

**Steve Sansola**

**Marist College**

**Poughkeepsie, NY**

**Transcribed by Aubrey Giesler**

**For the Marist College Archives and Special Collections**

## Transcript – Steve Sansola

**Interviewee:** Steve Sansola

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**Summary:**

Life before Marist College; Life at Marist College; Housing; Thoughts about Marist College

01:04 **Gus Nolan:** OK, Today is Wednesday, July twenty third and we have a chance to interview Steve Sansola, from housing facilities I don't know what's the general title other than that but that's the word I'm going to use for this. Steve you probably heard me say this is a project that dealing with the archives of Marist trying to get historical oral interview of people who have been here twenty

or more years to comment on their early years and now and to me Marist is a wonderful story. How did it happen? And I think that question can be answered by people like you who were here who participated in the changes and are here now to talk about both the old days and the new days. But that being said, let me say first just say a few words thumbnail about yourself, where were you born, brought up, early education so we have a kind have a picture of you background.

02:08 Steve Sansola: Well, let me just begin by thanking you for this opportunity and you know hopefully I can contribute my view or my take on my experience here at Marist and the collective wisdom of the growth of the institution. So I was actually out of New York City originally born and raised in the Bronx, Pelham parkway, Aster Avenue actually grow up in city housing projects and went to public schools and then went on to City College of New York and Manhattan and actually transferred to Suny Cortland to pursue a degree. And I have a degree in actually recreation education, outdoor education at the undergraduate level and then went on to get a master's degree in education actually worked a little bit after receiving my undergraduate degree and then went on to get a master's degree later on.

03:00 GN: What kind of work you do summer job.

03:03 SS: Well I did a lot of the work as you're going to college and you work in summer jobs in some programs in New York City. When I graduated out of college actually worked near Syracuse for Allen park and recreation as a superintendent of a community park actually lived out west in Utah worked National Park Service and Moa acres National Park and then came back to Syracuse to continue part of the work I did it was summer and internship and it got a full time job. Working for park and rec program. I did that for two years. Did parttime teaching in Millbrook full time substitute teacher in history and didn't really care that much and then went on to do work at colleges in New Hampshire and Maine.

03:50 GN: What kind of work.

03:50 SS: Resident director at Plymouth state college working really in student affairs entry level. Then did that for two years and became a director student life for a small college in Maine, Thomas Waterville, Maine and then actually came to Marist in 1985.

04:07 GN: OK. That's the question I want to ask now how did you learn about Marist? What is the genesis of that?

04:14 SS: Yeah well it's a very interesting connection and you know it just reminds me of the timing, everything in history of Marist college and really the timing myself for Marist college. At the time I was married and my wife was from Pleasant Valley and my brother in law who was Brian Doyle graduate of Marist College you may know Brian. He had mentioned to me that Marist was looking for a director of housing just in conversation that summer. So at that time my wife and I are thinking about me coming back to New York from Maine because I knew that wasn't really the growth potential where I was, so I applied this was late or early August

04:53 GN: about nineteen eighty?

04:54 SS: nineteen eighty five, summer and I mentioned my brother applied and Jerry Cox was a vice president the time. I happen to say to Brian you know Brian if you see Jerry, cause there friendly from theater just mention that I apply. You know and it turned out he called Jerry. And when he called Jerry Cox, Jerry Cox looking at my resume on desk divine intervention. So you know Jerry to Brian as relayed to me, I am looking at your brother in-law. It's kind of interesting. Lo and behold they called me for an interview and they hired me and I went back Maine and got a call, this is two weeks before the semester started the position has been vacant for a while director of housing.

05:39 GN: Who's here in housing at that time now? What is her name there, was a woman here for a while? Well not housing but.

05:47 SS: Student affairs well in student affair you had Gerard Cox of vice president **Peter motto** as a dean you have **Betty yangon** college activities I think she since passed away. And the director of housing life government of housing life was an open position. Those were the four main position you know Jane O'Brien in health services, you had a counseling **Dina Pereiro** special services and some of the old name and some of the positions weren't as elevated or the office weren't large. So the housing office had been vacant about two months and I came August fifteenth as I recall and I came just when the Garland Commons residence complex was being

built by Ebarhard builders as a private developer like condos to be rented and the college made a decision to purchase them and I remember when school opens end of August September one pending on their Labor Day One of the buildings was not finished. So you can imagine what it's like for me coming two weeks before schools started position was vacant Bea (Olympia) Kustas was secretary. Building wasn't ready. It was a challenge. So it's interesting for me to look back on what it was like I was working.

07:13 GN: Did you make deals three students in one room.

07:18 SS: Some of them we didn't know where they were staying and it was really chaotic because I had come to a point where I was trying to clean up and work vacant for two months.

07:28 GN: Unfortunately we haven't had anything like that scenes.

07:32 SS: Well I think indicative of the growth and ability to adapt and change and hard work and commitment by all and flexibility.

07:42 GN: You come on board what your first duties what you supposed to do now you're in charge of?

07:47 SS: Directors house and it was only director housing a time and I also had discipline. So I had both.

07:55 GN: So housing is to put people in rooms and take care of that of dinning services.

08:01 SS: I didn't have dinning services at the time.

08:03 GN: We didn't not have them?

08:04 SS: I did not have it in my area. Diving service actually reported to Gerard Cox at the time right to the vice president so my sole responsibility was to housing wasn't even housing residents life. So the focus on placement of students, but also an emphasis on education in the residence halls this was a beginning trend where of housing and residence life operations housing residents live personal growth. So you know I have the responsibility of placing students, selecting student RA.

08:33 GN: Sheahan, Leo, Champagnet, what else?

08:39 SS: Garland and the old town, Foy ABC that

08:43 GN: Was it

08:47 SS: Benoit, Gregory and we and north road house across the street. Yeah we have five of those which are no longer in existent when they expanded rout nine. So in housing we were doing placements, we were training students to be RA, selecting RA's, we're doing educational programming. At that time we were starting to transition where we had a full time professional live in resident director staff. We also have live in mentors that reported to DiCaprio and we had to entry offices that were students entry offices and short time later I think in '06, '07 as we transition to full time professionals adults.

09:35 GN: Is that security.

09:36 SS: Security that are at the entry way of residence halls and have swipe access.

09:42 GN: Do you have a secretary to help you?

09:45 SS: Bea (Olympia) Kustas, and my office was two small rooms which at the time was student center three sixty eight and there were probably a little bit in this office.

10:00 GN: All right. So that was the beginning of it. OK, now move on a little bit here.

10:09 SS: So little and so basically you know when I got there what quickly started to develop for me and my position was we start to see interesting growth in Marist in terms of housing facilities. So immediately we started looking at how are we going to grow our availability of space for students and so on thinking really the next thing we build would have been Midrise. Rights Midrise came in ninety four so that's a few years later. And then of course the east campus after that the Lower town houses. We also early on eighty seven, eighty eight I remember getting funding for a full time assistant director of housing and then again having a professional RD in each building or building in area.

11:03 GN: I want to get in to that the organization that we used to call a practice on the floor at one is each floor under supervision of a student.

11:22 SS: Yes, so we had a RA per each floor or two wings to a floor. It might have been two floors to an RA just depending it was a general rule one to ever fifty or so students and that tends to be a national average. For under class average is a little higher with upper class and because they live a more independent lifestyle. And they were supervised by a Resident director and had to live in Proctor's or mentors that reported to other positions student fairs. The mentors and resident director and RA would meet in an organization known as the student S.L.T. Student life team meeting. The idea was they meet weekly to talk with each other as professionals and student professional of what was happening in the building.

12:09 GN: How big of a group would that be?

12:11 SS: I could be Champagnet was large with about twelve or thirteen to a small four or five depending on the number of RA in a building.

12:18 GN: They would all be together once a week that would be about twenty or more students.

12:23 SS: Well I'm sorry. Each building would with their own staff, so Champagnet would meet a group of twelve.

12:28 GN: So there's not a meeting of all?

12:30 SS: No just the houses. Within the build and the idea was the concept behind it was to understand what was happening in the building. What were the behavior of the students, what were the programming needs, what were some students to keep an eye out for? What with the upcoming programs coordination of programs by the mentors in the RA what's happening a larger scale within the college? Is there a theme week? Do we want to bring in guest speakers you know at that time we had some of our Marist brothers living on campus bother Belanger in Champagnet and other brother? So you know would they have a dinner would they bring in a speaker would the promoter studying abroad which is really in its infancy then so that was the purpose behind the S.L.T. student life team meeting as a housing staff meaning professionals we would also meet weekly. Each RD and from each building with myself and also the assistant director because we receive funding.

13:31 GN: How does that male/ female interact with this?

13:34 SS: In terms of students or staff?

13:36 GN: Students, directors, RA's is it a blend depending upon building.

13:42 SS: Yes the floors are separated by sex because you have sensitive the common baths. And then you have your staffing is such you have a male on the floor or student RA a female on a female. The professional staff have their own apartment buildings they could be male or female. On occasion we sometimes you have a young married couple. Yes I'm searching back with our remaining names issues but I think we have on occasion you know a young married couple. Then as a professional staff housing we meet weekly all the RD come together and we talk about administrative details. We talk about problems, issues, upcoming events, planning for future. You know there might be a theme week, were working with college activities. We have room selection in spring that's a busy time. We're closing the residence areas so you have a lot of dynamics happen it's a little city it's a city of I guess that time the eight nine hundred. We got thirty two hundred plus in residence.

14:50 GN: Give me a comparison between the student then and now. In terms of maturity, in terms of dedication, in terms of interest, in terms of ability.

14:55 SS: Well I would say you know certainly in eighty five when I came Marist did not have a higher academic standards it does now certainly. And I remember spending a lot of time as someone who did the discipline in dealing with behaviors that were not appropriate for some of our students male and female. Yeah so you can imagine that. Their interest in study academically I think very different than today's student a student I think is more driven in what internships, externships, extracurricular activities, they're going to conferences more serious about their studies coming to Marist with more advanced, AP courses. That was highly unusual. I can't ever recall meeting a first year student Marist in eighty five, eighty six, and seventy eight that had twenty, thirty College credits. Unheard of. Many were not as driven terms of their interests you know many of our students know they want to be a business major.

And in some ways that's good some ways it's bad the student who's may again a little more from a liberal education liberal arts education be more open to the possibilities as opposed to someone who's maybe more focused and so it has some blinders is not seen of the opportunists though a more liberal arts education. Of course the core offers that. Than we had the science of man programs which I didn't have much knowledge of but I remember being, I guess the precursor to the honors.

16:33 GN: Xavier Ryan. What about student activities, no let me put it this way, student academic retirements does the RA supervise as much as class attendance and you know over seeing that aspect of it?

16:55 SS: No I think as in most college's students the traditional student is trying to make up their own mind his or her I think the role of the RD has always been and continues to be to keep an eye on the welfare of the students so that he or she is really engage in the college experience. So it would not be uncommon although not a requirement for an RA to notice someone not going to class or maybe socializing too much and would say something to the student and would bring that up to the RD. The professional staff in the S.L.T meeting we know this Person x or person y is was not going to class when the mentor might say yeah know you know I have the faculty contact me. Because we had that process though the academics where our students don't attend classes. Faculty will notify that office or trickle down so you have this convergence of information and we approach the students and say you're not going to class, you're out socialize, what's going on, do you want to be here, do you not want to be, is there's something going on and try to help in some way. Now our attention you know we had we had some retention problems early on and we built programs designed to redirect that and the mentoring program live in program is something that really plays to that. You had the idea of rites of passage at Marist college you know we purposefully designed our structure in the housing office and even within string affairs as rites of passage.

18:29 GN: What does that mean?

18:30 SS: Well what it means really is that when you come to Marist when you come to a college as a young person you need some structure need some support you need some rigidity sort of a parameter so that you stay within the box. You can make some mistakes which you don't wander too far and you know the way I have been taught at Marist is the Marist brother's challenge and support you know their philosophy so the rites of passage gives some structure. Like we're going to assign you a freshman roommate, you're going to be on a Dining Plan so you eat well, you're going to your classes will be structured in a certain way. There's an RA the ratio of RA to students is a lower ratio to provide more supervision. We will do some in-house programming on time management so you gain the skills. Then as you become a sophomore student and you're learning more about yourself in the college the rites of passage that passage are such that you have more or greater ability to make choices so now you can choose to live with a roommate, you're meeting people through the first year experience, you might choose a different dining plan. Now in particular you might chose to live in a location where there's a kitchen you can do your own cooking and you don't you're not on a dinning plan or now as compared to then you may choose to study abroad for a semester.

19:49 GN: But the freshmen don't have that choice that's part of the passage?

19:53 SS: More structured yeah and we have that structure now you know they're given their freshman classes by registrar based on some writing exams or math proficiency, we assigned them a room based on a questionnaire there mandated to be on the Dining Plan unlimited all you can eat because being giving them a time to eat and be social it's important. Our students tend to be very social I've noticed that since I've been here in eighty five there social creatures so there's a purpose behind that.

20:23 GN: Speaking of what you've noticed since you've been here is a commonness in the Marist students. I've heard it said that seems like breed like you know that the kids that come here seem to be like the ones that are here and I don't know if you would say that you know or is there been a major difference in the character of the disposition, the outgoingness, the friendliness, the Sociability of the Marist student.

20:52 SS: Well I you know I think what I am seeing is there's no doubt that our students are social like spending time with each other and engaging in activities. Where it's inter murals, clubs, fraternities, attending sport events, and you know I hear from alumni they

speaking very highly of the social experience the friends for life and many have married people they met. Now I will say that I've noticed a more serious attitude about academics. OK. I think they're a little more sophisticated. I think some of our students come with high expectations sometimes unreasonable.

21:37 GN: Meaning what?

21:39 SS: Well-meaning that I don't mean.

21:41 GN: They expect to get all a's.

21:43 SS: Well I think we'll certainly there's the whole issue about grade inflation or not you know yes I deserve an A because I did that high school what do you mean kind of thing. Also I think students expect a level of service from us such that do you mean I can't do that, or no one's ever said that to me, or no one ever said that to me or no one's ever said no to me or my position oftentimes in working with students is come and see me. Don't have your mom or dad call and there's a lot of parental intervention, helicopter parents you know there caring their support how do you strike the balance of how a parent gets involved versus encouraging their son or daughter to be a critical thinker, make decisions, resolve conflicts.

22:33 GN: Is Marist an island unto itself or is it participating in the national conference that you participate in what's going on across the country in various college pretty much going on here.

22:46 SS: Oh yeah I think the issue of students having high expectations of themselves in terms of grades that's happening all over I think students demand for services happening all over colleges private or public. Parental intervention is happening all over. So I don't think we're an island unto ourselves. I think we have a college we're connected with many other colleges and universities though our collective professional organizations attending conferences so what we're experiencing and seen other colleagues at other campuses are experiencing seeing as well.

23:23 GN: Do any of the activities such as football or basketball or athletic activities in to college I wouldn't say rivalries but games and meetings and conferences blend over into student life?

23:39 SS: I think this is without a doubt my experience of Marist is we generally have I think a good turnout of spectator participation. Certainly at some sporting events over others but you know some of our men's and women's games basketball football they tend to bring people together we have a lot of student organizations. Or residents' organizations band together to have students come to events or to take on special events like run for hunger, Cancer cure, you know walk for cancer. We have a lot of students that are coming to Marist with life experiences of their own or family that really moves them in a way that they're committed to these causes.

24:22 GN: They've done this in high school, they've done in origination before.

24:25 SS: Because of personal experiences firsthand or friend. So they bring that with them they carry with them. And our students I find it very supportive of each other for those cause.

24:36 GN: Marist has changed in your twenty some odd years here.

24:40 SS: Twenty nine.

24:41 GN: Tell me about it. What would you say is one of the most dramatic changes from your perspective? The campus is obvious building have gone up, like trees have grown you know, but the character of the college tell me about that? Is it the same college you came to?

25:05 SS: Well look I say this to you I the character has changed from my perspective and I don't necessary mean that in a negative way I think there is certainly a very strong tradition at the college. I feel it as a long serving employees and I see it less in new employees but we're trying to engage them in this about the missionary's brothers the values of the College and carrying that forward. I think not all of our students today understand that or see that the rich history tradition from student perspective. But we're giving it to them were offering were trying to expose that to them. Perhaps we can do it more in different ways. I know with new employees there's an orientation to the college which speaks about Marist tradition. There's a richness tho a characters in spite of may be an

individual not knowing the history, but once there here I think they can feel and understand breathes the passion that employees have for the college, for the work that they do to help each other and help the students. I think that's very, very evident and I know myself as a supervisor you know I have found myself with new in employees saying the Marist tradition is, we at Marist we believe that, or this is why we do it. A lot of times new staff in our area I've never seen a college doing that or you know why do you care so much about this. If you have a student emergency really go out of our way follow up with the student call a parent checking on the student our faculty I know having taught a class myself trying to give extra time work with them if they're confused you know I just see that so that caring passion is there.

27:08 GN: You have been here Twenty nine years why did you stay?

27:11 SS: You know it's an interesting question because before coming to Marist I was changing jobs every two or three years. For me it was a home you know I really fell in love with Marist and sense that I worked with great people. I reported to Jerry Cox who as Marist brother have a long history tradition of the college really you know imbedded me a sense of the Marist tradition. I found the work challenging, I found the leadership of the institution moving in a forward way, and the other reason why I stayed as I was really blessed with the opportunity to move into different positions not everyone can do that at Marist. I came in a right time in the right place I got promoted and I kept doing different things.

27:58 GN: So you be able to participating in the building actually of it. It's that's part your organizational skilled so bring about some of the changes that are here.

28:08 SS: Yeah I mean can speak to at some point maybe all the things that I did that I think were part of the changes.

28:13 GN: Say some let's hear some of them. Limited to three at the moment.

28:17 SS: Ok well I am thinking well I was very involved the growth of residential facilities on campus you know in the beginning stage from eighty five to ninety one ninety one I got promoted to an assistant dean and I had college activities and housing combined. Betty had retired so I was able at the sort of reorganize.

28:39 GN: Who replaced her, Bob Lynch?

28:42 SS: No Bob was the director of college activities. So yeah in some ways he moved up we merged both offices, operations and I supervise those operations and reported to initially I reported to **peter Amto** but then I reported to Gerard Cox. So I had a chance to you know get more involved student activity student government building programs club structure lectures on campus and housing. I was involved with creating Marist money which is a student debit card that now quit extensive I did that and then.

29:15 GN: What was the background of that, how did that come about?

29:18 SS: Well Marc Adin and I at the time and Joseph Weglarz is also a long serving employee here in the business office to financial services that was a time when colleges in the nation started moving towards a new ID system with swipe card on the back like we have a debit card and we moved to a system where we had swipe access for residence halls. Yeah. Through a central location I was involved instrumental in getting all the exterior exit doors locked they were only alarmed locks so if the fire alarm went off they release it forced everyone to come in only one way and we had an entry officers so we really could improve security and the students would swipe. So at the same time there was a movement higher Ed to add value to that card and what we did is we put the dining program on the card and Marist money so the one card concept access dining and a debit card and we extended the use of Marist money to off campus merchants and on campus, the post office, the bookstore.

30:20 GN: Where is that money?

30:23 SS: The College owns it, students make a deposit and they swipe at a debits it and they buy their books, they rent their video, they buy stamps or they go off campus.

30:04 GN: Who's the treasure who oversees that?

30:35 SS: Well at that time I went through student accounts which is the office at the time. so Marc Adin and myself and Joseph

Weglarz were instrumental in the process of re-carding everyone getting the software through an outside vendor and developing that program seeking merchants I did that with Joe because Marc Adin left probably five, seven, eight years. We created the Marist card office and in Donnelly and went under information technology IT with Christina Mulvey, cause it grew and need more staff is an example of an genesis of an idea. Create an office and a better service. Then in two thousand and one when Jerry left I got promoted to the associate dean and moved down to the area where Deb is next to Deb was a vice president and then became responsible for the Liberty Partnership State funded program, upward bound federally funded program both have a long history here and they took over dining services and housing residents live and campus sustain ability. Denis Murray point me his chair and I was doing the campus community coalition off campus group to deal with students activities in the community.

31:52 GN: It's quite sweep of activities and organizations. It's a very interesting to me I mean I know you in one roll but I know you had this whole background in terms of that.

32:10 SS: I would just say that dinning piece you know it's almost a million dollar operation.

32:14 GN: And you get ten percent of that. You've mentioned you're staying here and this is part of it is there some turnover in the staff do people leave?

32:30 SS: Well you know in student affairs we're really lucky I think we have probably some of the longest serving colleagues at the college. Roberta Staples, Deborah DiCaprio, Bob (Robert) Lynch, Tim Murray, Sarah English is now going on fifteen, years twenty nine for me. We've been here a long time. We're very committed.

32:50 GN: You slipped in Tim Murray this athletic director does he report to anybody.

32:57 SS: Student Affairs he reports to deb. So but also we have young professionals you know going back to this idea of communities to the institution I find that young professionals like many of our students are very interested in just the experience of moving on. You know so like a resident director may stay like two years, or a first year coronate two years, there's changeover.

33:28 GN: Where do you get new people?

33:30 SS: We will advertise to human resources whether it's online or in particular professional organizations or journals. Marist has a good reputation are from our people we've hired have since going to other career positions in other colleges might refer people.

33:46 GN: Do you prefer to get somebody from Marist or somebody from outside Marist?

33:51 SS: You know I like the idea of having someone who's just graduated from Marist to leave to get some other experience where it's college related or not and then come back their alma mater in a different capacity I think it's good to give a little break it's also good because they sometimes maybe too close to the students that they might be dealing with. We have on occasion hired a recent grad. But I think it's some advantage to go until different work or life experience.

34:20 GN: Admissions told me that of the ten thousand or so applicants we could fill this place with Marist people. With you know sons and daughters of alumni and you don't want that you know you really want to diversity.

34:36 SS: Yeah from the mission point of view. Yeah absolutely.

34:39 GN: And they are getting it now. I mean California, Hawaii here come Austral, China it all in the sweep of it.

34:50 SS: The idea of International students residing on campus housing that's all new.

34:55 GN: And you know there was a time maybe history will tell you this that we used to rent out space in the dormitory to I.B.M. And because we didn't have enough students to fill it.

34:05 SS: You know that was right before I came in eighty five I believe I know we rented some space in the summer to their interns. But I didn't know about the actual beds.

35:16 GN: I mean it's just word I am using that just a difference of the time. Known I mean just to get to bed at this places you got to get in line.

35:26 SS: And you know we have students living in residence inn and off campus.

35:29 GN: What you hoped was quickly changing focus I understand is going to be a new dormitory going up shortly.

35:36 SS: Yes plans to build on the residence hall facilities sophomore beds.

35:40 GN: High rise.

35:41 SS: Four five story two thousand six hundred fall opening.

35:47 GN: Boy have to go quickly to put the

35:52 SS: Were gonna see that happen real soon. So the plan is to build that were the old bank of New York was and then. Demolish Gartland commons construction there's some problem then build another unit of additional beds in that location as well.

36:09 GN: And John Gillard told me he wants to see a parking lot go up. Good luck and he has a place for it that well down in between Champagnet.

36:23 SS: And McCann its expensive parking lots.

36:25 GN: Fifteen thousand dollars a spot.

36:26 SS: But that's the place build it and put a tennis court or something up top.

36:34 GN: So that's part of my future things now about Marist image has changed. What would you contribute particularly you know Lee Miringoff would say it's the public opinion poll what do you think? The image of Marist in terms of students they present well the girl's basketball team has done its share and getting us on the map. We have conferences here National Conferences it's a nice place to come.

37:17 SS: You know what word just came to mind as you ask me Gus, connectivity. You know Marist is connected in so many different ways to so many different places and people. So we host conferences. They know us by MIPO, they know us by basketball, they know us by a students present conferences. They know us by the quality of our dinning service what we're doing in terms of buying local food. So what I'm thinking is when you say Marist to someone they say oh I know about Marist the team, or I heard you guy are doing this, or you have beautiful facilities so the brand recognition based on the connectivity all that we do. The web the archives with Roosevelt. That quickly just came to my mind because I can't think of one outstanding thing you know all of us to service in the community you know I am on three boards. So, when they know me and they say oh, I work at Marist oh Marist. You know that's another way the Marist has a place with a face you know.

38:22 GN: We have a teach Ed program in Hawaii, the abroad programs. Florence and all of these kind of things kind of bring it up. This is going to fast there's so many things I would like to. What do you have to say.

38:48 SS: Well I'm just trying to look over my I wrote some notes about early days and you know right now for us and something that's new that's a buzzword in higher ed is outcomes data you know it's a killer for some accreditation you know how measuring what we do to prove our value return on investment is a good thing or not.

39:12 GN: OK Stop there. My question is college worth the investment?

39:21 SS: My answer is yes.

39:23 GN: You got to answer that in terms of financially. If you think because you graduated from college you're going to get your money back. I'm not sure about that. But that's not a part of the program the investment is the development of the individual.

39:40 SS: No I agree. So really to the point about is the money the money dollar investment worth I think it is you know some of the studies I've read says over time the scale of pay for work because of college education does pay for itself and I do believe that. I have two children one grad school one in undergrad so I am living and breathing it. Certainly Marist education is a little more costly then public education there's aid available but the bottom line is I think it's worth it. But not only for the value of education on a particular subject matter but I think the value of the experience in an educational institution. So what I mean by that particularly is the engagement, the spoken word. Right now young people they're not talking a whole lot. They're on Facebook, there's e-mailing, so there in a situation where they're engaged in conversation, understanding a difference of opinion, having dialogue, presenting

themselves, thinking critically, analyzing.

40:36 GN: Interesting you should say that this morning Jan Stivers I ask the same question to her and she said if I could have a video of the classes where we having a discussion and the kids are talking one to another and I don't understand why did you say that and the critical take that goes back and forth. But if I could send it to their parents it was worth you know the growth, the maturity, the development, the listening.

41:05 SS: So she speaks to the same point.

41:06 GN: Yeah exactly and you would say the same thing now.

41:07 SS: Yeah and I'm not in the classroom as much as she is certainly and as educator for students who want to be teachers that's important. But you know we see it in terms of a meeting with a student with a problem, disciplining inactivity, in a program why do you think that what you like about that what you think do you greed. We encourage our young people just idea with another person in a room don't have to be their best friend just got know how to get along. Yeah these are students that come from the own bedroom some have their own bathrooms now they're going to live with someone. The social development. Then making choices you know we tell our students we all want to be accepted that human beings are like that and I and I say to students the careful about how you move along in your social crowd, every one ones to be perceived as liked. And a lot of times a student has a perception of what the norm is and it's very different and the tendency is to behave based on what the perception is rather than the reality. So we encourage students don't always think what you're hearing is the norm. So stay true to your values. Be open to new people in the way they think, the way they look, what they believe. Make some choices around that. You may go bump in the night a little bit but try to stay centered.

College is a good place experience that go to a different activity, eat new food, join a club, travel abroad.

42:33 GN: But it's a waste of time to send so much time studying and writing paper and going to the library.

42:40 SS: Well I my son just recently said that to me so you know what am I doing all this for. I don't think it's ever a waste of mind and to improve your mind. Waste of time rather to improve your mind and the challenge is to get a young person to see that because some of them do see what others haven't going to college have been successful and there are many out there. You know the Gates and Google.

43:08 GN: Most of them you know go off to drugs, most of the multimillionaire there superstars have probably huge problems. In fact one of the worst thing you can do is win the lottery or you will the lottery you'll see the problems you're going at your door step.

SS: But college I think gives you the ability to stay focused so that if you become wealthy a lot of people who are wealthy, but stay true to the values they give to charity have to program that's in need they stay focused and centered. I believe, I think that a lot of it is well there life experiences where they came from where they're going but people who influenced them many times it's a faculty member, the minister, or the counsellor that stepped in to help them at a time when they were searching on their own.

44:00 GN: OK one question. What does Marist still need and if you had the chance to talk to the board what would you say to them?

44:17 SS: Well look I think we are very lean as organization. We work really hard. I least my experience in student affairs. We were a lot of hats. So I think sensitivity to what the appropriate staffing level is given the press of student demands. I think allocation of resources needs to be equitable across the board. We do spend a lot of money on facilities, infrastructure that's important but.

44:48 GN: Salaries could be improved.

44:50 SS: Yeah I look I'm in a position were I'm not concerned about my salary but I think the general rule. Speaking on behalf of all the college we want to be competitive based on what others are making. I do believe firmly that paying a little more is world of difference than having to constantly rehire and recruit. I'm recruiting, hiring a director right now the time and energy and money for that and having to do it every couple years. And we're better off to pay a little more and retain someone and have that person give back to the institution so I'm firm believer in that you know. And then also just having Marist continue to be or build on being flexible to put some money where I directed strategies are showing themselves to be of value. So if there is a direction we want to move towards

in the college tries to do that in their strategic plan to put some resources to towards that.

45:54 GN: Example of that?

45:56 SS: Well example for me would be in our dining service program you know. It's something we push for many years to college did in fact rebuild and redesign our facility which is great. Right now I'm pushing hard to add different types of procurement food I want to buy hormone free, antibiotic free grass fed meats for our students we'll be world class not many colleges are doing that I think it's a great opportunity for us to build that part of the program for the college good nutrition, good service. Students want that, parents are taking their students to these kinds of restaurant, students buying these kinds of foods we should be there. That's just a very specific example.

46:36 GN: What's the hardest part of the job? The most difficulties you had? Expelling students?

46:43 SS: Well yeah I was going to say one of most challenging difficult things I have it did and I did this multiple times in my early years from eighty five to about ninety one was dismissing students in the college and I did that. I don't do that any longer the other difficult challenges I have is sometimes working with parents. When parents of students or working with my frontline director staff and aren't please and they call me and there's some hardship, and anger, and misunderstanding, and it's very gratifying when I can have understand but it's also painful and frustrating when they're so adamant and so closed about certain things. They of course think they doing what's best we of course think we're doing what's best for that's a challenge and it's also very satisfying when I can get them to see the role of us in college that we're doing the right thing for their kids and to let go to appreciate that. I think the other sad thing is when I leave Marist.

47:46 GN: The happiest things you did?

47:49 SS: Happiest things, I get great satisfaction when I can develop a program or project and see it develop to the point where it's providing good service. I've been very satisfied when higher good staff and see them stay with us continued and contribute and I've been in positions were I've help some students out as individuals over time. Just recently I went to a wedding of a Marist alumni.

48:18 GN: Very good. OK Well I have I've kind of run through my list I mean there's just new twists and turns that you could make and go back over but I want to get a sweep of Marist now and where you've come from in terms of the development of the organization that we are and hear about what still could be done to improve what we have. But nevertheless look with satisfaction on what we have come from to where we are so looking at it that way.

48:53 SS: Well look I think you know I certainly want to in knowledge the leadership of college though president Murray and the board I think they have done some grate things in terms of infrastructure and growth off site programs Institute for leadership. Ridgeway or Raymond Rich I'm sorry. I think its important diversify the board you know and I think that's slowly happening because they think that there's diversification will give some new direction or ideas of the college. I think we have some very committed vice presidents of various levels certainly want to see that can continue to be diverse as well.

49:39 GN: I have to agree with you Dennis has certainly done a key job and leading us forward but I also say he can't do it alone you know without that staff that is in all of the academic staff. We are first of all a college said and then we provide the whole story why did we build dormitories we weren't really going to have a dormitory here we were supposed to be just a mid-Hudson college at the beginning and they just weren't enough students but we had a big city down here that loads of students, so building dormitory then they had to be housed and supervised, OK and then we had to develop programs for them like sports programs. I just can't get over the days you have your club the activity's fair it's just a wonder of all of the things that are happening. I think it's a great tribute to have put this together slowly and then budgeting which is another problem all by its self that has worked out so well.

50:50 SS: Other thing to that comes to mind you know I hope I hope that we will always maintain that connection with the Marist brothers with us t you know we have brothers that are with us whether they're campus minister, or live in, we have brother Sean Sammon, to maintain the importance of that connection.

51:05 GN: Do you any connection with Brother Mike Kelly and the ministry group.

51:11 SS: Brother Frank Kelly. Well Frank is member of our student affairs team so yes. I am involved actually trying to do some programs with them of for the Jewish students. Yeah I chair the Holocaust Remembrance Committee where Gerard Cox and a member of the faculty involved in the Ephron. Frank and I have certainly collaborating on certain various activities, we support his campus ministry programs there the largest club on campus.

51:39 GN: And encouraging students to get involved.

51:41 SS: They're the largest club on campus.

51:43 GN: I mean the Christmas tree thing for one thing the Meals on Wheels or whatever.

51:49 SS: There's the Hunger walk.

51:52 GN: All of that kind things.

51:53 SS: We tell our students residents to be involved our clubs. I've walked all the hunger runs. I do present for the giving tree. You know I am really committed to what Marist stands. One of the things I've been fortune off enough you know my position such that I can go a lot of these events I go to lectures, I going to receptions. I get invited to certain things I've taken on the interest what can I do. I just recently was on the steering committee for accreditation. I learned a lot about Marist after twenty nine years or twenty eight because it was last year I learned a lot. And I know a lot of faculty you know they're my colleagues I can call them and say you know Jim I'm looking to do this what do you think can you help me and I think that's a rarity and a richness that I have of my level because my years of service. Yeah you know there's a mutual understanding respect and cooperation.

52:49 GN: I think we're happy that we are the number we are rather than the forty thousand of Purdue and Michigan some of the other kind of things. Steve it's been wonderful talking to you thank you very much.

53:01 SS: My pleasure.

53:02 GN: We'll have to meet again sometime when you have some more ideas that I haven't gotten to today.

53:07 SS: Hopefully it was help.

53:10 GN: Very good take care.