

## Synopsis of Oral History Interview

Dennis Busch

Director of Student Affairs from 2003-2008

Coming to Doha was a great adventure, making a change for personal and professional reasons, were interested in an international post, but not really looking for one. Opportunity came at a good time.

Knew very little about the Middle East or living in the Middle East. Became determined to go, but didn't know very much about the project. Had worked for TAM in College Station, didn't know the standard of living, or what they would find on arrival.

Found much more materialism and commercialization than had expected. Comforting to find Starbucks, but also wanted to experience the local culture.

### Being a pioneer

It was a very small group, just a few colleagues to share and learn from. Literally started with 6-8 staff and maybe that many faculty. There had been an advance team to setup bank accounts and accommodations. As a group, we started everything as we went along. Initial group has a very strong bond, support for each other. The entire college could meet in a small room to decide policies.

Was advised by the administration in College Station to tread very lightly, not to push 'our' culture on the students, so came very open to learn from students and then proceeded as the team learned over time.

First group of students; 28 students – could schedule an appointment with every student in the first couple of weeks, spent time getting to know each student, to let them know he was here to help them in any way they needed.

### Outstanding memories

First student orientation. Joe and Shannon Estrada were already on the ground. Had the orientation at the Diplomatic Club. Seemed very strange to stand up in front of all the students and parents in their dishdash and abeyas. Seemed very foreign and scary. First classes and first finals and first everything.

Was the only student affairs staff person. Then 2 the second year, and 4 the third year. Responsibilities quickly changed from doing everything, to five years later, 7 full time staff, from 28 – 362 students.

Leadership now is more administrative, planning.

Student body has grown not only in size, but changed in diversity. First class had only 4 non-Qataris. Now, very different with student population from many countries.

Wanted to see the first class graduate.