

**Vernon Peele's recollections
about the first four-year degrees in the 50s**

Sweeney: Did it seem to you that the school was ready in the 1950's to grant four-year degrees but that the state legislature was holding it back through meager grants?

Peele: Yes, I think we were ready. We did move forward in spite of the opposition, which I mentioned just before this. Some of the interesting aspects in this was that the library had to be expanded. The state legislature would not appropriate money for this. The students themselves got out into the city and they brought in over 50,000 volumes. Of course a lot of these books were useless, but at the same time, it showed an effort and an interest on the part of the students, and I think it did a lot to make the city realize that the students were behind us and that we were really developing over here, and that it was time for them to help us. The Chamber of Commerce formed a committee and they were very instrumental in helping us to get through this particular stage. There was also a Citizens Advisory Committee which had Mr. Alfriend as chairman and he headed this drive and raised some \$75,000 to help us with the library and to establish ourselves more firmly for the granting of our four-year degrees. (pg. 3)

Full interview at:

<http://dc.lib.odu.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/oralhistory/id/302/rec/14>