanted to do, it seemed, someone would say, "Sure, go ahead and try." I was just excited to be here, just totally excited and I absolutely love Northern. So, I got involved with the Ethnic and Cultural Diversity Committee because I was the director of the Human Relations program and the Human Relations program at the University of Minnesota deals with the nature of prejudice and bias and the corner stone of that whole program is Gordon Allport's book, "The Nature of Prejudice," and that book is—you might have read it, about 650 pages, I've got three or four volumes. It's a fabulous book. He did an outstanding job of really exploring the nature of prejudice in human beings as a very, almost, natural state of human positive activity and social activity. So, what can we, as teachers, do about that in the classroom so people can learn to get along better and learn better in public school settings? So, that was my role. I naturally gravitated toward the Ethnic and Cultural Diversity Committee and at that time, Les Wong and I arrived at the University of Minnesota at the same time, that's President Wong, and he charged the Ethnic and Cultural Diversity Committee with—wrote a charge, asking us to analyze and evaluate the diversity at the

institution and come up with a plan to put diversity as a core value of Northern. So, as a committee now, we were an advisory body, but as a committee now, we had a charge to advise the president on how to put diversity as a core value. We examined the number of volumes in the library and the number of courses in the curriculum that had to do with diversity content and then we decided that we would create a, kind of send-off or launch or some kind of conference activity or event at the beginning of each year to get faculty together to do workshops so they could take their syllabi and increase the amount of diversity content in their courses at this, almost like workshop, event. So, the first time, the charge came in 2004, it was finalized, I believe in 2005, I gave you a copy of the charge and the dates on the charge, so you've got a copy of that. I sent it to you via email and I can send it to you again. I'm not certain of exactly the dates but you've got them. The first thing we did was to create what we called the, "Domestic Diversity Institute." That was under Mary Etchison from the counseling program and department here at Northern. She's a counselor. So, Mary Etchison was the chair of the Ethnic and Cultural Diversity Committee at that time. Under her charge, she hired Bill Hill to run this, what we called the, "Domestic Diversity Institute." Bill contacted a person from one of the colleges in the Twin Cities to come and present at the institute and we had, I'm not certain how many people attended that institute, but it was a few, not very many, but a few. That was kind of our launch.

RM: That was in what year then?

JP: 2005. So, then Mary left the Ethnic and Cultural Diversity Committee and I was elected by the committee to chair the committee. We still had this charge from the president and we needed to write this report in response to the charge and we had this little foyer into this event called the "Domestic Diversity Institute" but I made a call through the entire university for interested people to come and talk about how to put diversity as a core value at Northern. We met in

Whitman Hall and there were like 36 of us sitting around in this great big circle, lots of us, and I remember being pretty amazed at how many people showed up. We had, I know Chet DeFonso was there and at that time, Darnell Bradley, who was the director of what is now MERC, and several people. We sat around and talked about what we could do and Darnell Bradley came up with the acronym UNITED and everybody rallied around that term. We liked it. So, we thought, well, we will put on this UNITED conference and I passed the torch to Darnell and said, "Here. Good luck with putting on this conference." Then, Darnell took a job elsewhere and there was no one to put the conference on and so, it fell back in my hands as now chair of the Ethnic and Cultural Diversity Committee. So, I made a call for presenters and put together the first UNITED conference and that was in 2006. The model that I used was having the professors from Northern present on topics of diversity of interest to them and having them bring their classes to the conference to listen at the same time and the community members could also come and listen. So, it was more of a, "Come to the University Center, teach your classes on topics of diversity and allow others of us to come and listen and we will bring in some key featured speakers and the speakers can present and we can have people come and listen and the speakers could also go into classrooms and do classroom visits." That was the beginning of the UNITED conference. That was our first one. I will have to pull up the programs to let you kind of monitor how the sessions went for the UNITED conference but the sessions became quite numerous, to the point where we had like 60 and 70 sessions at the conference. Sometimes we would be running three sessions concurrently. It turned out that it was spreading people too thin and we would have like 6 or 7 people show up to an event and that just wasn't enough. So, we then pulled back and now we schedule just one session at a time and our sessions are now well attended. We usually have about 25 to 90 people in any session. Our last UNITED conference, which was 2013, we pulled

in, I believe the number was, 1,840 people to that conference. The numbers are robust and the reason that the UNITED conference is working so well now, we have a little different model. So, as you remember, we started out thinking that we would have this event where faculty could come to do workshops to put diversity into their classrooms and instead, we now have a diversity conference where faculty have scheduled the conference in their syllabi as the diversity content. Their students, then, come to the conference and the students select the sessions that they are most interested in and we have sessions in 7 different tracks. So, you can do UNITED in art, UNITED in food, we actually have some food and sometimes some of the sessions involved cooking and food, UNITED in diversity, which has to do with nature prejudice and bias and we have UNITED in service and that includes the Academic Service Learning classes and outreach to Honduras and student teaching in different countries. So, we've had people present from different countries, including China and Indonesia and talking about—for example, one of the teachers in China was teaching English as a Second Language and they created a cookbook from the family recipes in China, now written in English because these are students learning English. So, we have this wonderful cookbook, I have it in my house, of authentic Chinese traditional meals, written by them. So, the book is really quite interesting—color photos and the English is quite good and the meals are fabulous. The recipes are wonderful. So, there's UNITED in art, in food, in diversity, in music and dance, in theatre, in research and UNITED in film. The way we run UNITED in film is really interesting in that we watch copyright very carefully but we can show any film once as long as there is a faculty moderator and there's an introduction of the film and we talk about the film content linked to the classroom work but we do not show any of the films twice. We don't charge admission. We have to be very careful about that, no admission.

There's also no popcorn, sorry, because we can't have food in Mead Auditorium which is where the UNITED in film is held.

RM: Usually it's held in Mead.

JP: We hold the UNITED conference usually in the University Center but then in the Mead Auditorium, we rent for the use of Blue Ray facilities and capabilities and it's more theatre-style room where you can actually sit and watch a movie.

RM: Wait a minute now, just to go back. You said, music and dance, theatre, film, and there was another—art, food, diversity, service, music and dance, theatre and there was something I missed. Oh, research. That was the one.

JP: So, it's been really a wonderful program and it's also one that is attracting a lot of attention now away from Northern. This last time, with the UNITED Conference 2013, 75% of my sessions were filled with people outside of Northern. I didn't have room for all the people from Northern who wanted to present. It's starting to become, I would argue, I wouldn't say competitive, but it is because we are limiting the number of sessions. I no longer want to run concurrent sessions. So, we have a limited number of sessions and I try very carefully to pick sessions that I think would have the broadest appeal to the undergraduate curriculum. So, this time in UNITED 2013, our most popular sessions was one on stuttering which attracted 4 different classes, one on human geography, one on human anatomy and two speech, language and hearing courses.

RM: And you said how many attended that?



JP: At that particular one, I think our attendance was, I cannot remember exactly, 90-some. It was just under 100 attending.

RM: So, how do you feel about this—we know how you got involved but now, how do you feel about the development of this UNITED conference?

JP: Well, I have very strong feelings about the conference and that is that it has become part of the fabric of the university that people are thinking about the UNITED conference all year. All throughout the year I get emails from people saying, “Here is a really good speaker that I heard for the UNITED conference,” and, “Consider this person.” So, people are thinking about bringing people to Northern to attend the UNITED conference and so the idea of UNITED happening every year is in the social fabric of our timeline at the university. So, that part is very good. The other part that is good is that we do have funding for the UNITED conference that has been designated. The deans have been very supportive and each of the dean’s has given \$2,000 per college and then Gavin Leach is supportive and he has also given \$10,000. So, to put on a conference for about—the cost is about \$15-17,000, that’s a shoestring. We give an honorarium, we give honoraria to our featured speakers—not very much, I mean the most we can offer is like \$1,000 but we try hard to honor our featured speakers or people that we bring to campus. Usually the featured speakers also go and give campus visits. We also have funding from the King Chavez Parks funding from Michigan. That’s funding for visiting scholars of color the university and we don’t limit the money just to faculty of color, it really is money for topics of diversity. That’s what it is, faculty that have taught about diversity. Although the King Chavez Parks funding does not cover performer, the performers are—for example, the American Indian artists and dancers are never covered which is kind of interesting because, I think, the American Indian artists address the history of their art and are highly qualified. I would argue that they are

professors in their area but the King Chavez Parks funding will not cover them. We are very careful about making certain that the funding does what the funding is intended to do and the other money comes from the support of the deans and academic affairs. So, now the downside is that UNITED does not yet have a home. It's been, kind of, following me around and having something attached to one person is a very bad model and that part I do not like. I've been trying to find a way to house UNITED. I thought I had a place for UNITED 2014, which is the President's Council on Diversity so it would go back to the Ethnic and Cultural Diversity Committee. The current people on that committee really don't think that they have the time to put on the conference. Now, the conference does take time to put on but there has been a core group of us that has put it on every year and it essentially runs itself. This is going to be our 9<sup>th</sup> annual UNITED conference. It'll be the 9<sup>th</sup> year so by the time you do something eight times, they know the drill. They know which rooms to reserve. They know that Mediasite Live has to be there to record all of the featured sessions, they know that there will be some food. We know that we don't give parking tickets on that day. So, it's like everybody has their role to play and they play it well and they just kind of lock into automatic mode during the week of the UNITED conference. I'm going on sabbatical next year. My sabbatical application was ranked first in my college which was an honor for me. I'm excited about the proposal and the proposal actually has to do with diversity. I'm going to Indonesia to work on a book on liberal studies for a national curriculum for Indonesia and then my part of the book is the pedagogy for faculty teaching in liberal studies programs to hone critical thinking skills because critical thinking really is my background for the University of Minnesota. That's really about the nature of prejudice and bias. It's really cognitive psychology. So, I'm going to be creating chapters on how to hone student's critical thinking skills while thinking in these liberal studies classes. Then the second book, the

second semester will be written here while I'm back at Northern and that will be, the same book, the philosophy behind liberal studies, general ed, general studies, this time from a student's perspective. You're taking these general education and liberal studies classes so what skills do you need to become a better critical thinker involved in these classes but written from a student's perspective. The books will be written in both Indonesian and in English. Indonesia is the fourth largest country in the world. It has the largest Muslim population in the world and it's going to be a really nice tie in with the UNITED conference, I think, but the UNITED conference needs to have not just one person as the face of the UNITED conference. It's not the Puncobar conference, it's the UNITED conference: Uniting Neighbors in the Experience of Diversity. It's Northern's UNITED conference. So, it has to go somewhere and it cannot go in a department. It should not be associated with education. It should not be associated with International Studies, I mean, it has to be somewhere—like an umbrella over the university. The only place that I can think to put it would be the President's Council on Diversity or the newly established Center for Teaching and Learning. That also would be a good place to house the UNITED conference but I don't know that people have that vision yet. I think that's a vision that could be established but it would need to be articulated on why a UNITED conference would be coming out of a Center for Teaching and Learning. I think that that link could be made but I don't think that it is readily apparent to most people.

RM: Well, can't you just move ahead because you would want it then to go to the Board of Trustee's to okay it and make it official?

JP: Oh you mean that I should just go say and make a proposal and say, "Board of Trustee, do this."

RM: I just did it this morning.

JP: Oh really? What'd you do?

RM: Well, the position of university historian, which I was given in 1994, the only document I have of this and what I'm supposed to do is an article in the Mining Journal. There is no document that you can find anyplace.

JP: Well, that's kind of like that UNITED conference so I'm glad we're having this conversation because the UNITED conference, the only person who knows about the history of the UNITED conference would be President Wong and me and now it's on tape but as far as what I would—I guess there are two people, I'm not the only person, there's two people who really know about the origins of the UNITED conference, but I think what is interesting is that I like to base all of my decision on what I call “the evidence.” So, evidence-based decision making and if I had to go back and try to find the original articles on the UNITED conference, I'd be hard pressed to find them.

END OF SIDE A

START OF SIDE B

JP: My computer has crashed a number of times and I had some files backed up but I could easily have lost that original charge from the President and then, where would we be? I mean, that really was the origin of the UNITED conference was from that charge.

RM: And that's the one you sent me?

JP: That's the one that I sent you. Then, when Mary Etchison left and then I took over as chair, I completed the charge and wrote the final report with the help of the committee members. So,

David Cooper from philosophy was one of the lead authors on the report along with me and along with John Kovaleski's spouse, who was she from English? Melissa Hearn. I believe Melissa was on the Ethnic and Cultural Diversity Committee for a while. She might've left with Mary, I'm not certain about that but I thought she was there for a while. I remember David Cooper and I worked on the—because I asked David to create a definition of diversity for us because, at the time and really historically for the United States, diversity has always been almost black and white and it's only been recently that the diversity is also included gay, lesbian, transgender, bisexual included, it even included gender, as far as male and female, so it's been relatively recently in terms of the history. There is not really written trail of the number of UNITED conferences that we've had, except through Cindy Paavola's office. She has kept a copy of all of our programs but I have some of them, but I don't have all of them. So, Cindy Paavola is a person that we really need to get in and go through her files because she does the printing for the UNITED conference and she would have copies of the posters and of the programs and of any table tents and handouts.

RM: I guess one of the things that—and I can work on this, as University Historian, I can come, it shouldn't take too long. We could round some of this material up and then it should be deposited into the archives.

JP: It should be, yes.

RM: Then, anybody that needs it—like, you could send me over there or if somebody is looking for information, you're not—

JP: It needs to go there. It needs to be in the archives because the UNITED conference, I think, is important to the university for a couple of reasons. One is that the charge of making diversity a

tangible value at Northern, something that we can actually see, taste, hear, touch and infuse into our traditionally white university campus. That's one reason that UNITED is important. A second one is, I think that it has developed a model for other universities to use for a way to infuse diversity into a curriculum, not intrusively, such that the faculty members don't need to come to a certain place and do a workshop and have to redo their syllabi, etc. etc. They can just put on their syllabus, "The class meets on this particular day at the UNITED conference at ten, three sessions of your choice." Then the students go to the UNITED conference, they get a schedule, a program and we put stickers on the sessions that they attend, they sign-in, we've got a record of their name, and they attend the sessions. So, it's a different kind of model for infusing diversity into the curriculum, not one that is practiced other places that I know of. As a matter of fact, I had breakfast this morning with Joanie Cowell and she gets around a lot with special education and she said, everywhere she goes she mentions the UNITED conference and all of the universities that she's been at do not do anything like this. So, I think it's a pretty unique model. The issue now is, with this sabbatical coming up, who is going to make certain that UNITED conference happens but it will happen and the reason it'll happen is that the kind of core people who've been putting UNITED on have been Judy Puncochar, Cindy Pavlov, the director of communications, Shirley Brozzo, the director of Multicultural Resource Center, Kerry Mohr, who is the secretary in Academic Affairs. So, Kerry takes care of the contracts and the itinerary and contacts people and we get together and have lunch every now and then and throw out some ideas for bringing people to campus and Cindy has, maybe, 20 students that work in her office of Communications, so she always asks the students names of people that are involved with diversity that other students would enjoy listening to and learning from. So, we get together and send out a couple of invitations and we see who is available at that time and invite them to

campus and we put together the conference. Now, I'll be gone next semester, or next year, and then someone else will have to do this. Now, when my father passed two years ago, Cindy and Shirley and Kerry Mohr did the UNITED conference and I got back in August and then took over but during the summery, they did most of the planning because I was busy with my mother. That's pretty much it.

RM: That brings us up to, what happens in the future now? And as I said, I would go for Board of Trustees approval. Then it's official. It's not some charge that a president gave you that's now gone and where do you fit.

JP: What's interesting is that currently, two members of the Board of Trustees, or three now, have been speakers at the UNITED conference.

RM: Then absolutely go for it because they're going to vote for it.

JP: One spoke three times at the UNITED conference.

RM: Was that Sook?

JP: Sook spoke three times, twice she was a featured speaker and once, she introduced the filmmaker for Vincent Who, this last year.

RM: Now, they would be thrilled by this.

JP: I think they would be thrilled by this. Also, the President's Entrepreneurial Panel that he did at Reynolds Recital Hall at the rap-up of the UNITED conference was a, standing-room only, huge success that has great, great reviews from the students. They loved that panel. That was part of the UNITED conference and the president loved it. I think the UNITED conference is this forum that is a conduit to funnel students to events. So if someone has an event that they want

publicized, such as the president wanting his panel on entrepreneurial efforts, from Northern alum's to be broadly broadcast, then we have all of these students that can come and listen and benefit. So, it's quite a good model I think for getting the word out.

RM: I think it would also be useful to have more publicity about the conference because you filled me in. I kind of new, in general, about it but you filled me in on a lot of details in ways, I'm going out the door, but I'll be here next fall.

JP: I wanted to mentioned that what is different now about the UNITED conference and when it first started is that, when it first started, I would send out a call for presenters and everyone would just come and present. I did not link with specific organization within the university. Now, I purposefully link with organizations within the university and they purposefully link with the UNITED conference because they find that they have more attendance when they link to the UNITED conference. So, the community partners, as the term is that I like to use, includes, the DeVos Museum, Northern Nights, it includes Platform Personalities and First Aid Productions. These are student groups and cultural groups that have funding that is based on participation and so it's very important to them that they get a lot of participants. This year's featured speaker from the Northern Nights group was the Alash concert at Forest Roberts Theatre and the Alash, this was with Northern Nights, the Alash concert brought in—they sold out, they brought in more participants than they've ever had at any of their concerts. I think linking with the UNITED conference does a great deal of good for our community partners. So we now have linked with these partners and we've also linked with the Beaumier Museum and I think I've give you our—oh, and also with Simply Superior, with the cooking. We've linked with them. That's part of the model then to really get the conference to be successful, you really have to link with other entities. There's one more thing that I want to mention. That is that every year, the UNITED



conference is part of the curriculum for the Management course called Event Planning. Part of the event planning class is to help put this conference on. I have every member of the event planning class wear a badge that's called "Conference Coordinator" on the badge and they help with attendance and passing out programs and doing the headcounts and they will introduce speakers. It's a venue for them to get training in the skills that they need to be event planners. So, that's also part of what came out of this conference. That developed with Dr. Carol Steinhaus from the College of Business and she and I got together and she wanted to create this event planning class and so, she wanted to do the sled dogs in the winter and does the UNITED conference in the fall. So, that's helpful. Also, Superior Edge gets volunteer hours for their students to participate and then my Freshman Fellows put on the UNITED conference and do the research on all of the data entry for the evaluations that we collect. The evaluations, people often do not fill out evaluations after the sessions that they attend, but we usually have anywhere from 300 to about 700 evaluations that they input the data and then we analyze the data but we always have people do head counts to make sure that we get a good, accurate count. I wanted to mention one more thing. That is that my understanding, through Kerry Mohr, who is the secretary, absolutely five gold stars, premier, fabulous secretary. I just love her professionalism. She's just dynamite. She's wonderful. She is the contact person for the King Chavez Parks monies. She's a very competent and capable secretary, fabulous. She mentioned that the funders of the King Chavez Parks program loved the UNITED conference. They see that as a model that really works for what it is and the intent of the money is for, which is, to get diversity broadly into the lives of undergraduate students. That we do and I think we do it very well.

RM: Over the years, I've seen how some of that money was spent.

JP: I think sometimes it is hit and miss and sometimes you just get somebody who is dynamite and sometimes, it's just like, "What?" Now, we have this venue. It's very transparent. We tape all of the programs so that people can go—we do live streaming, so people can go and they can watch the conference, wherever they are, worldwide and then they can go back and they can tap in and look at these different sessions. Then also we have the programs, you can access the programs so they can track where their monies go and what it is that the people are doing. I think that's helpful for the King Chavez Parks people. Then also, I created two classes based on the UNITED conference. These are at the 989 level and I think it's called 995 level. These are workshop classes that don't add credits to a degree program but they are good for Continuing Education credits for teachers.

RM: Oh, so the teacher can watch them online?

JP: The teachers can watch them online and they can get the diversity credits for their Teaching Certificates and renewal of their Teaching Certificates and they also align with the National Standards and State Standards. So, that's also part of the UNITED conference.

RM: So, that's another—I mean, you've gone—

JP: I was trying to figure out how to pay back to the university, the money that the university invests in the conference. I'm thinking, "Okay, how can we get the conference to help the university pay back for their investment?" It's hard to put a dollar sign on the investment of knowledge in a student but I'm thinking, "Can I actually get hard dollars back, dollar for dollar back?" I thought, "Well, I'll create these classes" and then the teachers can sign up and at least there will be some tuition dollars coming back into the university. There's been a limited number of teachers signing up, so it's usually been done on more of a directed study type of basis. It's

easy to run but I have an idea and this is—you asked me about the future of the UNITED conference, here's my idea: I'd like to—I'm going to go on sabbatical next year and I'm going to be writing these two books on liberal studies and critical thinking that deals with diversity. I mean, so that's really the focus of my sabbatical but when I come back, I want to, and maybe I'll even do this before I leave, I want to create a MOOC, a Massive Open Online Course with the UNITED conference, make it free and then people could come and sign up for the class, the UNITED conference class and this would not be credits added to like a Master's program or an undergraduate program. It certainly could be made into World Studies course if you wanted to assign an instructor to teach the course as an online World Studies course but I'm thinking more of a Massive Open Online Course that would generate an email listerv of people who are interested in topics of the UNITED conference. Then, we can interest them in our programs, our undergraduate and graduate programs. That would be like our segue into our university. That's one idea that I have that we could use the UNITED conference programming because we have used Media Site Live to tape every, single featured speaker in the UNITED conference since 2006. So, I have 8 years of absolutely amazing lectures stored and you should have been doing that with the Sonderegger Symposium.

RM: Yes, we have since—we've been doing it now for 13 years.

JP: Have you been taping them?

RM: We have—the first one is kind of spotty, three-quarters of them have been taped and are available.

JP: Okay, that's good. That's very, very good. I think that would be another opportunity for you, to do a Massive Open Online Course with that program and I could help you set it up. I know how to do it. It's just something to think about.

RM: This might be part of my legacy here, getting these things set up and then when I go out the door, they'll be locked in. If there is somebody that comes after me, then they can pick up on it and it's done. It's there.

JP: It's already in place. I think that's really important that we do this because I'm thinking, I'm not certain about when I'm going to retire but I'm thinking, maybe, I don't know 5 or 6 years—

RM: And that goes fast.

JP: And it goes fast and I'm already realizing, I'm already thinking that this year, I decided that I wanted to do things differently. I was going to have some kind of change in my life. I didn't know what it was exactly but I'm going to do things differently and I thought—the sabbatical, I think, will be pivotal for me. It certainly will get me focused on tying together my work for the University of Minnesota for the last 14 years that I haven't been able to do here, very well. I mean, I've done some of it with the UNITED conference because my whole work at the University of Minnesota was in the area of diversity. So, I've kind of continued that with the UNITED conference here but not with my critical thinking work. So, I'm going to wrap that up with my sabbatical. Then, I'm going to come back and I've got a year to pay back. I think during that year of paying back, I'm going to take the UNITED conference, take my critical thinking and I'm going to be developing these Massive Open Online Courses. I'm going to do it in a way that, because I'm an expert teacher, so I'm going to do it in a way that these are really expertly done courses and we can either set them up as small learning communities as we do in the

School of Education, Leadership and Public Service, where we have 18 students in a class or we can go massive, where I can get a couple hundred, three or four hundred people in a class and still run that course just fine with a different model of small online learning communities within the course. You and I can sit down and talk about that.

RM: Okay, good. You know, it's interesting here. You're talking about this. You're saying you might retire in five years, okay. Next year is the sabbatical, then the return year. Then you're down to three years and that's going to go, a semester here and a semester there, yup.

JP: So, it might be more than five years. I don't know. I'm feeling pretty good. So, how old are you? You asked me my birthday.

RM: I turn 70 on October 12<sup>th</sup>.

JP: You turned 70 on October 12<sup>th</sup>? Well, then I'm just a spring chicken. It might be like ten years before I retire.

RM: Well, if you enjoy it and your health is with you and so on then continue. I'm retiring, part of it is, I could continue, but I'm retiring because I have a backlog of books that are in fourth-draft copy, just need a little push over the edge but you really don't have the time, you know, to do it. I'm doing all of these other things.

JP: Well, and look what you're doing right now.

RM: And so now, what I'm trying to do is pull the encyclopedia together and then bring it over to Communications and say, "Okay folks, I brought it up to 2014. Now, you can have your staff, keep it and maintain it" because now I'm dealing with about 14 or 15 years of catch-up of these different departments and what-not, or new programs that have come in. So, that's a job.

JP: Well, I'd like you do me a favor with—I don't know who transcribes all of this for you, I would really like to have Cindy Paavola go over these with her eye and ear and mouthpiece for Northern, that she is so good at. She's really been my, in lock-step with me the whole time with the UNITED conference.

RM: Well, what I'll do is, it'll take a while but I have students transcribe it and then I will send you a copy back and, at that point, you can add, you can have Cindy add material—there might be certain things that you want to highlight.

JP: Yeah because there could be phrases that I want to change. The way that I speak is not necessarily the same way that I write.

RM: I think, what tends to happen here, is—what we've done with some of these is, we've done the interview but then it's been edited, so it sort of becomes the history of UNITED with, you know, you and whoever else might add to it as the authors. So, it becomes a document. As opposed to an interview with me asking questions and so on. It would read and then you can work on it but to probably have you sit down and write this up, it's not going to happen. However, the hour that we've spent here is now there and will be written up and then can be added to.

JP: I think that is a good way to do it. I just want to make sure that when it does get into the encyclopedia that Cindy has—

RM: Well, it's not going to be all of this. I'm going to sum this up, so it will be short but the document will go to the archives.

JP: Right but I certainly would like to have Cindy Pavlov look it over too and make certain that she agrees that my memory is correct and that my phrasing is also appropriate.

RM: What I'll do is, even with the little encyclopedia item, I'll send her a copy and have her look over it.

JP: Good, good. I'd like that a lot.

RM: Alright, very good. Thank you.

JP: Well, thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW