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**Steven Granger:** My name is Stephen Granger, S-T-E-P-H-E-N, G-R-A-N-G-E-R. I like to be identified probably as Steve Granger but-- as Chancellors Student Affairs Emeritus.

Q: So you are famously on record in UMM history as being Rod Brigg's first hire. How did that come about?

**Steven Granger:** My impression of being hired at UMM was that it was almost accidental. I was working as a psychologist after my degree at St. Cloud VA Hospital and one of my advisors knew that I was interested in a small college and at the same time Rod Briggs asked him to recommend somebody for the position as counselor. And so he called and I went over and his enthusiasm was absolutely infectious. Few people can understand how fundamental he was in establishing UMM. He, of course, he was thinking of taking another position when this one was offered. He was one of the extension agronomist, traveled widely in the state, had another job offer when the dean who was responsible for experiment stations and knew of the closing of these schools of agriculture said, "Wouldn't you like to do this?" And he said, "Yes," he would start a college and his enthusiasm, his personality and his tremendous range of activity, he hired everyone. He made decisions about their future. There weren't committees involved in deciding who would be promoted or not. It was done and this was done at the university-wide level as well. So I think I was hired as an assistant professor and counselor. Skipping over that by the second and third year we began to add enough staff so that I wasn't particularly involved in counseling but became the assistant provost which meant I was Brigg's assistant and involved in the planning of the institution, the buildings and attending meetings, involved in usually as an observer and commentator at most of the committee meetings on campus in which a curriculum was planned. I was involved in the hiring so that we were-- they thought because I was a psychologist I had the mystical ability to spot someone who would be incompatible as far as their personality was concerned and especially if they were nuts as happened because during this period of hiring the faculty the early '60s there was a shortage of faculty especially in the sciences and mathematics. It was difficult to find them and once one was found they were hired but Rod traveled to national meetings to look for faculty, to interview them, get them excited about coming and hire them practically on the spot.

Q: What would he tell them? What did you know about his pitch to people when he

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would go to these national conferences? How would he convince them to consider Morris?

**Steven Granger:** I think the thing that attracted most faculty and staff was the simple message come and develop a college as you would like it to be because the first round and second round faculty were clearly invited to do that. As more were hired and we moved toward a more discipline area approach, the message was "Come and develop your courses and develop the discipline the way you would like to see it developed," and so on. And of course as the faculty grew and the curriculum became more established less and less of that was available comes the rise of professionalism among the faculty, a concern not just for the college, not just for the excitement of it but my own career. So in the process the nature of the faculty changed some and in addition we lost some very good people who moved on in their career for their own professional gain.

Q: \_\_\_\_\_ conversation by saying something. It would seem an odd match that an agronomist which Rod Briggs was, would be chosen to start a liberal arts college. What was it about his personality and his mind that made him suited to do that?

**Steven Granger:** What was it that led Briggs to this position? First of all, he was a tremendously optimistic person and he was a builder and furthermore, he was more intelligent in a group than any other three or four people and knew how to manipulate the group without being offensive. It's just hard to realize how important he was. But the liberal arts college was something that was a given but it was a given for more than one reason, it was the only college that really had a good opportunity to survive at that time. The number of high school graduates was growing. The pressure from rural legislators and communities, business people, was very significant and the universities schools of agriculture, all of them, were on the way out, clearly on the way out. Their enrollments were falling and the consolidation of schools led to much larger schools that also taught agriculture as part of their curriculum, so there was less and less need. And the young people were leaving the farms as the nature of agriculture was changing. His background in agriculture, his being the extension agronomist traveling, talking, giving speeches, knowing so many people around the state was crucial. It's extremely difficult to understand how important he was and he was interested in challenges and that's what this was also. And he had the support of the University of Minnesota behind him, and especially Dean Finsky who was the Associate Dean of the Institute of Agriculture but responsible for the schools in the experiment stations who visualized, I believe, I don't know this, that the Institute of Agriculture would manage

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these campuses, so three of them were eventually developed, Morris Crookston and Waseca. Briggs understood that this had to be a liberal arts college or it could not endure. The faculty understood that also. There was never talk about it becoming an institution that taught technical agriculture as was the case of the Crookston campus, though they survived; Waseca did not. Why was a liberal arts college the best? Because we did not wish to and would not be allowed to and could not compete with the professional schools on the Twin City's campus, including agriculture but nursing would be a logical possibility. Too expensive, Twin City's campus interested in its own school of nursing and so on and so on it went through. So the curriculum was geared to first of all in case the institution failed, everything would be transferrable but secondly so many of the students were interested in pre-professional programs. You had to offer the first year, then the first two years for people in engineering and a \_\_\_\_\_ engine and that dictated. You had to offer pre-professional training in the health sciences. That meant biology had to be brought along in the second and third year and so on. There is a letter in the year book of 1963 that Briggs wrote to the students, interesting, and he talks about liberal arts and the liberal arts education. I don't remember that as anything other than a given for very practical reasons.

Q: You have said that if we tried to start UMM today it would just be impossible as opposed to trying to start it in 1960, why? What was different about that time?

**Steven Granger:** Why would it be difficult, if not impossible, to start UMM today in this particular climate? There was a very strong need for higher education in rural Minnesota, one. Two, the climate in the legislature, first of all, recognized this and it was a rural republican legislature with a great deal of compatibility. The two parties did not fight. They did not try to stop one another. They tended to compliment one another. In western Minnesota there were studies that indicated a need. The university I think will find it was not entirely convinced that these out of state schools of agriculture should become branches of the university. Duluth was the classic example of a branch campus that was a state college pushed onto the university somewhat reluctantly and in the meantime has followed a different course but has remained a large branch campus. The model is not the same at Crookston or Morris or Waseca. So it was a combination of the times, the need and a legislature that was compatible and proposed because of building pressure by the citizens and their organizations. They were persuaded to take this one and let's see if it will work and, of course, it was very, very successful at the same time. Even at the national level money was becoming available to especially build the sciences. I want to say Sputnik, a whole lot of other reasons, the need for professional people all came together at a very appropriate time.

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Q: You have said that the fact that they had to create the school, they could be part of developing the liberal arts campus and that goes to curriculum and what you would study but there were other things that had to be created as well. Like, we had no traditions, right? What was your role, what did we do to--

**Steven Granger:** The traditions of a college, I want to say I had a significant part in that but it was all conceived by Briggs. He had his own ideas. He knew that we had to have a student life right from the start and things that sound corny, like the beanies that were used, like an orientation in which the student body were bussed to his house to a, kind of, formal meeting between he and his wife and almost a tea and they were pleased by it. The intercollegiate athletics right away, student organizations right away, a student government right away, dorm governments right away, a newspaper, a year book, all of these things came in part because Riggs himself had a great deal of involvement on the Twin City's campus where he was an extremely popular teacher at the smaller institution, the Institute of Agriculture and it's collegiate programs. I think he also was extremely active in his own development. These were things that happened. Student leaders simply appeared from that first class of 238, whatever, who were almost all from western Minnesota who were recruited nearly by force. The number of students from Morris in that first class and surrounding communities is shocking. They were local. There was a network in the West Central Educational Development Association of high school principals and high school superintendents all said, "Let's do this. Let's support this. Kid, that's where you're going." I also think that parents have a good deal to do with it and were impressed by especially Briggs. Let me just continue with the question of why it would be so difficult today. Remember, over the last 50 years and particularly during the first 15, 20 institutions, especially community colleges were developed all over the state. They fulfill a really important role. They cost a good deal less to operate. In addition, the state college system improved and found roles for each of its institutions and then were brought together in the state university system which is huge in terms of enrollment easily confronts the University of Minnesota system, so you had two competing systems and the community college system originally run largely by school systems was converted to state support. At the same time money problems ensued. The population of high school graduates began to contract and the legislature began to realize we've built an awful lot. Let's hold back a while. In the meantime, UMM had been lucky enough to get in during this boom and during that same period largely because of Briggs, largely because of good planning the list of buildings that were really essential starting with science, that was the major weakness on the campus but it went on from there. These buildings, one after another were approved much, much more difficult today. There's a review that occurs at the

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Twin City's campus level, the needs of the university are great. The need just for rehabilitation of some of the great buildings on the Twin City's campus are huge and there is a process first that UMM must go through. UMM originally with it's building needs went directly to the legislature and the important legislative building commission run by who? But Delbert Anderson and they were extremely important. They visited sites all around the state on the off year and essentially approved a list of building. We were part of it. They horse traded at that level. They visited the campus. They were entertained by the local community. The Board of Regents visited. They were entertained by the local community and so on. State Counselor's Association visited and were entertained and found out about this new institution but we began by the time the buildings were either completed or on the drawing board and funded, enrollment began to decline slightly, slightly each year it began to decline. And from 2000 students in the early '70s it declined and plateaued at about 1500 students.

Q: I would like to go back talking about enrollment and talking about Vietnam because that had a particular impact on enrollment and what was that connection?

**Steven Granger:** The rise in enrollment during the '60s and the retention. First of all, the rise of a largely male student body partly the result of the fact that women students were less likely to go on to higher education. I mean, after all what did they do? They were secretaries, nurses or teachers. If you didn't teach secretarial, we did. We actually taught typing and a couple of other business related. Health sciences, we didn't do much except in the level of the solid sciences, biology, chemistry and so on which many women didn't have the be-all as it may. There was this large number of male students and they stayed on. They wouldn't leave and the reason was-- and high retention. The reason was the Vietnam War. These young men and the draft-- did not want to be drafted to go to Vietnam. Well, I used to talk to them. I wrote letters. Occasionally went and visited draft boards, explained how this person was absolutely essential to the future of the country and many draft boards were sympathetic to young men in college though they did not have to give deferments but they did. And those deferments went on beyond four years although they would occasionally go after students. In the early '70s retention was not so important. We finally got it, we understood but it was surprising the effect of the Vietnam War and it was in the late '60s at least at UMM that an anti-war movement of real significance developed. Some faculty were very much motivated by ending the war and would get some students who also felt the same organized so that there were participation in the anti-war movement but it really didn't hit the campus until the very early '70s.

Q: The hiring process and you and everyone and many people from the early says

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said, "Steve Granger hired me." It was a little easier in those days, why?

**Steven Granger:** Absolutely. I don't know that I hired anybody but some of the people in Student Affairs or Administration but we developed and I do take credit for it in part, there was a competition for dollars. Briggs, on the other hand, absolutely believed that UMM was a student oriented institution from the very beginning and supported all those moves. And I thought my role was to keep that alive, keep us from drifting off to becoming an institution owned and run by the faculty. Sometimes to the detriment of the student affairs operation which was, again, essential. My own background was from the Twin City's Campus College of Liberal Arts on through graduate school. Freshman year to PhD and if I had attended an institution like UMM, it would have changed my life I'm sure. I had great faculty on the Twin City but as far as involvement in the student life of the campus, it just was not there. But the people that we hired to support that portion of campus life, they were very good. They, too, were young. Many of them didn't have a good idea what it was all about but learned quickly.

Q: What did Dan Noble do in terms of the financial stability of the early days?

**Steven Granger:** There were a number of important people that I should mention in the support side of UMM's administration. Not all influenced by Briggs. The head of UMM plant services, Harold Fahl. He was involved in the development of all of the buildings on campus and I was, too. The round of meeting sometimes with two or three buildings being planned at the same time and the support of Winston Close who was the university's architect who looked over the development of campus plans and facilities. I'm thinking ahead. On the academic side there was Jack Imholte. First faculty member, first division chair, first Dean and then Chancellor when Briggs left he had a business manager by the name of Dan Nobel, a wonderful, whimsical, intelligent, sweet man who understood the university system who would cook the books to make us come out needing what was needed, funds shifted from one area to another as needed, wrote these wonderful letters to the Twin City's campus, attended meetings and so on. Dan finally left because he was confronted by Jack at a terrible expense from Jack's point of view I'm sure that he either had to stop drinking or resign and Nobel resigned. He would not stop drinking and he did not. If you talked to him today he would still say, "I'm an alcoholic and that's what I do." But he's wealthy. He invests, he lives a life that unfortunately was a great loss to the college. And Harold Fahl also. He retired when it was time, of course, but he was into everything.

Q: Do you recall what your starting salary was?

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**Steven Granger:** Yes, for a 12 month appointment as an assistant professor, \$8,400 and it was sufficient. It was a cut in pay from my job with the federal government but the university began relentlessly taking care of its faculty. Promotions, on the other hand, were not done by committees and frankly, at UMM what was important was the ability to do outstanding teaching and advising and participate in the development of the college and if you did research that was wonderful. Eric Klinger was a perfect example. The moment he hit campus he was convinced that research was absolutely crucial, so the psychology discipline was always a major criteria and this was true in some of the others but generally speaking it was an institution that was developed for the education of students and we certainly continue that tradition. I had something else that I wanted to say that has slipped my mind. Oh, yes. I mentioned enrollment. Enrollment increased through the '60s until by the early '70s we had 2000 students and 90 some faculty but it began to diminish as the number of high school graduates diminished and competition from other institutions developed. And we were plateaued until a truly dedicated and I think brilliant admissions director, Bob Vicander [ph?], not only was hired but developed a very close relationship with Jack Imholte. Bob Vicander worked for me but he never asked me what I thought he should do ever. He told me what I should be doing in order to support the admissions program and we started what was called high ability recruiting. Direct competition with the private colleges for the best students. The theory behind that was that especially throughout the state and beyond out into the Dakotas into Wisconsin, into Illinois, if you attracted one or two from a high school you didn't need everybody but you attracted one or two of their very best students, others would follow. And along with this the development of scholarship funds university wide as the price rose, scholarship funds were developed. But Bob Vicander [ph?] was a director of financial aide also and he would argue relentless for our fair share of whatever the university had. And he was a crusty character, so the people on the Twin City's campus, especially in student affairs were sweet people and they said at some meetings when Vicander left there would be weeping and gnashing of teeth but he got his fair share. We have national merit scholars, why? Because Vicander went directly to the scholarship program, became involved, learned how to attract those national merit students and we had all kinds of them. So we could say, "Well, how many national merit scholars do we have on campus and we could tell you. I think now we can't do that. We don't know how many we have if we have any. But he developed a very strong relationship and when Jack left for reasons that are unimportant, the chancellor, Dave Johnson, simply relieved him from admissions and financial aid and he languished, and he left, and he runs a successful consulting business now but he was extremely important. The recruiting of minority students, he and Bill Stewart with a connection that they had in Chicago with a recruiting operation there brought all sorts of black students to campus who never heard of UMM. But using

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a combination of skill and the backing of this operations in Chicago developed the minority student program. Since then the number has declines of black students. Another thing that we did, we threw the PE major out of the lifeboat. This was during a time when the president of the university he was a big shot. He was a genius. If you go to a meeting, he never listened.

Q: This is Ken Kelly? Right?

**Steven Granger:** And he said, "You got to purify that place." Jack threw the athletic/PE program out. Now, Jack allowed that to happen but the faculty was always willing to get rid of PE anyway because a number of them felt it didn't belong at a liberal arts college although we continued the intercollegiate athletics program. But from the pinnacle of the so-called Vicander years, 1999, 1998 we began to lose enrollment and if you ask Bob as I have he said, "This is what happened. We threw out the PE major. There goes 25 or 30 students and it also made the coaches around the state angry with us," so they wouldn't refer people anymore. Bill Stewart retired, we stopped recruiting black students. He will tell you, there goes another 30 or 40 students. And that makes a difference. I think, also, we're in a period now where technical education is important. Kids and their parents want jobs. You think about a parent whose young person has graduated from college and they have not picked the college that the young person will go to and said, "George, you will go to the University of Minnesota Morris and you will do the following," and they end up at the end with a young person who, when asked, "What do you want to do with your life?" Says, "I don't know." And that makes people wary. They want this large sum of money spent to not only improve the young person's life but head to a job.

Q: But I would have gathered that you disagree with that. So if you were approached by a parent about why my son or daughter should go to UMM, what would you tell them?

**Steven Granger:** A liberal education is the best. It is the very best preparation for life and a career. And the skills that people learn in terms of thinking and communication or technical background in the sciences, are crucial living in this particular time. More important, UMM is just a wonderful place. The facilities are staggeringly wonderful. The faculty is great and committed to students and committed to learning. Within the university system, it's just extraordinary. There are private colleges and there might very well for all I know be state universities within Minnesota that do as well but I'd be surprised, I really would. It's just an extraordinary place.



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