

R.I.P., DOUGLASS COLLEGE POLITICAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT by Roy Licklider

In 1968 I was hired at Douglass College. The Douglass department was quite separate from the much larger one at Rutgers College on the College Avenue Campus, but I was familiar with the Pomona system in California and the Five Colleges in Massachusetts which struck me as useful ways to combine the advantages of a small college with a larger institution. I grew up in Colorado and Arizona where state universities were important institutions, and I thought that Eastern state schools might be able to grow out of their inferior status to the private universities given the increased number of students. I wasn't so keen on a women's college, but I became a convert (which was just as well since my wife and daughter each attended one).

In 1968 the department consisted of five full-time faculty. Neil McDonald was the chair, a political theorist, and the only senior member. Harvey Waterman and Steve Salmore were already there, finishing their dissertations at Chicago and Princeton respectively. Bob Kaufman from Harvard was replacing Doug Chalmers who had been raided by Columbia, and I was from Yale and a year in Mississippi to replace Jim Rosenau, a senior international relations scholar who had just been named New Brunswick Chair of Political Science, a position whose title proved rather grander than its authority. Barbara Salmore, Steve's wife, was a Rutgers graduate student and T.A. who became effectively a sixth member of the department, at least until the nepotism rules were invoked later. The dominant figure in the department was Ruth Bennett, the department secretary who could easily have run a major corporation and handled us with mildly tough love.

We were a tight and friendly group. I was the only single person, and we all lived close to campus so socializing was natural and easy. The behavioral revolution was in full swing, and our graduate educations had been quite different; we learned from one another. This process was

facilitated by our unusual curriculum: a single, year-long introductory course, essentially a comparative course that included the United States (which, of course, is how comparative should be taught). There was no lecture; each of us had one section (or sometimes more—we were on three course loads), and we had to agree on the basic approach and most of the assigned readings. The framework was structural functionalism—the notion that all governments have to perform the same functions but do so in different ways. You don't hear much about this approach now, which is probably just as well, but it was a great way to organize a course, and it produced an ongoing discussion of undergraduate teaching which brought us together and has no parallel today. Most other courses had low enrollments—when my introductory international relations course reached fifty I felt swamped!

I had a particular issue with teaching that course. The Yale department believed at that time that it was possibly the best in the country (Putnam and Axelrod were in the class behind me), and we were pretty cocky. But when preparing for comprehensives the one book in international relations that intimidated us was a collection by Jim Rosenau of cutting edge articles. So when I met Jim on my recruitment trip, I told him so. He said he didn't understand since that was his syllabus for his introductory international relations course at Douglass!

As it happened, Jim taught that course for the last time my first semester. I took that course! I attended every lecture, took copious notes, and then walked down the hall with about half the students to teach my American foreign policy course to them. They thought it was pretty funny, and my later version of that course didn't look like Jim's, but I learned that you need to challenge students but also give them security and that they learn by doing.

The Douglass physical environment also encouraged interdisciplinary discussion. Political science occupied most of the sixth floor of Hickman, with American Studies tucked in

one of the double corner offices. History was on the fifth floor, English on the fourth, philosophy on the third, and we taught all our courses on the first two floors. Faculty met one another in the elevators and hallways, and the technologies of the time encouraged us to work in our offices rather than at home. Undergraduates poured through the building at all levels. The contrast with the current situation could not be more extreme.

I had no warning of the high level of conflict that we would face outside of our little department. My job interview seemed fairly normal—I gave a talk about my dissertation at a lunch attended by faculty of Rutgers College as well as Douglass and then talked individually to members of the Douglass department. I asked about teaching a graduate course and was told that it would happen. I was later told that the luncheon format had not been followed before and that Bob and I were the first junior faculty to have been promised graduate courses. What was going on?

Teaching political science at the time was challenging for political, intellectual, and technological reasons. Politically the country was in an uproar about Vietnam and civil rights, to the point where some officials of the Nixon Administration reportedly feared civil war. Like all males I had registered for the draft when I turned 18 in 1959 without thinking much about it. By 1963, when I graduated from college, Vietnam was becoming a serious issue. I decided that I wasn't going to volunteer but was going to do what I wanted to do; if the government wanted me, I would go. As it happened, I was deferred because of graduate school until I was 26 and effectively draft exempt. By this time it was 1967 and I was pretty clear I owed something to someone. I spent a few weeks debating whether to try to get into Marine Officers Candidate School (if I was going to be a killer I might as well be a good one) or teach in a Black college in the South. I finally decided that my fellowship money was better used in the classroom, a

decision which probably saved my life; a prep school roommate, stepson of the actor Jimmy Stewart, went the Marine route and was killed. Tougaloo College was not without its interesting moments; a bomb went off on campus shortly after classes started, I was called a homosexual on the front page of the Jackson newspaper (“that was no lady; that was our new assistant professor of political science from Yale”), and I had some interesting conversations with the FBI which was in the process of taking on the Klan. I arrived at Rutgers just in time to see federal troops suppressing riots in Newark and other cities and a ROTC building on College Avenue destroyed by arson, capped with debating closing the school in Voorhees Chapel after the Kent State killings with student demonstrators screaming from the balcony—it felt like the French Revolution! And grades were sometimes seen as life or death matters for young men since they might determine draft status.

Intellectually political science was working through the behavioral revolution. My dissertation had been a survey of civilians outside of government arguing nuclear strategy. The results were recorded on IBM punch cards—roughly a thousand--which had to be kept in the proper order for analysis. For much of this time we did our own programming. A single computer would often occupy a whole building, and the routine was that you would submit your program (also on punch cards) along with your data and return 24 hours later, usually to find that it had been rejected for some unstated reason which normally meant that one or more cards were defective or out of order. An alternative was a countersorter; Douglass had one on the first floor of Hickman, but it couldn't compute statistics. Steve Salmore somehow persuaded Neil to scrounge up \$3000 (the cost of a car in those days) to buy an electronic calculator which had programs to calculate statistics; of course he was the only one who could make it work.

Saying that there were three or four New Brunswick political science department was true but deceptive because the Rutgers College unit was so much larger than the others, at least until Livingston came up to full strength. A majority of the senior Rutgers College faculty were not happy with the changes in the discipline, the university, or in some cases the country and felt threatened. The graduate program was controlled by a Graduate Committee made up of senior faculty. Presumably because graduate courses were so difficult to teach, only senior faculty were allowed to teach them, and they received double teaching credit for doing so! About the time I came along a Combined Graduate Committee was created, including junior faculty, but it was only advisory to the Graduate Committee.

It took several years to break this system, and relations among faculty were often personally poisonous. Some of it concerned methodology; given my dissertation, it was disconcerting when a senior Rutgers faculty member said to me “You don’t really think numbers have anything to do with international relations, do you?” I regret that I wasn’t quick enough to suggest that numbers of soldiers and weapons did seem to have some relevance! We regarded the Rutgers College department as a snakepit and felt pity for the junior faculty like Ross Baker, Dick Mansbach, and Dick Lehne who had to put up with that atmosphere.

The system did change over the next few years. Some senior faculty (Gerry Pomper, Neil McDonald, Jim Rosenau, Dick Wilson, and Chuck Jacob prominent among them) worked very hard to make this happen. Gerry went from Rutgers to be the founding chair of the Livingston department and hired several senior faculty, including Gordon Schochet who had been denied tenure by Rutgers College! There was also some support from the University administration which supported centralization. But there were some very unpleasant years, and it made me determined to try to prevent such animosities from developing again.

Within the Douglass department, I always felt that Steve was the smartest, Harvey had the broadest intellectual reach, Bob was the most professional, and I was the one most focused on undergraduate teaching. Of course there were changes. We finally hired some women in the Douglass department, Sandy Kenyon Schwartz out of M.I.T. and later Roberta Sigel at the senior level. Harvey moved into administration and became the heart and soul of the graduate school for four decades. Barbara went to Drew and later Fairley Dickenson because nepotism rules wouldn't let us hire her since her husband was in the department; he eventually succumbed to a lifelong illness. Neil McDonald also died.

I was very happy within Douglass, and relations within New Brunswick improved over time. But my primary professional interest was teaching undergraduates. I didn't mind teaching graduate students, but I didn't find them as rewarding. I liked research, but after getting tenure I couldn't find a major project that interested me so I was an associate professor for seventeen years, taking advantage of an academic's freedom to structure my own job, first as chair at Douglass and then on leave for three semesters as program officer with the Exxon Education Foundation. I shared my colleagues' desire to see Rutgers become a top ten public department in the country, but it was not my passion.

The graduate program was fundamentally hobbled by the institutional and geographic divisions within New Brunswick. But we were, after all, a flagship state university. Undergraduate education was the primary goal of state colleges; our distinguishing features were supposed to be research and graduate education. When the reorganization proposal was circulated in 1979, there was no disagreement on its likely outcome (at least in the Douglass department)—it would greatly strengthen the graduate program and weaken the undergraduate one. I opposed it; most of my colleagues supported it. The disagreement remained civil, and in

any case the decision was basically made by the administration for perfectly understandable reasons.

It is hard to overstate the level of uncertainty during reorganization. Every department in the university was going through the same turmoil at the same time—folding several different college departments, each with its own curricula, bylaws, culture, and authority structure, into a single new one and at the same time moving physically! Within political science, at least, it was an intensely political process, and I'm sorry I didn't study it systematically, especially since I was teaching a short-lived course on the comparative politics of higher education.

The first major decision was physical location. We were a big department, and the existing structures had been built for the much smaller college departments. Everyone wanted to be on College Avenue, with the main library and where all the other good departments would want to be as well. We were told that, if we wanted to be in a single location, it would have to be at Hickman on the Douglass campus. The vote was contested, and some residual unhappiness remains to this day. (To be fair about it, the physical problems of Hickman were much less obvious thirty-five years ago, although the cables on the sixth floor securing the pillars were an early clue. These had their own stories. While sitting with her back to the window on the sixth floor and talking to an emotionally disturbed student, Sandy Schwartz saw the student's face whiten. Turning around, she saw a hand coming down outside the window; a workman on the roof was checking the cables.)

This in turn raised the question of how offices would be allocated. The highlight of the debate was when Ben Barber, who had staked out a public position in favor of strong democracy, asserted that senior faculty had few enough privileges and should have first choice. He was voted down overwhelmingly, and it was decided to allocate them by lottery with an

understanding that a “white market” could be set up for exchanges. As it happened, I was able to persuade Tony Broh to give up 616 and was therefore able to remain in the same office for fifty years!

The next question was curricula. Rutgers, Douglass, and Livingston all had different courses at both the introductory and advanced levels. After much discussion a typical political decision was reached—they would all be retained to allow faculty to continue to do what they were doing, and (implicitly) enrollments would determine which survived and which did not. So for a number of years we had two different i.r. introductory courses (102 and 221); this was also true of the other fields. It took several years for these to be reduced, often only after the particular faculty left.

A more difficult issue was hiring and promotions. Standards for both changed fairly quickly. The college departments had allowed for teaching and service to be valued highly (although this did not always happen); in the larger department research became substantially more important, and the senior faculty who had shepherded promotions lost influence. I do not believe that anyone who was junior faculty at reorganization was promoted, and we lost several very good people as a result. On the other hand we were able to make somewhat more rational choices of specialization when hiring new faculty, and our new, more conventional structure may have made us more attractive to good candidates. And it may not be a coincidence that at about this time I went back to research myself.

The result was a fairly conventional department on a very unconventional physical setup. The physical plant was built for separate colleges and could not be changed very much, and it’s probably true that our location at Douglass has hurt us; the decay of Hickman Hall has made it worse. A more serious problem for the University as a whole has been the declining level of

support from the state, pushing us to one of the highest tuitions of any state university and limiting our ability to support graduate students and hire faculty. So we remain a good second-level public university department. But when students ask me about Rutgers' future, I point out that it has lasted for two and a half centuries and suggest it will outlive us all!