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Interview summary:

<p><i>Summary of content; with time (min:secs)</i></p>
<p>Start 00: – Previously Research Officer, Glasgow City Council in Housing Department. Interested in going back into academic work. Glasgow City Council sent housing students to Glasgow University (day release) and DS had been involved in some teaching. Applying for a teaching post in housing at Stirling University made sense.</p>
<p>2.45 First impressions – lovely place to work, university felt quite small, transport not great. Nice place to work, supportive environment. Learned a lot. Glasgow City view was that only good things happening were happening in Glasgow – good to learn what was happening across Scotland.</p>
<p>4.35 Teaching responsibilities – Planning and Development, Housing Policy and Practice, placement supervision, dissertations, Urban Sociology. Also taught undergraduate module – good feeder for the PG course. Did some research – housing needs of ethnic minorities in Glasgow with Alison Bowes.</p>
<p>6.15 Collegiate feel – bumped into people at lunchtime. No lunch club – staff had lunch in same place as students. Helped get to know people. That changed as university grew.</p>
<p>8.00 Growing the course – additional student awards and sponsored places from employers. Then developed part-time course with Heriot-Watt in 1990. Core team grew from 2 to 5 by the time he left. Worked together very closely. Successful in developing research.</p>
<p>10.30 Became Course Director until Douglas Robertson took it over. Became more involved in the Department and also became involved with the Committee of the Scottish Branch of the Chartered Institute of Housing. Valuable for housing unit – networking, highlighting course at conferences.</p>
<p>13.00 Became Deputy Head of Department for 4/5 years and took over as Head for 18 months/2 years. Housing unit relatively small – tended to be marginalised – those roles allowed Housing to be highlighted.</p>
<p>14.30 University changed – greater numbers, new buildings – moved into Colin Bell Building. University became more significant in the local area. At time of arrival there had been departmental closures, various threats but that changed over the period of DS’s involvement.</p>
<p>16.40 Housing programme different from other courses (south of the border). Stirling programme had placement periods within teaching programme. 4 periods of teaching interspersed with 4 placements. 3 with landlords and one with another organisation. Very rounded experience and good range of experience. Emerged highly employable. Strong reputation UK wide for quality of teaching and experience.</p>

19.20 Employability – students got jobs quickly. Some got jobs before the end of the programme – final placement became start of employment. Employers survey in early 2000s – all very positive. Placement arrangements changed largely after DS time (was External Examiner later). Expensive to fund – reduction in placement duration over time.
22.50 Relationships with students – small numbers of students, placement supervision meant that we got to know students well. Friendships developed – still bump into former students.
24.20 Placement issues – pressures on organisations sometimes made placements impossible. Some expected to have a student. Voluntary organisations often delighted to have a student to do project work. One student went to South Wales, another to Dublin and London. Became adept at helping students with disabilities to undertake placements.
28.00 Field trips – one of first tasks to organize 3 day field trip to Newcastle. Became regular part of course.. Aiming to take students to a different environment. Also day visits to illustrate course information. No risk assessments!
31.10 Part-time programme – in collaboration with Heriot-Watt initially, subsequently went separate ways. Had an impact on staffing – Mary Taylor joined to lead on the course development. Difficult for students who lived far away – student from Moray Council travelled each week. Realised that going online would expand the market. Mary Taylor took lead, Scottish Homes provided some funding. That allowed a lot of students from Aberdeen/shire, Highlands and Islands to study.
35.00 Online teaching – having all materials prepared in advance – imposed a discipline. Forced to think about online assessment. Students online together – allowed for group exercises and assessment. Develops keyboard skills – happens very quickly, very focused. Different challenges. Some training on using online platform but mostly we learned on the job. Used WebCT at the start. People in IT very supportive.
39.50 Change in relationship with students – more difficult to get to know part-time students. They had induction period and other days in. CIH conference a good opportunity to meet up with students. Worked hard at keeping contact.
42.25 Frustrations? Housing seen as a bit marginal. Social Work/Dementia Studies seen as closer to Sociology. RAE in 1990s – for some reason housing was to be included in Town Planning – only given a 2 – not big enough unit to score higher.
45.45 Role as Depute Head of Department – insights? Understood more about university finances. Control and flexibility reduced. Never understood how some other Departments worked. Initially part of a Board of Studies – chaired by Mike Jackson – very inclusive approach – good at bridging between areas. Later Faculties were abolished – more difficult to make links – in departmental silos and ability to make connections across university diminished.
50.00 What prompted departure? Teaching on a professional course requires credibility. Glasgow course – all academics. Everyone who taught at Stirling had worked in practice, sat on boards of housing organisations. After 21 years – more difficult due to distance from practice experience. Transport also an issue – after 21 years of commuting. Sometimes evening events – made the day exhausting. A promoted post in University of West of Scotland was attractive. Right time to move. Valued time at Stirling – went back to do guest lectures, student presentations, External Examiner – remained connected for a long time afterwards.
54.15 Most proud of ability to give students a good grounding in housing education. Gets a kick out of meeting former students – really rewarding. Hundreds of students around Scotland who still value that connection years later.
Ends 56.00

Interview No:	SURSA OH / -		
Interviewed by:	Fiona Russell		
Date of interview:	17 April 2018		
Summary completed by:	Fiona Russell		

Date:	14 November 2018	FK9 4LA info@sursa.org.uk www.sursa.org.uk	
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