INTERVIEW with SEYMOUR MENTON
September 18, 1973

McCULLOCH: Okay. Now, the whole notion, Seymour, is just to chat informally. I'd like to ask a few of the questions, and then we'll go on from there. The first question is, what attracted you about coming to Irvine?

MENTON: Well, probably the biggest thing was the chance to create a new department and to try out some of my own ideas about how foreign languages and literature should be taught and also the possibility of appointing good people right from the start, which I think is important in creating a harmonious department, because I suppose departments in all fields in the University are plagued by dissensions and cliques and things like that. I've always maintained that those departmental problems stem basically from certain people's being insecure, and I thought that if I could appoint all well-qualified people they would be secure and if I could establish a democratic environment in the department, we would not have dissension. I think that was probably the biggest challenge of all. Of course, the geographical location of Irvine close to the ocean was also very appealing to me.

McCULLOCH: Well, now, in carrying that out, what are your memories of the first meeting we had, the four Chairmen and myself, when we sat down and worked out the program? What comes to mind?

MENTON: Well, I must say that, more than anything else, it was the great esprit de corps, the great camaraderie, that was felt at that time, and as I recall, there was absolutely no difference of opinion among the five of us. And we all seemed to have a similar educational philosophy at that date, and the requirements were set up for the School of Humanities, taking into consideration the thrust of each individual department.
McCULLOCH: Then you started to make your appointments, and I remember coming to the MLA and talking with you and even interviewing some people and so on. How did you feel generally about the recruitment? I know the main problem was really trying to find tenured people who would come.

MENTON: Right. It was extremely difficult to find tenured people who would come here, because at that time there was a serious shortage of teachers, and tenured people were getting big offers from the most prestigious universities in the country, and even graduating PhDs were being sought after by some of the leading universities in the country, and very few of the tenured people would even be interested in moving to a brand-new university where they did not know much about the library possibilities or about how the graduate programs would develop.

McCULLOCH: Yes. When you were doing your recruiting, Seymour, did you go for certain people who were going to follow your philosophy? Did you look for a particular kind of person? For example, we got Dick Barrutia—we met him in New York, you remember. He had his plans for the language laboratory. But the other people you were looking at?

MENTON: Well, I think Dick was my first appointment, and I think that does reflect one of the aspects of my philosophy about language departments, and that is the importance of language teaching; in other words, I didn't think that you could set up a good language and literature department by appointing only big names in literature, because the graduate literature programs depend on the language classes for their graduate students, because the graduate students in literature are TAs who are teaching first- and second-year language, and most universities in the country pass the direction of the TAs around from one young Assistant Professor to the other, who usually direct those courses reluctantly, and it was my feeling that we ought to get a professional to direct those courses—an applied linguist who
was also interested in good teaching, and I think by appointing Barrutia we set the tone for the department as far as the importance of good teaching, and I think that has continued.

McCULLOCH: And you were fortunate, also, to bring Marvin McKnight with you to set up the language lab.

MENTON: Right. At that time, we set up the language lab right from the beginning, and Barrutia designed it, and Marvin McKnight directed it for--what--a few years, anyhow.

McCULLOCH: He had it five years.

MENTON: Right. But as far as the other appointments were concerned, I think I was mainly interested in finding the best people I could get, and, once again, the best people did not necessarily mean those who had the longest publication record. No matter how good a literary scholar the individual might have been, I tried to investigate very carefully to see if the person was really a good teacher.

McCULLOCH: I remember. I completely agreed with you, and we--all of us, all the Chairmen--said they were going to try to recruit good teaching, and we would see good teaching. Now, I must say that you, probably more than any of the other departments, put in an evaluation system from the very start.

MENTON: Yes, right.

McCULLOCH: And although it was voluntary, apparently everybody cooperated, so before I sort of put the pressure on the others to do something about evaluating--student evaluations--you led the group in student evaluation of teaching.

MENTON: Yes.

McCULLOCH: Well, in making these appointments (Question three here), Seymour, did you feel our Universitywide administrative regulations helped you or were a problem?
MENTON: Well, I don't know how you interpret the word regulations. I would say that the standards of the University of California were helpful in establishing guidelines for rank and salary; at the same time, they constituted an obstacle in that at other universities there were some very good people who, let's say, were at the Associate Professor level and who were making more money than our Associate Professors were making and yet who did not have the publications to pass our Budget Committee and our Review Committees at the full Professor level.

McCULLOCH: Yes, this is what I'm driving at. For example, who was it from Ripon College you wanted?

MENTON: Roaten, Darnell Roaten.

McCULLOCH: Roaten was an example of where the regulations of the University--where an ad hoc committee said one thing and the Budget said another and the regulations of the University--the time elapsed, a long time elapsed, you remember that?

MENTON: That's right. But also there were cases of people whom I just approached initially and then had to drop them immediately. There was a man, Gerschman in Missouri, in French, who would have been very good, who was an Associate Professor there, and also Ron Tobin from Kansas, whom you may remember, and he is an excellent man, a very young fellow, very promising, very dynamic, but he was making more money than what his publications warranted by California standards. In spite of the fact, he was appointed to the University of California at Santa Barbara about five years later.

McCULLOCH: Well, how do you think these should be changed, then? You've really indicated already--

MENTON: Well, of course it's hard to say, because now the market situation is different; in other words, there is no longer a shortage of teachers--quite the contrary--so that in a market where jobs are scarce,
then the University of California can afford to maintain its high standards and can do very well.

I think as far as changing the rules and regulations, that would get into the whole broader issue of what a university should be like and whether we should continue to be mainly research-oriented, as we have been, or whether we should adopt a more flexible system.

McCULLOCH: That's a good answer, something we're going to have to be addressing ourselves to in the next couple of years. When we arrived on campus, we set up our Academic Senate, and this became a debating arena for various subjects. The most important one at the beginning that I remember was whether we should have a College of Arts, Letters, and Sciences or whether we should have separate schools.

MENTON: Yes.

McCULLOCH: How well do you think we set up our Academic Senate?

MENTON: Well, I think it was probably set up very well. I think the more important thing is how it has operated rather than how it is structured, and I can recall during my first year being very favorably impressed by the way the faculty was very ready and willing to speak out and express their views in a very forthright way without fear of offending their seniors, even to the extent of arguing with the Chancellor over the issue of the Medical School.

McCULLOCH: Yes, and athletics.

MENTON: And athletics, yes. I remember some very lively debates, and that was something that I had not seen in any other university. I must say, though, that through the years (I think probably the turning point was in '68 or '69, after we had the big problem with the Shapiro case and then the Cambodia issue) I think that the role of the Senate has greatly diminished,
and no longer do we see those open debates, and no longer do people stand up and criticize the administration that freely.

McCULLOCH: Well, I think that what you are saying is that the Senate was set up quite well, but that as time has gone on, particularly that polarization which took place in the winter of 1968-69, a point was reached where the Senate became no longer the area where all the faculty met and debated the issues.

MENTON: Yes. Well, then, I think that after that, in the fall when Bernie Gelbaum became the Chairman of the Senate, from that point on, at least in my opinion, the Senate ceased to be an independent organization; it became an arm of the administration.

McCULLOCH: Are there any bylaws, Seymour, you feel we should change in our University Senate?

MENTON: I'm really not that familiar with the bylaws, and, as I indicated before, I'm the kind of person who is more of a pragmatist—I'm much more interested in the way laws operate rather than in the way they are worded, so that I wouldn't have any recommendations on bylaws.

McCULLOCH: All right, going on, then, in what areas do you think you have had the greatest success in building the department, then in splitting the department and your heading up Spanish and Portuguese?

MENTON: Right, all right. Well, I think that the following things are not necessarily in order of importance, but I'll just give you some of them. I think the emphasis on good teaching has prevailed not only in the Spanish Department, but in most of the language departments, if not in all of them. I think the esprit de corps that we established and the democratic procedures have prevailed, certainly in the Spanish Department, and I think I set an example for the other departments—I'm not sure to what extent they have continued in the same manner. In establishing this democratic spirit
in the department, there was never any split between tenured and nontenured people in the language departments; there were good relations with the students; there were no student revolts or even protests at any time.

Another area of success: I feel that the Spanish program, both the undergraduate major and the graduate program, is probably one of the best in the country for its size, and I think if you compare our program and our staff to any of the UC departments we come out very high.

I'm quite proud of the library collection in Spanish, which, as you know, started from scratch, because in the initial library collection (what was it, 100,000?)--

McCULLOCH: Yes, 100,000, yes.

MENTON: --there were practically no foreign-language books. There were a few literary works in translation from the foreign countries, but there were very few books in Spanish, French, or German and what have you, and I think that today the collection is quite good. Darnell Roaten, I think, helped quite a bit while he was the bibliographer--for about two years, I think.

I think also that we have had some very good lecture series in the Spanish Department over the past few years.

I think that probably one indication of our success has been the very small turnover we have had in personnel. We've lost very few people in Spanish. Goertz left upon our request after two years, I think, and then Pages-Larraya went back to Argentina, which was a big loss for the department. But Villegas and Barrutia and I have been here from the start, Palley has been here since the year two or three, and even the younger people--Diez-Alonso and Truesdell--have been here about four or five years now. Zidia Stewart has been here five or six years.
McCULLOCH: Going on with these successes—you wanted to introduce literature to the students as soon as you could after the basic course. How do you think that has worked out? You and I talked about that for quite a while.

MENTON: I think that it has worked out well. My ideas on literature in the beginning in the undergraduate program were as follows: I felt that many universities introduced the students to literature at a level that was too difficult for them linguistically. That was one evil that I wanted to remedy. Another was that most universities introduce students to literature by means of a survey course, using heavy anthologies, where they would attempt to cover in one semester or even in a year all of Spanish or French literature from the Middle Ages up to the present, and those courses are a disaster, so that here we started the students off with genre courses—Introduction to the Theater, Introduction to Prose Fiction, Introduction to Poetry—and in planning those courses we did not attempt to make them all-encompassing. We felt that it was much more important for the student to read five or six plays on his linguistic level and analyze them carefully and enjoy them, rather than to be able to recite the names of a hundred different dramatists through the ages.

McCULLOCH: Yes, I remember you and I talked about this; in fact, I remember your ordering these paperbacks from the book store.

MENTON: Right. And I might say that I feel gratified that that orientation towards literature has continued in the other language departments, even after they broke off and formed their own departments.

McCULLOCH: Did you ever write up for any publication the work you did here on the program you started?

MENTON: Oh, I don't know if it's been published anywhere, but I know I've given talks about this. It's probably in some UCI bulletin.
McCULLOCH: Have any of the other campuses of the University followed suit?

MENTON: Well, I'm not sure.

McCULLOCH: I can recall Davis coming down and being very impressed. Do you recall?

MENTON: Yes, right. Well, Davis came down. Of course, at that time they were thinking of establishing a separate Literature Department and then a separate Linguistics Department, and I think that by talking with me they may have been discouraged from doing that, at least in part. I don't think that the other UC campuses have followed our lead; I think that most of them continue to teach those survey courses.

San Diego, of course, is very different, because their literature linguistics are separate, and the literature people get their majors after they have had only two years of language, and they thrust them right into the study of some of the most complicated literary works. I remember being very distressed at the news of the students' reading *Don Quixote* after two years of Spanish, which is well-nigh impossible.

McCULLOCH: Well, touching now on the next question, the areas in which you think you have had the least success and why, I'd like to talk about two areas—one is comparative literature, and the other is the area of linguistics. I'm not saying that really things have worked out so badly. We started out with this Committee on Comparative Literature to try to administer it separately, and after a year we gave it up. And then I was interested that Hazard Adams, after he became Dean, wanted to restore that committee, but gave that up. Just give me your general impressions.

MENTON: Well, I think that the problems with comparative literature stem from the fact that, when the initial committee was established, the Foreign Language Department did not have any senior people besides myself.
We had a staff of about ten. We had three majors in French, German, and Spanish, and I think we had Mrs. Reck teaching Russian at that time, so that we were really spread quite thin. Also, I was the only tenured person, I think. On the other hand, the English Department had at least ten, if not more, and probably half of them were tenured, so that when we participated in the Comparative Literature Committee, as I recall, it was just John Lindberg and Goertz, both Assistant Professors, who were our representatives, and for a number of different reasons they just could not get along with Don Heiney, and they had differences of opinion as far as the contents of the program were concerned, plus personality difficulties. And I think it was about at that time that I, myself, went on that committee for a while, and you were sitting in on the committee, and that lasted maybe another six months or so.

Finally it was put into the English Department 100 percent, which at that time might have been the most practical thing to do, but I think in the long run it has hurt the Comparative Literature program, because Comparative Literature is basically an interdisciplinary program, and it should not be dominated by the English Department as it has been ever since. Now, I think that one important step to change that orientation was the appointment of Alex Golley about two or three years ago.

McCULLOCH: Three, I think.

MENTON: Three years ago. And I think he has taken steps to change the orientation of the program, but the fact is that most of the people teaching in the Comp Lit program are still basically English teachers, and it makes that difficult.

McCULLOCH: Do you think the time will come when we can return to the committee? For example, Lillyman--I've never talked to Bill about this, but
I am very glad to see him Dean, and I think that, being a person in languages and interested in Comparative Literature, he might restore that committee.

MENTON: Yes, I think there is a distinct possibility of that for the future.

McCULLOCH: The other area--of linguistics--which is always a thorny one--you and I agreed on that when we started. Now, could you--

MENTON: Well, let me give you my ideas on that, because I think that, as you say, you and I agreed that linguistics was a problem area right from the start, although at that time we thought that it was a problem area mainly because of the, oh, antagonism that plagues many language departments between the linguistics people and the literature people; therefore, one of the reasons for appointing Burrutia was his human qualities and his ability to get along well with people; in other words, he was not the ivory tower linguist, and he would not be constantly battling with the literature people. And Burrutia was the first linguist appointed on this campus, and--

McCULLOCH: Mary Key was the second.

MENTON: Mary Key was the second, and in setting up the Foreign Language program, in all the languages we made a basic course in linguistics required for all majors, and that itself was an innovation.

I think the first problem with linguistics started--it may have been that very first year--when we found out that Jim March in Social Science was about to appoint a linguist, and he had not had the courtesy to consult us. And I recall that we went to Peltason and complained to him about it (I would say, probably to no avail), and then Social Science, over the next two or three years, got involved in linguistics in a very independent way. Then after about three years maybe, Julian Feldman in Computer Science became interested in linguistics. Then the Philosophy Department became interested
in linguistics, and then the English Department became interested in linguistics. And there was one point where it seemed as though the University was trying to coordinate these efforts, and they were about to appoint a big-name linguist to head the whole program.

McCULLOCH: That was my idea. You remember I talked to you, and I said if we can get a really big name--this man from Texas--and there were several mentioned who could really pull it together.

MENTON: Yes, but you see when that happened, then everyone who had the slightest claim to linguistics began to look for his own candidate, and the competition became intense, and as a result we didn't get anyone. I think it might well have been on my instigation that at one point the Foreign Language linguist got together with the Social Science linguist and with Julian Feldman to try to work out an undergraduate major in linguistics.

McCULLOCH: Yes, I think I was insisting on that.

MENTON: Were you there?

McCULLOCH: Yes, I was Dean, and I said to you, "We've got to get them all together and see if they can't work out a program and work together." And they tried.

MENTON: Well, we tried at that time, but it failed, because Social Science people, I recall, for example, did not even want to include any foreign language requirements for an undergraduate major in linguistics.

McCULLOCH: That's right. They wouldn't be moved, so the result was that we decided to go ahead just in the Humanities. The last thing I did as Dean, I can remember, before I resigned or left the office, was that the report was finally worked out, and it was finally approved by our Executive Committee then.

MENTON: Right.
McCULLOCH: And we had a program only in the Humanities. I felt it was most unfortunate that the Social Sciences would not play ball with us.

MENTON: Right. But that came about, I think, maybe about two years after the events that I have described.

McCULLOCH: Oh, yes. We're talking about 1970 or December, 1969, when the Humanities went ahead alone, and they tried for--

MENTON: Yes. I might say, though, that the Humanities linguistics major has been very successful. There are many students--

McCULLOCH: Would you like to talk about that a bit? I'm interested.

MENTON: Well, by this time I was not really directly involved in it, but I know, from the Spanish Department, Barrutia and Tracy Terrell have been very active in the program, Henri Diament in French, Mary Key, and Jared Gordon in Russian, and Alan Shaterian in German, and Colaclides in Classics, and they've offered a series of interesting courses for the students. The number of majors has increased steadily, I think.

I think that here again with all due modesty the Spanish Department took the lead, because two of the people are in Spanish--Barrutia and Terrell--and they are the two spark plugs. Also, the Spanish Department took the lead among all the language departments in diversifying our major about four years ago, whereas, when we started out, there was just one way to graduate as a Spanish major, French major, German major. About four years ago, the Spanish Department instituted a plan by which a student could graduate as a Spanish major with emphasis in either literature, linguistics, or culture, and just this past year we approved a fourth path, bilingualism, which is oriented towards the teaching of Spanish in schools in the Chicano barrios and also in teaching English to Spanish-speaking students.

But, getting back to linguistics, I think the linguistics program in the School of Humanities has operated very well, and the people in
Humanities have constantly made overtures to the Social Science people to join them in colloquia, in planning courses together, but to no avail. For example, I noticed that in this fall's class schedule, the Social Science School has its own introductory linguistics course.

McCULLOCH: Who is teaching it?

MENTON: There is a series of them. I think Culicover is probably the Chairman of it, but I doubt very much that it is that different from our introductory linguistics course. And I think that Hazard Adams last year, as Vice Chancellor, tried to get the two linguistics groups together, but again to no avail.

McCULLOCH: This is a great disappointment to me, when I think that if Roger Russell had pushed harder they would have found a big name and they might have put this thing together, but he would not--well, budget problems were one thing, he claimed.

MENTON: Right.

McCULLOCH: But I don't think he worked hard enough, because he knew of the problems of linguistics at Indiana.

MENTON: They had a separate Linguistics Department.

McCULLOCH: Oh, they had an awful fight up there. It was just awful, and he knew that, and he realized that if we could find some big name we might put together a program which included the social scientists.

MENTON: Yes. Well, I think the main problem has been the social scientists, and it's not only linguistics, as you know--they've been a law unto themselves right from the start. But I think that in view of our present economic situation it may have been a blessing in disguise that we didn't develop a full-scale linguistics program, because at this point I think it would be foolhardy to try to compete with UCLA in having a big graduate program in linguistics.
McCULLOCH: I think you're right there. But I'm interested in your comments on our own program, because I was very proud of the fact that, as Dean, the last thing I did was to get that off the ground. We did have a program and a major in linguistics in the Humanities, which I felt we really needed.

MENTON: Yes, right.

McCULLOCH: Are there any other areas in which you felt you had the least success or things didn't work out right?

MENTON: Well, I think that one of the problems was my inability to appoint tenured people, particularly in French and German. In other words, in a Department of Foreign Languages, if you have a natural leader, a tenured person, in each of the languages, then the Department of Foreign Languages can function and the different responsibilities can be delegated to those people, but we didn't have that, and as a result I was really four different Chairmen at once, or five different Chairmen at once.

And I think another lack of success, perhaps, was the fact that the department was split up into its individual components at an inopportune time. When I accepted the job as Chairman of Foreign Languages, you will recall that I did so only on the condition that the department be split up in the future, but at the right time. I think that the split came about prematurely, and as a result all the language departments have suffered by their being split up at that time, and then, soon after that, Hazard Adams became Dean, and the School of Humanities was completely dominated by the English people. I feel that, if the Department of Foreign Languages had remained intact, we would have had a more powerful voice in the affairs of the school.

McCULLOCH: I take responsibility for the timing of the separate departments. Quite frankly, the pressure was on me from these individual
departments, "We want to be separate." I can understand their wanting it, but it caused me problems.

MENTON: Well, yes, there were problems, and I think that probably the thing that precipitated it most was that I happened to be on leave that spring quarter, and Jerry Falley was the Acting Chairman, and Jerry did not call as many meetings of the French people and the German people as he should have, and this gave the French and the German people an excuse, I think, to ask for their independence at that time, because I think that as a result of their getting their independence—particularly the French people—they did not come up with a Chairman with the same high qualities as one I had been looking for, and I think that this has hurt them. With German, of course, it has been a problem, no matter who tried to find a Chairman—they've had bad problems.

Turning to another disappointment to me—I think that this is a disappointment—I don't know to what extent I could have changed things, but it continues to be a disappointment to me, and that is the lack of the international dimension on this entire campus, outside the foreign languages.

McCULLOCH: Could you be specific?

MENTON: Well, yes, I think that frankly it stems, at least in part, from the Chancellor's own background as an American soils chemist with very little international contact. I think that he went to Europe for the first time maybe five years ago, and I don't think he understands the importance of interrelating with the world. I think another factor has been very important, and that is the so-called scientific orientation of the Social Sciences. Usually, a School of Social Sciences will have experts in political science plus an area study—be it Africa, Latin America, or Europe, or Asia—but the School of Social Sciences, under Jim March, was specifically and outspokenly, I might say, antiarea studies, and they were supported
quite strongly by Jack Peltason, who was a political scientist with emphasis on American government. I think that as a result of that, for example, Irvine probably has the smallest percentage of foreign students of any university in the country. They probably have the smallest number of area-type courses of any university in the country, the smallest number of public lectures about international events, and I think this is a serious shortcoming.

Another one that I think is somewhat related to that is the lack of sensitivity to the nearby Chicano community and to minorities in general. I think one of the things that attracted me to Irvine (I could have mentioned this in the first question) was the fact that I thought Irvine's Spanish Department, being close to Mexico and in an area where, in nearby Santa Ana and in Los Angeles, there are hundreds of thousands of Spanish-speaking people, would be not the center, certainly, but a place through which interest in Spanish and the local Spanish-speaking community and neighboring Mexico could be channeled. In fact, you'll recall that through Extension (I think it was the very first year or the second year) we put on a series of lectures on contemporary Mexico. The lectures were given twice—once in English here at Irvine for the benefit of the Anglos and the second time in Spanish—I think it was in Garden Grove—for the Chicano community. But I must say that, through the years, I am convinced that the top administration of this University, including the Chancellor and the different Vice Chancellors we have had, are just insensitive to the problems of the Chicano community, and there have been numerous episodes through the years that could prove this.

McCULLOUGH: Going back to the area studies, do you think that one of the main reasons we lost Lew Hanke was that he wanted to push a real Latin-American Area Study program, but he found, as he said, that the social scientists "marched to a different trumpet," and he said he couldn't get them
involved, even though they were specialists in Latin America, that they wouldn't participate. I think that was one of the reasons he left.

Do you think the fact that the Fine Arts is so performance-oriented has had any effect in terms of our teaching of drama and music and so on of Spanish and other foreign countries? Have they cooperated with you? How has that worked out?

MENTON: They have cooperated, and I think it's less of a problem. You mentioned Lew Hanke's leaving, and for the record let me get back to give you some details on that. Lew Hanke, who, as you know, is one of the outstanding Latin-American historians in the world, and I were both very much interested in setting up an Area Studies program. Roger Russell appointed us to a committee, along with, gee, I think it was Duane Metzger and Michael Cole, although I'm not sure because they weren't always in attendance at the meetings, but anyhow he appointed a committee to investigate the possibility of setting up a Latin-American Area Studies program. We met once a week all year long with a number of people representing different departments and schools on this campus. At the end of the year, Hanke wrote up a fine report, summarizing our conversations and making definite recommendations. To our knowledge, that report sat on Roger Russell's desk for months, and he did absolutely nothing at all about it. Then the following fall, two or three of the Assistant Professors--Michael Cole was involved and Jay Martin (I forget who the others were, but there were very few)--went to Russell and said, "Gee, we ought to do something for the Blacks!" In other words, they'd discovered that the world was round. And as a result of their personally going to Russell without going through any Senate committee, as far as I know, Roger Russell expanded the American Studies program, and he put Black Studies in American Studies, and then he put Chicano Studies as a sop.
McCULLOCH: And called it Comparative Culture.

MENTON: Right; well, I think he called it Comparative Culture after the next step because this happened maybe in October of that year, and then it was in January when the George Kent case was resolved. You remember Kent was an Assistant Professor of Asian History who was up for tenure, and the History Department had recommended against giving him tenure, and he appealed, and the Budget Committee and the Chancellor decided that he should be granted tenure, but that he should not be housed in the History Department. So at that time the administration was looking desperately for a place to put George Kent, and in order to find that place they changed American Studies, Black Studies, and Chicano Studies, which were all US-oriented, into World Studies and called it Comparative Culture. And they put George Kent in there to start Asian Studies and arbitrarily assigned Latin-American Area Studies to Comparative Culture, under Jay Martin at that time, Professor of American Literature basically, without consulting Lewis Hanke or me or anyone else who had served on that committee. And that angered Hanke very much and me, too, because not only was it the wrong decision, but again it was a lack of academic courtesy. As a result, to this day there is no Latin-American Area Studies program, because within Comparative Culture there is only one real area specialist, and that is Raul Fernandez, who is a Latin-American economist. The other two people in the program, Carlos Munoz and Gil Gonzales, are more interested in the Chicano Studies program, although they teach from time to time courses on Latin America.

McCULLOCH: That's very interesting. That's history to me, Seymour. I wasn't aware of the sequence of events.

MENTON: Yes, I remember that very vividly. As you can tell, I still speak emotionally about it.
McCULLOCH: I don't blame you. I think I really felt, as you did, enormous grief at the loss of Lew Hanke. You might be interested—he will be President of the American Historical Association next year. It would have looked awfully good to have Irvine on it instead of the University of Massachusetts getting the credit for having him.

MENTON: I might say also that the lack of a campuswide Latin-American Area Studies program prompted me two or three years ago to offer the diversified major with one option in Culture, which, in effect, substitutes--

McCULLOCH: That's worked out very well.

MENTON: Yes. A lot of students are interested in that. Now, getting back to Fine Arts, although I know a lot of people have criticized the independence of the Fine Arts program and their relative lack of interest in teaching art history and music history, I don't think that has affected the language program as directly as the Social Science orientation. And in effect Dean Garrison has been most cooperative in arranging for joint appointments with us for Paul Gendrop, who has been a Visiting Professor—I forget what rank, maybe Lecturer—on two different occasions for a whole quarter both times.

McCULLOCH: How do you spell that name?

MENTON: G-e-n-d-r-o-p. He is a Mexican of French descent who is a highly qualified man. He teaches at the National University of Mexico, and he has an architect's degree from Monterrey in northern Mexico and a doctorate in aesthetics from the Sorbonne in Paris. And he has taught courses for us in Spanish and courses in English on pre-Columbian and Mexican art for the Fine Arts School. His classes have been large and very successful, and Garrison has cooperated very well on those appointments.

McCULLOCH: Now, Seymour, on the question of problems that are unique to Irvine, you have covered a couple, but I'd like you to elaborate more
about this international dimension which we lack and anything else you might like to say.

MENTON: Well, I think that, in addition to what I have already said, one of the most serious problems—and this is a structural one—that could still be resolved is the excessive autonomy for each academic unit on this campus, and I think that this would apply not only to the individual schools, but also to certain departments within those schools. Perhaps when the schools were founded, the large degree of autonomy was justified because we were obviously in a kind of frontier situation, expanding rapidly, and each man was told to go out and grab as much land as he could, and there was plenty of land to be had. But with the election of Ronald Reagan, resources began to get scarce, and I feel quite strongly that at that time the administration on this campus should have taken steps immediately to curb the local power and not only to encourage, but force, people to see the total picture rather than their own immediate needs.

McCulloch: Well, I think you're right, there. I'll always remember talking with you and saying, "Well, I think maybe we're going to survive this," and you said, "No, our resources are going to become more slender," and I have to admit right now that you were right and I was wrong. I take responsibility for letting each department work independently—I worked with them—but we had the problem.

MENTON: Sure.

McCulloch: We had to build a BA degree and an MA degree and a PhD. We just had only so much—

MENTON: Yes, right. I think the problem, though, was more the independence of the schools, Social Science and Fine Arts particularly, and also I think the problem became more aggravated after you stepped down as Dean. It has been much more noticeable the last three or four years.