

Alfred State College Centennial

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Dates employed: 9/1965 - 1/85 and 9/88 - 6/97

Memories:

Introduction. I will unravel my memory more or less chronologically. Hopefully there will be a useful timeline of events. There may be situations where I may be able to supply further information. I will try not to "toot my own horn" too much.

My original appointment began 9/1/1965 which makes me part of the "transformational period." By that I mean the "new" campus was under construction, a quarter- to-semester conversion was made to ease transfer credit, in electrical technology the vacuum tube was being replaced by transistors, then integrated circuits, the slide rule was being replaced by the hand held calculator, IBM punched cards were replaced by real computer memory, oh yes, the Ditto machine (and messy hands and razor blade) was replaced by the Xerox copier, student housing and classroom buildings were on the opposite side of Main Street, enrollment increased significantly, and later, the 4-year Bachelor of Technology programs were initiated, and so on. Well, my starting annual salary was \$8950.

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My initial contact with the SUNY Agricultural and Technical Institute at Alfred (I have the 1964-66 college catalog) was an interview in Albany with Mr. George Whitney, Chair of the Engineering Technology Division. The location seemed odd. I was living at home in Connecticut at the time and George attended SUNY meetings in Albany. It all made sense. Afterwards! George ruled firmly. (Others may use a different adverb!) One fall I returned to Alfred with a full beard following a backpacking trip to the Rockies. Within a few weeks I was informed by the department chairman, Gary Fraser, that George thought beards might be okay for liberal arts faculty but definitely not for engineering technology faculty. I waited a week or two, then shaved. George Whitney established the operational foundation (organizational culture) of the Engineering Technology Division. The School of Engineering Technologies building should be named for him as a proper recognition. (Dave Conde was preparing a proposal for this purpose but the naming of the Administration Building for Pres. Huntington received top priority.)

All the technology programs were in the Industrial Building (I-Building). The Electrical Technology Department was located on the top floor. I shared an office with Matt Bryzynski (sp). I learned quickly that he was a very unique person, technically speaking. Really set in his ways. Yet I don't recall any serious conflicts. The following year (?) Matt took a medical leave-of-absence and immediately I transformed most communications courses, without abandon. In many courses I was learning along with the students. Along the way I learned to admire and respect the academic caliber of two-year technical colleges. I was not exposed to this while growing up in Connecticut. Many years later I would tell friends that the first 10 years passed quickly because teaching was

so much fun. The students were excellent learners. One whole ET class, minus one student, was recruited by the Syracuse University Research Corporation.

George Whitney respected my engineering background and teaching ability. And I was rewarded with many salary increases. In 1967 he initiated an application in my behalf for the Technical Teacher Exchange Program (sponsored by the English-Speaking Union of the Commonwealth). Someone else received the grant that year. He initiated another application. In the spring 1969 I spent three months in England and Scotland where I visited 22 colleges and universities. It was one, fantastic experience ! Prior to my departure the ET senior students bought me a leather suitcase which I used. I have used that suitcase for each of the eight (soon to be, nine) trips to Germany. I use the suitcase as a tribute to those caring students.

I remember the robust faculty meetings in the large lecture hall on the fourth floor. Often there were lively debates involving Jim Cretekos, Warren Bouck and others. ! I remember, fondly, being "convinced" by the ET senior students that my new experiment was a flop and we should therefore go to the "cafeteria" located in the house diagonal across from the I-Bldg. for a soda. At about this time I started a long time tradition of taking the seniors to the Maple Tree Inn each spring (dutch treat). (I also gifted a worthy paperback to each graduating senior.) I remember the compulsory attendance required for all cultural events. They were held in the old Gym at that time. There was one program where many of the older coeds walked out -- too offensive. I participated in the well-documented human conveyor belt, i.e., moving the library books across the valley.

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The School of Engineering Technologies move was less dramatic. I and Bill Sheehan decided to do something special. We build a rough wood frame, attached an old sheet, and painted "WELCOME EET DEPT" on the sheet, and hung it from the roof of the new building. (have photo) I remember the exciting wrestling matches. Coach Steve Babcock was always at the sideline, giving advice with energy equal to the wrestlers. I remember the outdoor Commencement exercises. (reinstated in recent years) I remember being the chair of the advisory committee for the Center for the Improvement of Instruction with Chester Galle as director. At one meeting V-P for Administrative Affairs, Bob Granger gave us the green light to hire someone(position ?), then at the next meeting denied vehemently ever making the statement. I resigned. (Oh dear, my attempt at a timeline has failed!) I remember the IEEE "club" meetings and parties at the Lake Lodge. Klaus Wuersig was a great advisor. I remember the Brown Bag Forum. I was a presenter thrice. I remember holding classes at the base of the Hinkle bell tower. Outdoor classes were not restricted to liberal arts and social science courses! I remember the generous assistance of the librarians and Hinkle staff. Then there were the informal, old-timers picnics held at the home of Tony Schon. (I have some photos from 1991 and 1993). Yes, there was camaraderie among some male faculty! Although I was not a downhill skier I remember the ACES facility on Rt. 244. I remember the professional development sessions before the start of classes which never seemed to "hatch" anything useful! Lastly, I will mention the elimination of all Deans (year?) and I, as a department chair, was given more responsibilities. I remember many, many friends also but no particular or outstanding event. Oh, there were unpleasant situations as well but I won't write about them. Nor the personal ones !

I will toot my horn, some. Through two successive NSF Title-IV grants (ISEP), implemented from June 1974 through September 1980, I created the thick-film microelectronics laboratory. Over \$100,000 in specialized equipment were secured. This thick-film circuit lab the very first such lab in all two-year technical colleges in US at that time. I procured the first satellite receiver system on campus. The equipment was incorporated in a communication systems course. The dish antenna was installed on the rooftop. (I have photo w/ Jon LeGro, Ed Burns, and me.) I started a Creative Engineering Design course for Engineering Science seniors which I was particularly proud of. In part it was the application of my 19-year experiences at the Creative Problem-Solving Institute held in Buffalo. I collaborated with local practicing engineers, who supplied real problems. The civil engineer from the Hornell DOT "created" problems associated with local bridge replacement, for example. I will stop the tooting. I could easily write a page describing all the innovative teaching methods I used throughout my ASC career. Not the purpose of this exercise however.

About 2-3 years ago I discarded about 95% of my ASC documents otherwise I might have other events/situations "dislodged." from my memory. I still have the 1991-92 Faculty Staff Directory, the last one printed with photos! Also the 1972-73 Directory. Yah, I looked, Diana. ☺

Eugene H. Staiger
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