

An SfAA Oral History Interview with Erve J. Chambers

Toward a Scholarship of Practice

This interview with Erve Chambers, done by Judith Freidenberg in 2002, explores his career starting with employment as a policy researcher for Abt Associates in the early 1970s, and subsequent work as a faculty member in applied training programs at the University of South Florida and the University of Maryland as well as highlights of his service to the Society. Chambers served the SfAA as the founding editor of *Practicing Anthropology* and as its President. Now retired from the University of Maryland, Chambers was trained at the University of Oregon. Chamber's academic work produced significant insights into the role of the internship in applied anthropology training, strategies and implications of the professionalization of applied anthropology, and the uses of anthropology in the development of tourism. An important theme in the interview is the process by which practitioners reflect on their task and through this contribute to the development of a theory of practice. He subsumes this in what he calls the "Scholarship of Practice."

The text was edited by John van Willigen.

FREIDENBERG: As you know, I'm Judith Freidenberg, I'm a member of the SfAA Oral History Committee and we've decided to have you, as a recognized intellectual in the field of applied anthropology in the U.S. tell us about your career. I'm talking with Erve Chambers who is professor at the University of Maryland and the first thing that I have in mind is about how you became an applied anthropologist, Erve? Where was the field when you entered it? How did you become interested in the field? Was it a project you were doing or something in your personal life or current events in the U.S.? What really prompted you to enter this field at the time when it was developing?

CHAMBERS: Well, that's a long way back. I think probably I didn't enter anthropology with the idea of being an applied anthropologist. And I entered anthropology mostly because I didn't know what else to do and the only real choice I had was going back to school after I got out of the army or working on my uncle's chicken farm. And I'd taken a course in anthropology in France, while I was in the service. I thought it was interesting enough, it was the only major in the school I wanted to go to then that didn't require a foreign language, which is kind of curious. I was convinced at the time that I wasn't competent to learn a foreign language. But I saw some interesting topics so I went to school there and I didn't plan a career at all and didn't know what I wanted to do when I got out of having a B.A. A couple of professors suggested I should go to graduate school so being docile, I applied and I

got accepted and I got some grants to go to school and I chose the University of Oregon. I still wasn't interested, particularly in applied. My major advisor was Homer Barnett who was a very distinguished applied anthropologist. And he later retired and Phil [Philip D.] Young became my advisor. But even in my dissertation, looking at the transition into a middle-class lifestyle of elementary school teachers in Mexico, I [did not have] an applied interest at all, it was more dealing with class structure in Mexico. So, I went through graduate school and I still wouldn't identify myself as an applied anthropologist. But then I got out and I needed a job and it turned out I had two opportunities. I did have an offer of a small academic job in a school in Denver and also an opportunity to do a research job with Abt Associates, which is a company in Massachusetts, a major social research company that was doing some housing programs and they wanted to hire what they called "on-site observers." They were looking at anthropologists and so I went to work for them because they paid more money and it looked like a more exciting job.

And as a result, I learned probably more in my first six months with them about doing social research than I'd learned in graduate school in four years. It was a very exciting and interesting job. After two years, I got out of it and I went back to the University of Oregon to teach a one-year assignment and they asked me to teach applied anthropology. And then at the same time, that was the time in the early 1970s when the job crisis kind of came up. [Roy G.] D'Andrade had written his article about, we're training all these people in anthropology and there aren't going to be any jobs for them. We either have to stop training them or find other things [for them to do]. I remember the American Anthropological Association president made some announcement [that] we have to encourage people to work in other kinds of careers. And I remember I wrote a letter to the *Anthropology Newsletter* and I can't even remember what was in it anymore but it was kind of an outline of my experiences, [as] an anthropologist working outside of academia and why I thought, the AAA didn't really know what it was talking about in terms of developing practice. And unfortunately, I can't even remember what the issues were, but [chuckle] but it's there, published somewhere in the *Anthropology Newsletter*.

FREIDENBERG: I want to take you back to your experience as an observer at Abt Associates. This was a new kind of position. I mean there were not many like this. What were the expectations of your job? How did you think of yourself as an emergent applied anthropologist? Did you use these experiences to teach that first course in applied anthropology?

CHAMBERS: Well, clearly, I used some of those experiences. What that job did for me was, it took the idea of applied anthropology out of a scholarly context which you normally would read about in *Human Organization* into a real context where there were, at the time, important policy issues to be figured out. There were a whole lot of more resources than anthropologists usually talk about.

FREIDENBERG: What times are we talking about?

CHAMBERS: This is the very early '70s, from about 1971 to '73. The project I was working on was an experimental housing allowance program funded by HUD, which turned ultimately into Section 8 Housing. But this was an experiment, with experiments all over the country going on where this program was actually being operated. There were people doing research on it to see how well it worked. This was, at the time, very unique. Ethnographers at each site, recording and interviewing and doing all kinds of things from very different parts of the program. Now, what was exciting about that and made applied anthropology interesting to me was it seemed important and consequential. Ultimately our job with Abt was to try to help coordinate some of the different field sites. What we learned was, anthropologists are very different in the way they work and some of them work better than others in terms of the goals of the program and understanding the goals of the program. I think realizing that, created one of the first themes, which ultimately led to my book in applied anthropology. That is, that we aren't trained as anthropologists really, to understand the policy context in which we're asked to work. So, an anthropologist who goes in and thinks, he's going to New Guinea to study some tribe, it's a different kind of research. It becomes essential to understand the historical context of relevant policy formulations, and not just the parameters of the communities in which you are working. Well, I mean those issues became important to me back then as a result of that experience.

So, when I got out of that I found myself put in a position of advocating for the idea that applied anthropology wasn't just a matter of taking what you've learnt in school and studying some presumably applied or consequential program but was really a scholarly exercise in its own right. That is, you had to know things as an applied anthropologist and approach problems as an applied anthropologist that were different than the way you would as an anthropologist trained to another end or to another purpose. And I felt, by-and-large, most people within the profession who are advocating new jobs for anthropologists really didn't believe that or talk about it much. They were just talking about, you know, train the people the same way we train them and then somehow help them get jobs in different things. And to my mind that

trained [and] turned out people who were an embarrassment. They were an embarrassment as researchers because they didn't understand the context in which they were working, or sometimes even the problems they were supposed to be trying to understand. My favorite image is, you tell an anthropologist you got a problem to study and they immediately pack their field kit and figure they're going to be gone for a year or two, usually alone. A lot of applied research required a whole different attitude towards fieldwork and research and all that and those issues were just beginning to come into the picture. I found myself almost reluctantly, I think, becoming an advocate for looking at the way we do applied anthropology and the way we practice anthropology outside of academia. And probably to this day I still have a certain reluctance about that advocacy. That is, probably if I had chosen my career totally in terms of my most basic interest I'd be a poet or something like that and I'd probably be an academic of something rare and not spend so much time thinking about applied anthropology. But I think, through my whole career it's just been something that I got caught up in it. It seems that wherever I ended up there was a place where I have strong feelings about the way it's being talked about and that I felt I had to play a role in this development.

FREIDENBERG: And that appears in the article that you published in *Human Organization* about poets.

CHAMBERS: Oh, is that the one on [Edward H.] Spicer?

FREIDENBERG: No, the one on, either poets allowed here or something [like that] that you published in *Human Organization*.

CHAMBERS: Oh, that was about Ed Spicer, [and] some of his short stories that he had written. Because Ed Spicer, a great applied anthropologist, was a hidden short-story writer. His short stories were actually shown to me after he died. That's interesting.

FREIDENBERG: I'd like to enter now into the field of what are the issues that you - according to your experience - think are important to document for an SfAA Oral History and also, I would like to know what your perception of what worked and what didn't work. Let's go back to this very important issue that I think is still current, that you mentioned, between advocacy anthropology, action anthropology, and applied anthropology. How do you see those issues and is that something that we should be concerned about in the future of applied anthropology?

I guess another way of formulating this is, it wasn't too clear for me when you talked about advocacy within the context of applied anthropology in academia and outside of academia, what exactly you meant. So, perhaps I need some clarification.

CHAMBERS: Anthropology has had a strong advocacy relationship from the first. Some of the first United States organizations that involved professional anthropologists along with lay people were aboriginal protection leagues. So, there's always been . . . I think, it was [Sir Edward B.] Tylor who said anthropology has one foot in science and one foot in salvation. And so, there's always been this advocacy link. Now, in my own efforts to describe applied anthropology and the practice of anthropology outside of academia, I tried to acknowledge the advocacy link and the will and desire of anthropologists to stand up for, particularly, marginal people and things like that but also to support the idea that the range of things that anthropologists might do and the particular perspective they might take on their work really has to be an individual choice. And as some anthropologists are drawn to anthropology because of an advocacy sense and have found wonderful ways to apply that and to build careers around that, some are not as taken with the idea of advocating for particular causes or groups of people and are interested in other aspects of anthropology and working with other kinds of clients. And to my mind, that's an equally legitimate approach or role to play in anthropology. To tell you the truth - because I'm such an undecided person - I still don't know where I stand in regard to those positions.

Sometimes I find myself involved in research where I find an advocacy role being played out and other times [not], like the research that I did with Abt where we were talking about housing. I remember one time we were having a conference where we were talking about how some of the anthropologists had gotten too caught up in the cause of the low-income people so that they couldn't see the whole relationship to the agencies that were involved with everything else and they became advocates to the expense of understanding, And I remember making a remark in that conference that somebody had asked me, how I felt I had done what they perceived to be a very good job in that role. And I made this facetious remark where I said, "because when I went to work I came with the attitude that I didn't give a damn whether poor people got housing or not." [both laughing] So, it seems to me, part of the answer is that it depends on your role in a particular time. [James P.] Spradley said this once and he's talking about his work with the homeless and alcoholics in Seattle, that you take different roles at different stages in your career and sometimes you are an advocate and sometimes you're not. And the important thing is figuring out when you should be and when you shouldn't be.

FREIDENBERG: Right. And again, moving on to the issues that you have discovered in your experience that are important to document for a SfAA Oral History and not only what are the issues but also what worked and what did not work. I noticed, for example, that you're being prominent in your role of developing institutional mechanisms to bring practitioners and academics closer together and even provided a publication outlet for practitioners. And so, can you talk to us about founding and editing *Practicing Anthropology*?

CHAMBERS: Very good. I mean, this is another thing that just sort of happened and it's certainly true I didn't plan on that. After I had finished my work with Abt and worked at Oregon for a year on a temporary job, I was drifting around and looking for other work and I ended up at the University of South Florida, which had just started their master's program in applied anthropology. And they had the idea . . . *Practicing Anthropology* had actually originated from a visit that Sol Tax paid to the University of South Florida before I even got there. He made some kind of remark that, what you all are doing - which is trying to train people to work outside of academia with an anthropology degree - is really good, wouldn't it be nice to have a publication for these people to all communicate among each other? And he just dropped that idea and the people there took it up and planned to create that publication and Robert Wulff, who was on the faculty then, was going to be editor of it. And then just as I was coming into the department, Bob Wulff got a job outside of academia working for U. S. Housing and Urban Development and took off. And he and I talked and he asked me if I'd take over the publication, which was really just an idea at the point, we hadn't even figured out the name. I think one of the names was going to be *Anthropology at Work* and there were other names. And then this name, *Practicing Anthropology* came up. And what I liked about that, was, that at the time we had no way of referring to people who worked outside academia, usually we called them "non-academic anthropologists" or people working outside of academia, both of which have a kind of a negative connotation, describing them in terms of what they are not, that didn't seem right. And so, that is how *Practicing Anthropology* sounded like a good title. It's interesting that then it became also the name of a group of people, practicing anthropologists, which wasn't really going through my head that much at the time.

Now, some people complained with the first issues and I remember I got one letter to the editor that said, he didn't like that title because, for him the idea of practicing something suggested that you were not yet competent. [chuckle] People saw the title in different ways. But anyway, the idea of the publication, the original idea was to create a forum for practicing anthropologists to identify themselves, people working

outside academia and talk about what they were doing and also to create a bridge between academia and practice and between, programs like South Florida, that were developing these applied issues. So, once again, I found myself in an advocacy role for practice that I hadn't really planned on. It took an awful lot of my time because we had no idea how to create a publication. We started with a very small grant from the SfAA. Have you ever seen the early issues? They kind of look like . . . they're about the same size as the *TV Guide* that you get in the newspaper. Well, that was the model, that as I saw . . . the TV guide and said that's about the size . . . that's about what I'd like to have. So, I took that to a printer and said, you know, "Well, could you do something like this?" And I had to do the typesetting, a lot of the typesetting. I had to do the formatting. I had to learn how to format a publication. We had almost no money. And then we, the students and I would get together and actually put the labels on the publication, prepare it, package it for mailing and take it down to the post office.

FREIDENBERG: But you must have liked it because you stayed there as editor-in-chief for about eight years?

CHAMBERS: Eight years, I liked it and I didn't like it. A lot of things in your career are like that. Like it took a lot of time and sometimes I resented the time it took. On the other hand - particularly at the beginning of it, - I thought it was important and it was good for me. I mean, it got me attention and the reception of the publication was good. But I think it's changed since then. I think the original idea has kind of gone out of *Practicing Anthropology* now and it's become more like another journal. If you look at the old issues there's just a lot of news items, there's a lot of discussion, people were writing very small contributions and part of that was based on the idea that people who are out there practicing don't necessarily want to write lengthy articles about things but they want to communicate with each other.

FREIDENBERG: Exactly.

CHAMBERS: I think we have lost some of that.

FREIDENBERG: Another role that you were very helpful in was in developing training programs to provide academic and professional preparation to enter the discipline of applied anthropology. At the University of Maryland, for example, you had an important role working for a master of applied anthropology as a terminal degree and as a professional degree. So, tell us about your experience training applied anthropologists and what you think worked and did not work?

CHAMBERS: Well, again, that started when I was at the University of South Florida and I was there for four or five years and had an opportunity to get in close to the beginning of their program, which at the time was a stand-alone master's degree program too. I learned a lot and had the opportunity to come to Maryland to help develop a stand-alone program. I think partly, the experience that I'd had at South Florida plus getting to know what was happening in other areas, Memphis was developing a program, Georgia was developing a program. [The Maryland program] tweaked the model a little bit and tried to create a thoroughly professionalized kind of program. The first part of that idea was that even the degree name would be different. So, we created, proposed a master of applied anthropology, which is not a master of arts degree. To me that was very important because it was making the declaration that this is a professional degree. Whether we could stand up to that promise, I think in the early days particularly, was very questionable and some of us were worried about it. And we had some good people coming in and we've gotten very good people since then but I think the differences that we tried to introduce there relate to a lot of just fundamental ideas that I have about applied anthropology. The experiential, the internship being an important part of that, that we reemphasized by making a regular internship, adding a pre- and a post internship process so it became a much more extensive kind of experience than in most of the other programs. The idea that most of the last year the program would be devoted to the student developing competence in a particular area or domain of interest which might include a lot of work outside of anthropology, [This] relates to the idea that I feel very strongly that anthropologists are helpless if they, in an applied context, if they don't know what's going on in the related fields around that. That became fundamental to what we were doing at Maryland. The whole notion that this was not going to be a spin-off to a doctorate, that this was going to be a stand-alone degree that was going to produce, what I like to think of as not just applied anthropologists, not just practicing anthropologists, but scholars of practice. That is, people who are equipped and inclined to take a notion of scholarship to the idea of applying anthropology. And that relates, probably in five or six other steps, to the whole idea that applied anthropology should be a fifth field of the discipline that has its own level of knowledge and an intellectual interest and its own intellectual problem. Its intellectual problem is what happens when you bring anthropological knowledge into the world. And that, unfortunately, is something we don't really do a lot of inquiry about, to try to systematize and understand what really happens when our knowledge comes into the world.

FREIDENBERG: As different from other types of knowledge?

CHAMBERS: Yes. That is, a scholarship of applied anthropology to try to understand those processes, and the good and the bad and the ugly that results from practice and from our involvement in the world. And that's what I've always hoped and to some extent I think it's happening within the University of Maryland program. We were not only just training people for interesting jobs outside of academia but that we would, as a faculty and as students, be engaged in this broader inquiry about the nature of applying anthropology and making it a true sub-discipline in the act of giving it an intellectual core.

FREIDENBERG: And I noticed that you continue to be very instrumental in thinking through and promoting how we were to train applied anthropologists because you founded, I believe, a consortium of programs that offers masters in applied anthropology recently?

CHAMBERS: I didn't found it. Linda Bennett and I think Linda Whiteford also actually founded it. I just talked about it for about fifteen years with a number of people, including people of Memphis where Linda is, and I've always thought that it be very important and it'd be very beneficial if we had a consortium of the different applied programs to talk about some of these common issues and to move the field and its intellectual content forward. But it's actually Linda then who picked up the ball and accomplished it and did it, and put it together which is very great. I've been a participant and have been ever since and, it's still just a few years in the making, but I think it's a very important gesture.

FREIDENBERG: Was that part of your agenda when you also had an important role within a professional organization, to promote the discipline and the link academia practitioners like when you were president of the Society for Applied Anthropology? Was that one of your interests as president to promote this link through education?

CHAMBERS: Yes. Clearly it was. And I think there is kind of a qualification like in my own life, the idea of practicing anthropology outside of academia became a cause that accidentally happened to me. Then as I became more and more associated with the idea I also feel responsible for it. That is kind of weird because you're advocating a kind of anthropology that you're not and so I'm always dependent on real practicing anthropologists to create the thing I'm talking about, which is kind of an awkward [chuckle] situation to be in. But I guess that's applied anthropology too. When I became president of the Society, which was . . . pooh, it's a long time ago, late 1980s.

Certainly there are a couple of things, I was very interested in supporting and getting together the local practitioner organizations that had been forming and some had already been in existence like WAPA [Washington Association of Professional Anthropologists] for some time and there were a lot that were just beginning. So, we would ask them to come in during SfAA meetings and we talked to them and asked how we could assist them and things like that. And then, of course, I was very interested in getting more practitioners, people practicing outside of anthropology, involved in the Society itself and trying to make that possible. And, again, I think that's something that's kind of fallen off in recent years. So, I think we were more active in that respect ten or fifteen years ago, than we are now. I've got some students right now who are looking at the extent to which practitioners are represented in the Society's various activities. They're coming up with something like while 50 percent of the membership of the Society is composed of practitioners, only 20 percent of them ever participate in the annual meetings or in publications. It's a big concern. Most of my career I've been involved in this, I don't think we've accomplished very much. We've accomplished recognition of the idea of practice. We've acknowledged practice and certainly our attitudes about practice are very different and more receptive than they were twenty years ago, but the actual figuring out how to bring our societies and our institutions to the service of practice, how we do restructure the annual meetings of the SfAA so that they are more beneficial to people who are not academics, to people who need it to make a justification to their workplace that this is a professionally important thing for them to do. We haven't been very successful in getting that next step, which is to really integrate practice as an essential part of our discipline.

FREIDENBERG: And why do you think that has happened? Because you mentioned that *Practicing Anthropology* was not that much an outlet for practitioners . . . that that was a trend that we had fallen into, right?

CHAMBERS: Yes, I mean I don't know how . . . there's several possible reasons or excuses. I mean, one is that we're creatures of habit and so we always refer back to what we're familiar with. Our institutions and publications and even our attitudes were created in an academic milieu and that's the only way we really know how to do things. And, we add a workshop here and a workshop there but to make the workshop concept be the primary part of a meeting would be more interesting. So, it's easier to go on doing the way we're doing, just try to bring in practitioners on the fringes. They recognize very clearly that they are left on the fringes of it.

FREIDENBERG: It sounds like there would be academic applied anthropologists looking for opportunities to engage more practitioners.

CHAMBERS: Right.

FREIDENBERG: I wonder why the other movement is not happening. Why aren't practitioners demanding, being more important in the SfAA and publishing more and practicing?

CHAMBERS: Right. Good question. I guess when my own involvement in all these issues started, I guess, that's the scenario that I imagined...was that by this time, twenty years later, that practitioners would be running all this stuff.

FREIDENBERG: And it hasn't happened?

CHAMBERS: It hasn't. You see, I mean there are some practitioners that have played very active roles in the Society and organizations like WAPA, NAPA, National Association for the Practice of Anthropology, and all that but they really haven't pushed the agenda out and beyond in a way that's very imaginative. Where they participated, they've done the same things that we do. I was talking to somebody the other day about that, the idea that those practitioners who become most successful in the Society, and even in the National Association for the Practice of Anthropology to some extent, are those who are most like us, who have academic aspirations [chuckle] and tendencies and leanings and therefore they fit well within the current structure but the vast majority of others don't fit well. I think part of it is that, and this has to do with what I was saying about a scholarship of practice, I don't think we have learned how to prepare people to be very effective practitioners in a huge variety of settings; we have not been able to discover in any really substantial sense what it is that they all have in common, what is it that makes them anthropologists, that we could then reinforce so that they would not only want to but need to come back to meetings and to entertain and participate in the publications of a group like the SfAA because they really learn there something important about what they do. I don't think we've gotten there.

FREIDENBERG: Right, something like continuing education. If we think of the discipline of applied anthropology as a profession, it would be like physicians going back to take boards to certify them to be able to practice.

CHAMBERS: Right. I mean if you think about it, there's so many interesting people working in different research or non-research practicing modes who would have so much to learn about by something that somebody else is doing somewhere else. We cannot make those connections and find out how to make those connections. So, there's still a whole lot of work to be done to realize that.

FREIDENBERG: I wonder whether another of your prominent roles, which is on thinking, reviewing and evaluating the role of internships in applied anthropology, is not a good way to start thinking about this because we train these applied anthropologists to go and be practicing anthropologists within an academic context but in a sense, we're going to institute mechanisms for them to continue being members or associated with academia. In other words, when we prepare them to do internships it's almost like we send them away.

CHAMBERS: Right.

FREIDENBERG: We don't use, perhaps, internships as a way of training people who have to continue to truly practice outside of academia but who will feel that need that you were talking about of constantly connecting to academia not only for reading papers but also to establish collaborative projects or, perhaps, to consult some kind of continuous link.

CHAMBERS: Right.

FREIDENBERG: And I wonder whether your experience, for example, at the University of [South] Florida reviewing internship at the training level could help us figure out what we could do in this respect.

CHAMBERS: I mean, that experience was, at the early part of their program, and it was mostly an evaluation of the internship at that point in which we learned a lot of very interesting things. One of the most interesting was that when we interviewed people who were not anthropologists, but who had supervised anthropology interns, that when we asked them what was the difference between their having an anthropologist as an intern and somebody else, they clearly identified what we hold to be some of our most important values. They said, these people had much more ability to work to understand the context in which they worked in a broader point of view or an understanding of what's going on. Essentially this defined the ethnographic and holistic perspective of anthropology in different terms, in terms that made sense to them, which made you think it was really working.

FREIDENBERG: Definitely.

CHAMBERS: But the question you bring up is then, can you use that experience to go on and create the further linkages. I certainly think that's what we need to do. I don't think we've done very much of it and I don't even know at what level you do it. And certainly, some departments, our own department here at Maryland, for example, are developing stronger alumni ties, but a lot of the relationships are very personalistic. I think every training program has certain numbers of really star graduates, that are affiliated with them and benefit from association with them as the programs do from their association with those practitioners. But to do that on a more institutionalized basis, I think that certainly is a step we need to go, in that we haven't gone in.

FREIDENBERG: Because I notice that you, for example, have also being very active in continuing to promote a scholarship of practice. You have been editor of the *Adventures in Applied Anthropology* series of the State University of New York Press and that's to promote the scholars of practice [to] publish. As we have these academic presses helping us promote the publication of scholars of practice, we don't have similar institutional mechanisms to promote the practitioners, whether they publish, books or journals, peer-review journals, or they publish reports and there's a lot of excellence in reports as well which we don't, I think, recognize.

CHAMBERS: Right. I think one has to have the sense of a scholar of practice as not necessarily being recognized in the way we recognize it in academia through publication and teaching directly in the classroom. I'm trying to think of the name of a guy at MIT wrote a book called, *The Reflective Practitioner* and it's always . . . it impressed me a great deal. It's not about anthropology at all but he'd acted like an anthropologist, he'd gone out and interviewed a lot of people, a lot of different fields like urban planners, social workers, different practical kind of fields, and he came back with the idea that, sure these people go to school and they're trained in their particular professions but when they get out they enter a different kind of scholarship and they operate on the basis of work-related theories and notions of what's going on and in that work they create their profession. Well, his term is "reflective," like it's a reflective theoretical notion and it's different from what they learned in school.

FREIDENBERG: Right.

CHAMBERS: It's unique in and of itself, so, urban planners are what he called, "not just practitioners but they're reflective practitioners." They're creating ideas, theories of what they're doing all the time. So, the idea would be how do you get a hold of that in terms of what applied anthropologists do? What are the kind of on-the-ground theories that they construct and create as they get mixed up in the world in the

particular ways they do? And can you create that as a scholarship of practice? And then you bring that back also to the training program, because then you have more knowledge about and have created more of a relationship between these two scholarships. But I guess, it takes some people who really want to devote themselves to thinking about those things and working some of that stuff through.

FREIDENBERG: Right.

CHAMBERS: I want to clarify this whole issue of a scholarship for practice and how you create one. If you look back at what I was saying about when we created the program here at Maryland, the idea it would be modeled after a professional program was very important. The kind of professional program I think about is nursing because that's what my wife does and so we talk about it a lot. But if you look at the way nursing is, both as an academic exercise and as a practice, you see that the idea of practice is absolutely essential to what goes on in the academic institutions that train nurses. The research is generally based on how you make better nurses and how you equip nurses to deal with the kinds of issues and problems that they have. That should be the goal of a professional applied anthropology program. It should be how do you make better applied anthropologists, practicing anthropologists? And to do that we need to understand what people actually do when they get out. We need to accept that as our fundamental issue and our fundamental problem. Well, as a rule right now, as we maintain our own research interests and relate those to our students' interests, the driving force of what we do as scholars even within applied training programs, is not based on what our students will ultimately do but is formed mostly from our own rather narrow interests. So, I think the transition that needs to be made - and maybe it's a just very gradual kind of thing - is that people like us who purport to prepare and train people to go outside of academia to practice a profession that their practice is our fundamental problem in scholarship. And that's what we look at and that's what we try to articulate and learn how to better prepare people to do.

FREIDENBERG: So, are you suggesting that, that we try to research what applied anthropologists actually do?

CHAMBERS: Exactly, just like a nurse researcher, a Ph.D., in a nursing program goes out to hospitals [and] works with nurses, and they identify a problem related to problems nurses are having and try to solve it in the context of the work that nurses are doing. That's what nurse scholarship is all about. That is what our scholarship should be all about.

FREIDENBERG: But if that was the case then our professional societies should be interested in funding such studies?

CHAMBERS: Yes, I think so.

FREIDENBERG: Right. Well, that would be a very important change. I think that this is very interesting and we've gone over a lot of your roles in which you've helped found and nurture the discipline of applied anthropologists but I'd like to go back to your work as a teacher and as a scholar as well. I've noticed that you teach a variety of courses including one that I'm intrigued about, Writing Anthropology. How does that fit in terms of training applied anthropologists if supposedly they're not going to be asked to write all that much?

CHAMBERS: I really haven't thought about it that much because I don't perceive the course - even though most of the students who take it now are in our applied program and are applied, it's also open to undergraduates who are not, particularly interested in applied - I don't perceive it as an applied course. It's not a course about writing conventional anthropology, it's really an opportunity for students to sit around and talk about what is - now, I'm going to contradict myself because it is applied. What the course is about is looking at what I call, cultural discourse and recognizing that. It's not just anthropologists who are involved in cultural discourse but that discourse about culture is being convened in all kinds of ways throughout society. So, we look at the way a journalist writes about culture. We look at the way short-story writers write about culture. We look at the way anthropologists write about culture. And we talk about that and then we do our own writing. And most of the people don't write about applied topics but relied on a more personal level about cultural relationships. We really focus on the quality of writing, quality of communication, and the ability to talk about culture in a kind of an uncompromised way, not to trivialize culture as so much writing does. To your second thought, I don't think of it as applied but it sort of is. It's a course that I love teaching but the other part of your question was, why learning to write well an issue for an applied anthropologist is? We have all these discussions and students - certainly applied students - get very anxious about whether they're getting all the skills they need to the point that there's no way you can give all the students all the skills they need in a program such as ours or in any program. You probably teach them to acquire skills more than give them the whole set of skills. But I think there are two fundamental skills that we all need and that's the ability to write well and with clarity and the ability to speak reasonably well. I'm a much better writer [chuckle] than I am a speaker so I emphasize writing. But that

applies as much to applied anthropologists, practicing anthropologists in general as anybody else.

FREIDENBERG: Exactly.

CHAMBERS: I was just having lunch at the meeting last week with Bob Wulff, and he's an anthropologist who for twenty years has made his living developing real estate property at some high levels of financing. And he just spontaneously said, "You know, the difference between me and the other people I work with and what makes me successful is that I've learned how to write well." I think that applies to virtually any profession.

FREIDENBERG: And I think it's very important personally, even more important for applied anthropologists who work, for example, in the field of development and they have to, not only write well - but write with the ability to communicate with, say, economists or agronomists about what it is that they're saying about culture and not just noticing that these people are different or these behaviors are different.

CHAMBERS: Right.

FREIDENBERG: So, I think that that's an important course. I was just intrigued that in an applied program, you saw a course with that title.

CHAMBERS: Yeah.

FREIDENBERG: Talk to us about another course that I think that is quite novel, within anthropology and particularly applied anthropology, which is Community Tourism.

CHAMBERS: That's a new class. I've [taught] tourism over the past ten years, [it] has become my major area of interest and I teach a couple of courses on tourism. Now, a community based tourism is a new one and it's aiming to be more applied to look at both the impacts of tourism on a community level and how communities can participate more - I hate the word empower I don't want to say "empower communities" to participate but that's what I mean [chuckle]. Essentially how you can develop alternative tourism strategies that are a benefit to the communities in which tourism occurs. So, it's probably one of the most challenging courses I've taught because it requires a lot of work and a lot of reading. [It] starts out by problematizing the idea of community itself and then problematizing the idea of sustainability and

then asking what all this has to do with tourism and, I guess, a culturally socially sustainable kind of tourism.

FREIDENBERG: That's great. Does that relate at all with your role [in] developing the track in cultural resource management at the Department of Anthropology at Maryland?

CHAMBERS: Yes, it does. Again, the track is fairly new and the Maryland program just went to the track system fairly recently and that happened at a time when I knew my commitment to looking at tourism in an applied perspective was strong and I felt that a tourism track wasn't going to be the most appropriate way to go, but to combine, to try to think about new kinds of tracks that would incorporate a lot of things of interest in anthropology. We chose resource management to combine issues related to environmental development, tourism development, heritage issues. People keep asking, why did you choose the word resource? And I think there's a very particular context there. First of all, resource management is a recognized area of practice in a lot of the areas that we were interested in like forestry resource management, environmental resource management . . .

FREIDENBERG: Water.

CHAMBERS: Yes, water resources. So, something that can be recognized by people we work with as a term that has salience and significance. But then our own internalized meaning of that term is really based on the idea that we would look at human relations from the point of view of them being resources rather than liabilities. We've got an asset theory now and from the asset perspective, you think of a kid in the inner city and you've learned to think of that kid as kind of a liability and a problem. But how does your mind turn around in terms of applied anthropology if you think of him as a resource, the loss of which is a fundamental loss to society? And so, you try to find what is the resource that you develop, how do you solve the problem or get rid of the liability? And so, we have applied that idea to all the things we're interested in. In terms of tourism, the question becomes what are the resources of the community that can be built through tourism, rather than how do you solve a community's problems through tourism, which you really can't do anyway. I don't think you could solve anybody's problems with tourism. It is more likely to exacerbate them. But how can you - by taking a look at the community - how can you enhance a community's resources through tourism is a different kind of question. And that relates to the course I was talking about, you know, you look for linkages between

more commercial tourism and the community itself and how you can support the community as well as whatever the economic or commercial enterprise is.

FREIDENBERG: You were saying earlier that you started that course with the notion of problematizing community. How does it work when there's different interests promoting the . . . the interest, different communities as it were promoting their own interests? How do you address that in your teaching?

CHAMBERS: Well, I mean, that's what we talked a lot about and, I guess probably the end result is you expect that there's going to be different perspectives in different communities within communities and so, and what they have tried in this course and never really thought of trying before is that a couple of the resources they use are extremely conservative ideologically. I use the book called *Community in Tradition* which is about the conservative view of what community is. And most of the books we use are the kind of books we all use which tend to be highly liberal, if not radical in one way or another but, it's interesting, there is a conservative view of what community is and it's very different and in fact threatened by, another view of what community might be. And then when you get into community development, you see these conflicts occurring and what I want to do is cover the range of view[s]. You send students out, or you graduate them, they go into communities that have a completely different value system. And then there are mostly rural communities around here that we work with that are extremely conservative communities.

And we don't even know anything about why they are, or the basis of belief . . . the fundamental beliefs that create a conservative view of community. It's important to know that. We've really problematized the idea of community and we're looking at it from very different perspectives. And then one thing that I've been talking about recently, you begin to see as you look at these different views and different agendas where they can fit together. I don't even think you want them to fit together but they can fit together in very interesting ways so you can have a bunch of liberal folklorists, for example, developing heritage in different communities and they're developing it from an ideology and a framework in which diversity is good. So, they are encouraging diversity of all these different [communities], say, take the Appalachian region, for example, diversity of expression, from the indigenous music styles to quilt making to African-American practices in these different communities. That fits their kind of liberal paradigm. And yet, you look at a lot of the communities and these are projects that can actually work. They're effective. Even though the members of these communities might be quite conservative in their values and have a different sense of the relationships between things like diversity and shared value systems or

commonality. And yet, it's the same program and it's working for both. It's working for the kind of traditional liberal who had a diversity perspective and it's working for the more insular kind of conservative community perspective. And to me that's just intriguing.

FREIDENBERG: Very intriguing. It also brings out to my mind the fact of what you said earlier for an applied anthropologist it's important to look at history and the policy context.

CHAMBERS: Right.

FREIDENBERG: And it's almost like reversing that assumption in saying, sometimes policy makers do not take the community context so much into consideration and they should learn how to more.

CHAMBERS: Right. Also, a post-modern approach stands positive. I recognize the idea that people in communities aren't just passive victims, they're active agents, in that they learn how to use the people who control their lives in a different sense and learn how to manipulate meaningful lives out of those contexts. That's another interest of mine. There's so much being learned from political economy, even a post-modern perspective that's really important for applied anthropologists to know. And I think there are a lot more compatibilities, that are being recognized by applied anthropologists, not all of them, that we have a lot to learn some of the way anthropology in general is, challenging the idea of culture, the way the culture concept is being used and the idea of the agency of different actors in different roles in the society that those are all extremely important things for applied anthropology too. It's interesting to me, I think, probably in the last twenty years clearly the two most fundamental movements in anthropology has been the postmodern perspective and applied anthropology. They are the two forces that have really driven the profession in the last twenty years. And yet, there is very little recognized interrelationship between the two in a lot of ways.

FREIDENBERG: Some archeologists who consider themselves applied anthropologists use postmodernism, some to a great extent nowadays?

CHAMBERS: Some do. You know, I know some colleagues [chuckle], very close colleagues, and I think their embrace of application can have a certain ambivalence, almost accidental applied anthropologists in some way. But I guess I define myself in the same way.

FREIDENBERG: Going back to this book that you were mentioning *The Reflective Practitioner*, are you suggesting that perhaps archaeologists as applied anthropologists have to be more reflective about their practice?

CHAMBERS: That's something I'm working on now. I'm working on an edited volume with a colleague, Paul Shackel, to look at archaeology as applied anthropology. And recognize it in their own career development. The archaeologists that have gotten involved, particularly in the last ten years [have] become more and more dependent on public involvement in furthering and developing archaeology so that they really need to be good applied anthropologists as well as archaeologists. Unfortunately, there is very little discussion about that or about what that means or where to go with, it although as it develops. I think in some ways it might be easier to develop a coherent sense of being an applied archaeologist than it is to develop a sense of what it is to being an applied cultural anthropologist just because you got a large group of people who do pretty much the same thing.

FREIDENBERG: And work at the same agency perhaps.

CHAMBERS: Yes, just in the same way that it was easier for archaeologists to put forth legislation that favored the property that they dealt with because it was so easy for the public to see what an archaeologist is. They have tools. They have material, objects, [chuckle] and things that identify them as a profession. So, they were very successful in the early '70s in putting forth legislation that made them essential to the development process and that they had to be consulted and they had to be brought in. Whereas cultural anthropology, we certainly made gains in that respect but it's much harder, both to articulate and to distinguish ourselves from sociologists and other people.

FREIDENBERG: What other major domains in applied anthropology would apply or anthropology in general that you see, in terms of the process of developing [your] career?

CHAMBERS: I see, vaguely, vaguely, I see a career there. [both chuckling] I've written comparatively little about the research I've done, most of which has been applied research and is in reports more than like a lot of applied anthropologists but where I published the most is commentary, material which tries to synthesize different aspects of the field. I like to think of it as a kind of meta-anthropology. I mean we're so trained to be ethnographers to go out and talk about our little place and our people that we study and things and to build our research on that, that we kind of

develop these atomistic kinds of relationships with each other. We're almost afraid to talk about each other's work and to try to assess it and bring it together. And, of course, that makes it very hard then to create any sense of a synthesis about what it is that anthropologists do or how to train them. So, it seems . . . but I've always, no matter what my particular interest is at any time, what I've always been most interested in was that trying to create that sense of synthesis. So, one of the first things I wrote was - with Phil Young at the University of Oregon - was a synthesis for the *Annual Review of Anthropology* of Mexican community studies because I had been reading them, I was fascinated by them and I thought, nobody has ever tried to compare all these things, nobody has ever said, you know, "If you took them all together, would that tell you anything?" Or are they so disparate, [they don't] tell you anything. And I always look for the patterns, which is kind of fundamental for anthropology. It's not just something I write about but it's a research topic for me. I do research on applied anthropology and then I write about that. And then the same thing in tourism was to look at it and write a book about the whole field, to try to synthesize and to say, if you put it all together, what are people saying, you know, how do you count for the differences. So, I guess, if there is one strain that's the idea of trying to create a kind of a different conversation outside of our own individual research. I think it's something more people should be doing. Usually they see it as writing a textbook or something but that's not what it is. It's creating a kind of meta-sense of what we're doing around any particular topic.

FREIDENBERG: And we are supposed [to] include the practitioners. You've mentioned a couple of minutes ago, that a lot of what you had written was hidden in reports. We only actually write reports when we are mandated to by contract or by any kind of formal agreement and yet, that's also what anthropologists do. I noticed that your book *Applied Anthropology: A Practical Guide* is still the most cited textbook in applied anthropology in the U.S. and abroad. I've used it my course in Argentina. Do you think that this might be a good way to continue on that work, that this could be like Volume II of *Applied Anthropology* if you were to do to write about your experiences researching Applied Anthropology?

CHAMBERS: I don't know. First, I think, my buddy John van Willigen might wonder whether my books are the most cited or not and I think this is questionable. I mean, his books are cited a lot too and I don't know which one is cited the most. But I mean, it has gotten some attention. There have been a couple of points where I thought doing another edition would be a good idea and yet I've always rejected that idea to create another. . . if I do write a new book on applied anthropology, it's not going to be related to the other book at all and be very different and be very short in that will

be done sometime within the next six months to sixty years [Freidenberg chuckles], essentially the idea of that book is to address the question I find plaguing our graduate students so much is - and it's a very legitimate and important question - as they get into a program like this and they start being taught that you need to know this, and you need these various general skills that other people have, like it's not just anthropology, and then they start wondering, when I go out and try to sell myself or make myself useful what it is really about anthropology that makes any difference? I think we all as a profession we begin to think that, you know, what is it specifically about anthropology that makes the difference, that makes a real professional role that you could call anthropologists? That's what I'm interested in right now, to answer that question. Nobody answers a simple question for all time, but to address that question and to write a little book that would try to get a sense that there is something that's very important about anthropology that is cohesive, that is the property of anthropology and somebody could try to steal it but they'll never get away with it because they don't have the experience, that there's something experientially based in anthropology that's fundamental to being an applied anthropologist.

FREIDENBERG: And is that something that you wish to answer in the training of applied anthropologists or you think that it would be good to educate the non-anthropologists that employ applied anthropologists?

CHAMBERS: Well, it might. I mean certainly I would want it to be of interest to people besides anthropologists. Mostly, I think the audience that I most clearly envision are people who are beginning or anticipating a career in anthropology. I want to look at issues between the kind of more positivistic drift of anthropology and the more postmodern view...I've always been interested in the relationships between science and art.

FREIDENBERG: I noticed also that you've had international experience. You've done work in Thailand and you got a Fulbright Award for that and you've done work in Mexico and you got an NIMH to do that. Can you tell us how that those two stages in your scholarship apply to the topics that we're talking about?

CHAMBERS: I've been fortunate in that I have had opportunity to spend a fair amount of time in different places and it started even before I was an anthropologist, I was in France for three years. That was an important opportunity for me. Mexico, that's where I did my dissertation research. I'd actually wanted to go to Asia and I had the grant and the opportunity to go anywhere I wanted but the significant other that I was

with didn't want to and being a compliant person, you know, did whatever I had to do. So, I went to Mexico and then that was a good experience for me. Probably about ten years ago, I started getting my chance to go finally to Asia in a relationship to my work. That was after I was chair of the department at Maryland and just sensing I wanted a break and I wanted to finally go, so I planned the trip where I traveled as much as I could around Asia. I had to have an excuse. So, I said I was going to study tourism which at that time I didn't know anything about. But that's a neat thing. [both chuckling] I began to think about tourism but in a very informal sense, like it wasn't like doing very deliberate work at the time but it was an important experience. And, of course, I've been back then probably fifteen times, most often to Thailand since that time. I had the Fulbright, [which] was actually to consult with tourism training programs on developing community-based tourism, which was a wonderful experience and developed my ideas about tourism a lot.

FREIDENBERG: Have you also gotten the Praxis Award, what did you get the Praxis Award for?

CHAMBERS: Well, I didn't get the Praxis Award [from WAPA] for praxis, I got it for being a judge. And when they first gave the Praxis Award they gave it the Praxis Award also to the judges recognizing that it was an effort on their part. That was with Bob Wulff and Shirley Fiske, [they] put the award together and I was on the first two juries. And what was interesting about it, of course, nobody had any experience. I mean, this was an award where people nominated themselves and talked about their practice in some specific project and how important that was. I can't remember all the members on the juries but it was a very diverse group and George Foster, you know, was in the group and Setha Low was in the group.

FREIDENBERG: Were there lots of people in academics?

CHAMBERS: They were, a lot of these people who never really talked to each other and they got all these nominations and they read them all, everybody agreed [on the results]. They didn't even discuss it because they were in different parts of the country but when you got them altogether there was just absolute agreement. This was in judging a level of being an applied anthropologist and nobody even discussed the point. You didn't even know what the criteria of good practice was. And yet, everybody did, this was Number One, this is Number Two, this is Number Three.

FREIDENBERG: Actually, going back to your thought of putting together what applied anthropologists did would be like what applied anthropologists think applied anthropologists should do?

CHAMBERS: And it's there and I guess the lesson is that we do know that but we don't know how to articulate it. That's kind of a scholarship of practice again and that's this reflective practitioner I was talking about. We know what this stuff is but we don't know how to articulate it.

FREIDENBERG: Do you think that it has to do with spontaneous invention professionalization? Are we afraid coming out as real professionals like, say, an attorney or . . .

CHAMBERS: I think some of us are, well, that's alright. And I think some anthropologists are terrified of seeming to have vested interest in anything, even though they are firmly and securely ensconced in an academic profession, the idea of making a business out of something or profiting from something is very difficult. And so, there are some obstacles to - still after all this time - to talking about professionalization. I think one thing that started happening in the '70s that was very threatening to a lot of people was when the AAA began to be not just a disciplinary organization but a professional organization. And you can see the transition - if you can see it - beginning to occur and I could hear some people beginning to be very nervous. And that's why, I think, an organization like the Cultural Anthropology Group split off and wanted to have their own meetings because they didn't want to have all this discussion about professional issues, particularly since they expanded beyond academia into areas of practice that would be suspect to them. Now, that is interesting.

FREIDENBERG: It is interesting. It makes me think also of whether, going back to you pointing out that the Society for Applied Anthropology now does not have that many practitioners involved in the running of the organization, whether it could be that in a sense was developing to two distinct communities or cultures.

CHAMBERS: Right.

FREIDENBERG: And, until we find that out it's going to be difficult to put those together.

CHAMBERS: I think the one thing that it is really interesting that I've been thinking quite a bit about recently is there's something happening to the nature of practice itself. I've no idea what it means yet. But if you look back at people, like when I first got interested in practicing anthropology and I was always talking to practitioners who were about my age, to mostly people getting out of school and starting their careers and we're all kind of getting old now, but there's a and if you talk to them, well, what I'm trying to say,, there's a significant percentage of those people who like me envisioned an academic career. . . because at the time there wasn't really much else to envision. Even when you talk to them now, even though they are very successful - sometimes very successful practitioners who have created really interesting careers for themselves - there is still this kind of reluctance and this kind of reticence and this sense that this is not really what I wanted to do, this isn't really what I was going to do. And so, there is a little negativity to the message that comes across and that comes so clearly. And yet, I see the students that we get now in a program like ours and they come motivated only to be a practicing anthropologist, not all of them but a lot of them. And they know what it is. They know that there are opportunities. They have quite often a very clear idea of what they want to do and it has nothing to do with academia.

FREIDENBERG: Exactly.

CHAMBERS: And if anything, we get to start to keep up with them because they're bright. We figured out finally that the GRE [scores] of our last master's degree applicants were higher on the average than those for our College's doctoral programs, which means to me - and I think this is very important - that these are people are not selecting a master's kind of career oriented program because they don't think they can get into a doctoral program but in fact, they can get into a doctoral program but they want a program like this. Now, what those people do in the next five, ten years to me is going to be the critical dimension in everything I've been interested in for twenty-five years because this is the first generation that really includes people who entered the field with a desire to practice and who are highly motivated to do so. And the question is, are our institutions and our academic programs going to be able to serve that desire and that motivation rather than divert it and turn it off because we're so antiquated in it of ourselves. So, this is the greatest challenge is right now. I hope I'm wrong, but I don't think there are very many people in my position thinking that the people we are training are our future and are our absolute future. I just don't think there are.

FREIDENBERG: You mean the future of the discipline of applied anthropology?

CHAMBERS: Of at least of that kind of applied anthropology that we talk about when we talk about going out to train people to work beyond academia... I mean, we are a very elite, special group of people. We've made a commitment presumably to pushing anthropology outside of academia and to training people to do that. So, we've only put one of our feet in that water and we haven't put both of our feet in that water yet. I think the two critical factors, one that we have now which is an out-coming cohort of the people who are highly motivated to be practitioners and the other is a cohort of trainers in professional program who will jump in with both two feet and say, this is what we do. But that is not where we are now. Again, where we are is, we're still creating our own research careers, our own research activities that may involve our students but that our students are not essential to our careers. We developed that and then we do the best we can to create a good program and to encourage people to do this but we don't jump the bridge with them.

FREIDENBERG: Exactly.

CHAMBERS: And until we do that we will never be doing what we should be doing. We'll always be just half of a truth.

FREIDENBERG: Right, including the danger that we might instill in our highly-motivated masters in applied anthropology the same sense of frustration that those that did that did not get through academic programs still feel even, like you said, successful.

CHAMBERS: Yes, that's the danger that will take this much more highly motivated cohort and they'll jump out there and they'll find there's no one with them and they'll be kind of treading water. Outside, down the road there's not much to embrace them and there is more the temptation for them to become a part of something else that does support them. So, they go into urban planning, they become urban planners rather than anthropologists or they go into this field or that. The more I think about it right now this moment...this is a critical moment.

FREIDENBERG: It is a critical moment, I agree with you, and a dilemma as well because and it brings us back to something that we discussed early on which is, what institutional mechanisms might our professional organizations in applied anthropology promote or start so that we address the situation head on?

CHAMBERS: Right. The consortium has the potential to do that and would be important. And I think we need all of our parts of our institution that we need to be

able to think how they can address this. What are we doing at the meetings to create this relationship, and how should we restructure the meetings to a way that creates this dialogue and creates this kind of unity between academia and practice?

FREIDENBERG: Although we have been discussing applied anthropology in the new millennium in a sense, now I want to ask you directly what you think, where do think applied anthropology in the U.S. - well you told me where you think it is, but what do you think it is moving to? What should we do? What should we not do? What should we encourage the younger generation, the students we train to do? And what are your thoughts on this? And this is . . . of course, we can't predict but in terms what your experience is.

CHAMBERS: Yes, there are a lot of, what I've been mostly talking about is that relationship to practice and the way training programs are involved in that. And, you know, but there are a lot of different approaches and ideas and ways of being an applied anthropologist. The trends I see, in one sense there's going to be a more sub-specialization within applied anthropology. I would like to say that I think where the future goes in terms of my own interest in practicing anthropology outside of academia, is that what I was just talking about will happen. There will be a commitment to, on the part of our institutions, our academic institutions and our professional institutions, to build practice and to take advantage of all this power and enthusiasm that we're involved with. But I'm not sure at all that that's going to happen. I think it's more likely that it won't happen actually and I think it's more likely that we'll continue to move with tentativeness and uncertainty into our future, each of us looking after our own little domain of interest and appearing at the meetings with our sense of our self-importance well protected. That seems like the way it's been certainly, all my career and I think that's likely to be the way that it will end up.

FREIDENBERG: Well, you know, it made me think about the profession of nursing that we were discussing earlier and what is it and not only from our past experience within our discipline but from other disciplines and the way they professionalize themselves. It wasn't until quite recently that the profession of nursing, or even the profession of medicine, had these continuing education workshops and their demand put on the practitioners by the professional organizations to pass them and actually continue to be board certified for the practice of a profession. We don't have that. Do you think that having that, instituting that might help kind of coming out with more response?

CHAMBERS: We need a practitioner group that's much more assertive and aggressive to move the idea of practice along to identify and demand, what the institutions need to do for them. The problem is that we don't have that kind of

aggressive, assertive practitioner arm. Because when we bring these people through the school we train them to think of themselves as second-class citizens. We don't respect them as scholars. And, again, I'm speaking in generalizations and I'm not speaking for everybody but from my experience like, we have never - even those of us whose business it is to train people to be practitioners - most of us have never encouraged those people to think of themselves as a particular important part of the profession.

FREIDENBERG: Let me reverse the question, could it be that the current institutions and organizations that we have to represent the professions are no longer representative.

CHAMBERS: Well, they're not. Yes, they're not.

FREIDENBERG: Maybe these people who are made to feel that they're second-class citizens could invigorate those . . .

CHAMBERS: Could invigorate but, again, I think they need more. It's a socialization thing and it's like I had some students that, I've been talking to recently who are very interested in going to the SfAA and trying to work some of the stuff out and they're graduates now and they're out and they feel the isolation. We've been talking about how to make this movement and I said, "Look, you've got to have two things that you're going to accomplish in the first year because you're going to burn out very quickly. I mean because it's such a thankless kind of thing and unrecognized kind of thing that if you go into the Society and try to make change and try to move things along in the direction you think should be, you're going to have mostly just 'that's a good idea', and 'yeah,' 'okay,' and that but you're not going to get any real support. And so, you need to be one, more radical and second, you need to set forth that you're going to accomplish this by this year and this by this year. That's what I worry about. You see people coming out and little workshops being held about how you can solve this kind of problem and then you see that this kind of drifts off and it goes away. And that's been happening for a long time.

FREIDENBERG: And that's very scary to lose that cohort of people. We can lose as much as a generation of applied anthropologists?

CHAMBERS: Yes, we still have those that are associated with academia but I mean it's not only losing them but it . . . it really . . .

FREIDENBERG: Not learning from that.

CHAMBERS: . . . what it really says for those of us in training programs is, it really says we're not doing what we say we're doing. We're not training practicing anthropologists. We're training practicing something that goes out and does something and gets good jobs but we're not training people who ultimately self-identify as anthropologists and feel the importance of staying with the club. And if that's all what we're doing, then why are we doing it? Except, you know, that it's competitive like we get lots of applications because of what we're saying we're doing. In a sense, it serves our own purposes, but I mean it's about time we ask whether it serves the purposes of the reason for our being here.

FREIDENBERG: I think that's a terrific question and I think that just by asking those questions straight on that we can find the answers.

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The SfAA Oral History Program

The Society's oral history interviews are archived at the Nunn Center for Oral History at the University of Kentucky Libraries. The SfAA Collection consists of two sub-sets of interview audio records. These include 132 records of the SfAA project and 24 of the Bureau of Applied Research in Anthropology at the University of Arizona done in cooperation with the SfAA project. Some of these are transcribed and some are published, mostly in the SfAA Newsletter. The data base which includes this collection can be found on the Nunn Center's on-line data base under the heading "organizations." The Nunn Center will make available copies of the interviews on request. The details of this program are available of their web site.

Suggestions for persons to interview can be sent to John van Willigen at johnvanwilligen@gmail.com.