

Architecture Faculty Oral History Project

Interview with Jean François Lejeune

Professor

Coral Gables, FL, June 15, 2017

Interviewed by Gilda Santana

Recorded by Gilda Santana

Interview Length: 1:42:21

Summary:

Jean-François Lejeune is Professor at the U-SoA, where he teaches architectural design, urban design, and history-theory. From June 2009 to December 2014 he was the Director of Graduate Studies. He taught at the Oregon School of Design (1985-87) and was Visiting Professor at the Universidade do Rio Grande do Sul (Brazil), the Università La Sapienza Roma, and the Universidad de Alcalá in Alcalá de Henares in Spain. In 2007 he was an Affiliated Fellow at the American Academy in Rome. Born in Belgium, he graduated from the University of Liège (Belgium) with the Diploma of Engineer-Architect. He is now a Ph.D. candidate and researcher at TU Delft, Netherlands, where he is completing his dissertation on *Reciprocal Influences: Rural Utopia, Metropolis and Modernity in Franco's Spain*.

Jean-François Lejeune
June 15, 2017

Gilda Santana: What was your take on the decision to go with the Krier Design for the Perez Center?

Jean François Lejeune: (Talking about Leon Krier)

Despite the obvious association with classicism, it's always inventive. Even in his housing, are quite inventive. They are a lot more inventive than what anyone has done in New Urbanism. There was a second version, an alternative version of Glasgow Hall, which I thought was way better. More Italian, more Rationalist. There was a version he designed that was attached to the (sketching in demonstration as he talks) with a portico. Vertical columns, no dome. The reason it was there, was it would solve the problem of handicapped access to those two buildings. But it was a lot more expensive because it required elevators, connections...I think it was a much better idea. It would have been more cost effective in the long run. You will have to talk to Lizz about exactly what happened, but what I understand is that Jorge Perez rejected that version. The first version with the dome had been rejected by the University. That is why this version was done. But Perez didn't want this one, and pushed to have the other. Lizz went back to the committee with the money, and they built it. That's my interpretation and understanding of it. Perhaps this building is closer to the old Krier. You were talking about Aldo Rossi. You must know that some of the faculty here were adamantly opposed to his design. A group headed by Millas (Aristedes) and Hochstim (Jan) were against the Rossi designs. I remember they published an article in the Miami Times maybe the Herald. They actually started a public campaign against the building which had repercussions as news got over to the administration. It didn't help the Rossi thing. Why? Jan is no longer with us, but Millas may have something to say about it. I guess they just hated the Rationalists, they hated Aldo Rossi and the post-modernists. I mean Aldo Rossi was never a post-modern person—never—he would kill you if you were to say or write that. But, it

Jean-François Lejeune

June 15, 2017

was a reaction against traditional modernism, and both Jan and Ari were educated in great years of MIT—you know Mies van der Rohe, Frank Lloyd Wright and the early, post-war international style. They were very refined people in their own right, but they headed the campaign against Rossi. I don't remember for sure who was with them or not. Was Patricios part of it? Langendorf maybe? Some of the guys from the "old guard". But for sure, Millas and Hochstim were a part of the opposition. Paradoxically, that was the only moment in the history of school that construction project ideas went public. They were published in numerous international journals, Lotus International, Architectural Record. I remember people coming to campus in the early 1990s to look at the Aldo Rossi project because they actually thought it had been built. If it had been built it would have been photographed and subsequently published.

GS: We have a video of him sketching part of the plan right here in the courtyard.

JF: That was a very highly publicized project. That never happened again. So, Lizz made every effort to not publish the Krier building before it was built in order to avoid the same thing from happening. Same with the Arquitectonica building (Murphy Studio). It was barely shown anywhere. It was critical for the reputation of the school. I believe that the Dean was very much under the influence of Teofilo who at the time was very influential. The famous *Ca' Ziff* was being finished. I only found out that it had been demolished a year ago. It was the major work of Teofilo and his wife, Maria de la Guardia, the red one with the loggia and patio right next to Vizcaya. His *carte de visit*. He's done a lot of things after that but it is only the project of his that was published. I found out it was demolished because I was at a picnic in the park next door and looked over to see that the land was totally flattened. I called Andres Duany and Roberto Behar, and they said,

Jean-François Lejeune
June 15, 2017

“Oh we knew—you know, real estate”. There was never any discussion. It wasn’t even put into the “Call to Order” book. Not even mentioned that it was demolished. How is that possible? I was very pissed because it meant that there was really zero discussion here. Here you have the major work of one of our faculty member’s that was the most published work coming out of the school outside of Duany. Demolished without anybody saying anything. Apparently it was in the Herald, but I missed it all. This was also right about the time of the construction boom. Ca’Ziff was partially related with Rossi, and it was also moment when Vincent Scully arrived.

GS: He’s someone I’d really like to talk to. (at the time of this interview, Vincent Scully was still living He died in 2018)

JFL: The person who hired Vincent Scully was Jose Gelabert-Navia. He had the connection with Scully and he was responsible for the early contract negotiations with Scully. I don’t remember exactly what year. He could tell you how that started. It was an important moment.

GS: Did Gelabert-Navia go to Yale?

JFL: No, he went to Cornell. The Cornell school here was a side, but always important. Gelabert-Navia, the Trelles brothers. Allan Shulman and Carmen Guerrero went to Cornell later. Teofilo went to Columbia. Liz and Andres were Yale. Cornell was Colin Rowe and the city which were big influences. I actually saw that there is a new book with ten essays written by architects about Colin Rowe. One of them is Krier. It would be interesting to see how he writes about Rowe now, because they were not friends apparently. So that was the intellectual moment here.

Jean-François Lejeune
June 15, 2017

GS: So, would you say the most intellectually active moment here was the late 80s?

JFL: The 80s to mid 90s were the years when there was a very clear direction. It was quite inventive in terms of drawings and projects because of those connections, and also because of the “drawing” image of the school which was started really in those years and ended up in the book “Between Two Towers” that Vincent Scully wrote the introduction for.

GS: Who would you say spearheaded that “drawing” movement here at the school?

JFL: I would say the drawing influence was a combination of Teofilo (Victoria), Roberto (Behar), Ceo (Rocco). In fact, although it’s in German, there is a dissertation by my friend Petra Liebl. You may want to interview her. She has a doctorate in Architecture, although she doesn’t practice architecture, she’s barely taught architecture, but she has taught drawing for architects. She’s been here several times. You may have met her. Her dissertation is about the presence of the drawing in the architecture curriculum following the Bauhaus. The Bauhaus revolutionized the idea of drawing and how the arts were integrated into architecture. It was a school of art, architecture, fabric and design. Petra looked at the integration of art and architecture in the Bauhaus model, then of course then came the war...so her thesis asked, “how did the idea of integrating art, drawing, and architecture reappear after the second world war in Germany and abroad. And, for reasons that she would be better able to explain, we are in her dissertation. She came here to interview Teofilo and Rocco. Because those are two ways of looking at drawing. Rocco came the year after me. I don’t think that Rocco was a Krier/Rossi person—not at all, but he had his own specific interest in drawings. I believe his influence was big. There is a section in Petra’s

Jean-François Lejeune

June 15, 2017

dissertation about Miami, and we're in it. It's probably the only dissertation written about our pedagogy. We're never mentioned in the big books about architectural pedagogy. It's always the big guys, Yale, Cornell...

As far as I know, she's the only one to have introduced the University of Miami School of Architecture in relation to the process of pedagogy at the international level. I met her in 1997, and she had interviewed them by then. She helped me organize the conference on Capri. We've been intimate friends ever since. It's been 20 years, and it was the moment when it began to somewhat decline, but it had been building for those years.

GS: I want to hear more about your contributions to the school. This is a wonderfully fabulous historical account about others. Were you hired as a historian?

JFL: No. No. No. I would assume that I made a contribution to the school, not quite in the direction that we have discussed, although I was certainly a "city" person. I was hired as a design faculty with the capacity to teach some history even though I had no history degree. I had been teaching in Portland, Oregon for two years, which was a crazy deal, because I had left my job in Brussels. Leaving for the United States to teach in Portland, when I had never taught was a leap of faith. They seemed to know what they were doing, and I kind of knew too, but... I was specifically hired by Oregon to teach the history of cities because they wanted someone from Europe who actually talk about the formation of cities. Literally, before I leaving Brussels I bought some books, started making slides, and taught design and history of cities for two years. I may have taught other things, but I don't remember.

Jean-François Lejeune
June 15, 2017

GS: What appealed to you about coming here?

JFL: Well, there is a whole series of circumstances. The reason that I ended up in Oregon, was because of a Colombian friend from Brussels who'd had the position in Oregon. This man, Francisco Sanin was one of the rare persons who actually worked with Leon Krier. Leon Krier worked pretty much alone. He didn't have an office. This guy actually was his office. He was hired in Oregon and then quit the job in the middle of the Summer and said, "I'm not going to come back. I have another job in London". So, he found me to replace him---there's a whole story about how all that happened. Eventually, I had an encounter with him in mid-July, and by mid-August I had signed a contract and had a Visa. Those were other times (chuckling).

They held my job in Belgium for one year, and then they said that at the end of the first year if I didn't return they would give it to someone else. They said, "Don't worry, you won't return.", and, I said, "Sure I will". And, they were right. I applied to many places in between there and Miami and got many rejections. But, how did I end up here? I was reading the ACSA (Association for Collegiate Schools of Architecture) news, and then in '87, I got interviews at Syracuse and Miami. The Miami search committee was led by Felipe Prestamo, who later became a very good friend. Prestamo was also a very good friend of Sanin. Sanin had taught at UM as a visiting faculty. While I was still in Oregon and looking for another job, Sanin had said to me, "If you ever see an ad for Miami just look at it, because it's really cool and I think they would be interested in you". So when the ad came up in ACSA, I called Felipe, and told him that I was a friend of Sanin. I was late in applying after the deadline. He said, "Yes, just send your stuff". Miami immediately asked if I could come for the interview and met everyone here. Then I was asked by Andres (Duany) to come to the very first design charrette they did for New Urbanism in

Jean-François Lejeune

June 15, 2017

Texas. So, I went to the Texas charrette with all those young New Urbanism kids. Andres said, if they don't hire you at UM, we'll hire you for the office [DPZ]. But, UM did hire me. All of those connections were in play. I was hired to teach design, but eventually taught History of Cities. It's the course that I've taught the longest here in the school. The Suburban and Town Design Master was created at that time, 1990-91. I was the first director of that program for four years, which were the greatest years. We had three issues of *The New City*. We had Allan Shulman, Galina Tachieva who is now the second in command at DPZ, Tom Low—I mean all of those people who were in the very first years of the Suburban and Town Design program have great careers, including those that came from Germany. They were really interesting. We had money. Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk was the founder of the program, and I became the director. She actually got the provost to give her a special budget of about \$150k to launch the program for the first two or three years. We had two conferences, exhibitions, the *New City* was launched. I organized a conference on *Latin America and the Law of the Indies*, another on *John Nolen*. All of those things that are “early” *New City*, were paid for by the Suburban and Town Design Program. I think one of my major contributions was to bring history into the program beyond what Jan Hochstim was teaching which was the modern. He was teaching Frank Lloyd Wright, Louis Khan, the sort of core, but I realized that there was a lot of the world that was not being dealt with at all here. For example, the city, which had never been taught before, Latin American architecture and urbanism.

GS: So, we arrive at what was going to be my next question...were you always interested in Latin American architecture and urbanism, or was that something that happened as a result of being here?

Jean-François Lejeune

June 15, 2017

JFL: No, not at all. I arrived in this city in '87 and things developed quite quickly. In Europe, outside of New York and Los Angeles, and Frank Lloyd Wright, and a couple of other canonical architects like Mies van der Rohe, you heard nothing. The other cities, very little; Latin America even less. Oregon had an incredible library for a small school where I spent many nights preparing my classes and browsed all the books. There was no internet catalog so that was the only way I could know what was in it, and then where to point the students. I did the same thing here, although I don't think we had the Paul Buisson Library yet. When was the branch established?

GS: According to Jorge Hernandez, the library started as a locked cabinet of perhaps thirty faculty donated books and it grew with donations from there. The rest were at Richter.

JFL: Latin America is a very, very unique thing. I was browsing in the library here too, and I found this book which I hope is still there, *Urbanismo Español en America*, that has beautiful reproductions of the plans from the Archives of the Indies, Archivo de las Indias, and it was a revelation. I had no clue. My experience in Europe before coming to the US was partially with Germany and Italy. I had been to Spain once as a tourist, but other than that I had no connection with Spain whatsoever—Latin American even less. There were a few Cuban things. I knew about Cuba, of course because of Castro. I could have gone to Cuba for free in the 1960s because there was a lot of propaganda, but I refused. I said, "no, this is not what it says it is". It could have been interesting, but I didn't want to be part of the propaganda issue. So, I found that book and immediately became interested in Latin America and the Law of the Indies—what is this? I found the book in '88, and then by '92 I was starting to organize conferences, and then I started translating the Law of the Indies, and then I got the big grant from the Florida Humanities Council to do the

Jean-François Lejeune
June 15, 2017

exhibition *Havana and the Cities of the Caribbean*. I still have the invitation in my office if you want. It's a beautiful little invitation. It was at the Museum of Cuban Art and Culture. It's the only street in Little Havana that has a median with trees. It was a nice museum. Cristina Nosti was involved with that museum. She's now at Books and Books. I proposed the exhibition to them. I did courses here called Caribbean cities for which we created models and drawings. I invited people from Madrid and Sevilla, and they came to talk here. I mean, it was a really big conference. It was held at the *Center for the Fine Arts*, ex PAMM [later became Miami Art Museum (MAM) and then Perez Art Museum of Miami (PAMM)].

GS: What was the conference called?

JFL: I think it was called *Havana and the Cities of the Caribbean*. I had people from the Ministry of Culture in Spain, they gave me drawings. I travelled throughout the Caribbean. I went to Venezuela, Colombia, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Santo Domingo because I had the budget. I did the exhibition with a former student of ours, Joseph Bubillones, who was Cuban. He was a bright student. He had embarked on a PhD in Cuba while in Canada, but never finished, and now he's a big interior designer in Palm Beach. I haven't seen him in fifteen years, but we talk on Facebook from time to time. He was my collaborator for the exhibition.

In design, I was pretty much following the curriculum. No major difference, but not very traditional overall. I did many studios abroad—you may have heard of the Bauhaus connection in '92, '94, '96 and '97. I was a big leader of that and we had an exhibition of it.

GS: Do you still have all of your curriculum records?

Jean-François Lejeune

June 15, 2017

JFL: Yes, I have a lot of those things, but mostly on the computer. We were in the Bauhaus at least four times in the 1990s, all of it thanks to the Master of Suburb and Town Design funding. One of the students in the program was a friend of someone else working at the Bauhaus in Dessau. That connection was a very important one, but eventually it diminished and we lost it completely because our friend there moved on to another career. You know who has the connection now with the Bauhaus, although not literally with the Bauhaus, but with the school that is attached to it? FIU. They just signed an agreement with them.

Then I went up for tenure. I was told that it was not a good idea to be too close to Lizz and Andres, that I should quit working in their office, and that I should probably resign from the Suburban and Town Design program because it might actually prevent me from getting tenure. That's what I was told. That's how things were at the time. Of course it was the "old guard", Hochstim, Patricios, Langendorf, all those guys. I kept excellent relations with them afterwards. Eventually I got tenured with one vote against me. I never figured it out, but I think it was Warburton. He was a devil. I always figured that he was the one that voted against me. But it all worked out. They were tense times.

Rocco, Denis and I were hired as Visiting Faculty. We were not hired as tenure track. Eventually the Dean opened the tenure track lines. I still remember a faculty meeting where Rocco, Denis and I were present, where Hochstim said we should have a search because there were better candidates. But the Dean's idea was to have a formal search. It was critical for me at the time because I needed my green card. We all got the jobs except for someone—I forgot the person's name. Imagine these things being said in front of everybody including the young faculty. I never contested that there could be someone better, but it was rough. This idea of being as far away from Lizz and Andres was very, very clear. I received tenure from Schlunz [Roger]. I've had four or

Jean-François Lejeune
June 15, 2017

five deans during my tenure. There was the first Dean who was here when I got here—Regan, then Jose Gelabert-Navia (interim), then Cenicacelaya, then Jorge Hernandez [Interim], and then Schluntz. So I had five deans in seven years. Not easy, because I got completely conflicting messages.

GS: Seems like a very unstable period.

JFL: Very unstable. It's much better now.

GS: Would you say that the instability was counter-productive, or did it force you all to be more creative?

JFL: Yes, to some extent. I will now say, that the idea of staying distant from the New Urbanists, not working with Lizz and Andres—although we remained very close—defining my own direction as a historian was a good idea. They were right about that, because that's when I started to be really productive. I got tenure essentially because of the history material. I started writing and doing the exhibitions. Nobody has ever done that here. Honestly, now it probably wouldn't be sufficient. I would do the same thing, but I would do it differently, probably more like the way that Allan has done. I was completely nuts at that time. I would always say what I thought like I always do. I'm getting quieter in faculty meetings today, but not then.

GS: No filter.

Jean-François Lejeune
June 15, 2017

JFL: I was doing that while I was on tenure track. Nobody ever contested anything in a faculty meeting while they were on tenure track. I was always taking a position which didn't help me. So, at some point, when I got the message, I listened. I resigned as director of the Suburban and Town Design and decided to focus on research and writing, get people to write me letters, and it actually worked.

GS: What publication resulted from that research and writing?

JFL: Well I got tenure in '96. I'm not going to go into the details of the Schlunz story, but it was literally a military coup. Literally a coup. The faculty went behind his back to the administration to start a petition against him. Schlunz was not a bad Dean. He's the one who eventually hired Scully. 45:39 He hired people like Pat Bosch for example, who is now the Director of Design at Perkins and Will with Jose [Gelabert-Navia]. She was a visiting faculty here for several years and she did absolutely fabulous work, but it was work that a lot of the faculty hated. He [Schlunz] wanted to bring back a more modern approach. He was as we say in French, "heavy shoed", not very diplomatic. He wanted faculty to be in the office all the time. He was a bit militaristic and that didn't really work here. He was accused of being anti-Hispanic, and he really wasn't. He came from Arizona and he actually spoke Spanish. The faculty created a petition. The petition came to me the semester during which I was being reviewed for tenure. I was in Rome when I started to hear the rumors about the petition. Rome (program) is another big thing that I contributed a lot to for the school. Anyway, I arrived at the airport in Miami, and my wife was not there. Tomas Lopez-Gottardi was there. Imagine, for a moment, what I must have thought. You've been talking to your wife before taking the airplane, you arrive at the airport and a faculty member is

Jean-François Lejeune
June 15, 2017

there instead of her. Panic. So it turns out that she was alright. Lopez-Gottardi told her (my first wife) that there was urgent business to discuss with me and that he would pick me up and drop me off at home. And he handed me the petition for Schlunz's removal which he wanted to deliver to the administration the following day.

GS: He was the one that spearheaded the petition?

JFL: I said, "Tomas, I'm coming back from an international flight. I'm totally jetlagged. Do you really expect me to sign this right now at the airport? I'm going to read it. Do whatever you want but I'm definitely not going to sign it now."

I thought it over and I realized, "No. I just received tenure from this dean. I'm not going to sign a removal letter for someone who just got me a permanent job in this University." I wrote to them saying that I wouldn't sign it on ethical grounds. I don't know who did or didn't sign the letter, but a couple of days later, he was removed with the provost's agreement based on the majority of the faculty and with the condition that there had to be a Dean search. Faculty had to agree on a Dean. Elizabeth [Plater-Zyberk] presented herself for the deanship. We all had to vote whether or not she would be the next dean without a search.

GS: Didn't they confirm that there had to be a search?

JFL: They never did. In these type of cases it's possible that because there had been a search only 2 years previous, that it was deemed unnecessary. It was a really nasty thing. I was probably on the minority side of it. I think most people signed it. I was ostracized after that. I'd had the

Jean-François Lejeune

June 15, 2017

best relationship ever with Teofilo before that. We would spend hours together and then it stopped. Same with the Trelles brothers. It took years and years and years to rebuild those relationships, decades in some cases. I have the best relationship with the Trelles' now. We respect each other. I've always respected them. But, I was completely shut out. It was not a bad period because Lizz was a good Dean. She was able to put the faculty back on track after such a tense period. We were not fighting each other anymore. She probably must have gotten a commitment from a lot of the faculty. I believe on those grounds she was unbelievably successful.

Yes, I certainly established a distance from the New Urbanism, certainly from the orthodox way of looking at it, even though I've never taken any distance from the principals and in the teachings. I finally got the Directorship [Graduate Studies] in 2009. I had been asking for it for years, but Lizz had reservations. She felt I wasn't ready. Until she started to see the problems and realized that it was necessary to get new blood into it. We were coming up for accreditation. It was time because the school was falling apart into pure routine. This was the time of the great insertion of the computer and that architectural computing became essential. We were behind on everything. Our students couldn't do anything on the computer. But, to some extent, the one thing that Lizz did was that she never embraced the de-constructivist block type construction. We've never really done that kind of stuff here. So, we maintained a non-avant-garde line, while everyone else was embracing the de-constructivist line. I think it worked in our favor because there were a lot of students who didn't want to do that kind of work. We were a good choice for some. Things have evolved to a point where I don't know where or who we are. Dean El-Khoury has been very super smart, however, in figuring out that the best moments of the school were the Aldo Rossi years '85-'95, because these were the most intellectual moments. Then in the 2000s, Lizz and Andres became *persona non-grata*. They were not getting published or being invited to juries.

Jean-François Lejeune
June 15, 2017

Interestingly, when you go to older *Architectural Record* articles and peer awards, they were jurors for urbanism all the time and they'd receive awards from the architectural profession. They did receive tons of awards from others in the 2000s, but not from the architectural profession. Everyone was going constructivist, you know, like Zaha Hadid. We didn't follow that track. FIU was starting to do those things. Scully was here until he was not here anymore. I basically continued my thing with Italian Rationalism, which Carmen Guerrero has embraced wonderfully. **56:42** I taught the course for the first six times here and in Rome, and then I had a couple of big projects—Latin American Exhibition, Miami Beach with Allan [Shulman], so I handed the whole thing over to her because she's very smart. It's fantastic when you can start something and have someone younger continue, which has been the case with people like Allan Shulman and Carmen. A lot of our current faculty were students of mine at some point, like Adib Cure and Carie Penabad, but they were not *my* students in the traditional sense. We all have the people with whom we like to work and those were Allan and Carmen. And they've both become very important.

GS: The tectonic plates shifted.

JFL: It had to. It had to shift.

GS: Would you say that the 2000s were kind of in the doldrums?

JFL: I wouldn't say doldrums, but not the most interesting years. Honestly, the school was smoothly, nicely run by Lizz. No noise. Nothing was really happening. We had an administration which was run for 9 years by Tomas Lopez-Gottardi in the undergraduate, and Teofilo in the

Jean-François Lejeune

June 15, 2017

graduate program with no changes. Tomas did two accreditations and he was successful. I have a lot of respect for Tomas. He was not a bad administrator, but the real administrator was Lizz. She was making all the decisions and the school ran well. They were dealing with the daily stuff, but still the school was in a bit of disarray. The strange thing is that the school was in disarray, but at the same time we also had the highest number of students. The undergraduate was not in disarray because it was 400 strong, but the graduate program was a complete mess. But it has gotten stronger. It is much stronger now. 2007, 8 and 9 were not very interesting here, but for me they were good because I had the exhibition in Brussels on Latin America, I had the book on Miami Beach with Allan, I had the book on Modern architecture in the Mediterranean, I had a lot of conferences and papers. For me it was an excellent period. I was mostly teaching here and not on any committees so I was able to get work done. Rome started to get better. Jose was also putting a lot of support behind Carmen. The library started to get better when you arrived. When did you arrive?

GS: 2007.

JFL: Was that the moment of the big discussion about what to do about the library? There was a campus-wide committee about the library which I was on for two years with John Russo and all those guys.

GS: I was not here yet.

Jean-François Lejeune
June 15, 2017

JFL: Those were days in complete turmoil. Bill Walker literally saved us because before that it was a complete disaster. The library was a disaster not only in terms of facilities, but also in terms of collections. For two years there was a senate group that discussed what to do about the library. Then Bill hired you.

GS: One of the reasons I was hired was to comply with accreditation which required that students had to have access to a professional librarian.

JFL: Who was there before you?

GS: Leonor Vila. But she wasn't a professional librarian. She was lovely and extremely knowledgeable, but she wasn't a librarian.

JFL: She was wonderful. She was character. These were complicated years especially for research. Interlibrary loan was in place, but we had no collections. To be honest, today, the problem that is happening at the school, is because to some extent we've gone backwards...back to the same books. The Dean is doing a very good job but he's hampered by his own hesitation and indecision about who to trust to lead the school. Lizz had that problem too to some extent, but she was doing it. He doesn't do it. He is a different Dean. He's doing things that she didn't do—he's a more international person, he's opening up and inviting more people...bringing in more technology. But there is still a lot of indecision and lack of clarity. The one element that I thought he would be better at was to change the students' attitudes and get more of their involvement.

1:06:10 That's something that has also evolved over the years.

Jean-François Lejeune
June 15, 2017

I think the 90s were probably our best years in terms of students. They were some really bad ones, and I don't know where they have disappeared. I hope they're not doing bad stuff around the world. We probably wouldn't have them now because the University has raised its standards. But we had more top leaders. We have incredibly good students now, but they're not terribly invested. In the 2000s we had a lot of students but the quality was not great. It's really difficult to assess who the students really are now. I find that they're better, but few that are really interesting. In 2000s we had relatively few bad students—C guys. That has started again for me. This sort of thing may be cyclical. The reason why the students were more invested in the 90s was because these new ideas like New Urbanism were there, and it was a collective effort. The internet shifted things and made things more complicated...nobody knew exactly what to do—there are too many ways to do things. I think the students know better now what to do because they have the environment and climate change. These are all important things to them, and it helps them, but it's not easy for them.

GS: The discipline of architecture has become more complicated. They're required to know more than design. They need to know policy, environment, etc.

JFL: It was way easier in those years because to some extent, there was one major way of looking at the world. Almost everybody was looking at the same things. There were some that were oppositional, but it was opposition to "some thing". We are a school born in the post-modern period when architecture and urbanism was being re-defined, whether it was Rossi, or Krier. The period before, like the Hochstim period, when it was still part of the School of Engineering is still a mystery to me. There are a lot of alumni from that period. There was probably a lot of friction. There is one person from that generation that I'd like to investigate,

Jean-François Lejeune
June 15, 2017

Belaunde from Peru. This is probably one of the most important faculty we've had at the University until the 80s and 90s. As you know he was the President of Peru twice. He was an architect, and he was probably the most important person in Latin America regarding social housing. He wrote some of the most important books on social housing, some very important competitions were organized through his tenure, and he was a student here, and he came back to teach here.

JFL: So, *Belaunde* is of interest to me. Felipe Prestamo had spoken to me about him when I arrived, and then I completely forgot about him, because I had zero interest in Peru. It was a mistake. I had no idea of what had happened in Peru in the 60s. Even when I did my exhibition in Brussels, I had a very limited budget and I could barely cope, which means there was not a single mention of anything Peruvian in my exhibition. It was intellectually, a big mistake but it was corrected by MoMA with the exhibition that Barry Bergdoll did. They had a major section on Peru and most of it was social housing and it's *Belaunde*. Now there is a 300 to 400 page book published on this, and I'm particularly interested because now Peru is becoming the new Chile. If you look at the new magazines, you'll see a lot of Peruvian work, and it's nice work.

I wonder where his papers are. Probably somewhere in Peru. I have a vague idea to convince the Dean to do an exhibit of Peru which would include *Arquitectonica*, *Belaunde*, and the new work that's being done in Peru, and ask Fort-Brescia to sponsor it. They've built some important buildings in Peru. I have no time to do this right now.

GS: The Miami Hurricane archives have been an essential source for my research. *Belaunde* is mentioned copiously throughout. It goes back to 1927.¹

¹ Fernando *Belaunde Terry* was a student in the Architecture program at the same time as Robert Fitch Smith. However, when the Department of Architecture closed in 1933, he finished his career elsewhere. His uncles were

Jean-François Lejeune

June 15, 2017

JFL: I think that the situation was that he was a student here. Maybe Engineering. Whatever, he has a piece of paper from here. Then he went back to Peru, became President, then was stopped by a military coupe, was exiled, came back to Miami to teach, I think, and then was called back to Peru to become President for a second time. I found out because of the MoMA exhibit, and Wikipedia. The details remain vague. I don't even know if we have his books, but there are some important books in which he is always mentioned in Peruvian and Latin American context on social housing. First, he built social housing in the traditional slabs and bars. But, I think he was instrumental in shifting the idea social housing from the sort of big European and Soviet bar building to a neighborhood based approach. The project that was shown at MoMA was called *Previ*, which was a series of experimental courtyard housing which were two or three stories. Top of the cream of world architects participated in that competition and they all built a piece of that neighborhood. Now if you go there, you won't recognize it because the residents have changed all the houses, informalizing it totally. It was based on informality but they further informalized it by changing the formal design of informality. It is a very interesting story and there is now a book that Vanessa showed me. I think she got it by interlibrary loan. I will need it for my History of Cities course next semester.

GS: Before I forget, because this is just the tip of the iceberg of "conversations with faculty", I want to let you know that I give everyone an opportunity to retract something you've said if you're not comfortable with it.

both Professors at UM. Victor Andres Belaunde was a professor of Latin American History and Institutions, and Rafael was Professor of Latin American Economics.

Jean-François Lejeune

June 15, 2017

JFL: I'm not hiding anything from you. At this point if someone reads it and says, "this is what Lejeune thinks", it's what Lejeune thinks. The story about Tomas picking me up at the airport, a couple of people know it, and that's the way that things were those years. Nothing like that would happen today. But on the other hand, everything was very public back then. The Aldo Rossi project was made public. We have a communication problem at the school right now. It's frustrating when you don't know for example, accreditation. Why is it that we don't even have the report. Six years ago the moment we got the report back, it immediately was shared with the faculty. There was a complete lack of transparency. I don't think that the Dean is doing it on purpose.

GS: He doesn't quite have the whole story of the history of this place. Are you optimistic about a research center or a library with the library during this administration? Where would you like to see the library go?

JFL: As I've said, the library situation has improved dramatically, both here and at Richter. No comparison if you saw what it was twenty years ago. Our first librarian was a young woman who was there before Leonor. A little bit crazy, but very nice. She actually built up the beginnings of this library. She died of cancer. I think she was Latin too. Leonor took it over from her and she did fine, but Leonor wasn't really a librarian. Then you came around the same time that Bill [Walker] came and things changed for the better for me. They're still too bureaucratic, and I had problems again last week with the new log in. I couldn't sign in for two days, and found out it wasn't UM, it's actually a sub-contractor. They agreed that it is problematic.

Jean-François Lejeune

June 15, 2017

GS: Well, that's not the library, that's a University wide security issue.

JFL: Why is it that I can search for books at Harvard? I mean, I can't take books out, but I can still search for them. If there was a safety issue, they would have figured it out. I'd like to be optimistic about the future of the library. I don't know what the Dean's ideas are on this. He has published a lot, so he knows what it means to make a book and he has a doctoral degree so he's a very different dean from that point of view. He's much more interested in research, that we can see. But how much the library is part of his focus, I'm not sure. I would like to be optimistic that after so many years something will get done.

I think this should be only a reference library full of magazines, because magazines are reference.

I think we send over a lot of books.

GS: But we don't have any room over at Richter, or Miami Lakes. There is no place to push the problem to.

JFL: But that was the problem back in the 90s too, and they always seem to resolve it. **1:30:06**

We've always thought that we should be building an intellectual center. The new studios are basically a hangar, the purpose of which can be changed later. I still believe in the idea of a fully integrated research center. Why do I work here rather than in many other places? Because here I can get the book and scan it right away. I work at home after five because you close at five. That's the worst time to leave campus. I'm partially not optimistic because I think that fewer people come in now than before.

Jean-François Lejeune
June 15, 2017

GS: We still have the highest circulation of books. If you notice when you go into the studios they all have their own little private libraries. My problem with having closed stacks, is where will we put all the people? The students need quiet spaces.

JFL: They don't necessarily like to be in the library space when faculty are present. Once the building is built, what next. In August we were designing a strategy for the School for Architecture using the model of the College of Engineering. The President liked the presentation and the Dean liked it. We have to get the library in the strategic plan.

END OF INTERVIEW
Gilda Santana
11.13.18 (transcribed)