

Nate Horowitz

Centennial College



I'm the dean of the School of Communications, Media, Arts and Design and campus principal of the Story Arts Centre of Centennial College. It's the downtown-ish campus of Centennial and it's close to the Bloor-Danforth Subway in East York.

I started in 1970 as a part-time support staff person. Then I became a faculty member and then coordinator and about eighteen years ago I became a dean.

(From the early days) I remember a lot of interesting people. There were a few Americans who come up for various reasons from the States during the Vietnam War and many Canadians who came from the trades into the college. Other came from the sciences, media engineering, business and higher education. The first building of any of the colleges, Warden Woods campus, was a converted armory. There was collaboration between areas and diverse disciplines; so that silos were reduced. That was very important; a feeling of family. There were tremendous opportunities; people had so much energy and ideas. They wanted to make things happen.

I started in audio visual with my background in photography and design. I've grown academically over the years to be a dean but still, that (photography) got me into the library. I stayed there probably all of two months and had an opportunity to move into the academic area in the very small communications department. Journalism, broadcasting and advertising made up the department. I became a technologist there and then shortly after joined the faculty.

In those days, there seemed to be quite a bit of money available from the ministry to develop and implement ideas; to grow departments. There seemed to be a lot of 'let's make this work'. Bill Davis wanted to make it work.

Most of us had no connection to other colleges. Today, it's quite different through Heads of Media, Arts and Design or Heads of Business, Heads of Engineering, Heads of Health, Heads of Hospitality. We, the colleges, are all more interconnected and I think that's a great and very important factor in the on-going development of the colleges and the economy in Ontario.]

A memory? There are many. Those days were heavily experimental, experiential and allowed for traditional and non-traditional scholarship of teaching and learning as in Boyer's Model.

Students would really get excited about stories that they could photograph or film; they just wanted to get that equipment and learn quickly and get out there and do those stories. They were so hungry to learn. They wanted to do investigative stories, great documentary films and feature films. It was so exciting to be part of that energy. It still is; but in a different sense for me now working with others to engender that excitement.