

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY
NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH ANTONIO CALCADO
FOR THE
RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

SHAUN ILLINGWORTH
and
PAUL CLEMENS

BRICK, NEW JERSEY
AUGUST 13, 2020

TRANSCRIPT BY
JESSE BRADDELL

Shaun Illingworth: This begins the second oral history interview with Antonio Calcado, on August 13, 2020. I am Shaun Illingworth in Hightstown, New Jersey, and, Paul, if you want to say where you are today.

Paul Clemens: Paul Clemens, in Metuchen, New Jersey.

SI: Okay. Are you in the same place today, Brick?

Antonio Calcado: No. Today, I am in New Brunswick, in my office at Winants.

SI: Okay, great. I wanted to go back into the McCormick years and ask about some of the big projects that you were a part of there, but also just how things got done. You had made a point in the last interview about how under the Barchi administration, the strategic plan became very important in determining what was a priority, how things got shaped. If you go back to the previous administration, it also saw a lot of growth and building on campus. We want to know maybe a little bit more about how things got done there, how priorities got set, and maybe it would be helpful if we went through a specific project and you told us how it played out from your role, so maybe Livingston, which was a major redevelopment program and changing the mission quite a bit of the school. Go back to the beginning. When did it first become a priority that Livingston was going to be recast as this professional campus? [Editor's Note: Richard L. McCormick served as the president of Rutgers from 2002 to 2012. Robert Barchi held the post of Rutgers University president from 2012 to 2020.]

AC: I would say we started working on what Livingston could be, what it should be, I would say probably around 2010 or so, I'm thinking. Livingston had been, unfortunately, for whatever reasons--and I really can't speak to them--just for whatever reasons, somewhat neglected as a campus, for the most part. From a physical perspective, the history of Livingston was that it had been an Army camp, Camp Kilmer, during World War II. It was a major jumping off point, actually, for the European Theater, very convenient to send, because of the railway system that was on the Livingston Campus, to send munitions and men to Port Newark. From Port Newark, they would then be shipped, of course, off to Europe for the European Theater.

Livingston [Camp Kilmer] was in use for many years and then, at some point, probably in the mid to later '50s, early '60s, was decommissioned for the most part as an Army camp. There was still a piece of it, a motor pool, that was actually there until very recently, during the Iraq years. When it was decommissioned, of course, it was then willed, for lack of a better word, to Rutgers University, really at no cost. Then, Rutgers began to develop it. One of the first buildings, I believe, was the RAC, and then there were a few other buildings that were put up and Livingston College was created. [Editor's Note: Camp Kilmer was a U.S. Army post in Piscataway, New Jersey that was in operation from 1942 to 2009. In 1964, Rutgers acquired 540 acres of Camp Kilmer, upon which the university envisioned building three colleges. Only Livingston College came to fruition. When Livingston opened in 1969, the campus was still under construction, with the first buildings being Tillett Hall and Quads I, II, and III. The Rutgers Athletic Center,

the RAC, also known as the Louis Brown Athletic Center, is located on the Livingston Campus and is the home court of the Rutgers basketball teams. The RAC opened in 1977.]

When we were in the system of campus colleges, there was really just who was vying for what resources, and it got more and more difficult to pay, I believe, attention to Livingston in the manner that it should have been paid attention to. So, Rutgers College always came out on top. Cook College was doing what Cook College was doing, and since they had a lot of tentacles throughout the whole state, it wasn't as big a deal. Douglass was having its issues already in the 2000s. Livingston, there was really a brainstorming commitment--it came out of a brainstorming session--what do we need to do? It was based on students from Livingston who were upset with the fact that Livingston was not being paid attention to. Dick had done--I would say maybe a town hall, maybe some session with students at Livingston, and had made some commitments that he would seriously look at improving the Livingston Campus. But it was student led and student driven.

Then, I was charged with, "What can this look like?" One of the things we recognized right away was it could not be the way that development--and I don't believe in planning and development in this way--had been occurring at Rutgers University as a whole over the years, which meant a building here, a building there. When you have a thousand buildings, putting up one building has no significant impact into what you are doing. So, we made a decision that we would literally look at doing a major development on the Livingston Campus, so we wanted to do a transformative development. We brought in a series of planners, understood what was missing and what we could put there. Our housing stock, at the time, was all pre-1950 housing stock. It was pretty bad. In the end, students are consumers when it comes to much of what they look at when they're making a commitment to a school, and we had terrible housing stock. Of course, students would settle for it, but it wasn't a selling point at all. It also became difficult to maintain that housing stock, because so much of it had gotten so old.

We looked at building around what would be the theme, so to speak, for the Livingston Campus, and it was determined that the business and professional schools would be the theme for the Livingston Campus. Loosely defined, we had themes on every campus in New Brunswick. We had themes. So, College Ave was really the liberal-arts type campus. Douglass still was women's studies, gender studies. Of course, Cook College--and by then it had been renamed SEBS [School of Environmental and Biological Sciences]--was our Ag station, agricultural thematic type. Then, when we looked at Busch, we were looking at the sciences, for the most part, so loosely defined. Not every building on Busch is a science building. Not every building on College Ave is a liberal arts building.

So, we then began to plan out the campus. Sometimes, timing is everything. There was another--really, the crash of 2006-'7. We were almost kind of fortunate, because we were able to do things during that time period. As that unfolded, going into 2010 and '11, we were positioned in a good place. So, we had determined that we needed an anchor building, an iconic type of building. If you think of Passion Puddle, an iconic place. You think of the gates of Queen's,

iconic, as you think of it, and some of our chapels, of course, iconic settings that people can remember and can think of.

What we also had, unfortunately, a little too much of were buildings that had no style to them whatsoever. I mean, people don't leave Rutgers and think, "Oh, I'm thinking about X building, because typically X building," you know, Records Hall, who would ever remember Records Hall, unless you had a problem with your bill and couldn't get it resolved. That's the only reason you'd remember Records Hall. Certainly, I've never heard, in my twenty-six or seven years here, an alumni say to me, "You know, I have fond memories of Brower Commons." That just doesn't happen.

I talked the last time a little bit about a competition for College Avenue, and we never got College Avenue off the ground because of the economics and what happened, but we had promised a commission to a starchitect. So, Enrique Norten had been that starchitect, and we were able to land his services at an extremely reasonable price, because, again, of what the economy was doing, to design the business building. So, let me pause there. The business building, I will tell you, that no one ever looks at it and just does a shoulder shrug. They look at it, and they either love it or they hate it. That's exactly what we wanted. We wanted a building that had an impact, that people saw, and, again, you could love it and think, "My God, this is just phenomenal," or I get a lot of people [laughter] that say, "That is the ugliest building I've ever seen." But it's a strong opinion. No one ever does not have an opinion; everyone has an opinion of the Business School. [Editor's Note: Designed by Enrique Norten and TEN Arquitectos, 100 Rockefeller Road houses the Rutgers Business School on the Livingston Campus. The building opened in 2013.]

From there, we had housing really be the driver, and we put up all of those apartments that sit within there and the retail and the plaza. It just transformed that campus, just transformed. We redid the roads. We put the roundabout in. People love to go there. They think it is phenomenal. We did a lot of private-public type of partnerships. That's what I did. We did one of the largest solar arrays on a college or university campus in the United States. We have thirty-four acres of solar, over eight-and-a-half megawatts of solar, and if we throw in the small one, we have about ten megawatts of solar that's built out of there. Most of these we tried to do--that one we did as a private-public partnership. That'll pay off for us for years and years and years and years, the economics of that. In the end, the money that we borrowed is offset by the monies that we get back from the electricity, from the lease payments that are paid back to us. We actually have, when you factor all of it in, a negative point-five percent interest rate on the thirty-five or thirty-seven million dollars that we actually borrowed for that project.

So, I'm really proud of that project and the way it came together, but it was a first and we had to look for expertise well outside of the things that we do. Livingston, when I first started going around, talking about what Livingston would look like in a few years--and by 2012, I think we were pretty much [complete], we had completed Livingston 2011 or '12--no one would believe it. No one would believe that that vision could be put in place, and mostly what I got was, "Yes, we've heard all this before, and it's never happened." That was, I think, a win-win.

President McCormick and the Executive Vice President Phil Furmanski gave me a lot of leeway and my team a lot of leeway. Once we could get our arms around and grasp what the academic program was for the campus, then we could talk to the dean of the Business School and talk to the dean of the SMLR, School of Management and Labor Relations, and talk to the different deans that were already embedded on Livingston, to be able to understand what the needs were. Once we understood what the needs were, the planning process becomes that much easier. Then, of course, the same thing from residence life. They were the experts. At that time, Greg Blimling, I believe, was the vice president for housing and auxiliaries, and so they were the experts as to what this housing should look like. [Editor's Note: Philip Furmanski served as the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs from 2003 to 2011. Gregory Blimling held the post of Vice President for Student Affairs at Rutgers from 2004 to 2012.]

Then, the retail, we worked with retail partners to understand what can activate this? What should this look like? Always understanding that at some point we would get to some place with athletics--it just wasn't ready at that point in time--but we understood that we would get to someplace with athletics, so that would continue to be a part of what we had in reserve.

The wellness aspect, we've always wanted to and now we do have decent trails in the Ecological Preserve, some of it, not all of it, wooded. It used to be farmland, so some of it's new scrub. Some of it's old growth. It has been a great place, especially over these last six or seven months because people get to enjoy the outdoors and do some hiking. So, that's the birth and renaissance of the new Livingston; it essentially worked in that way.

SI: You brought up the public-private partnerships, and obviously, over the years, you've had to work very closely with particularly DEVCO and also other aspects of New Brunswick redevelopment. When did you first start working with those entities in your job regularly? [Editor's Note: New Brunswick Development Corporation, or DEVCO, is a non-profit redevelopment organization that serves the City of New Brunswick. It was founded in 1976.]

AC: So, probably the Gateway Project was my first foray where I was making decisions. It would've been the Gateway Project and the office component and the bookstore and what we did there and how we really took an old gas station on Easton Avenue--it used to be a gas station and had become a facilities building--and horse trade it between buildings. There were some tax credits that came into play there. There were some new market tax credits that came into play. So, all of those pieces kind of were moving pieces. We only had a piece of that because of the bookstore, but we were able to make things work there. [Editor's Note: The Gateway, completed in 2012, is a mixed-use twenty-three story tower that was developed by DEVCO. The Gateway includes housing, parking, a three-story Barnes and Noble, the headquarters of Rutgers University Press, and a pedestrian walkway to link the train station to College Avenue. The project was eligible for the Urban Transit Hub Tax Credit Program.]

One of the biggest ones was with the solar array, again. That was an extremely large project. Actually, that project was about forty million after we did the parking lot, so I don't want to lost

sight of that. That was one of the things we wanted to do. Those parking lots were put in place when the RAC was built, and the RAC was built when the Nets first played in it. What they did was lay down about two inches of blacktop just to kind of make places for people to park. They were still the same ones, and it was in terrible, terrible shape. [Editor's Note: The New Jersey Nets played at the RAC from 1977 to 1981.]

Then, when the State of New Jersey began to really work through the Economic Development Authority in the [Governor Chris] Christie years, I would say, with tax credits, we then really were able to do much more by way of private-public partnership. So, we were able to, with our for-profit partners, leverage those tax credits to fall back to us to lower our debt service payments. We've done this, again, not just New Jersey tax credits, but we've looked at things like new market tax credits. There are a number of different programs. Many times what we did--again, through the BPU [Bureau of Public Utilities], actually, for the solar systems and even now for our cogeneration plant in Newark, same thing--we looked for what the programs are that make monies available and can we fit into that program? How do we leverage that program? It's all above board. We're not breaking the law anywhere.

Actually, I will tell you, for instance, we looked at, one time, a project in Newark, 15 Washington, which is just a phenomenal building. I love that building. We looked at historic tax credits, historic preservation tax. So, they're federal tax credits. There was a chance I was not willing to take in aligning us up for those. They're very specific, the way that they work. You can create entities, you can do things, and I thought, "We're being disingenuous" and the one thing I never wanted to come across as was disingenuous. So, you'll see people unload an asset, then bring the asset back during an x-period of time or whatever, and that's not the way we wanted to do business. We wanted to be above board. We stepped away from about fifteen million dollars in tax credits up there, because we should not damage the university's reputation in that way. I certainly didn't want to be the person doing it. [Editor's Note: 15 Washington is a historic building on the campus of Rutgers-Newark. It was completed in 1930 and donated to Rutgers in 1979. From 1979 to 2000, it was home to the S.I. Newhouse Center for Law and Justice, and in 2015, it was renovated and transformed into a residence hall.]

SI: Paul, do you have a question?

PC: Yes, I would like to follow up briefly with one thing. When you were doing Livingston, you were working with Piscataway. How did that differ from working with New Brunswick? Were you getting different types of concerns from Piscataway?

AC: Right.

PC: Did you have to negotiate things differently with Piscataway?

AC: We are fortunate in a number of ways. Zoning laws don't apply to us, so we don't have to actually get any type of permission. What we do is we do a presentation to--I think this is called a Section 13, I believe that's what it's called--what we do is a presentation to the planning board

of Piscataway or New Brunswick or Edison or whomever it might be, and it's a courtesy presentation. We take feedback, and we may or may not incorporate their feedback, depending on what it is. So, certainly, we kept Piscataway abreast of what we were doing, because of the increase in what literally would be population in Piscataway, but the process is fairly the same. So, I have worked with the mayors of New Brunswick and Piscataway for years now. We have a very good relationship. So, the process is not the same in New Brunswick, because you're really in the middle of a city versus the middle of a suburb. Some of the pressures are different. So, we need to understand those pressures. What'll happen in New Brunswick is that the public will be using your facilities. What'll happen in Piscataway is it's pretty much only going to be your visitors and your students and staff and faculty; your community pretty much are going to be the only ones. So, we have a movie theater in Piscataway. Of course, we have residents from Piscataway that come and use it, but it's different than what happens in New Brunswick proper because we're in the community, not the community in us. That brings a different look, a different feel.

PC: Let me follow up with just one question. I remember when this was all going forward, one of the things I heard about was questions about how much money Rutgers was going contribute to Piscataway for certain types of things. We have given them money, not under any gun, but we have traditionally given them some money back for various ways we tap into their services. I do not need the details of that. What I am curious about is, in this larger world of planning that you are a part of, can you tell us a little bit more about, specifically, the role you play in it? Do you get involved in things that might have, say, a legal aspect to it, or is it the planning aspect more narrowly defined that you are personally involved in in these things? Can you give us a little better sense of what you are doing?

AC: Sure. My world, it is the bigger part, not the smaller part. So, laying out what it is that we want to accomplish and how we want to accomplish it, and then I have a team of planners that go back and work on that. Then, there are the legal aspects of, "What do we need to comply with in order to make this a success?" Then, there are the town-gown relationships. So, those things I am heavily involved in. I speak for the university when it comes to these town-gown relationships, sitting down with the mayors, typically, the mayors. Planning officials from a township, departmental officials from the township or from the city, they usually sit with my staff, and that's handled at that level. That's not said in a disparaging way. That's where they work out the technicalities and the details of what may overlap or not overlap. Again, we are guests, in many ways, in these municipalities and cities, and we do use some of the services.

We also contribute back in services, so things like police services. I'll give you an example. There was an unfortunate situation in Piscataway where a very young female police officer passed away, and of course, the whole police force wanted to go to the services and the funeral. On that day, Rutgers University supplied all of the police services for the Township of Piscataway, from patrolling their streets to taking their calls to doing those types of things. We do the same thing, of course, in New Brunswick. Our 911 center is the dispatch center for the City of New Brunswick. We take all calls for the City of New Brunswick. So, we have a lot of these relationships in the things that we do. Sometimes, there's money involved. We are heavily

involved with the Piscataway Board of Education, heavily involved. We provide many services to them. We have, or had, at our peak, maybe eighty students that attend their schools. So, it's a burden. That's numbers, and we don't pay taxes. Instead of actually monetary issues, what we do is we pay in lieu of. So, we do in-service for their teachers. We provide venues for their commencement, for their graduation. We do these types of things, and those are the partnerships we try and work out with the townships. We avoid monetary payments, because that speaks to our status as a non-profit and we don't want to set precedent in those legal lanes. The cities and townships that we work with understand that, but we do look to help them because we are guests and we do use some of their services. That's the way we tend to work with them.

All of that higher-level planning, that's what I do. The business development is what I do. Guidance over what this should be and look like is what I do. Then, whatever team I need to pull together, whether it's some lawyers out of our office of general counsel, whether it's people out of finance, then I would pull them to figure out how we do this big deal.

SI: I am curious, since your position and title changed a little bit over time and the relationships in the university changed as well, at what point did the Newark and Camden campuses fall under your bailiwick? Has that changed over the years as other things have shifted?

AC: Just after the merger, when Bob Barchi came onboard, so he came onboard in September of 2012, at that point, I was the vice president for facilities and capital planning. Then, when he came onboard, he realigned essential services with the intent of really creating a more effective and efficient organization. Having three facilities organizations just didn't make a lot of sense, three police departments, actually four, if you took former UMDNJ into account. He's the one that realigned those. So, it didn't happen for every essential services. It did for the pieces that came to me, but facilities and capital planning and security and public safety and police departments all then, eventually, came to me. That wasn't in 2013. That was a little bit later, in 2016, but he's the one that realigned those initially. So, Newark and Camden and the former UMDNJ, RBHS, all became part of my responsibility when it came to facilities and capital planning and the units within it. [Editor's Note: The merger refers to the integration of Rutgers with the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ) on July 1, 2013. As a result, Rutgers formed Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences (RBHS), which serves as the umbrella organization for the eight schools and seven centers that focus on health care education, research and clinical service and care.]

SI: Well, maybe that would be a good bridge to talk about the merger years. From your perspective, how did that unfold and affect your job?

AC: Of course, we all understand the merger by way of taking these two huge schools, and, interestingly, what RBHS or UMDNJ actually was were nine schools. It's two medical schools, and it was this kind of crazy setup as well. Coming from a legacy Rutgers person, that's something to say. So, there was Camden; they had pieces in Camden down in Stratford. They had pieces in New Brunswick, they had pieces in Newark, and we had a lot of the same stuff, pieces all over the places. It was determined that seven of those nine schools would be coming

to us. Something in Camden, I don't even recall now, for the most part, the Camden issues went to Rowan. So, then it was, "How do you do this? How do you pull this off?" Once the politicos had determined, "This is what we're going to do," the legislation had been crafted, the issues with splitting Rutgers up and removing Camden from the fold had been handled. So, I won't really speak to all those. That was not where I was really involved in. [Editor's Note: On July 1, 2013, the New Jersey Medical and Health Sciences Education Restructuring Act went into effect, integrating Rutgers with all units of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ), except University Hospital in Newark and the School of Osteopathic Medicine in Stratford.]

Once it was clear that this is where we were going and it was going to happen and there was a timeframe of about a year, the university then engaged a consultant, PWC [PricewaterhouseCoopers]. They have, I'm going to call it, a cookie-cutter type of approach to these kinds of things. They had a series of twelve teams, and the twelve teams, there was UHR [University Human Resources], there was an academic affairs type of team, there was an OIT [Office of Information Technology] type of team, a technology team. There was probably a risk management team, as I recall, a finance team. So, there was twelve, and the twelve teams consisted of a leader from legacy Rutgers and a leader from UMDNJ. So, two counterparts, to the best that it could happen, sat at these weekly meetings, at that time, and it was a whole formula that we went through and we did, and that's what happened.

I headed up the team that was facilities and public safety, but public safety did not report to me. It was just that that's the box that PWC worked in. So, facilities and public safety was one box, one piece. So, my boss at the time, Bruce Fehn, was the CFO, and most of the administrative functions fell under him. I reported to him and public safety reported to him too, but it was a different vice president. So, he appointed me to do that, and we worked through all of the issues. Now, I then had a background team that worked with me on these issues, but I would work with my team and then go to these meetings, where there was a conference room with three dozen people probably in total. We'd go around the room with issues and all, what was going on and what wasn't going on.

I will tell you that that was a great training place for me for crisis management, believe it or not. Although that was not crisis management, I actually picked up a system that I use today for crisis management from that. So, there were a number of benefits that I personally received, but that was a big one, was lessons learned. I learned that lesson there, and I thought, "Wow, this is a good way to be able to control a situation that almost seems uncontrollable." We were putting together two-billion-dollar operations and we're going to wind up with twenty, I guess at that time, twenty-two or twenty-three thousand employees. We're going to have about a thousand buildings. We're going to have twenty-nine million square feet, and we're going to be in every corner of the State of New Jersey. It's, in some respects, coordinated chaos, and I thought, "This is a good way to do this." So, that's how we moved forward with the merger, and things then started to fall into place. On July 1 of 2013, we were able to seamlessly and smoothly move into a new being, a new entity.

SI: Somewhat amid this, we have the Hurricane Sandy disaster. Tell us a little about the response there and managing that crisis.

AC: So, we had Hurricane Sandy in October of 2012, and, interestingly so, Bob Barchi had been onboard for maybe ten days. It was a short amount of time. He still didn't even know where the public safety building was at that point, and that's just [because] he was here such a short period of time. So, Hurricane Sandy, when that happened, I was not in the position that I have now, so I was not the Emergency Management Coordinator for Sandy. That was a different vice president, who was in charge of public safety. I was simply in charge of facilities. I was also on vacation, on a cruise, and spent an inordinate amount of time from the deck of a ship and from, I remember, the US Virgin Islands on the phone, coordinating my end of what needed to be coordinated. Thank God, there's really no time difference, so that was good. [laughter] I can tell you that on one day alone, my cell phone bill was about 3,400 dollars. So, it was all the time on the phone coordinating everything that needed to be coordinated. Then, when I got back, soon after that, [I] had gotten completely, of course, into the fold. Once the airports were open, I was able to get back.

It was a lesson, again, that was learned, and I think, more important, the lessons learned from Sandy actually did carry through as we went forward. So, I think that there were a few things we did that we should've done differently. I think we should've looked at, like so many others, this storm coming and sent our students home versus sheltering them in place, because then we had a big problem. We had fifteen thousand students, and what are we going to do with fifteen thousand students for an extended period of time with nothing to do? That was an issue, from where I sat.

I think, as we looked at the different emergency systems we had in place, by way of power and those types of things, we learned some really valuable lessons that we were able to apply later and we did. So, we went and we took our cogen [cogeneration] plant, for instance, on the Busch Campus, and we can now black start the cogen plant, which means we can start the turbines, without needing electricity, on generator and power up a pretty good piece of the Busch Campus and keep our research operations up and running. We also were able to identify all the critical areas, like at SEBS [School of Environmental and Biological Sciences] that we just didn't know. We did not know. So, our preparation was not where it should have been, in my opinion, in many ways. Yet it was a good success story, because nobody got hurt or killed, and that, at the end of the day, is the most important outcome that we're looking for.

Then, we also entered into some agreements and housed people from outside of our community. You know, we did all of those things. It had a major impact, and most of the major impact really had to do with flooding, inability to get across the river, power outages were really the pieces that hurt us the worst. It wasn't as much of a loss of property that so many others suffered from, unfortunately. It was more about if we had been a little better prepared, we would've been that further ahead of the game. It's not to say we didn't have preparation. We had a plan. We enacted the plan. When you hit the worst storm in anybody's memory, there's always going to be things you can do better, and I think we discovered some of the things we could do better as we

move forward. We did. We actually did a deep dive into a lessons learned, a debrief, to understand what are the things we need to do, don't need to do, what type of ongoing training should we continue, which we already had started and were doing, so, you know, these tabletop exercises. Communications became a big problem. So, strengthening our communications system by way of a whole different set of radios that actually are in line with what the state police use, and that is something that we have to this day. So, we're able to be able speak across the entire state to all of our units as to what's happening in Camden and what's happening in New Brunswick.

If you notice too, over the years--and these are lessons learned, coming out of things like Sandy--we've developed better protocols around snow, always the bane of our existence. It's not easy to shut Rutgers University down, because of our patients, because of our research. It's just not easy. If you hit an exam week, for instance, what are you doing? So, you learn lessons about getting the word out, communicating to people early and often. Over the last three years or so, people get emails from me, the entire university, about, "This is what we're anticipating. This is what we're anticipating. This is what we're anticipating." Then, we make a call, to the best of our ability, whether we remain open or we shut down. Again, when you shut down and you have eighteen or nineteen-thousand beds, you need to be able to understand, what are you going to do with those students? So, the big snowstorms are easy. It's the little ones that are a problem. The six inches in a big burst, that's the problem. The ones that come overnight, but they start at two a.m., those are the problems. So, some of the other ones are a lot easier, but they're lessons learned and every one of them is an additional lesson that we have put into place.

Now, when we look at the pandemic, how do we treat snow moving forward, even when we'll have students here? We now know we can deliver online. Does that look entirely different at this point in time? It'll be interesting to see in a year from now, what will that look like? This winter is going to be, in my opinion, irrelevant, but in a year from now, when we get into something that's a little more set.

Then, the other thing we do a lot of drills with and for are these crisis situations by way of weather because climate change is making a difference, whether we like to admit it or don't. Just last week, with [Hurricane] Isaias that came through, when we look at a week before that--or maybe two--we had Tropical Storm Fay that came through, so I think we're going to see more and more and more of these and I think we need to continue to harden our infrastructure and our processes more and more and more. I'm [going to] work with our emergency people to do that, because the bottom line is we need to keep people safe here. In some ways, our luck was, over these last two storms, there's nobody really here, but that's not going to be forever. That'll change as well. So, this is the best time to prepare for them to understand what it is that we need to do. Sometimes, [it's] as simple as shutting down Voorhees Mall in anticipation of a storm, because those elms are old and that canopy creates a lot of damage when a storm blows through. Before somebody gets killed and gets hit on the head with something, it's literally tape it off and shut it down. Five years ago, that's not what we would've done or even thought about doing.

SI: Paul, go ahead.

PC: The first half of this is not a question, but then it leads into a question. When I was writing my book, even after it was published, I kept abreast of what was going on and I did go and look at what had been said about Sandy. There was a big report that was done, and significant parts of it were redacted. That's not the question. The question is, since it was redacted, you cannot share the whole thing with other universities, and one of the things that seems to be an element of public life today for universities is they all watch what their peers are doing. I was wondering, what is the policy reason behind redacting? Does that really limit your ability to talk to, say, the University of Maryland or North Carolina or some other eastern coastal university who might be facing the same types of problems that you are at Rutgers?

AC: I actually don't know why portions--I just don't recall, so I'll be up front about that--why there were portions that were redacted of that report.

PC: I actually do not want to talk about that a lot because I assume it is upper level.

AC: Right.

PC: But I am interested in how this material gets shared with other universities. It came to mind when I was reading a redacted report. I would think if I worked with the University of Maryland in particular--they're in the Big Ten and all that--I would want to see what Maryland did about Sandy. I would like to see what Rutgers did about Sandy if I was Maryland, that sort of thing.

AC: Right. We do that with the human contact. So, our contacts in these universities, we have a lot of conversation, as one might think, and we look for what are the best practices? Again, we talked about that not too long ago, about what are our best practices? What are you guys doing? Where are you going with this? In that setting, the information flows freely. There's no holding back on pretty much anything, except maybe the combination to the safe. Aside from that, you do have these free-flowing conversations, picking off what the best ideas are and how our peers and our colleagues move those ideas forward. So, it literally is in a verbal format in those types of conversations.

PC: Did you have any discussions with Maryland or some other school like that when this was happening or after this was over?

AC: In this pandemic?

PC: No, about the earlier Sandy stuff, in other words.

AC: I did not personally have it, but I have had it during other situations that arise, "How are you handling this situation?" When we look at--and this applies to a number of things--social unrest and what's going on, how are you looking at this and how are you handling this? What are some of the approaches or strategies you may be putting into place? I've come to fully

understand that the more informed we are, the better off we are, because hope is not a strategy, although some may think so. The more preparation we can do, the better off we are.

I will tell you also that with Covid-19, that has not been as much, because everyone is reinventing, inventing, reinventing, inventing, reinventing the wheel every day. I've seen more on Listservs of colleagues, "Where are you going with enrollment?" or whatever it might be than actually debating or having conversations about what strategies could be put into place. I think that's because of the nature of this evolving so quickly. There just wasn't time to catch up to understanding what others were doing.

SI: The 2030 master plan was developed and approved in, I think, the mid-2010s. How did that take shape from your perspective, and how has it reshaped your role in some way?

AC: It was actually done in 2015, '15 or '16. It might have been as late as '16, when it was approved by the board. So, we're going into our fifth year, and we have about two more years before I would say we need to do a refresh, a complete refresh. So, that plan began with a strategic plan that Bob Barchi had developed with the community, and the strategic plan, of course, spoke to academics primarily in what we were aspiring to, what we wanted to be. Then, the 2030 was really to back feed the strategic plan. We understood what we wanted. We went out and looked for consultants that could head this up and marshal the resources for us. We met with an enormous amount of community members. We were really very transparent at every turn about every piece of that plan. Once it was up and running and approved and even before that, we had started to operationalize some of what needed to be in there and some of the things we wanted to do.

There was a lot of inclusivity in 2030. That's not to say everybody agreed with everything. It's just a lot of inclusivity. What I loved about 2030 was it wasn't a physical master plan. It's on there, but the reality is it was all about how does the university operate? Where are we going as a university supporting that academic plan, the aspirations of where the university wants to be? I'll give you an example of that. One thing that we did from there was try and align the transportation system with the registration system with the housing system, so put all of these together to understand how to move students. Here's the stupidity, for instance, you're housing your first-year students primarily on Livingston and you've got two of these major courses, "English 101" and "Math 101" on Cook. You're taking them from the furthest points to get them there, versus why don't you move those courses to Livingston? This way, nobody has to get on a bus. They could walk to the course. So, if you could accomplish that and you're knocking off fifty percent of your students from having to get on those buses to get over there, you're taking the stress off the system in a very big way. Those were the types of things that were embedded in 2030 that really, in my opinion, make the difference more than a building makes the difference.

It's how are you operationalizing, operating the university, in support of what the university is doing. That includes things like not just moving people around, but it includes taking a good hard look at how do you deliver, beginning--the irony--of looking at how do you deliver

instruction remotely. Not all over, because I'm a very strong believer that the university experience cannot be replicated sitting in your bedroom or living room. It just can't. I also can believe that we can take some pressure off some of the places where we need to take the pressure off. So, I will tell you, I'm a proponent in that we need to get smaller. I don't mean we need to get smaller by way of students or faculty or even staff. We need to get smaller by way of footprint. We're just too darned big and it eats up too much money, and that money should be invested in students. It shouldn't be invested in buildings that are obsolete and really not doing us any favors.

So, I think that strategies that call for a better mix of how we deliver instruction, how we move students, will lead to us being able to make a better investment in academics. If it costs us ten dollars to run and two dollars is in a building and we can move those two dollars into students, we're not losing the ten dollars. It's just moving the two dollars to a better place, way better than--and I'll use the same example--keeping Records Hall up and running. It's just we're too big in too many places. I'm a believer too that we stifle some of the communities, the cities that we're in, because of our size. Again, we're eating up a lot of good ratables that we shouldn't be eating up. That does not do our partners in these cities, as they look to move the needle on economic development for themselves, it doesn't do them any favors by eating up properties that they would be better served using. That comes back to my hat in economic development and public partnerships--I actually call them private-private-public partnerships--in how do you monetize some of these assets? It still does us a lot of good, but it does that city a lot of good as well and a public or private entity a lot of good.

SI: Just going back to your personal education, you eventually got a master's from La Salle.

AC: I did.

SI: When did you go back to that, and how do you think that shaped your thinking?

AC: Well, that was a ten-year endeavor, I think, at a number of places. [laughter] So, it's a little bit of a different training and more professional, and by then I was already embedded in a career. So, ideas and thought processes that came up there I was able to better use in what I was looking to try and do with my career. The public sector was always more my passion. I didn't go back for an MBA, because I liked the public sector. I liked public administration. I liked being in the public. I never expected to be a millionaire. That was fine by me, and I think we can do good for people in the public sector. So, it helped me in how I thought about things as we pushed forward. It wasn't all about monetization. It wasn't all about stock price. It was how do we take what we're using, what we have, and how do we make that better for the communities that we're in? Or on a bigger scale, how do we translate that into policies that are meaningful? So, I'm able to look at that and keep an open mind as to some of the things that we do and try not to get pigeonholed, which is something that, unfortunately, in the public sector happens too often. They write restrictive policy that pigeonholes them in a place that doesn't allow for any flexibility. I understand, because flexibility allows for people taking advantage, but there's a fine line you kind of need to find somewhere in there.

SI: I am curious, in the biography that we got to look at before the interviews, it says you are the leading expert on deferred maintenance. Can you tell us what role that plays in your work?

AC: Over the years--and that kind of comes from--we have many other institutions, whether in the State of New Jersey or across the country, that call and say, "Some of the strategies that we put into place in order to address deferred maintenance ..." Many times, institutions look at the strategy for deferred maintenance, "Give me money, and I can fix it." Typically, that's about the only one that doesn't work, because no one is going to give you money until there is a crisis. When there's a crisis in a building because something happened, because ten people got shipped off to a hospital with Legionnaire's disease, all of a sudden, then that's when you're going to get money.

You need to start looking at how do we attack it? First of all, we need to start looking at how it gets defined. Typically, traditionally, deferred maintenance gets defined by an asset that has now outlived its useful life, and who defines useful life? The company that gave you the asset. That's who defines useful life. So, you take a chiller from a HVAC system, and the company says to you, "This is in its ..." the way it creates its maintenance schedules and all of that good stuff, they say, "This has got a ten-year lifespan or a fifteen-year lifespan." In your database, you put in your ten-year lifespan or your fifteen-year lifespan. When it gets to year eight, nine, or it gets to year thirteen, fourteen, the flag goes up and says, "You're not fixing it. You're not replacing it." It now goes on the list of deferred maintenance. So, that billion-dollar list, is it really a billion dollars, or is that list really a quarter of a billion dollars? Good maintenance prolongs the life of equipment. What it does not do is create efficiency in the equipment. So, there is a tradeoff. A new chiller is going to be much more efficient than a fifteen-year-old chiller that works phenomenally well. So, you have to determine what the value added is here. Is the tradeoff enough that that really should be replaced, or is the tradeoff minimal and you will continue to go along with this? That's a piece. Number one, define it, and then define how it works for you. That doesn't happen in a lot of places.

So, I have a lot of conversations with a lot of different entities and have presented at conferences about how do you do this? Then, how do you strategize around what's the most important piece here? How do you fund it? There are a number of different ways. One, it becomes part of a larger project, which is typically your best bet in getting something funded. It's almost like the old, going back to my political science days, the old, "Let's attach it to the bill," the earmarks. So, you attach it to something that's happening, because you need to make sure that that does happen. You look for a private-public partnership, and it might be larger. You might be looking at utilities in an area, and you're going to do the whole thing and you're going to work with a public or a private entity to pay this off in the longer term. Then, I have a lot of experience in how those are done. Or, you look to just retire the asset in its entirety, which means the entire building, because, typically, where are these? These are in buildings that probably have outlived their useful life as well. So, there are a number of strategies--that a lot of the bigger universities now all look at, because we all talk to each other, of course, over the years, but midsize and

smaller, those are the ones that struggle mightily with this as well--that they can absolutely put in place, that really, really starts to speak to that deferred maintenance.

Typically, what I find--and think about the size that we are--it's not deferred maintenance that typically becomes the problem. It's pockets of issues that kind of bubble up and blow up, and it almost always is a series of pieces that fall into play that just frustrate the living heck out of people. So, I could probably go through half a dozen buildings where this comes to mind, and this never fails. So, you've got a control system in a building for a HVAC system that something's off. It's not working right. It keeps shutting things down when it shouldn't. It keeps raising temperatures when it shouldn't. Sometimes, this is software related, and we have to go through that and try and figure out, "What the heck is this? What's going on?" It takes time. Then, when that happens, almost always, there's some roof leak that happens, and because it shut some things down, it's the middle of winter, three pipes burst, because they froze. I have to tell you, it almost never happens just once. [laughter] It's usually like three months of these types of things until we can figure out what the heck and get it straightened out, but it feels, for occupants, like a year. It might be a month, but it feels like a year. Then, what'll happen is, we'll have occupants who have been in the building a long time, and it brings back memories of this having happened ten years ago. A good example of this is SMLR (School of Management and Labor Relations on Livingston Campus, Janice Levin Building) when it was first put up, we had terrible HVAC problems, and it was a series of issues, not the least of which were that the building had skylights, and the thermostats, the sun would actually hit the skylights. Nobody ever set the thermostats. Nobody picked up on that, as they're building the building. So, it took time to shake the building out. For years, every time we had one call, it would be, "This building is terrible. It doesn't work." Typically, it was something had to be reset. It wasn't a major issue. What'll happen early on in new buildings, specifically, is if it gets labelled, you almost need to go through a generation of people to get the label back off. So, to answer your question, deferred maintenance is something I've done a lot of work on and consulted a lot, not for money, but consulted a lot with colleagues and peers to help them to get the strategies that might be better for them than the ones that they're using.

SI: Well, I think we want to discuss Covid-19 in more depth, but I am curious, in between Sandy and Covid, were there any other crises? I have looked through *The Targum* and there are other issues that come out, but from your perspective, what do you think was the biggest crisis in between?

AC: So, we had a big issue on the Cook Campus, at one point, with the electricity, and it turned out to be--no one would ever believe--an underground cable that was touched by a backhoe during construction. During a construction project, an underground cable was touched and it didn't break the cable, it didn't break the backhoe. It loosened a wire at the transformer just enough that months and months after the project was open and running, vibration, probably by a truck or something over time, the cable fell out, and no one could find it. It took us days to find what the problem was on the Cook Campus. So, that was one, because, again, we need to move people around. It becomes a big issue. We had the incident at the business school that, of course, was a tragedy that that happened. You know, crises are not always just bad events. I

also had the good fortune of heading up President Obama's commencement address ... [Editor's Note: In November 2016, a former student stabbed a faculty member and a student at the Rutgers Business School on Livingston Campus. In 2016, Rutgers University commemorated the 250th anniversary of Rutgers' founding with a year-long celebration. President Barack Obama delivered the commencement address on Sunday, May 15, 2016.]

SI: Yes, 2016.

AC: 2016. So, that's working towards something different. It's handled in the same way as a crisis is handled. It's the same strategies. The same protocols are put in place. It's all the same, except this is a lot more fun. You're getting to a better place. That was a big part, a big piece that really generated an enormous amount of excitement around the university and I personally am very proud of. It's, again, one of those events with fifty thousand people, where everybody walked away with, hopefully, a smile on their face, but more importantly, nobody got hurt and that's critical. We got a President of the United States in and out safely, and that's critical. When you take somebody and plopp them in a fifty-thousand-person event, it's much more difficult than when the person's there and you get a few around them. But it was good. It was a good experience. It was a great experience, and I fully enjoyed heading that up and doing that. So, that was a highlight of my career, I will tell you.

SI: Getting into Covid, from our perspective, it kind of went down in the first or second week of March, but how early were red flags going up that this was going to be a major issue?

AC: Second week of January. When we came back from break, we already had a number--I was not involved in these initial conversations because this happens, it's not uncommon--but I had my director of emergency management, Steve Keleman, already convening meetings of res [residence life], student life, international and global programs, student health. [We were] already having conversations because we had students, and this, for the most part, was two pronged, we had students who were on study abroad that were in China, were in Wuhan, China, and we had, of course, students that had come from Wuhan, China, international students. We had the rest of all that we had there. The second week of January, we came back, I guess, from break, and there were already meetings. I had been pretty much looped into these conversations that were going on, and January--I'm sorry, February--and having conversations with Brian Strom, who's [an] epidemiologist and well versed, of course, and infectious disease doctors at RBHS. It was clear that there was a problem, and a big problem in China. What was not clear was what the extent of the problem was, because information was sketchy at best and, I'm not making a judgement, wasn't reliable, the information that we were getting. So, that was a problem. [Editor's Note: Dr. Brian Strom serves as the inaugural Chancellor of Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences and is the Executive Vice President for Health Affairs at Rutgers University.]

I started to get really concerned towards the end of January, as reports were coming out more and more and more. On February 10th, a week before I would have asked for this, I convened the entire emergency operations team and brought them together to give them a briefing as to what

was happening in China, not knowing where are we going, but we do have a vested interest because we have international students with us, foreign nationals, and we have global students there. So, we have a very, very vested interest. We had a full, all-hands briefing, and we had a big conversation. Everybody understood that this could escalate quickly and that everybody needed to be on alert, that we may be pulling people back in a very short order.

I will tell you, two weeks later, which would put us in the middle of February, towards the end of February--yes, actually, I think it was about a Wednesday or a Thursday--the outbreak in Italy happened. For whatever reason, that's what I was looking at. We knew China, we heard China, but how reliable was China? But when overnight Italy had sixty cases and they became 260 cases and they had no deaths and it became sixth deaths--this was like from a Wednesday to a Thursday or Tuesday to a Wednesday--I immediately, for Friday the 28th of February, called the entire emergency operations personnel back and we activated our emergency operations plan. So, we had dealt with pandemics. We had Ebola. We had a number of issues. We had the bird flu. So, we had dealt with pandemics. Of course, nothing to this, but it was still pandemics. So, that day, [we] created fourteen teams led by senior university managers, administrators, and they, in turn, probably pulled in another two hundred people. We assigned tasks to every team, identified tasks. Teams were asked to identify those tasks that they felt they had to look at and talk about. We put a cadence of meetings in place, and then we put a governance structure in place. So, that all reports to me. I report to the president. The president, his immediate cabinet are the chancellors. That's the governance structure.

Interesting, from that day forward, from February 28th, then it broke as quickly as quick could come. In fifteen calendar days, we literally had brought the whole university down, brought it to a standstill in every which way. So, we worked with some guiding principles. We met every day. Every day, we had a meeting. Then, I would have a meeting with a chancellors, subsequent to that meeting, in the height of what was going on. Then, once a week, we would have a meeting with all of the deans, directors, and vice presidents, and everybody else.

So, the three principles we looked at were that time was not on our side. We knew we had to keep moving it. We just had to. We had a laser focus on depopulating the campuses. In order to flatten the curve, that's where we had to get. I would preach every day, "Just don't let the perfect be the enemy of the good." Sometimes good is good enough. We need to move on. You just can't cross every "T" and dot every "I" because we don't have the time to do that. The reality is we were not closing. We had to continue. We still had healthcare we were delivering on a regular basis. We had research we were delivering. We had to support the remote curriculum, and we turned that around. We had three thousand students in New Brunswick alone still living with us that had nowhere to go, international students, housing people who had no homes to go to, and we had to feed them. It was as this system was just kind of coming to an end, and now people are running super scared, just super scared.

We had to turn around eighteen thousand spring sections, eighteen thousand spring sections, that now had to go remote. We had students that had limited access to internet, sitting on the front porch of Alexander Library trying to catch internet on a laptop. Sometimes, we didn't even have

laptops, so we bought two or three thousand laptops to hand out, both to staff to go remote and to students who needed them. So, we were sucking up equipment everywhere we could find it.

We absolutely discovered, interestingly, that in the end, how weak the supply chain really was. Whether we were looking at PPE [personal protective equipment], whether we were looking at things like laptops and trying to pick those up in bulk, so was everybody else and no shipments were coming from anywhere and factories are now quickly closing as well. So, we recognized right away, "This is a big deal."

I know some dates that kind of stick out in my mind. March 17th, we had sent everybody home, and we were making decisions quickly, very quickly. So, on March 17th, that was a day that was quite interesting, because that was the day that we had to let our graduating seniors know that there would not be a commencement. I have participated in commencement for years and years and years, and it is one of the biggest days. It's, of course, our day, but it is the biggest days for our graduates, because so many of our graduates are first generation. When you see that joy of their parents and them, you can't help but to be happy for them, because it's so critically important to these families. Not being able to celebrate that, I thought that was brutal.

We continued to make these decisions. We continued to get everybody off the campus, to depopulate as much as we could. I think we were highly successful at making that happen, in my humble opinion, but it was a yeoman's work and it could never have been accomplished without these fourteen teams. I mean, the academic affairs team had to go back, they had to find a way to go remote with the provosts on every campus and then including the deans, and how are we going to do this in like a week? We gave people like a week's notice. How is this going to happen? What resources can we put in play? What are the things that can happen here? When you look at HR, we are not built for telecommuting. We're just not built for that. Well, the university is not built for not having a setting where we're all congregating with each other. So, we're not built for telecommuting. You've got to figure out, how do we do this? How do we make this viable and productive for people to happen? OIT had to understand, on that day, when we flipped that switch on coming back from spring break to go all remote, are we going to crash all these systems? This is eighteen-thousand sections we're going to run this week. How is this going to happen when we do this? Are we going to crash our mainframe, our IT systems?

Then, all the meetings that were happening, these teams worked tirelessly to make this as seamless as possible--I mean, tirelessly--and the dedication was just beyond the pale. I can't begin to tell you how hard these fourteen team leads worked, I mean, just incredibly, incredibly hard, and the logistics. The days went from days to nights through weekends; it didn't really matter. You were just always on the phone and always meeting.

Interestingly, on March 27th was the last scheduled [meeting] I had determined. By now, everybody was off the campus, except for our essential workers. We had pretty much brought everything down to where we couldn't get it, really, any flatter on the campuses, and this was Newark and Camden, RBHS, all of them. We were still having some meetings here, one of which we would do down in the boardroom of Winants, appropriately very socially distanced.

This is also pre-masks, pre-face coverings. That day, I wasn't feeling all that well, but I had already determined earlier in the week that this was going to be the last in-person one and from here forward, we would be doing regular Webex or Zoom, but it was Webex meetings, versus in person. We were already doing it both ways. Really, it was buttoning things up. So, I wasn't feeling all that well, and by the time the meeting was done, I kind of left here. It was an eight a.m. meeting. I kind of left here; it was probably midday at the latest.

By Sunday morning, the 29th, I was in the hospital. I had contracted the virus, and by Sunday night, I was literally fighting for my life. I was in critical condition. I had double pneumonia. I had fever of 104, and they had to ice me down twice. The choice was ventilator, or what they were kind of experimenting at this point with, because it was all experimenting, you know, what are we fooling around with here? What they were looking at, the medical professionals, at this point, was something called a high flow machine, which is masked and then you're blowing air. So, it's a hundred percent oxygen at sixty liters. If you think about those little portable oxygen things, that's like two or three liters. This is sixty liters and blowing this pure oxygen through your lungs to see if they can get somewhere. So, I was on that for four or five days, and my blood oxygen levels had fallen into the seventies. I mean, you don't want to get below ninety. So, I was convinced that I was going to die. I actually Facetimed my family, because no one's allowed to see you. So, I Facetimed my family to say goodbye, because I didn't think I'd make it coming out of that. But through a lot of great medical care, prayer and hope, here I am to tell you the story.

I was in for a week. I came home still on oxygen. I lost fourteen pounds in a week, and that's about the only--now, I don't really have any--that I'm aware of--any side effects. I don't know if there's any long-term issues, but this is where I am now. So, I was home. By then, everybody's home. Now, people are wearing face coverings. From there, I was home for about a week, and then I started to reengage, because I was bored out of my mind. [laughter] You can do that from a laptop in a bedroom. Probably the second week, I started to take back what I had been involved with, and then we started to cut back on the meeting times, the dates, we didn't need so many. We were still cleaning things up, still putting policies in place, still expanding, and we still are.

Then, what we did, in the middle of April, I spoke to Bob and I spoke to the chancellors, and I said, "Now, we need to pivot ..." probably early to mid-April, no, mid-April, because that's when I came back, "We need to pivot to planning for the fall semester." So, they agreed. We brought the team together and said, "What is it that we need to do to reopen in the fall?" So, I will tell you, in my mind, because you make some assumptions, you think about what will this look like--and this wasn't a big deal at that point in time, people weren't really talking about it--I was thinking, "This'll be a hybrid, and what we'll do is ramp up." So, it'll be a hybrid, start as a hybrid. When we get to somewhere in the middle to later October, we'll start bringing more onto campus, maybe start populating dorms a little bit more, so that by the spring, we'll be seventy-five to a hundred percent. So, that's where I thought we were and I thought we would get, and we had some conversations.

I could tell you by the beginning of May--our team had two weeks to pull this all together--the beginning of May, we had a brainstorming session, and it was clear as a bell to me, clear as day, that we weren't opening in September. What it would take for us to do that was too dangerous. We could not keep people safe. We just couldn't. So, as I saw more and more of these schools with their plans, I would think to myself, "How are you doing that? How are you doing that?" Even if we populated our dorms in New Brunswick to half population, and that would still be 7,500 kids--you know what, let's say five thousand, even five thousand--and then they go home on weekends and they're taking this back to their mothers and fathers and grandma and grandpa and aunts and uncles. I'm thinking, "We're going to be super spreader. There's no way we can do this. We can't control this environment." Well, you might appreciate this, one of the issues that came up was, "Well, the faculty's not going to want to come back in this environment." I actually had not thought that, and I thought, "Yes, yes, that's a problem."

In the beginning of May, I had already made the decision and, ultimately, conveyed to the chancellors and Bob that certainly no later than the first week in May, going into the second week of May, that we needed to shut down. We needed to go fully remote, with some exceptions, things you can't do remote. It was also critically important from where I stood that we not delay time to graduation. If there's lab courses or something along those lines, we would need to figure out how to do that.

This also became important to Mason Gross, because the conversation I had with the Office of the Secretary of Higher Ed recently, they had banned performing arts, and I said, "Mason Gross is a conservatory. This is not an easy three-credit elective in dance that someone's going to go do at every other college and university in New Jersey. This is a conservatory. You only have so long to be able to make this happen," and think about dancers, think about ballerinas. Even the career is not going to be long. So, those are some of the conversations we had. We knew early on that we just needed time to put all the processes in place, develop that whole returning to Rutgers document, give people guidance and guidelines and understanding in how we would do this and how we'd bring people back safely.

Then, of course, we're in the middle of a presidential transition, and that certainly added another dynamic. Jonathan [Holloway], I had briefed him early and often and was aware of where we were, but there's a dynamic there. Jonathan and Bob certainly worked well together. That was never an issue when it came to this, but there were a lot of moving parts. Then, the determination was to make an announcement, a general announcement. Unfortunately, because it would happen for September, Jonathan really needed to own all of this in the end. He was well briefed and understood and was in agreement, and that's how we unfolded to where we are. [Editor's Note: Jonathan Holloway began serving as the 21st President of Rutgers University on July 1, 2020.]

I could also tell you that within the next two weeks, we're going to put the fall semester to bed. We're going to undergo the same process for the spring semester, to figure out what it is we're going to do in the spring, knowing what we know and knowing the unknowns, because we do know the unknowns. That's where we'll be. So, this process starts all over again. Again, I can't

say enough about the people that I've worked with that have just been phenomenal in making all of this happen.

SI: Paul, did you have a follow up?

PC: Could you give us any sense on an individual level, other than your own incredibly moving story about yourself, any of the sort of personal crises that you were aware of as this was all unfolding that shaped your energy and your desire to get things fixed as best as they can be fixed?

AC: Yes. In addition to myself, I came home from the hospital on a Sunday, and my mother-in-law, who was in a nursing home, passed away from Covid on Tuesday. So, I had a number of acquaintances and friends who did pass away. I also had a number, coming out of HR, that was incredibly high, of family members of employees, typically spouses, who had passed away, and understanding one of the ugliest pieces of this is you pass away alone. There's no visitors allowed.

My wife drove me to the hospital at seven a.m. on Sunday morning. I go into the emergency room. They take me to a certain [room]; they had a room, actually, not a hospital room, but a room in the emergency room. They take me there, and they send my wife home. That's the last time I see her, except through Facetime. You're alone. You are completely isolated, in a room, on lockdown, and a nurse comes in three or four times a day to look at the vitals and your food is kind of passed into you and that's all on paper trays. No one even picked up the garbage, because no one wants to go in that room because you're akin to a leper. So, you watch the clock, in my case, those classroom clocks [laughter] right in front of me, and the worst time is, of course, midnight to six a.m., because you could watch the seconds go by and just go by, tick, tick, tick. That's all you can do. It is a horrific experience. So, understanding what some of these individuals were going through, because I had that firsthand personal knowledge, it gives you a sense of scale, scope, understanding that this can happen to anybody. I had no underlying conditions. I went to the gym five and six days a week. There wasn't like there was something inherently wrong with me. It happened to me, and it took me down in a matter of a day. It just took me down; it crushed me. Seeing a number of my acquaintances pass away, it just gives you a sense of, "We need to move fast. We just need to move fast," and then, on the upside, we need to keep people safe.

My thinking, again, was not so much about the students. I knew we could keep employees fairly safe. Nothing's foolproof, but we had enough protections in place that we could do that. We had a good plan in place to keep them safe. But the cohort of students is not a cohort like people in their fifties, sixties, seventies. That's true. I mean, the science proves that, but, again, my thought process was with their parents and grandparents and what are you taking when you go back. You're not wearing a mask in your house, and if you've got two generations and you living in the house, there's no doubt you're going to spread this. We see this every day. You see the numbers, these super spreader events where people weren't wearing masks. Students, we're not going to keep them apart. That's not going to happen. We can keep them apart in our buildings,

but they're certainly not going to be apart on a party on Easton Avenue. We can't patrol that, we can't police that, and that was the scary part for me. How do you keep people safe in that environment, because they're going to take that right back home? Right back home. I couldn't even imagine, in some instances, as I saw some of my colleagues, using that old metaphor, the bell rings, everybody gets up, and rushes out of the classroom. How do you stop that, like, "Wait a minute. Wait, wait, wait, until your six-foot turn comes." I don't even know how we would do that in a traditional lecture hall-type setting.

PC: If we are only talking about, let's say, the three thousand students who had to stay on campus longer than others because they literally had no place to go and the facilities people, in particular, who continued to go into buildings to clean them and presumably have, occasionally, over time, since March, how many people do we know actually got sick at Rutgers? Is there any way to put a number on that?

AC: Well, I can give you the recent number. So, we've done over ten thousand tests at Rutgers of employees. Our rate is about point-three percent. We don't have any number that is literally attributable to having contracted the disease here. So, I will say this. After March, mid-March, everybody went home, and only the three thousand and essential personnel were left on campus. It's interesting, because the three thousand had nowhere to go, and they were kind of spread out amongst the campuses and the dorms. It was almost lockdown, because where were you going to go? The kids in the homes, there were no parties; they were all gone. That all was done. So, they were kind of stuck there, literally, kind of stuck there. The staff had minimal interaction with students that were still here, except for staff, for instance, at the health centers. That would be different. Facilities staff, for the most part, they only clean common areas in dorms. We don't clean rooms in dorms. If we need to clean a room, there's a whole set of protocols that come into play; it's a whole different ball of wax.

Since re-standing up, and I would say that would be beginning in May, later May, when we started to get into testing, early June, specifically when research started to come back, then we started to reopen, we brought the testing onboard, again, about ten thousand tests since then and with an infection rate of about point-three-two or point-three-one, I think was the last--I just saw this number maybe two or three days ago. So, we've done a good job of containing and holding it down, and that's the key. We have to continue to do that job of containing and holding it down. We'll actually have less students here in dorms than we did in the spring after depopulation. So, we'll probably have about half that number. We may be looking at 1,500-1,600 students total in all of New Brunswick and Piscataway, again, really around housing insecure and internationals. We have internationals that never left, because they can't get back, unfortunately, with the way that the visa rules are today and then what country are you coming from and countries that are still banned coming in.

PC: Another follow-up question. It's played out in the press what has happened with the football program and more generally with all the sports. Did your committees have any input in the thinking that went on officially or unofficially about what Rutgers' position should be on continuing fall sports?

AC: No, that actually is at the president's level, and it would be the president with the presidents of the other Big Ten schools and the commissioner and the athletic director. I know that there was, I believe it was the athletic directors of the Big Ten schools and the commissioner, I think there's actually a daily phone call. With the presidents, I think it was two or three times a week they've been speaking as well. So, that's all at that level. The committees don't have anything to do with that. It was a decision early on, whether it was here, Division I in New Brunswick, or whether it was Division III in Newark or Camden, that for those decisions, we would look at the guidance of the conferences, and then pretty much they were led by that guidance. That's absent our ability to be able to really understand, you know, it's an animal of and onto itself, so to speak. I don't mean that in a bad way.

PC: Just one quick follow up, which may be way outside what you know about. Would it be fair to assume that if the president was working in this group of the athletic director, the president, the Big Ten conference commissioner, all that stuff, was he talking to Brian Strom on the side to get the epidemiology sort of input for this?

AC: We have two groups that meet. We have the team leads, which are the teams I spoke to you about, which, with some staff members, it's probably seventeen or eighteen people that meet. We meet on a weekly basis now. Then, there's a bigger working group that includes the president, so that's what we call the Emergency Operations Command Center working group. That includes the president, the chancellors, the provosts, so it's a bigger group of about thirty-five that meets every two weeks. The expectation is team leads, of course, talk to the chancellors, and I brief the president regularly--and including Brian Strom. He is very much in tune with what the science is, what epidemiologists are looking at, what the trend lines look like, what the predictions that are out there talk to. So, yes, I can say with confidence that he is well aware and understanding what's happening and what's going on.

SI: Go ahead, Paul. Did you have another question Paul?

PC: No, I do not, at this point.

SI: Well, obviously, as a result of this pandemic, we have also had this kind of unprecedented financial crisis. How has that complicated both the emergency management aspect and then your regular duties as well?

AC: My colleague, Mike Gower, who's the CFO, anything that has to deal with or has had to deal with health and safety, there's been no penny pinching. Somewhere, we have to find that money. There's no doubt about that. But the reality is that we have taken a phenomenally large financial hit. Universities aren't run on a big margin. It just doesn't happen that way. We run on a half a point to a point in a good year. Much of our revenue is restricted, as one could imagine. You can't just take from Peter to pay Paul; it doesn't work that way. [Editor's Note: J. Michael Gower is the Executive Vice President, Chief Financial Officer and University Treasurer at Rutgers.]

One of our biggest revenue generators, of course, is always the auxiliaries. That's every university. That may have taken one of the biggest hits of all. Our housing debt service alone, it's a little over forty-nine million dollars a year, fifty million dollars a year. With no revenue coming in, you still need to make that payment. So, we've burned through the reserves and used that up. We're looking at this year probably, for fiscal year '21, a two hundred-million-dollar hole in our budget that needs to be closed in some way, shape or form. It's a very delicate balancing act.

Then, there's another issue, so there's two issues. We want to do right by our employees. We really want to do right. Our employees are part of a larger family. I'm not talking about the Rutgers family, but their families that sit behind them, with benefits and all those good things that we can offer. So, we want to do what's right. By actually doing a furlough program in some areas, I think that that's been somewhat or even highly successful, because we've not actually had to lay people off.

Part of the problem that we now encounter, in some areas, is we don't have work. When you shut all your dining halls down, you don't have work for dining hall workers. Facilities, when there's no one here, again, there's only so much work you can have for custodians, because there's not enough people here. You're employing hundreds of people as custodians. The thought process was, of course, September you're going to come back up, these employees all would come up, but that's just not happening.

So, there's a lot of pressure on us to try and figure out how to close those holes, and the biggest expense we can cut back on, at this point in time, is really our labor. Then, how do we work with labor to get to the best place we can get to? That's the only thing we could potentially do. We loathe to have permanent layoffs of people, because how does that help the greater good and the greater economy? I mean, we are still part of the greater good in the State of New Jersey. We're also the second largest employer in the State of New Jersey.

This has been a real struggle to get somewhere that everybody can live with, understanding what it is that we're going through. The "we" is just bigger than just us. It's the economy at large, and it's businesses at large and other colleges and universities at large. Unlike K-12s, I find it interesting when they start crying poverty because everybody's still paying their property taxes and that's how they get funded. Don't cry poverty to us. When your enrollment is down, when your auxiliaries are wiped out, wiped out, in their entirety, that's a big piece. We have over 220 million dollars in auxiliary revenue a year. We're down to nothing, nothing, and the expenses are all still there, even the people expenses. For the most part, we haven't let the people go, for the most part. We're working with people to make things happen. But the only auxiliary that we have open, fortunately, is the golf course now, and with social distancing, we've got about half the tee times. [laughter] That's it.

SI: Paul, do you have other questions about the Covid crisis?

PC: No, I do not think so.

SI: Okay. Well, I kind of envision us coming back for a follow up somewhere down the road.

AC: Sure.

SI: Hopefully, this crisis will be behind us sometime next year, but there will be more to talk about, I am sure, as more unfolds. Is there anything that we missed that you would like to add, anything we skipped?

AC: There are a lot of lessons here to be learned. I think if we, in a very smart and strategic way, apply the best of those lessons as we move forward, Rutgers will come out a better place in the end. We just have to get there.

PC: I want to ask a follow-up question to the interview process. Would you prefer to stop the recording?

SI: Yes, I will conclude. Thank you both, and we will hopefully resume with a third session sometime in the future.

AC: Well, thank you.

-----END OF TRANSCRIPT-----

Transcribed by Jesse Braddell 10/25/2020
Reviewed by Zach Batista 12/21/2020
Reviewed by Kathryn Tracy Rizzi 2/8/2021
Reviewed by Antonio Calcado 2/25/2021