

Ivonna Anderson interview #10
6/10/13
51:20

Note

This transcript has been lightly edited by TCC Archivist A. Demeter to remedy name spelling, misheard/missing words, and other minor corrections, 4/1/2024.

Summary

In this interview with Ivonna Anderson, she speaks about a variety of topics such as the evolution of the Science and Math programs at TCC, the direction this evolution took, the differences between being an instructor and being a chair, and the 1973 faculty strike. Other topics discussed include the expectations for your students, working with the TCC Foundation, Advisory Boards, and the importance and changes in math and science.

Table of Contents

- I. Work at TCC pp.1
- II. Climate at TCC during 1960s pp.1-2
- III. Why TCC? pp. 2
- IV. Community Colleges pp. 2
- V. Time Spent at TCC and Retirement pp. 2
- VI. Watching TCC Grow and Thoughts on TCC's Future pp. 3
- VII. Background, Immigration, and Tacoma pp. 3-4
- VIII. Interest in Science and Teaching pp. 4-5
- IX. TCC's Facilities and Architecture in the 1960s pp. 5-7
- X. Cadaver Program pp. 7
- XI. Courses Taught pp. 7
- XII. Relationships with Students and Coworkers pp. 7-8
- XIII. The Expansion and Direction of TCC's Science Program pp. 8

- XIV. Teaching Philosophy and Expectations for One's Students pp. 8-9
- XV. Racial Issues of the 1960s pp. 9
- XVI. Faculty Strike of 1973 pp. 9-10
- XVII. Joining the Administration and Job Titles pp. 10-11
- XVIII. The Differences Between Being an Instructor and Being a Chair pp. 11
- XIX. Math and Science During Budget Cuts pp. 11-12
- XX. Assistant Dean Responsibilities and Duties pp. 12
- XXI. Advisory Boards pp. 12
- XXII. Changes in Math and Science Programs pp. 13-14
- XXIII. Why Study Biology pp. 14
- XXIV. TCC and Tacoma pp. 14
- XXV. Foundation Work pp. 14-15
- XXVI. Personal Thoughts pp. 15

Interview

INTERVIEWER RACHEL PAYNE: Would you say and then spell your name please?

IVONNA ANDERSON: My name is Ivonna, and when I worked here it was McCabe. And now it's Anderson. And Ivonna is spelled I-V-O-N-N-A, McCabe is M-C-C-A-B-E, and Anderson is A-N-D-E-R-S-O-N.

INTERVIEWER: So when did you get involved with TCC, and what was your role?

IVONNA: I was hired at TCC in 1967. And I was hired to teach primarily anatomy and physiology, and most of the students in the class were nursing students from St. Joseph's Hospital Nursing School.

INTERVIEWER: So we didn't have a Nursing program at that time?

IVONNA: We did not have a Nursing program at that time. And then later on the nursing students from Tacoma General took their anatomy and physiology as well as some other science classes. And then when the Nursing program was established here, then of a course a majority of the students were nursing students who had aspirations of being admitted to the Nursing program. And there were also students then who were in the X-Ray program, that's what it was called then. And Medical Records. And as the Allied Health programs grew, then the enrollment in those classes grew as well.

INTERVIEWER: When you were teaching students from St. Joseph's, were they already in the field of nursing?

IVONNA: No. They were in the nursing program at St. Joseph's.

INTERVIEWER: So was St. Joseph's running the school then?

IVONNA: Yes. They had a nursing school at St. Joseph's and they also had one at Tacoma General Hospital. Then when I also taught general biology on occasion. Taught, um, chemistry once in a while, and on a rare occasion I taught anatomy and physiology – I'm sorry, genetics. Then about 14 or 15 years later I became the Division Chair of Math and Science. Then eventually, the job didn't change, but the title changed, to associate dean. And then I gradually acquired the social and behavioral sciences. Distance learning, physical education, and I also developed a couple occupational programs.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. So going back to the late 60s, can you describe the climate in our country when TCC was founded?

IVONNA: Well, TCC was founded earlier in the 60s, but as the years progressed, in the later 60s, things were... a bit unsteady politically and socially in the United States. And we started getting more and more minority students who also expected to gain more recognition, and we actually had the police here a couple of times. And we had a big rock in the middle of campus, and one day the rock would be painted white, and the next day the rock would be painted black, and this see-sawed back-and-forth. And at that time there weren't any minority faculty. And the majority of faculty were males. And, so, from that time on gradually there was a greater emphasis on hiring minority faculty and making the campus more multicultural.

INTERVIEWER: So when you were hired in 1967 were there any other female faculty members?

IVONNA: There were some other female faculty members, but not in math and science.

INTERVIEWER: So, why did you decide to come to TCC?

IVONNA: Well, I was teaching at Mt Tahoma High School at the time, I had been there for two years. And they needed someone to teach anatomy and physiology because they didn't have that expertise on the faculty. And so I was recommended by my major professor at the

University of Puget Sound. And I was called to see whether I was interested, and I wasn't, because I was very happy at Mt Tahoma. And then I was called again, and then maybe a third or fourth time, and finally I just said "Okay, I'm gonna come and look around." And I liked what I saw, and then I was hired.

INTERVIEWER: I suppose it was a little after the community colleges were formed when you started, but do you remember why that whole system came into being during the 60s? Why were the community colleges needed back then?

IVONNA: I really don't remember specifically, but I think it was-- it provided an opportunity for students, to get a chance for a higher education, and in many community colleges for an occupational education as well. Going to the four-year schools initially was not affordable to a lot of students. So, um, and there was a movement in the United States to make higher education more affordable and more accessible to a greater percentage of the population.

INTERVIEWER: And what was your next step after leaving TCC?

IVONNA: I just enjoyed my retirement, and loved every minute of it. And still do!

INTERVIEWER: So that means you spent basically your whole career here?

IVONNA: I was at Mt. Tahoma for two years, and then the rest of the time I was here.

INTERVIEWER: Was that the plan, or just happened that way?

IVONNA: No, it just kind of happened that way. I was very fortunate that I had the opportunity to do that.

INTERVIEWER: So, have you stayed in contact with the college at all, have you watched it grow? Do you live in the area so you can see what's been going on here?

IVONNA: Yeah I live in the area, and then I'm also involved with a foundation that gives scholarships, primarily to TCC students, and I'm on the board. And so I come to campus for meetings, and I keep in touch with some of the faculty that I hired while I was here. So I'm aware of what goes on here at TCC.

INTERVIEWER: So kind of looking into the future, again this is a question we've been asking everybody, if you were to describe what TCC as you think it will be or as you think it should be like 30 years from now, how will it have changed?

IVONNA: That's a difficult question. I think that TCC has been very proactive in changing with the times. And as certain aspects of education are needed, TCC has always been in the forefront of stepping up and providing that education, and I think it will continue to do that. And what

programs or what type of education will be needed in 30 years is difficult to predict, but I think TCC will continue to be a vital source of education for the citizens of Pierce County.

INTERVIEWER: Great. So now we're going to be moving onto the personal questions. So are you a Tacoma native?

IVONNA: No, I am not.

INTERVIEWER: Can you tell me a little bit about your background?

IVONNA: Sure. I was born in Latvia. We had to escape when the Communists invaded our country. We went to Germany, and were basically homeless until the war ended. We escaped prior to the end of World War II. And when the war ended there were so many refugees from Eastern Europe the Germans didn't know what to do with all of us, so they established displaced persons camps, and we lived in a displaced persons camp. Initially it was very crowded, and... [clears throat] excuse me, um... a room this size would have bunkbeds and then a two-foot space, bunkbeds and a two-foot space, and bunkbeds with maybe another family. And eventually they opened a school, and I was able to start school.

INTERVIEWER: What age were you when you were in the displaced persons camp?

IVONNA: Between the ages of 5 and 11.

INTERVIEWER: So you got some of your primary education then in that camp?

IVONNA: I did.

INTERVIEWER: And how did that go?

IVONNA: Oh, it was fine. It was very rigorous. There were many refugees who had been teachers, and so they just continued teaching and provided a wonderful background for us. And we studied arithmetic and science, and grammar and writing and everything that you have in a school here, only the demands were much greater.

INTERVIEWER: Did you have to learn another language?

IVONNA: No. I already knew three languages, I spoke Latvian, German, and Russian. You notice I didn't speak English! So we came to the United States when I was 11, and I had to repeat the fifth grade because I didn't speak English. And I was fully immersed in the classroom. The teachers were very nice in that they had had other foreign children who didn't speak English so they were very kind and very patient. It was at Central School, when it was a school. And within, oh, six, seven weeks I was able to stand in front of the class and do an oral report.

INTERVIEWER: Wow. So you came directly to Tacoma then?

IVONNA: We went to New York for about two weeks, approximately. Then we took the train across the country to Tacoma.

INTERVIEWER: Did you have family here or something?

IVONNA: I do. Oh, well no, then we didn't. We were sponsored by the Lutheran Church. And I arrived in Tacoma about 11-ish in the morning. I was in school at 1 o'clock that afternoon [laughs]. Education was very important to my parents.

INTERVIEWER: And the Lutheran Church that sponsored you are they still in Tacoma?

IVONNA: Yeah, it was First Lutheran Church on the corner of Sixth Avenue and I Street.

INTERVIEWER: Great, thank you. So I guess we kind of started talking about your educational background. What happened after you were established in school in America, how did your pathway go from there?

IVONNA: I went to Central School, and then I went to Jason Lee Junior High School, and then I went to Stadium High School. And then I went to the University of Puget Sound where I earned a bachelor's degree in biology and chemistry, and was offered the opportunity to get a master's degree in those subjects as well.

INTERVIEWER: And how did you become interested in science?

IVONNA: You know, I don't know. I've been asked that question, and I've never had good answer. I can't even make up a good one [both laugh]. But to me it was easy, it made sense. It was, it was organized, and that kind of went with my personality. I'm very left brain, I'm organized. I think linearly. And, um, I just liked it.

15: 03

INTERVIEWER: And why did you decide to go into education rather than say, research or something?

IVONNA: Well I was married when I was a... sophomore. In college. And I had a little daughter. And [clears throat] excuse me. And I was offered an opportunity to go ahead, get a PhD at Purdue, but I just felt that my family life didn't really permit that. So education was a great opportunity for me to be able to have a job, to be a productive member of society, and still be available for my children.

INTERVIEWER: And did you enjoy being a teacher?

IVONNA: I did. I liked it very much.

INTERVIEWER: So how was teaching at TCC different from teaching at Mt Tahoma?

IVONNA: Well, for one thing, there weren't as many classes in the sciences. I had large lecture halls, and then the labs that went along with the subject. And you didn't have to deal with discipline to the extent that you did in high school. And students were responsible to themselves. And if they did the work it was great, and if they didn't do the work, they suffered the consequences, where in high school you had to take more responsibility for the students' learning.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. And you said the lectures were large? Just how large would one of your anatomy and physiology lectures have been?

IVONNA: Well they were 96 seats in the lecture hall, and I usually started out with about 110 students. Not that they sat on the floor, but we did bring chairs in. And the course was three quarters in length, and they kind of weeded themselves out. And by the end of the third quarter, I was probably down to, oh, about 75.

INTERVIEWER: So you taught a sequence that went the entire year then?

IVONNA: Yes.

18:00

INTERVIEWER: What did TCC look like when you first arrived in terms of facilities and architecture?

IVONNA: Well, it was definitely a California-style architecture where the buildings were separated, and you had to walk in the rain a lot. Um, by the time I arrived there were a couple of faculty office buildings. Um, there was a library, and there was a science building, and then there was an assortment of classrooms. And there was an administration building, and a small cafeteria. So it, and all of the buildings were just one story high. Most of them had mansard roofs.

INTERVIEWER: We still have a couple of those on campus.

IVONNA: Oh yes, there still are.

INTERVIEWER: Is the building that your faculty office was in, is that still around, do you know?

IVONNA: It's still there but they're doing something to it and I don't quite know what it is.

INTERVIEWER: So that's the one that's having-- a couple down from here, that they're gutting and stuff?

IVONNA: Yeah, yeah [laughs]. Then, when my office was there and it rained really hard, it would flood. And the last time, and then you know, we-- all the carpets were wet and we used to slish around in the carpets. And the last time it flooded, apparently, the matter that on the floor wasn't too pretty nor was it health wise very good so they closed the building for several years.

INTERVIEWER: And when did that happen?

IVONNA: I don't know, I was gone by then.

INTERVIEWER: But you spent your whole career basically in that same office?

IVONNA: Um, I started in an office in that building, then I moved to another office in the building. And then when I became division chair then I moved back to that office and stayed there until I left.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, great. So what you think in the changes of architecture since 1967? Do you think we're moving in a good direction, or what do you think?

IVONNA: I think it's a much more efficient use of space. Um, I don't think that the buildings initially were particularly unattractive, but they weren't real practical. And I think the architecture and the size of the buildings, and the height of the buildings, is much more functional.

INTERVIEWER: So no real practical. So did you have everything you need for your lab? Did that work out fine? Or did you experience some inconveniences?

IVONNA: There were some inconveniences. As far as equipment was concerned, it wasn't, it was okay, but the floor plan of the labs was horrible because the area where the students sat were peninsulas that came out from the counter at the wall. If a student had a question in one corner he had to run over there and then invariably a student had a question in the other corner, and you had to go all around these peninsula-like lab benches. And at the end of two to four hours, you were pretty tired [laughs]. But you got good exercise.

INTERVIEWER: So how many classes would you typically teach in one day?

IVONNA: Well, it varied. My lecture was Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and that was 50 minutes. And then, um, for... each student was required to be in two lab sessions of two hours each, per week. So generally on Tuesdays and Thursdays I taught three lab sessions. Mondays and Wednesdays I had lecture for the 50 minutes, and then a 2 hours lab session on Fridays, I just had one lecture.

INTERVIEWER: So has the teaching of anatomy and physiology, has that changed since you first started?

IVONNA: Oh it changed in that one of the things that we initiated was using cadavers. And while the students didn't dissect them themselves, they were able to look at human muscles rather than cat muscles, or look at organs in humans as opposed to organs in cats or in guinea pigs, or some other mammal. So that was a much better experience for the students.

INTERVIEWER: So are you the one that introduced our cadaver program?

IVONNA: No. No, we had another faculty member, Mel Urschel, who had connections at the University of Washington to be able to get cadavers for us to use.

INTERVIEWER: And is it fairly unusual for a community college to have a cadaver program?

IVONNA: Yes it is.

23:57

INTERVIEWER: So what was the first course that you taught here when you just arrived on campus?

IVONNA: I believe it was general biology. And then I... and at the same time I taught anatomy and physiology as well, but the class was much smaller because there wasn't as much demand as there was later.

INTERVIEWER: So over the years, would you say that you taught mostly students who were going into maybe nursing or one of the health professions? Did you also teach some of the general population students that weren't going into science, but just needed the science credit?

IVONNA: When I taught chemistry and the general biology they were general students who needed the science credit as their distribution requirement. In the anatomy and physiology courses we occasionally had this strange person who wanted to suffer through anatomy and physiology because he or she was interested. But the majority of students were in some form had intentions of being in some form of healthcare.

INTERVIEWER: Have you kept up with any of the students, do you hear where they ended up? Did they get back to you about, you know, where they went after here?

IVONNA: When I was on campus frequently students would stop by and tell me what they were doing. And after they finished, some of them finished my class and became personal friends. I see them ever so often, so, yeah I did.

INTERVIEWER: So now you said you were basically, well, in the beginning you were the only female instructor in the Math and Science program. Did that affect your relationship with the students at all? Did they treat you any differently?

IVONNA: No. No, they didn't.

INTERVIEWER: How about your coworkers?

IVONNA: They didn't treat me differently either, that I knew of. But I was the only one for maybe a year, for a very short period of time, and then a mathematics instructor, a female mathematics instructor, was hired. And you know, and then gradually the female population in the sciences and mathematics grew.

INTERVIEWER: Do you remember the building in which you taught your first class?

IVONNA: It was building-- it was the science building, which at that time was building 14.

INTERVIEWER: The numbers have just been rearranged a couple years ago so. So I wouldn't know which one that would be.

IVONNA: That's right.

INTERVIEWER: Since you first started how has TCC expanded its science program? What direction did it go in?

IVONNA: Well, the Allied Health programs that were started here, and have grown here, had a dramatic impact on the number of students in the sciences because they were required to take chemistry, and biology, and microbiology. And so, as Allied Health grew, the sciences grew as well.

INTERVIEWER: And why did Allied Health grow? Was that just responding to demand?

IVONNA: I believe it was primarily responding to demand.

INTERVIEWER: Can you tell me a little about your teaching philosophy?

IVONNA: You know, it varies depending upon the age of the student or the level of the student. When I was teaching I had high expectations, and I was rarely disappointed. If one has high expectations of students they generally step up and meet those expectations. People said that I was tough, but I was fair.

INTERVIEWER: Would you say that the college overall had high expectations of students? Or did that change over time?

IVONNA: I think it changed over time. I think it became more lenient. And, as, I think generally faculty will, to some degree... teach the way they were taught, or teach the way their favorite teacher taught. And I think especially in the 60s and the 70s, the students who attended college during those years, had a little bit, they had a different experience than I did when I went to school in the 50s and early 60s. And I think they were little more lenient because of that.

INTERVIEWER: Did you have a favorite teacher that you modeled your teaching on?

IVONNA: Oh, absolutely. It was, two actually. I had a chemistry teacher in high school that was tough as nails, but I really liked that, because I knew where I stood, I knew what was expected, and maybe I was an overachiever, but, you know, I performed. And when I was in college I had my major professor in biology was Gordon Algorn, and I thought he was just marvelous, he was my hero.

INTERVIEWER: Has your own personal teaching method undergone any changes throughout your career? Or was it pretty much the same?

IVONNA: I think it stayed pretty much the same. And, you know, the last half of my teaching, or my career at Tacoma Community College, I was a dean, so I didn't teach anymore.

INTERVIEWER: So going back to kind of some of the early issues of the college, what were your thoughts when some of the racial issues started coming to the front around 1969 or so?

IVONNA: I'll have to think about that one. I guess my thinking was that... Students should be here for an education. That was their primary reason to be here, in my view. And that all the side issues, while they were important, should not have impacted their ability to be successful in education. And it's a very narrow point of view, knowing now, knowing what I know now versus what I knew then, but, um, I was somewhat bothered by the distractions.

INTERVIEWER: So you found it distracting. Did it impact your teaching at all?

IVONNA: No. Because I taught a fairly neutral subject.

INTERVIEWER: Another big issue at the college was the faculty strike of 1973. Did you have a role in that?

IVONNA: I participated in it, and it was kind of funny. Several of the faculty had a bet that I would not participate. I was a faculty member at the time, well, no, yeah I was a faculty member at the time but they were sure I wasn't going to participate. So they had a bet, a few dollars, and they were going to contribute the money to the strike fund. And I did participate, and we used to walk the picket line on Mildred Street. And my picket partner was Murray Morgan, who was one of the most fascinating people I've known. And he would regale me with stories about Tacoma, so I'd really look forward to my time on the picket line because of that [laughs].

INTERVIEWER: And why did you decide to participate in the strike?

IVONNA: I guess I figured I was a faculty member, and that was a decision that the faculty made. And I've always been a team player, and that's what the team did at the time.

INTERVIEWER: And how long did the strike last?

IVONNA: I don't remember.

INTERVIEWER: Did you find the resolution satisfactory?

IVONNA: ...I don't remember that either.

INTERVIEWER: Alright. Did the climate between the faculty and the administration, did that change at all after the strike?

IVONNA: I think there were some people who were angry at the administration and had a hard time getting over it, but I wasn't one of them.

35:06

INTERVIEWER: Alright, and so, after that you joined the administration sort of. You became a dean, the division chair and stuff, so how did that work? What were your job titles at TCC?

IVONNA: Well, I was a faculty member first, and I served several times as the department chair of the biology department. And, then, when I became an administrator so to speak, I was, the title was Division Chair. Division Chairman, I think it was, and then it was shortened to chair, I think. And then, it stayed that way for a long time. And one of the things that we noticed was that when we went to statewide community college administrators meetings, that if you didn't have a title, sometimes your contributions weren't valued as much. So we requested that our title be changed to at least Associate Dean. And so it was eventually. And then, I believe now, it's Dean.

INTERVIEWER: So how did that work with your teaching, did you gradually phase out the instruction, or were you teaching the whole time? How did that work?

IVONNA: No, as far as my full-time teaching responsibilities were concerned, they stopped when I became an administrator. But I did teach part-time, one class in the summer.

INTERVIEWER: And when was it that you became an administrator?

IVONNA: ...In the early 80s.

INTERVIEWER: How long did you stay in that type of role?

37:19

IVONNA: Until I retired.

INTERVIEWER: So you didn't go back to teaching full-time or anything?

IVONNA: No, no.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. And why did you choose to make that switch?

IVONNA: I had personal reasons to do that.

INTERVIEWER: Alright. How was being a division chair different from being an instructor?

IVONNA: Well, when you're an instructor you're working almost exclusively with students. When you're a division chair, you have administrative responsibilities, you work almost exclusively with faculty. You plan the budget, you plan the class schedules, you make teaching assignments, you serve on a lot more committees.

38:17

INTERVIEWER: And did you have some challenges with that, because it sounds like, were you in the administrative role during like say the budget crisis of the early 80s?

IVONNA: Oh, yes.

INTERVIEWER: How did that go?

IVONNA: It was difficult. Didn't like my job real well at that time. Not for any other reason that, we had to make budget cuts, three or four times during the year, and that was very, very difficult. We had tough choices to make, that weren't always popular.

INTERVIEWER: And did you have a role in making some of those choices?

IVONNA: Absolutely.

INTERVIEWER: For your department or for the college in general?

IVONNA: Um, primarily for the departments.

INTERVIEWER: And how did the Math and Science division fair during the budget cuts?

IVONNA: Actually quite well, because there was such a demand. We were a support group to Allied Health, and there was a large demand for math classes and different science classes. Our students that, whose area of concentration was math and sciences, did extremely well when transferring to the senior institutions. And yes, we made cuts, and we had to give up some, purchasing new equipment, that type of thing, but you know – you learn to live with what you have, and we got by, and things got better.

INTERVIEWER: Did you lose any people during that time?

IVONNA: No we did not.

40:12

INTERVIEWER: That's great. I have one more question about that [inaudible]. Okay so can you give me some examples of duties and responsibilities that come with being an associate dean?

IVONNA: They were really, it was just a change in title. There was uh... that's all it was, the responsibilities stayed the same, the salary stayed the same, the number of days you worked stayed the same, so, it was just an elevation in title, I guess.

INTERVIEWER: And so it sounds like you were responsible at least in part for maintaining the quality of those programs under your care?

IVONNA: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: How did you work with the hospitals or the four-year colleges to make sure that we were doing what was needed for a job or for a transfer?

IVONNA: Well we frequently had meetings with, either groups of individuals from the four-year colleges or heads of schools or departments in the four-year colleges. We kept track of some of our students, not formally but anecdotally. We... I forgot part of the question.

INTERVIEWER: When did we start having advisory boards for some of our programs?

IVONNA: Advisory boards were for used for occupational programs, not for academic programs.

INTERVIEWER: But was a program like nursing considered an occupational program?

IVONNA: Yes it was. And they had advisory boards.

INTERVIEWER: And was that from the beginning, or did that come in at a later point?

IVONNA: Believe was from the very beginning. And the advisory boards helped to develop the curriculum and the requirements.

INTERVIEWER: Did those requirements change quite a bit over time, or did they stay the same?

IVONNA: You know I did not have that much contact with that aspect of the Allied Health program, so-- I think they can answer that better.

INTERVIEWER: And as far as math and science in general, during the time when you were an administrator where there many changes made to any of the programs that you were overseeing?

42:35

IVONNA: Yes, there were. In mathematics in particular. Um, the way that mathematics was taught was less and less by rote, repetitive type of learning. It was more application, made it more relevant to the students. And the physics, pre-engineering programs, they had a very comprehensive change in the approach that students learned. They learned to apply what they learned more than they had in the past. In the other science classes some of that was initiated as well.

INTERVIEWER: And where did that shift come from? Was there like a shift in educational theory that started this, or?

IVONNA: There was, definitely a shift of educational theory in science and math instruction on a national level.

INTERVIEWER: So did you see some changes in the level of preparation from students as they came up from the high schools? Or were they basically learning the same material, even if it was in a different way?

IVONNA: They, uh, at that time the high schools hadn't bought into that philosophy. And so the students were, basically came the same way that they had previously. One of the things though that did happen over the time that I was here was that the students were less well-prepared for college-level course work. More and more developmental education was introduced into the curriculum because the students just weren't ready.

44:43

INTERVIEWER: And why do you think that was?

IVONNA: You can always point your finger and blame somebody else [laughs], but we just felt that the high schools weren't preparing the students adequately, particularly in mathematics.

INTERVIEWER: So when you taught at Mt Tahoma, do you think your students would've been ready to take college-level work?

IVONNA: I think at that time they were, and it was reflected in the number of developmental courses that were offered then versus the number that were offered 20, and 30, and 40 years later.

INTERVIEWER: So we have always had developmental courses though?

IVONNA: We've always had some, but not as many as there are now.

45:40

INTERVIEWER: Interesting. Alright. It says here that you returned to the classroom in 1991, is that right?

IVONNA: I don't think so...

INTERVIEWER: Going on to a more general question. Why does, or why should a student study biology? Maybe like in general student who is not going to go into the nursing field or something like that?

IVONNA: Well I believe that a well-educated individual contributes to society by having a well-rounded education. And that includes the sciences. And in today's world with science being, science and medicine and, and, um, other aspects of our progress, if we may call it that, people need to know more of the basics to be able to understand what happens. If you go to the doctor, and the doctor diagnoses you and gives you a prescription and explains what it's for, if you don't have any biology knowledge, you probably don't understand what he's talking about.

INTERVIEWER: So when you were teaching, did you feel that it was important for other women, either students or colleagues, to see you in the teaching and administration positions you've held? Do you think that affected people to see that there was a woman teaching the class?

IVONNA: It may have, but you know, that just wasn't in the forefront of my thinking.

INTERVIEWER: So you were talking about science and society just a moment ago. How have math and sciences here at TCC been responsive to the needs of the city of Tacoma? Or the people of the city, I guess?

IVONNA: Well, it provides the basic requirements for a lot of other programs whether they're occupational or whether a student is going on to a senior institution.

INTERVIEWER: And, um, what's the relationship of TCC with the city of Tacoma?

IVONNA: I think TCC provides a lot of opportunities for citizens who are working to gain an education. I think TCC is very responsive to the needs of the city of Tacoma and its citizens, and whatever needs are required.

INTERVIEWER: Can you tell me a little bit about your work on the foundation? When did you join the foundation board?

IVONNA: Well I'm not on the official TCC Foundation board, I'm on another foundation, whose main emphasis is to provide scholarships.

INTERVIEWER: So you help select the scholarship students then?

IVONNA: To a degree.

INTERVIEWER: To a degree, okay. And how long have you been doing that?

IVONNA: Oh, goodness, for probably 30 years [laughs].

INTERVIEWER: Do you think the needs of our students have stayed about the same as far as support and everything?

IVONNA: I think they're greater. Especially in the economy as it is now with a lot of unemployment. So students are finding it more difficult to afford an education.

INTERVIEWER: Even at a community college?

IVONNA: Even at the Tacoma Community College, right.

INTERVIEWER: Alright, I think we've gone over pretty much everything else. There anything that you would like to add or elaborate, or clarify?

IVONNA: One of the interesting things for many, many years, was [clears throat] excuse me, that people did not quit. They left Tacoma Community College when they retired. And I think that speaks loads for the kind of place this is. People for the most part liked coming to work here, they enjoyed the students, they enjoyed what they did here, they developed good friendships. And it was just a great place to work.

INTERVIEWER: Great, okay, well thank you. If you wouldn't mind just staying there for a second I'm going to take a still photo, I'm getting just some pictures too. I keep forgetting when I'm doing the interview to take the picture [camera sounds]. Alright thank you.