

Interview with Craig Walker (full panel)  
2/29/08, 11 a.m.  
753 Engineering Sciences Building

Roy Nutter: Explained Jan Boyles' role as recorder. Also explained that information may be made public through Freedom of Information Act requests. Asked for Walker's background.

Craig Walker: I graduated from WVU in 1977. I received a degree in business administration with an emphasis in accounting. I immediately went to work for WVNET. Then, I took a slant to athletics. I started a master's in sports administration. I was the first student to go through the program. I moved out to the athletic department. At that time, we [the athletic department] were almost bankrupt. I worked as the athletic business manager. I reported to vice president for finance. As part of my day to day interaction, I was housed in the Coliseum with the athletic director. At one time, I served as assistant athletic director in 1982-1995. I then took a position with the WVU Foundation as finance administrator. I was in charge of buildings, HR, legal. Then, I moved into my position as chief of staff in July. I have been at the university for 30 years.

*Lori Franz: What is your relationship with Heather Bresch?*

CW: Before this happened, on Oct. 11 or 12, I had never talked to her.

*LF: You had never met her?*

CW: No, I had never met or spoken to her.

*John Burkoff: Can you describe when this whole thing breaks – how did you hear about it; when you called Heather first?*

CW: It was Thursday, Oct. 11. It was brought to my attention through the president's office that a call was placed to A/R, asking if she [Bresch] had obtained her eMBA degree or not. The media called and A/R responded. I was charged to get a lay of land. That's the way my job functions every day – it's different from one day to the next day. My job is the resolution of disposition of problems, issues, disputes.

*JB: So you catch on Thursday, and then what happened?*

CW: A/R was involved. I needed to contact Jerry Lang, but he was also teaching that day as well. So I got ahold of Cy Logar, Jerry Blakely. I had to watch for Jerry to get into building.

*Art Centonze: Lang or Blakely?*

CW: Lang.

CW: There had been a discrepancy in records. You know, it is what it is. You have to figure out what it is and let us know. We had a call in from Heather Bresch in the president's office.

*JB: How did you know there was a discrepancy? How did you know if that's all you know?*

CW: We had a message from Heather Bresch that she was concerned with her degree.

JB: So you just didn't know. And you're trying to figure out what's going on.

CW: So I called her that evening on Thursday, Oct. 11. We were getting information. It was also inauguration that next week. I touched base with Heather Bresch. There had been contact by newspapers. Reporters had contacted WVU and were told that she didn't have the eMBA. She said she didn't understand – She said, 'I do have an eMBA.'

*JB: What did she tell you about how she has an eMBA?*

CW: Flabbergasted is probably the best word. She said, 'I went through. I walked through graduation. I have my degree.'

*AC: She has her degree? Does she have her diploma?*

CW: She just has her degree. She had spent time in California working for a legal case for Mylan. There was a period of time when she was not on campus and did not attend classes. She spent several months – 3-4 months – working on the case. She met with the director of the program and explained what had been done. And as she explained it, in her mind, was told the work done there would convert into credit, and you have ended the program and reached an eMBA.

*LF: Did you ask questions of her, like, how did you convert this into credit?*

CW: No.

*LF: Did you ask why didn't you sign up for an independent study? What faculty member did you meet with?*

CW: She met with Paul Speaker.

*LF: Did you follow up with the director?*

CW: We had talked to Mr. Speaker, yes.

*LF: Did you ask about her follow up from the lunch meeting?*

CW: I did not.

*JB: Did she say she had prepared a paper?*

CW: She said that she had files that she had presented.

*JB: She presented these to Speaker during the luncheon meeting?*

CW: Yes, during the lunch meeting in December 1998.

*JB: So Speaker said – that's it; you're done?*

CW: Yes.

*LF: Does that seem logical to you?*

CW: I didn't have an opinion.

*JB: So you're trying to get the story. Did she mention Leah Summers?*

CW: I believe. Someone in prior year cohort had been in that meeting.

*LF: Do you know Leah Summers?*

CW: No.

*JB: Do you know what she does for a living?*

CW: She was a former Miss WV, but now employed by Mylan.

JB: You knew that she was employed by Mylan and that Heather Bresch works for Mylan.

CW: I know she works on the legal side.

JB: So you call Heather Bresch the next-day...

CW: I believe so.

*JB: Do you remember what you talked about?*

CW: There was concern that – she was flabbergasted and shocked – that the records were not complete on our end.

*JB: Did she provide any other information?*

CW: We had a brief conversation.

*JB: How long did this conversation last?*

CW: It was short. I believe Heather Bresch called me.

*JB: She called you?*

CW: She had received calls from the Post-Gazette.

*JB: Did you call Leah Summers?*

CW: I believe I called her. I definitely had a conversation with her.

*JB: When?*

CW: Friday.

*JB: What type of conversation did you have with her?*

CW: We talked about her memories of Heather Bresch and Paul Speaker.

*JB: How was that lunch meeting described?*

CW: Heather talked about her background and work in California. She conveyed that Leah felt that after that meeting that the work would convert into whatever credits were needed to finish the degree.

*LF: Would convert?*

CW: Yes.

*JB: Did she talk about any papers? Do you remember her referencing any files?*

CW: I can't recall.

*Michael Lastinger: Is there any sense about the way academics work with this kind of credit work? Did you ask her and say – can you tell me more about how this would work?*

CW: No, that's up to the academic unit.

*JB: Did you have any other conversations with these individuals?*

CW: One call.

*RN: Did she provide any other evidence than the lunch meeting?*

CW: I don't think.

*AC: If it was an academic matter, why did you handle and not Lang?*

CW: The chief of staff is an intermediary. My responsibility is to work toward resolution. It's not unusual.

*ML: Is it ok for you to be an intermediary between a student and professor?*

CW: No, between the student and the university in general.

*AC: Did you inform her of the process in place to resolve the matter?*

CW: I didn't go into detail. It was asked to be handled from an academic standpoint.

*AC: How did she respond?*

CW: I have my degree.

*AC: Was she ever asked to present any evidence?*

CW: I don't know.

*JB: You didn't ask her?*

CW: No.

*LF: Did you talk to Paul Speaker?*

CW: On Thursday night.

*JB: Was it you calling? Or someone else?*

CW: Jen Fisher. She had served as chief of staff over a six to eight month period. She was then serving as a deputy chief of staff.

*LF: What did she say – what question was – do you recall this student – any issue with the degree?*

*JB: What did he [Speaker] say?*

CW: Paul Speaker said she was close to completing her degree, but had spent time away from campus in a case in California.

*JB: Did he say anything about her finishing the degree?*

CW: No, I got that second hand.

*LF: Did you talk about the lunch meeting?*

CW: I don't think I had that conversation with him.

*AC: Then what happened?*

CW: The provost came back from class. It was matter of triage – what do we know and what don't know. Dean Sears was out of town, so my point of contact was Logar and Blakely.

*JB: Did you also speak to the president?*

CW: He didn't tell me to do anything. It was a 30,000 ft. issue. Heather Bresch had been contacted by the Post-Gazette. A/R showed that she doesn't have the degree.

*JB: Did he tell you to stay on top of it?*

CW: No, he knew that by function of my job, I would.

*AC: When did you return the call?*

CW: I don't know.

*ML: You mention a discrepancy between A/R and Heather Bresch?*

CW: Right. We had a former student who thought she had a degree. A/R thought she didn't.

*AC: How did Logar and Blakely get back to you?*

CW: I asked for a meeting the following week. I wanted to know how they concluded. As a student, we should be able to tell a student fairly quickly whether they have a degree or not.

*RN: They did that. They said she had the degree. So who else would you ask?*

CW: There were other students brought to our attention – there was a list that brought this to our attention. The records did not match in the case of [REDACTED]

*JB: Who listed these cases?*

CW: Logar, Blakely, the dean – I'm not sure.

CW: We had a former student who came this summer and tried to verify his degree, and A/R told him, you don't have an MBA.

*ML: So we can hold these records together and see a parallel story?*

CW: Yes, there are other cases -- [REDACTED] -- yes, I believe so. [REDACTED] came to A/R to get his transcript and was told he didn't have an eMBA. What we were told, they added classes.

*ML: Added classes?*

*JB: You were told that they added classes?*

CW: Yes.

*JB: Your sense became that other people had similar problems to Heather Bresch?*

CW: Yes.

*LF: Did anyone lay out the records?*

CW: That was part of the review done internally.

ML: If we leave other students nameless, we have to look at a significant sample to make sure they are correct. When we go to the public, that's casting a pretty broad brush.

*JB: On Oct. 15, you talk about all these things. But didn't you have a smaller meeting?*

CW: We met Friday, Oct. 12.

*JB: Was this meeting in your office? Who was there?*

CW: Jerry Lang, Jerry Blakely, Cy Logar -- I can't remember if Paul Speaker was there or not. I don't think Steve Sears was there. Legal counsel may have been in -- Alex Macia -- and there may have been Jenn Fisher.

*JB: Were you there for the whole time?*

*LF: And you called the meeting?*

CW: I'm not sure if I called it or the provost called it.

*LF: It was in your office?*

CW: My room has more room.

*LF: Are your offices adjacent?*

CW: No. Mine's on first. Lang's on second.

*ML: At what point do you compare the B&E records to the A/R records?*

CW: We were asked to go through the provost to investigate and find out everything they can and get everything together.

*JB: Was there any additional information that you found from this meeting that added to what you had from the evening before?*

CW: At some point, records were not available going back 10 years. Some storage revisions were made. There was reference made to a zip drive. The physical location of records was discussed. We said, it's in your all's court.

*JB: Did you give them a time window to respond?*

CW: I didn't give them a time-specific date. At that point, we had a former student who thought she had a degree. We had media calling them and the university. Yes, we needed to get resolution.

*JB: It wasn't going away because of the student...*

CW: There was another student in state of Washington – a school teacher – whose transcript showed with just a bachelor's. They came to our office. We talked to A/R to see if there was a discrepancy. We saw the initial request for a transcript and provided the transcript. We went back to the 1970s and pulled from microfiche.

*JB: But there was no media attention in that case.*

CW: That's right.

*ML: And that record was there.*

CW: Yes, sir. The gentleman on the West Coast had a transcript.

*ML: Do you know if the person had a diploma?*

CW: I don't.

*LF: Paul Speaker was not at this meeting?*

CW: I can't recall. I know we had a conversation on the phone.

*JB: And Alex Macia was at that meeting?*



CW: I recall.

*JB: Was it a necessity to get moving?*

CW: Everybody had an appreciated...

JB: They wanted it resolved.

CW: We had to get the answer no matter what. Not that we're going to be driven by the press, but she deserved an answer. So did we say this needs to be wrapped up by Monday morning? No -- but there was an implication that we need to get things figured out.

AC: So you're trying to gather everything at that point.

CW: Yes, here's what we know at this point. Go through the academic records and make that determination. I talked to Heather -- and shared what she had conveyed. They had looked for records night before.

*AC: At the next meeting, did you know a decision had been made?*

CW: No.

*LF: You talked to Heather twice. Did anyone suggest to go back to her?*

CW: No.

*LF: Did anyone go back and contact her?*

CW: No, ma'am. I was never asked to find out...

*LF: Would anyone else have called you?*

*JB: Other than the press?*

CW: I don't know. I believe by phone or e-mail, I talked to Paul Speaker. I know by e-mail.

*LF: No one at any meeting said, we should call and get more information?*

CW: It didn't come up in the meeting I was at. We basically said, it's your issue.

*RN: So then there's Saturday. So what happened next?*

CW: I sent an e-mail Monday asking to have a meeting. There was the Dean, Cy Logar, Paul Speaker, Blakely, myself, Alex and the provost.

*JB: Was Bill Case there?*

CW: I don't know if he was there initially. We may have brought him in at some point because of obvious communication issues with the paper.

RN: So go around the room one more time...

CW: There was the provost, the dean, Logar, Jerry Blakely, myself, Paul Speaker, Alex Macia and Bill came in at some point.

*AC: What was the purpose of this meeting?*

CW: To see where we were at.

*JB: Who chaired the meeting?*

CW: Jerry Lang.

*RN: Was this in the president's conference room?*

CW: Yes.

*ML: You followed up on the meeting from Friday?*

CW: Yes.

*ML: What time of day was the meeting?*

CW: I think mid morning – I'm guessing 10.

*AC: From Friday to Monday, was there a chance to review records? Was staff available?*

CW: I think so. But I don't know.

ML: Do you know what would happen if ordinary faculty/staff try to get into records over the weekend? You'll get an e-mail that says you accessed the system after hours. It depends on your access level.

CW: I'd be shocked if the dean of a college and associate dean would have problems. They may need a staff member.

LF: Many institutions depend on staff members for this type of thing.

CW: We didn't just want to leave it on Friday at 5, and pick it up Monday at 8.

*JB: Why?*

CW: There was a student waiting and the press. The university should be able to say if a student has a degree.

*JB: What happens at that meeting? Who says what first and what do they say?*

CW: The dean kicked the meeting off. What I take from that meeting – what I remember the most – the records were very incomplete. They couldn't find certain records. They couldn't find a zip drive, hard records. They found a listing of cohorts. It listed individuals that had entered the program and indicated when graduated or DNF. Heather Kirby – it showed she had graduated – others showed DNF.

*JB: Did anyone have a physical transcript?*

CW: I've never seen a transcript.

*ML: When you say the records were incomplete, there are two distinctions. Were the records not available or not there?*

CW: I didn't see them.

*LF: What you saw was a document of students in her program?*

CW: It was an Excel spreadsheet. It had the student's name and the year they graduated.

*ML: Did someone look at the graduation status of each person on the list? Did you see that list physically? Would you recognize it?*

[Shows Walker PS 6]

[Walker confirms PS 6 as the list]

*AC: Was this list contemporaneous with the class graduating or made after the fact?*

*ML: In your impression, when a student is marked DNF, they did not finish. But if they are marked with a graduation year, they did finish; they graduated.*

CW: That would be my impression.

*ML: If you learned differently, would it change your opinion about the legitimacy of the list?*

CW: Maybe. But I was not part of that decision.

*JB: At some point, Speaker talks about a meeting that you heard about from Heather Bresch. Give your account of what Leah Summers said.*

CW: I believe, in my memory, there was a discrepancy at the conclusion of that meeting in what she had to do to finish.

*JB: What was your discussion about that discrepancy?*

CW: How did what she did in California relate to the case? Was it one versus two classes?

*JB: What was that discussion about? What were people's decisions?*

CW: Paul Speaker was the only one in the meeting. He agreed that her work would be credited to [REDACTED] – maybe [REDACTED] classes.

*AC: So all the other credits that are missing – those would be attributed to life experience?*

*JB: One or two classes or everything?*

CW: It was her understanding – this was the last term she was in this program. She was given credit for her work during her time in California.

*JB: What was Speaker's notion?*

CW: [REDACTED] classes, plus a plan of study.

*JB: What was the discussion toward satisfying the plan of study?*

CW: The discussion was very vague. He had left the program.

LF: She says she met all the requirements for the program and she does not contend that she came back to complete additional classes.

*JB: How did people resolve this inconsistency – Heather versus Speaker? She realizes and thought she was finished. What was the discussion like?*

CW: What do we have to turn to? What are the records? There were not a lot of clear cut records.

*JB: No records except for contradictory records. Was there discussion of [REDACTED]?*

CW: I do not recall specifically. During the Friday conversation with the [REDACTED] initially when inquiry came in, A/R said that she didn't have the degree. They indicated the number of hours short, which is a violation of FERPA.

*ML: You think that A/R told the paper that she was "x" number of hours short?*

CW: Yes, I believe that. That is a clear violation of FERPA.

*RN: How do you know that?*

CW: That's what Steve Taylor told me.

*JB: Do you recall about [REDACTED] and one of the [REDACTED] was in his class – I know you don't recall specifically, you couldn't recall the specifics. But when you had the resolution – you were going ahead – deciding that she has the degree – there were unclear records as to [REDACTED]. What was the basis for a decision with situation that is so vague?*

CW: I don't have these hard records back. The listing provided by B&E, the programs produced, was not on that list.

*JB: That was a key basis?*

CW: On the list, it says that she graduated. She was not on the list of people that never graduated and had deficiencies.

*JB: Paul Speaker figures something happened in the interim, but there is no evidence of how she finished up her degree?*

CW: No.

*LF: If Heather said that after the meeting that she did nothing, what evidence is there?*

CW: She didn't have to do everything.

*LF: Who would take care of everything?*

CW: B&E.

*LF: What about giving her credits?*

*JB: If Speaker is to be believed, everyone knew the possibility of not doing anything else. Why was her word taken over Speaker's word?*

CW: With what we had available, I believe that our only decision is to say, in fact, she earned the degree.

*AC: No one said, let's take more time?*

CW: The dean looked at Lang, Sears...

*RN: What did Speaker say?*

CW: He questioned 1998. He can't account for what happened after she left the program.

CW: The question was asked – "Are you ok with this?"

*AC: She was awarded a degree effective 1998?*

*AC: And Speaker agreed?*

CW: Yes.

CW: I didn't have a vote in it. Alex Macia wasn't asked the question. It was asked, 'Is everyone in the room in agreement?'

*ML: 'Everyone in agreement?' Can you clarify Paul Speaker's position?*

CW: Speaker indicated that before she left the program, when he came back into program, she was on the list of having graduated. He was not sure what happened though, after that. But she was obviously on the list of having graduated.

*RN: Did you have financial records?*

CW: Yes, I believe they were there.

*RN: What did they show?*

CW: [REDACTED]. Paul Speaker said as much as \$75,000 of tuition had not been billed or received by the college. Records show that one semester several students were never billed.

*AC: There were several semesters [REDACTED]*

CW: [REDACTED]

JB: But the [REDACTED] issues would comport with what she told you. She was talking to you that she was gone that semester.

CW: I'm not sure how they did billing with this program.

*ML: How do names get on a deficiency list?*

CW: That was not my role in the discussion.

ML: When I'm doing graduation check for our college, we have to make sure the person has applied, paid a fee. A name not being on a deficiency list is consistent with a person who did not get a degree. They are not on deficiency list because no application for graduation had been filed.

CW: I can't address that.



*LF: Are you comfortable with this – that question – did it refer to giving her the degree or the decision that she met the requirements?*

CW: That's a question to ask the provost. From the academic side, I think it was comfortable with the resolution of this.

*LF: Nobody said, 'Are you comfortable with giving some grade changes to courses that were never taken or creating courses?' Was there a discussion of the more detailed mechanisms of making this happen?*

CW: There was some.

*LF: What was said?*

CW: How do we resolve it? How do we get the right records to A/R?   


*LF: Was there a discussion of the needed 3.0 to graduate?*

CW: No. We didn't get through there.

*AC: Was the decision based on a sense that you had some certainty that she did complete the requirements or that she did not complete the requirements?*

CW: I can only guess. I was not part of the decision. I can't conclusively with records say if she gets the degree or doesn't get the degree – where do you fall on that – does it go to the student? We don't have conclusive records either way. My sense as an observer was – this is the best we're going to get.

JB: Without Heather Bresch's story, you don't have enough. The only professor there said she has to do this and she didn't do it. The only thing that her degree hinges on – she had been told something. She hadn't done anything from Fall 1998 afterward. The only thing that goes the other way is the fact that she said...

CW: She also indicated in one conversation -- I asked her about the plan of study -- She indicated that there was no plan of study. That was communicated to the group

*JB: But without her story, you don't have anything – why wouldn't people follow up with her after that?*

CW: I'm not sure if anyone from B&E followed up.

*ML: This lunch meeting, when did it take place?*

CW: December 1998.

*ML: Within a week or two of graduation?*

JB: She couldn't show what she had done in California before she went.

CW: Graduation was coming up.

*LF: What was communicated to the group that Heather told you about the lunch meeting?*

CW: What I told the panelists.

*LF: What did you say about Leah?*

CW: What I told the panelists.

*LF: Were there legal ramifications of the meeting if a degree isn't granted?*

CW: Not at all.

*LF: You said something about that fact, that Heather has a witness to the meeting?*

CW: Sure. That was conveyed to the group. At the meeting with Leah Summers – Leah was one or two years ahead of Heather going through the program.

*LF: You didn't say anything about her being a lawyer?*

CW: No.

CW: Perhaps...

*ML: Is it unusual for a student to meet with a witness about an academic issue?*

CW: They were classmates. They did work together at Mylan.

*LF: Was there any suggestion that this was a threatening situation to WVU – that there would be legal action if we don't do the right thing?*

*AC: Was it discussed?*



CW: I can't recall from that context if it was discussed. From the academic perspective, what do you have to make the decision on? If they say you do not have a degree, are you comfortable with that, do you support that?

*LF: It was a clear decision to grant or not to grant, not a decision to resolve somehow?*

CW: I think it's all in one. At the end of the day, does the College of Business say that she has a degree or not?

*JB: Do you believe what happened in December 1998 because of what Heather Bresch told you? Did you ask Leah Summers?*

CW: I don't recall.

*RN: Do you Steve Cutright?*

CW: No.

*RN: Was there any pressure from Gov. Manchin?*

CW: Absolutely not. There was no conversation with the governor on this issue with the work of the university.

*ML: Have you followed his comments in the press?*

CW: I try not to read everything.

*LF: Did you have any private conversations with Sears?*

CW: No.

*AC: When the decision was made, was it reported back to Mike Garrison? How did he react?*

CW: Very similar – it is what is. If she ends up not having a degree; either she does or she doesn't.

*AC: When it was reported that she will be getting degree, how did he react?*

CW: He didn't show much one way or the other. It was his inauguration week.

*AC: How was the decision communicated to Heather Bresch?*

CW: Through me. This is why we got Bill Case involved. The Post-Gazette wanted a response from Heather Bresch and the University. There was the recognition of FERPA

and privacy. We wanted to make sure what we provided – we are in agreement and comfortable with that agreement.

*AC: What was her reaction?*

CW: I don't want to say relieved. Thankful. How do we get this out to the Post-Gazette? She was involved in a large international merger with her company. She had pressing matters from a work standpoint.

*AC: She was never sent a diploma?*

CW: That goes back to the college.

*LF: Was there any concern about releasing this in a written way?*

CW: We discussed what a letter may look like coming from the dean to A/R that we could release to the Post-Gazette. It would not be the official, internal correspondence.

*LF: Is that normally in written form?*

CW: If a transcript...

*ML: What about financial records?*

CW: Yes.

ML: What about the \$50 graduation fee?

*ML: About her graduation of 1998 – “that’s the one thing that did not happen” – do you remember ever hearing a phrase like that?*

CW: From Paul Speaker. I don't know if I remember that word for word. In December, she had a plan of study to complete, because he was leaving the program. Attainment of the degree would be post 1998.

*ML: You suspect Steve Taylor would have given academic information to the paper. Who told you that?*

CW: Jen Fisher.

*ML: We know more information than that [number of hours] was given.*

CW: There was more given than flat directory information.

ML: We asked Steve Taylor about this. They [A/R] are highly professional.

*LF: Would he receive this call?*

CW: The director was out of town.

*RN: Can they give out the number of hours to complete?*

*ML: He knows what information can be given out. He can say whether the student has degree or not have a degree.*

*CW: It depends on how the question was asked. Did they ask how many hours short? Or does she have [REDACTED] hours toward the degree? Or how many hours do we have toward degree?*

*RN: Gov. Munchin had nothing to say about it. What about Steve Goodwin?*

CW: No.

*RN: Board of Governors?*

*CW: No, sir. They were interested from a university standpoint, but did they provide direction, pressure – absolutely not. But there was concern from the board's standpoint.*

Interview ending time: 12:25 p.m.