

Roberta Staples (Part 2 of 2)

Roberta Staples

Marist College

Poughkeepsie, New York

Transcribed by Wai Yen Oo

For the Marist College Archives and Special Collections

Roberta Staples (Part 2 of 2)

Interviewee: Roberta Staples

Interviewer: Gus Nolan

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Summary: Roberta Staples continues her interview with Gus Nolan on her role as the Director of Professional and Student Development. Her introduction of the Office of Violence Prevention Education on the campus and the prominent role she plays in the mental health and well-being of students and faculty at Marist College. She reflects on Marist College students and prospects for the college. (PART 2 of 2)

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Gus Nolan ([00:02](#)):

[...] Today is November 9th, 2010. It's a Tuesday afternoon. We're in the Marist College Library and we're continuing a conversation with Roberta Staples. From the office of [...].

Roberta Staples ([00:32](#)):

Actually, my title is Director of Professional and Student Development. So I do a lot of training, particularly around interpersonal violence, crisis intervention. I do a variety of things. I absolutely love my job. Last year at the request of my supervisor, Vice President Deborah DiCaprio, I actually started an Office of Violence Prevention Education and it's to follow up with students who have been impacted by a critical incident. Maybe they don't need counseling but they need advocacy information, sort of psychological first aid. So I do that as well.

Gus Nolan ([01:18](#)):

Those students who would have those needs experience what kind of trouble?

Roberta Staples ([01:25](#)):

Well, the concept actually came out of a number of incidents that a year and a half ago. Whatever academic year that was. Students who had been impacted by a critical incident. One had been the victim of an off-campus assault. Another had something similar happen. And the first responder people: security, residence life, judicial are very good at what they're doing. And they get the information and they check in with the student. But who checks in with the student a week after, a month after, after the case is sort of resolved. Sort of saying, "How are you doing and how's your family doing?" And that sort of follow up. It's not clinical. It's not psychotherapy but it's sort of reaching out to those students. And I love doing that kind of thing. The other piece of it is, as a college doing as much as we can to prevent those incidents from happening in the first place. So this year's project is, I'm actually working on a bystander intervention program. We're partnering with Family Services in the community and we're teaching students how to intervene in a situation without becoming part of the problem. And we have a wonderful group of about 20 students that we're teaching. You know, if you see something going on [...] a boyfriend, girlfriend fighting or hate or whatever, inappropriate behavior [...] Don't think it's not my business. I don't want to get involved. But don't go in with the pin out of the hand grenade either. There's a way to just interpersonally, sometimes diffuse situations and teaching other students how to do that [...] I think it creates a different culture.

Gus Nolan ([03:18](#)):

How did you find this group of students to be willing to participate in the program and the learning?

Roberta Staples ([03:24](#)):

Some were recruited, known to be sort of natural student leaders involved in other activities. And some just saw the posting. I sent a message to a number of faculty saying if you know, a student who would be particularly interested in that. So in fact, John SchleppA sent me a number of students. I met some others at the activities Fair. So it was sort of a networking of recommendations and students on their own being interested.

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Gus Nolan ([03:56](#)):

Is there an academic component to this? Are there credits involved?

Roberta Staples ([03:59](#)):

Not to this one. It's actually a program that comes out of Northeastern University that's in place in high schools and campuses across the country. So [...]

Gus Nolan ([04:08](#)):

So are you also involved with other universities and colleges in this kind of program?

Roberta Staples ([04:14](#)):

Yeah. In the next step, hopefully we will train our students and they can do sort of peer education here at Marist. But they can also go into the community and talk to younger students in high school and middle school about sort of civility and violence prevention. So our students are really very interested in doing that.

Gus Nolan ([04:36](#)):

Now what part of your program or your day is dedicating to this or is that the whole day?

Roberta Staples ([04:42](#)):

No, it's not the whole day.

Gus Nolan ([04:45](#)):

Would it be half depending on it [...].

Roberta Staples ([04:47](#)):

Depends on the day. Yeah. Yeah. And depends on where we are in the cycle.

Gus Nolan ([04:52](#)):

Now are you alone in this or is there one or two other members?

Roberta Staples ([05:00](#)):

Well, there's actually four of us doing the training. One is Alyssa Gates who's down in the McCann Center. She's director of Student Athlete Enhancement. Another is Whitney Banora who works for Family Services. She's their prevention educator and myself. And the fourth is Jesse Saland whose wife works in Dennis's office whose father's a Senator. And Jesse is a social worker and very, very good at especially working with male students. So we're a team but that's just one project. Like what we were saying before. I also have run summer conferences and I'm on the assessment team. So there's a wonderful variety of activities I get to play with.

Gus Nolan ([05:48](#)):

Yeah. it dawned to me now, but it's a question that relevant to the times. And I know it's a point that we're to be discussed and the academic committee at the board. Related to you might say

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infringements of rights of other students vis-a-vis the tragedies that have occurred in other colleges. And how far can you [...] What kind of limits and how is this to be monitored? I suppose some of the people in your program seeing this underway [...] People depriving or taping and televising the kinds of things that are inappropriate would be asked to step in and kind of cause a cease and halt of this kind of activity. That would be it.

Roberta Staples ([06:42](#)):

I think that the power of a peer saying that's inappropriate. That's not the only piece. In fact, on the 8th of December, we're hosting a webinar. I'm not sure how I feel about that technology. But it's on cyber bullying because you're right, it is going on in high schools and colleges everywhere. I think we would be naive to think it could never happen here. So we want to be informed with programs like that. The presenter of the webinar actually is an acquaintance who's an attorney who specializes in higher education risk management. Because you have to balance the freedom of speech. You have to look at the technology piece, which is for some of us very complicated. And that infringement on another person's right. So there aren't simple answers.

Gus Nolan ([07:34](#)):

Right. Moving on two other points of contributions you can or do or not involved in. Just a curious point on my behalf. Are you involved in admissions in any way? Do you have recommendations? Are any applications run by you in terms of students' ability to be able to function in a college situation?

Roberta Staples ([08:08](#)):

No. That that used to happen on occasion when I was in the counseling center. Because the admission staff would have sort of clinical questions about an applicant. But I guess you and Deb DiCaprio were talking about how much more complex it is these days with students. I don't know if they're being diagnosed earlier or there's an actual increase in some of the disabilities like the spectrum disorders and those kinds of things that a medication can be helpful with. But you still have a student who's perhaps a little vulnerable because they don't pick up on social cues or you know that kind of gray area stuff.

Gus Nolan ([08:52](#)):

In a not too distant past, we had a guy here, Larry Sullivan. And it seems to me that sometimes he was called upon to be what might be called an alcoholic counselor. Maybe it's not the correct word, but substance abuse of another time. Is there such a person now?

Roberta Staples ([09:12](#)):

I think that role is more diffuse. I know there are folks in the counseling center. We have a student population of what, 4,000. Then we have three people in the counseling center, so they're very, very busy providing psychological care for a wide variety of mental health issues. Certainly substance abuse would be part of it. Another person that would be educating students around substance would be Christine Pupek, who's a director of student conduct. If a student is found in violation, there's an educational component looking at at your own drinking. Angel Arriaga who's with HEOP and the Center for Multicultural Affairs is very well versed and trained students. He teaches a class. So Larry's role is played by a number of people. In fact, there's

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another bystander intervention program that just started. It's called the red watch program and it's out of Stony Brook University. There's a very sad story attached. A faculty member, a woman who's on the faculty there lost her son at, I believe Northwestern. He went to bed highly intoxicated and died. And she never wanted that to happen again. So it's similar in the bystander if students see one of their own who's highly intoxicated, it's really a medical emergency. So we teach them CPR and we teach them how to intervene and keep their fellow students safe. They'd rather see their fellow student called into the judicial office then pulled out in a body bag. Quite frankly. So difficult, difficult choices, but students need to think about those. What really are the consequences of my behavior? Yeah.

Gus Nolan ([11:08](#)):

Have you had experience with returning veterans to college and their problems?

Roberta Staples ([11:15](#)):

Some, and that's another passion I have. That's why I love my job. I get to work with all these topics. [...] I don't think we've had as many veterans enrolled as perhaps some other colleges. We do have a few and I met one a couple of weeks ago. In fact, the Director of Disability Services called me because she's knows I'm interested in this. And she brought this young man over and he's really delightful. I think he did two or three deployments. He chose Marist. But he moved to the area from Westchester County. Really didn't know Poughkeepsie. Didn't know Marist. And he said, I really would like to start a student organization so I can tell other incoming veterans. You know where to live and how to negotiate through the academic and with our current generation of veterans especially because of the multiple deployments and the technology that's used over there. You almost have to assume PTSD and TBI (traumatic brain injury) because the brain structure actually changes with the trauma that they endure which means in a classroom, much harder to concentrate. This young man was saying, I have to sit with my back against the wall because instinctively I know I'm not safe. So it's a different and wonderful population but they're sitting in classes with our young 17 and 18 year olds from Long Island and New Jersey. And I think there's a richness of the exchange potentially. But we have to educate our campus regarding the veterans and what we know to be true of the majority coming back.

Gus Nolan ([13:04](#)):

More than likely we will start to get a stream of these fellows because more and more federal help is being provided for them. And with that, they would [...] beats trying to go to work when you don't have the abilities to do what the work you know is going to involve. So [...]

Roberta Staples ([13:26](#)):

There's a wonderful organization in the community that somehow I became part of. John Schleppe and Dan Meyer who are affiliated with Marist are members of the Hudson Valley Psychological Association. And two years ago they wanted to host their annual conference. Well, the topic they chose that particular year was veterans and PTSD and they invited me to attend the conference which was wonderful. And out of that came a group of community people in Marist people who really wanted to look at the Hudson Valley as a region. We have 140,000 veterans returning. And they'll be at all points of the spectrum of homeless, completely disabled to ready to take the GI bill and come to campus. Tomorrow is November 10th and we're having the first

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meeting of the Marist Veterans Organization. Hopefully, we'll get some students to attend. Tomorrow's also the Marine Corps birthday. So maybe we'll get some Marines. So we're beginning [...]

Gus Nolan ([14:32](#)):

Yeah. Well as complex as this phase of our talk has taken us now. In terms of your office and the work that you're doing and the programs that you were involved in the needs on the campus. Let's turn it a little bit and a little bit from the historical to the present. The campus; this is not the campus you came to work on now. When you came in, where would you start to say, I can't believe the library. Or what are the most striking changes for you, at least physically on the campus?

Roberta Staples ([15:14](#)):

Oh, there are so many other. I remember the very first time, I came to the campus it was actually before I got a job here. I was looking for the library and there was a huge sign out near Route Nine of those [...] map of the campus with a "You are here" kind of thing. We only had three buildings but we had this big sign and now we have multiple beautiful buildings. And I think what strikes me is not only the Library, the Hancock Center and the beautiful facilities but the whole landscape and planning of how the campus looks.

Gus Nolan ([15:50](#)):

And some of those things. And I, to be honest, I was not enthusiastic about the \$9 million going into the stadium. I thought it was a little ambitious and somewhat out of the range when we would seem to have other needs like classroom space and office space. But in retrospect and talking to people who are involved in the program, it does seem to be a worthwhile investment. Do you see it as such? I mean, do you have [...] have you experienced the breadth of, for instance, [...] it's an attraction for a wider choice of students. Students can come here if we don't know we're here. So the idea of playing in San Diego or in Jacksonville or wherever the football team goes and the basketball team as well. But getting a wider spread, the Marist name is much more known and familiar throughout these contiguous States. There was a time when you would experience only New York, New Jersey and Connecticut. I think. Maybe Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

Roberta Staples ([17:08](#)):

That would recognize Marist? Yeah. Sometimes even within Dutchess County, I wasn't quite so sure. And as you know, I grew up in Maine and when I would go back to visit, I'd be asked where I work and it didn't ring. But the only person that rang a bell with was George Mitchell who actually had come here to speak a number of times and was familiar with the Marist Opinion Poll. But it was rare if ever that outside of this little area, anybody would recognize Marist. And now we truly are on the map. We're on a lot of maps. We're on the map, but we're on a lot of maps, we're on the athletic map. We're on the academic map.

Gus Nolan ([17:50](#)):

Yeah, that's true. And you'll see the Marist seal all over the place. I mean, you can see it in Florida and you'll see it, you know, down Jersey Way. I mean, not just of course the bridge, but

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getting down. And so that part of the sweep of it. Then do you have any particular academic program yourself? Are you involved on a class? A teaching at any time?

Roberta Staples ([18:19](#)):

No, I'm in the classroom occasionally but to do presentations on, for instance within the social work and the behavioral sciences. A faculty member will ask me to come in and do some training around crisis intervention, psychological first-aid, bystander intervention; those topics that would be of interest to students in those majors. But I'm a guest speaker, I'm not an instructor.

Gus Nolan ([18:44](#)):

Well, okay. I mean, I was saying that in terms of students' use of this library, and we just saw it today. Coming in here, I mean. This little room was taken because it's a convenient place to come and study and there are two or three students out there. There are carousels around and [...] you know, so it's different from the library that you were trying to find 40 years ago.

Roberta Staples ([19:06](#)):

Well, yeah. And that was, I think it was then in Donnelly. In the computer center.

Gus Nolan ([19:11](#)):

Yes. Yeah. Hopefully before then (?) you'd go up to Fontaine or that area? Across from it. Also there's been a change in faculty and administration. I'm amazed by the number of people here and who have been here for 10 years that I hadn't got a clue about and I thought I will have been here for a good part of my life prior to retirement. It's just that the wave continues of new people coming on. Do you keep in touch with many of the old faculty or does a separation from buildings divide that?

Roberta Staples ([19:56](#)):

It does to a certain extent and I think we've become very involved in our projects and in our buildings. And but I find maybe the older I get, the more I'll run into people in the grocery store, over at Mike Arteaga's. And I think we make a point of connecting and reconnecting and having those conversations and reminiscence.

Gus Nolan ([20:19](#)):

Yeah. just a sidebar, Michael Arteaga versus the Marist Physical that is used a lot. You'll see [...].

Roberta Staples ([20:31](#)):

Our facility? Yeah, it's very busy.

Gus Nolan ([20:33](#)):

There are a number of times to see it, you know, and in fact, talking to Debbie, she would say, you know, that one of the two most important things that you have to have now in the running in a college for students. Besides the dining services, would be a recreational where they have to be

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able to go and exercise. And you know, this seems to be a thrust that we didn't have. I always planned the necessity to rake the leaves if it was the case. But this idea now is much more rampant even among college students than it was.

Roberta Staples ([21:12](#)):

And we have clearly outgrown the McCann Center and I think the expansion that [...] I think they've already started actually. Will really be wonderful. And I'm over at Arteaga's [...] as you know, just about every day of the week and I'm seeing more and more of our students over there as well, which is a good community connection. If they find the weight at the McCann Center as too long, they'll pop across the street and they are taking care of themselves physically. And Mike is an alum, so he's [...]

Gus Nolan ([21:46](#)):

There's accommodations can be made in a reasonable financial and so on. That makes that possible. We have talked, I think maybe the last time about the students [...] the change in the students, but let's revisit that a little bit again. How would you describe the most significant changes from the earlier years and your first dealing with them to what you're dealing with now [...] the students that you're dealing with now. In terms of a number of things, culturally, financially, academically, religious, spiritual, whatever you want to say in that category. Let's just run through them. How do you find them?

Roberta Staples ([22:32](#)):

It's a generational thing. I don't know that it's specific to Marist and I don't mean to insult any generation of students. But I find the current students are much brighter, much more accomplished, much more diverse, much more focused. I think their stress levels are higher. I really can't speak to the economic or religious components specifically.

Gus Nolan ([23:06](#)):

For the economic is evident in that they can come here. And with the tuition has steadily gone up between what it used to be and what it is today. So they do come from, it would seem more financially accomplished parents or families.

Roberta Staples ([23:29](#)):

And I don't know which is cause and which is effect. But certainly the majority of our students are involved in community service. They're sort of out there. I don't know if that's the expectation of the college that you will be involved and give back to the community or it's the students coming in with a desire and, and perhaps an experience in their high school of having done community service. But that's a really big component.

Gus Nolan ([23:57](#)):

Yeah. And it being a, you might say, cultural thing for the generation. Is it as widespread would you think at New Paltz or at Long Island University or at Albany? The one that [...] Have you, there's hardly a way to measure that I suppose?

Roberta Staples ([24:18](#)):

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Yeah. Yeah, exactly. And every campus culture is different. And in fact, are you familiar with the Grace Smith House here in Dutchess County? They're the battered women's shelter and a lot of our students have interned with them and volunteered with them. Well, every year, the Grace Smith House does a gala and it's, it's a really elegant event and they give an award. It's called the Woman of Grace award. And one year it was to the Special Victims Bureau Chief in the District Attorney's office because she prosecutes the offenders. One year, it was to Mary Lou Heissenbittel who founded the Grace Smith House. So this is an award that really is significant. This year, it was awarded to the three colleges, Bard, Vassar, and Marist for the work that each college is doing on violence prevention. And the event was only a couple of weeks ago. Each college sent an administrator and two students to receive the award. And the difference among the three campuses, all three doing very good work. My sense is we have a greater percentage of students involved in community service. The other two campuses have wonderful programs but they're very different. Our team was the last award recipient and I was there with two of our students. And I actually quoted the mission statement of Marist College and what better way to address that than to work towards greater peace in our world and in our campus and community and in our relationships. And then I introduced two of our students who were just fabulous. One is Terrance Turner who's on the football team. He's a great big guy. He's a science major. And he gave the most poignant talk and he disclosed that he grew up in a family seeing things that he never should've seen. And he vowed to the audience that he would raise his family in a peaceful environment. And he was so powerful. And the other student was Danielle DeZao who also disclosed that she had been in an abusive relationship and held him accountable. But then she wanted to learn more about how that happened, how she got in that situation. So she learned more and more about dating violence and she's actually started an organization that does fundraising and awareness. She's been on television. She's on her way to establishing a not-for-profit. They were just so [...] they are current students. He's senior and she's a junior. So we have some stars among us. Not that that wasn't the case in the earlier years but I think that speaks to the difference too,

Gus Nolan ([27:19](#)):

But I think that's part of the, they might say a characteristic that Marist, you're allowed to develop here and do things you know. And there's [...] if you have an idea, they're pretty often willing to listen to it. I mean going back to the beginnings of hearing the athletes talk about their first days of the football teams and their crew and these various kinds of sports that started and it was from the ground up. The students who came forward and said, you know, we want to do this, we want to do that. You know, unfortunately, you know, the mentality was you want to do it, do it, but stay within the limits. This refers to the college and you got to get to class and all of that as well. And that could mean a lot of money. What did I want to say here? Yeah. You've pretty much touched on one of the points, but I wanted you to repeat it. And the culture of the students today and their phones. And their constant wanting to hang on to the roots where they have come from for the most part. At least that seems to be the view that you get that they're more concerned with calling out to someone else rather than the person next to them walking down the corridor coming out of class.

Roberta Staples ([28:50](#)):

Yeah. That was only an observation that I've made over the past few years. Again, it wasn't that many years ago that I was in the Counseling Center and I would get calls from parents saying,

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"My daughter's not adjusting. My son is not making friends." But then my observation would be, they go to class and class is dismissed and they all stand up and immediately get on their phone instead of talking to the person across the hall. And it's the era of technology. I know that. And it is what it is.

Gus Nolan ([29:24](#)):

I mean that's not an Marist phenomenon.

Roberta Staples ([29:26](#)):

Oh no, no, not at all. In fact, I had a colleague a few years ago, Rich Kadison up at Harvard. See when you become a dinosaur, you sort of know people in a lot of different places. But Dr. Kadison wrote a book called "The College of the Overwhelmed" and he's talking about college students [...] this generation of college students in general and their stress levels and [...] the technology piece. And as you pointed out before going to very expensive colleges that don't necessarily yield a job. Our own seniors, looking at that clock in Donnelly hall, how many days till graduation? Yeah. They get frantic over that. Take that clock down! So a lot of changes.

Gus Nolan ([30:13](#)):

Yeah, yeah. You're in the womb still, you know, and you don't want to leave. You are right. There was a time, I don't know if I told you the story, but back in the days of Vietnam, students would fail you know, so that they purposely not want to graduate so that they could hang on. But I mean, the point was that once they did, they were [...] The draft was still on. So they are now [...] we could come up and it was better. They'd rather be in college than going out of their way. Not that they weren't dedicated Americans. But they just were anxious to go to war. And so that was it. Okay, let's change again the focus on what. And go down and look out and say, well, where are we going? What would you think Marist would be like 10 years from now? You know, in terms of, I've heard some ideas expressed about even changes that will be made on the campus but that's physical changes. Maybe you've heard those too. I don't know. Lowell Thomas will be re-positioned to reorganized. Because the need to improve the media that we're teaching that we have and so on has to be enhanced. I mean that would be one place [...]

Roberta Staples ([31:40](#)):

I think it will continue to grow. I went to a presentation a couple of weeks ago because we were addressing summer programs. All of those external groups that call the college and say you have such a pretty campus, we'd like to have our annual conference on your campus and stay in your residence halls. And I really think we need to look at [...] are we going to become a conference center or not? But, but the meeting was called because of this coming summer, the extent of construction is enormous. They're going to be doing the tunnel under Route Nine and they're going to be changing the entrances. They're going to be closing off Route Nine for a period of time, redoing the McCann Center, continuing with Hancock and it's just going to be one big construction site. But exciting.

Gus Nolan ([32:31](#)):

So last summer was something when they were building Hancock and they were changing all the paths and the lines outside of Lowell Thomas and Dyson. Yeah.

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Roberta Staples ([32:38](#)):

Well I think that will continue. I think we'll continue to grow.

Gus Nolan ([32:44](#)):

So that's one thing. How about [...] what do you see in the programs? Are we [...] is there an area and the academic field [...] I don't where the premed is at this time or how far advanced it is. Or sports medicine I think is on the horizon. I mean, there's been a tremendous increase in science students.

Roberta Staples ([33:08](#)):

Yes.

Gus Nolan ([33:08](#)):

But only six of them are in chemistry. Yeah. All the others are either biology or med tech or some of those things. So do you hear that [...] Are you familiar with a new need as it were in academic programs? To go forward?

Roberta Staples ([33:30](#)):

Yeah. I'm not really part of those conversations but certainly observations. I've done some guest speaking in the Athletic Training Department. What a wonderful program. A very focused students. And because I do sort of crisis intervention a number of years ago myself, I decided that I can do psychological firstaid and crisis intervention but if you're bleeding I should know what to do about that too. So I became involved with the EMS field. And there's great interest in actually offering the EMT course here at Marist for Marist credit and it goes on the Marist transcript. But the local agency is Dutchess Community College. They are the emergency medical services provider. So they would bring their equipment and their staff to our campus and teach our students at the end of the course, assuming you pass, you are an EMT. And the number of students I have talked to and those majors are so excited because it's not just looking good on the resume. But those students who want to go on to nursing or get into medical school or any branch of those fields.

Gus Nolan ([34:48](#)):

Those fields will become much more fields of opportunities for our students. And there are post-graduate things here.

Roberta Staples ([34:58](#)):

And we do have a tremendous shortage. I know of doctors and medical facilities, I wouldn't predict us becoming a medical center.

Gus Nolan ([35:10](#)):

But still at the end of the biology part of it. My physician in Highland, his son is in college at Syracuse or someplace upstate. But he wanted him to take chemistry here, you know you know, he said he was chemistry course. He went on to come to the now so that, that was kind of a name out there that is known and you will get a good chemistry here. And I think that's not a high

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level, you know. That's kind of [...] it's basic chemistry. The lab's the introduction to it, you know, and that's not the MD degree, but it started in opening up the door to me able to get one.

Roberta Staples (35:52):

Yeah. I think some of the segue programs we are a test center for the law school admission test. Yeah. And I won't tell any lawyer jokes, but we are rated fourth in the state as a testing facility for students that want to get into law school. And we don't have a law school, but we just do a really good job of administering that test. We have a very strong paralegal program. And sort of the segue into law schools without having our own.

Gus Nolan (36:22):

Yeah. It's the paralegal program. A sidebar is the word [...] academic to those credits. Are they part of their regular diploma? I think you get a certificate, right?

Roberta Staples (36:38):

I think you do. Yeah.

Gus Nolan (36:40):

Yeah. So that, that probably is [...] it's something over and above or beyond or actually yeah.

Speaker 3 (36:46):

And I think that traditional undergraduate degree would [...] for one that wants to go to law school would be in History. We have a pre-law advisor that helps students sort of configure their courses to their best advantage to going to law school.

Speaker 2 (37:03):

Yeah. we're talking about the future. And one of the things about the future is to keep the campus bright and attractive and having the people come here. And then what they're coming here for also has to be kept bright and attractive. You know that the study is worth it. That the degree will be worth its name in print. You know, when you're getting a diploma. So those things remain. How do you keep ahead of the game? How are we going to keep pushing the envelope in terms of offering these things and attracting these students in? Do you see methodologies for keeping, attracting competent faculty? Is the pay scale equitable? And from what you hear among faculty, you know, is it?

Roberta Staples (38:09):

I couldn't begin to talk about equitable pay scales, I just don't know. But I think one answer is to continue those programs that are so wonderful when you look at orientation in June when the families come in with, with their incoming students. The enthusiasm, the love they already have for this campus is amazing. And then the other is sort of celebratory, the family weekend. We get huge numbers of families coming back and we had alumni weekend. Do we call that alumni weekend? Homecoming or I'm not sure. But I attended that and the number of alums from many, many years ago calling back and so happy to be here. And the place is beautiful. So I think our alumni connection is a real strong one and becoming stronger.

Roberta Staples (Part 2 of 2)

Gus Nolan ([39:07](#)):

Yeah. I've been here to see some of my colleagues pass on this past weekend, there was the Memorial service for Harry Goldman, you know. And having guys like Bill Austin talk about the first years when they were beginning their athletic program and he's saying, you know, it was something, we didn't have wrestling, but we had to and he never took it apart. Well, you're going to become the wrestling teacher and you're going to have to learn it and do it, you know, so it's "you do it." And from this experience, they told loving stories about how all of this thing happened. And then at homecoming weekend we had the dedication of the LaPietra lab. Again, stories about people who had these experiences and have set the bar pretty high. It's a matter of keeping it there and letting that speak for itself. I'm doing the talking. Let's go back to you. What would you say are some of your best experiences here in terms of profession, in terms of involving with students. In terms of programs?

Roberta Staples ([40:26](#)):

I don't think I could pick one. I think the opportunity to work for and with some wonderful people working with Deb DiCaprio is just wonderful because I sort of have the freedom to take on projects and the support. I love working with our students. I don't know that I could pick one, but I do feel that I've had the opportunity to grow and challenge myself and certainly not unique to me. If I see something that I really believe we could do and do well or that needs to be addressed in the best interest of our students, I think there's a support for doing that kind of work. Maybe the veterans as an example. We don't have an Office of Veterans Affairs. But there's one veteran came forward and said, I really want to connect with some other students. That's not part of my job description, but I feel the go ahead to, you know, let's make it happen. Yeah. And maybe that's part of the history of the early years that we will make it happen. Yeah.

Gus Nolan ([41:37](#)):

Okay. Now if you had a chance to go and speak to the board of trustees. Would you have an idea or two to say, you know, what Marist needs? Marist needs [...] where do you see? The Office of Veteran Affairs? That's one. You know, we just gone there and [...] Do we need to a Fine Arts building, you know our students frustrated by you know, they come with all this talent and they have nowhere to show it except in the basement of Champagnat. Yet with, you know limited opportunities. You might say. I'm giving the answer to one or two of them, you know. What will you tell the board?

Roberta Staples ([42:26](#)):

I don't know that I would presume. But yes, we need Vet- [...] I don't know that I always have the big picture in mind and I think that's the job of the board to have the big picture in mind. But on a smaller scale, yes, we need Veteran's Affairs. I would really like this Office of Violence Prevention to go further because I think we've got a really good thing going in terms of not only not changing, but awareness on our campus, but also offering something to the local community. I think that's needed. A Fine Arts building, I think would be wonderful. The Steel Plant is terrific. My daughter graduated from here in '08 in summa cum laude of course. But she's an artist. She is an art major. I don't know anything about the field, but I'm sure she would like a new building.

Roberta Staples (Part 2 of 2)

Gus Nolan ([43:19](#)):

Well, the Steel Plant is unique. Across the street, there's a chemical [?] production place that apparently they'll take down soon. Maybe not that soon because that involves other problems. And you know, there's two schools of thought. It should be a cafeteria or it should be a fine art's place, you know, and so that will be fought out on the plains in the years to come.

Roberta Staples ([43:46](#)):

And I don't pretend to have that expertise, but, and I don't think I'm being naive, but I do believe that the groups and the people who are planning or planning very, very carefully. And they're taking into account all the variables in terms of which direction this college should go in. I do have a trust in that, not that we don't argue sometimes and have our own priorities and bailiwicks. But I do think there's, there's a sense that we're planning where we're going into the future. The strategic planning which is enormous. Enormous. And it's being very, very carefully done. I do think, and it's not unique to Marist. But I think we're on board with it that you don't plan programs just because you think it's a good idea. There has to be evidence-based. There has to be strategic planning. There has to be assessment. What is the impact on the student learning outcome if you will? Yeah. How do you know you're doing what you're saying you're doing?

Gus Nolan ([44:56](#)):

You know, Frost has the poem about two roads and I chose one. Are you happy with the road you chose?

Roberta Staples ([45:06](#)):

Oh, absolutely, absolutely. In fact, I went for my physical today. My doctor said, "The only difference is you're a year old or whatever you're doing, keep doing it. You're doing it." I'm surprised that I'm still working full time. And I said, I love it. If I wake up in the morning and don't look forward to going to work, then it would be time to look at other options.

Gus Nolan ([45:33](#)):

Well you've certainly put the time in. I mean, you've been here, you know the place obviously it's a good marriage, Marist likes you and you like Marist. And so we hope that the union continues.

Roberta Staples ([45:48](#)):

I don't know that the marriage analogy is one I would use. But it's a good [...] it's been a good match. It's been a good match.

Gus Nolan ([45:56](#)):

Friendship companions along the way. All other words, it's going to be jumped into this kind of stretching for it. But from my point, I just delighted to have this opportunity to hear you out to finish the story that we started sometime ago. And we generally take about an hour for this. I want you to know we spent 52 minutes out of an hour, so, and we have to consider what we have on the first part of the other tape. So when you're having fun, it goes fast. But I enjoyed this. Thank you very much.

Roberta Staples (Part 2 of 2)

Roberta Staples ([46:35](#)):

Thank you.