

U.P.E.I. - A CHALLENGE

Cadre: Professor Baker, could you tell us why you have come to this university?

Baker: Oh, I think that new Universities are very exciting places. I have been 5 years—nearly 6 years—at Simon Fraser, and I've been there from the very beginning, I was the first appointment. I think I'd served my time there, and this looked to me like an interesting job—you know, to try and help put together two institutions that go back a long time—one quite different from what I'd done before. And also I think that a university of this size interests me; I've been mainly in larger ones, and I've always been interested in a college of about two thousand. Those are the main reasons.

Cadre: What do you think is your biggest challenge in creating this university?

Baker: Well, I think all universities have got real problems of what they're doing. The big challenge here will be to get two institutions that were not terribly close to one another to work together at the same time as we're facing the problems that everyone else is facing. I mean, it's difficult enough to put two places together, but to put them together at the same time as you've got all these student, faculty, and board upheavals — this will be a real challenge.

The other challenges are ones that all universities have: no one ever has enough money, you can never get all the staff you want, but everyone has these. It doesn't matter how well off you are, you never have enough.

Cadre: Do you think there are any special problems arising from being on P.E.I.?

Baker: Well, I think there are some special problems in the Maritimes generally, in that there are quite a lot of institutions, and I think that if they're going to be able to compete with the other universities in Canada, they've got to get together. I think that there's got to be co-operative arrangements on libraries and computers. Personally I'd like to see more co-operation in courses. I don't see why that for certain things it shouldn't be possible for a student to take courses at a large number of Maritime universities. Now, I don't say that for everything, but I think there are certain kinds of degrees that you could do that way. This is a problem that the Maritimes have had for a long time. You know, when there were four degree-granting universities west of Ontario, and large populations all through the Prairies and in B.C., I think there were 23 degree-granting institutions in the Maritimes. Until very recently there was one university in B.C. for over two million people. And it's hard to compete if you have too many small units.

Cadre: Yes. What do you think are the advantages of UPEI over SDU and PWC?

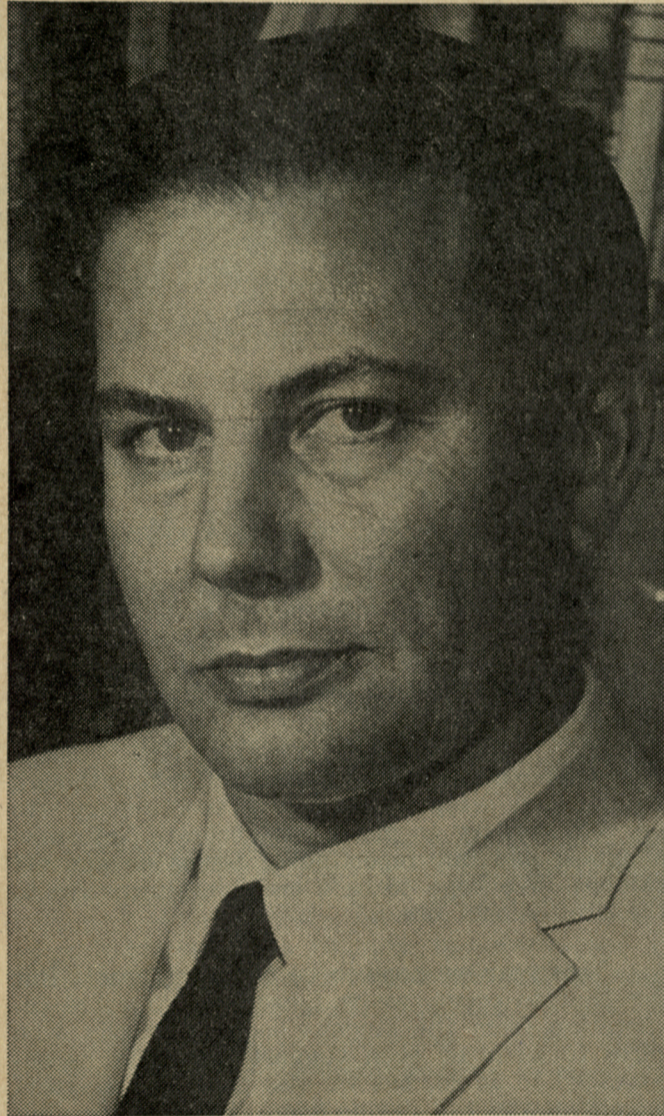
Baker: I really don't think there's any doubt at all that you simply can't run a modern college if you have fewer than about 1500 students, even if you have unlimited money. There are all sort of reasons for this. Students nowadays want a big variety of courses. They want not just the traditional humanities and sciences, but they want the fine arts, they want music, they want sociology, political science, anthropology, archaeology; and to provide that kind of variety you need a lot of people. That's one advantage.

Another advantage is that if you have only one or two people in a department, they really don't have anyone to talk to about their own work. It's difficult for them to keep up to date. We've seen a tremendous improvement by just putting the universities together. We had two libraries here before; we've now put them together to form one, and it's very much better. There was a lot of duplication, inevitably. So I think there's be more variety for students, there's be more books, the faculty

I think will find it easier to work in a slightly larger unit. And there won't be the competition either. Some kinds of competition are good, but I must say I don't think that the competition of two universities in Charlottetown is especially good. It's just not big enough.

Cadre: Have you found any indication of a polarization of old PWC and SDU personnel toward their own backgrounds?

Baker: Very little, I think—less than I would have expected. You can't have two institutions, both of them going for over a hundred years, and not have people who are very loyal. But already I think there are different kinds of partnerships developing. And if I had to predict, I'd say that within a fairly short time the polarizations, such as they are—and I hope there won't be very many—will be those pretty much like those in other universities. Probably between the younger ones and the older ones, or the so-called liberals versus the so-called conservatives, or perhaps some of the more



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traditional ones like arts and science. But I think that considering the history, and considering the difficulty of getting started, there's far less polarization than I would have expected.

Cadre: Are you pleased with the physical aspect—the two campuses?

Baker: Oh no, no of course not. Although a lot of people have told me—not here, but people elsewhere have told me—that there is an advantage in two campuses. I must say I don't see it much myself. It means that we'll have to pay for more transportation; we're going to have to move backwards and forwards, and the sooner we can get on one campus the better, as far as I'm concerned.

Cadre: How are the accommodations re residence space, office space, and classroom space?

Baker: We wouldn't be badly off at all for office space were it not for the fact that we have to maintain a duplication of offices. That is, the registrar has to have an office on both campuses, and I do, and the deans do, and then where faculty

have an office on one campus, we have to give them office space on the other one to interview students. Otherwise we wouldn't be at all badly off, and even then we're not badly off.

Classroom space: we're reasonably well off except for the fact that we've got two campuses. In the residences: I was just talking to Mr. Griffith, who's in charge of it, and he tells me that he thinks that there's not going to be any great problem in students finding accommodation. They've been fitting them in fairly well. (But if you want the real details on that you should see him.)

Cadre: Yes. How many faculty will we have? Will it be more than SDU and PWC combined had?

Baker: Yes, it's a few more because we expected the enrollment to be up—not a great many more. I think if you count the fact that some people have left, we've probably got about 10 more. It's a little difficult to be exact, because how far back do you go? Do you count somebody who left two years ago and you're replacing him as a new faculty member or not? But it's about ten more than last year.

Cadre: Is that because of extra courses? I understood that one of the reasons for the creation of this university would be that it would eliminate duplication of courses.

Baker: No, there are very few new courses. There are one or two, but very few. It's mainly that putting the two campuses together has made it possible to give some courses every year, whereas before they were given every other year. And then, both campuses had started on certain plans: for example in music or business administration, where there had been promises to develop a kind of program, so that we had to honor those commitments where we could, and we've added people there. Some of them are simply growth in some subjects, for example sociology, political science, and psychology have all had a very large growth in the last year or two, so we needed some more staff to look after that growth. Really we needed more than we could afford.

Cadre: How long do you anticipate Holland College being on the same campus as the University of Prince Edward Island?

Baker: Dr. Glendenning and I have been talking today about getting a consultant in on the ultimate sites, but just going from the problem of how long it takes to build and so on, I would expect at least two years. Personally, I wouldn't be unhappy if we were always on the same campus—now that's a purely personal point of view—but I rather look forward to the time when students are able to get the kind of education they want because they want it, rather than because there's more prestige in going to one kind of place than another. But that's purely personal. A lot of people wouldn't agree with me, I know.

Cadre: Which do you think will be leaving the PWC site?

Baker: I have no idea—as I said, we're getting a consultant who will advise us first of all on which institution should go to which campus, and also to look and see if there are any other campuses which we might build completely new for either one of us. There's a real problem about a downtown campus: that is, how much can the city afford to let go without taxes. Now if the city taxes you at downtown rates, are you wise having a college downtown if you can have it out of town, and not pay the same taxes. This is the kind of problem we've got to look at, and it's a technical problem — you know, you work out the tax value of your land and the needs of the community and so on. And this is the kind of thing we need advice on.