

A Faded Dream for UC

UCSC Santa Cruz Campus Loses Allure

By Ronald D. Moskowitz
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Santa Cruz

In September, 1969, several hundred of the nation's brightest students gathered in star-shaped clusters of trailers on a spectacular ranch overlooking Monterey Bay to start a noble experiment.

The University of California, long criticized for ignoring the needs of undergraduates, had chosen Santa Cruz to build the first campus in the system devoted to and planned for younger collegians.

The dream was irresistible to the hundreds who were chosen and the hundreds more who were turned away.

Beneath ethereal cathedrals of redwood trees, students would have easy access to their professors, who would live with them on campus in a collection of small residential colleges emulating Oxford.

The emphasis would be on good teaching and the focus on the liberal arts. Written evalua-



DANIEL DRELL
'Tough place' for some

tions would replace grades. There would be little competitiveness and no professional schools — only a love for learning about man's heritage: the languages, sciences, philosophy and history.

The dream flourished for nearly a decade. But then enrollment dropped off as students headed back to the larger, more urban and more anonymous — UC campuses they had complained about before.

Today, Santa Cruz is having a hard time attracting enough students to fill its \$100 million worth of splendid buildings. What went wrong?

The foremost reason appears to be the swing of the pendulum. In its formative years, the Vietnam war was in full force and many of Santa Cruz' students were worried most about finding a haven where they could evade the draft.



UC Santa Cruz students measured sea urchins during an intertidal study project



LYNDA GOFF
'A shift in student interest'

The new generation of undergraduates is chiefly concerned with economics — the

personal kind.

"There is a shift in student interest to professional schools," Lynda Goff, an assistant professor of biology at the campus, acknowledged.

"The employment picture is bleak and they want a degree that will help them find jobs when they get out," she said. "They have financial worries now they didn't have in the '60s."

"Today, to get into a graduate school to study engineering, business or horticulture you need prerequisites and contracts you can't get here. If I had a son or daughter going to school I'd be thinking about that too, wondering what my child would do with a degree from Santa Cruz."

The campus has been especially hurt by this trend toward jobs. While graduate schools and employers normally require

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highly structured undergraduate curriculums and high grades, Santa Cruz has a history of no grades and letting the students run the show.

"When I first came, I talked with a counselor and asked him what I should take," Felecia Johns, 21, a black student from Los Angeles said. "He asked me what I thought I should take and when I told him he wrote that down and said, 'That looks fine.'"

"Well, that blew me away. I didn't know what I wanted to do so I talked with another counselor and he finally gave me some direction."

The campus has also been hurt because many of its required courses have been made optional in recent years — a fact that enrages Cathy Meyer, 30, a 1969 graduate who now lives in Oakland.

"Some of the best courses I ever took were those I had to take and would never have taken if I didn't have to," she said.

Still another reason Santa Cruz is suffering enrollment losses is because its once lauded pass-fail grading system has degenerated into a system where no student — not even the least motivated or talented — can flunk out.

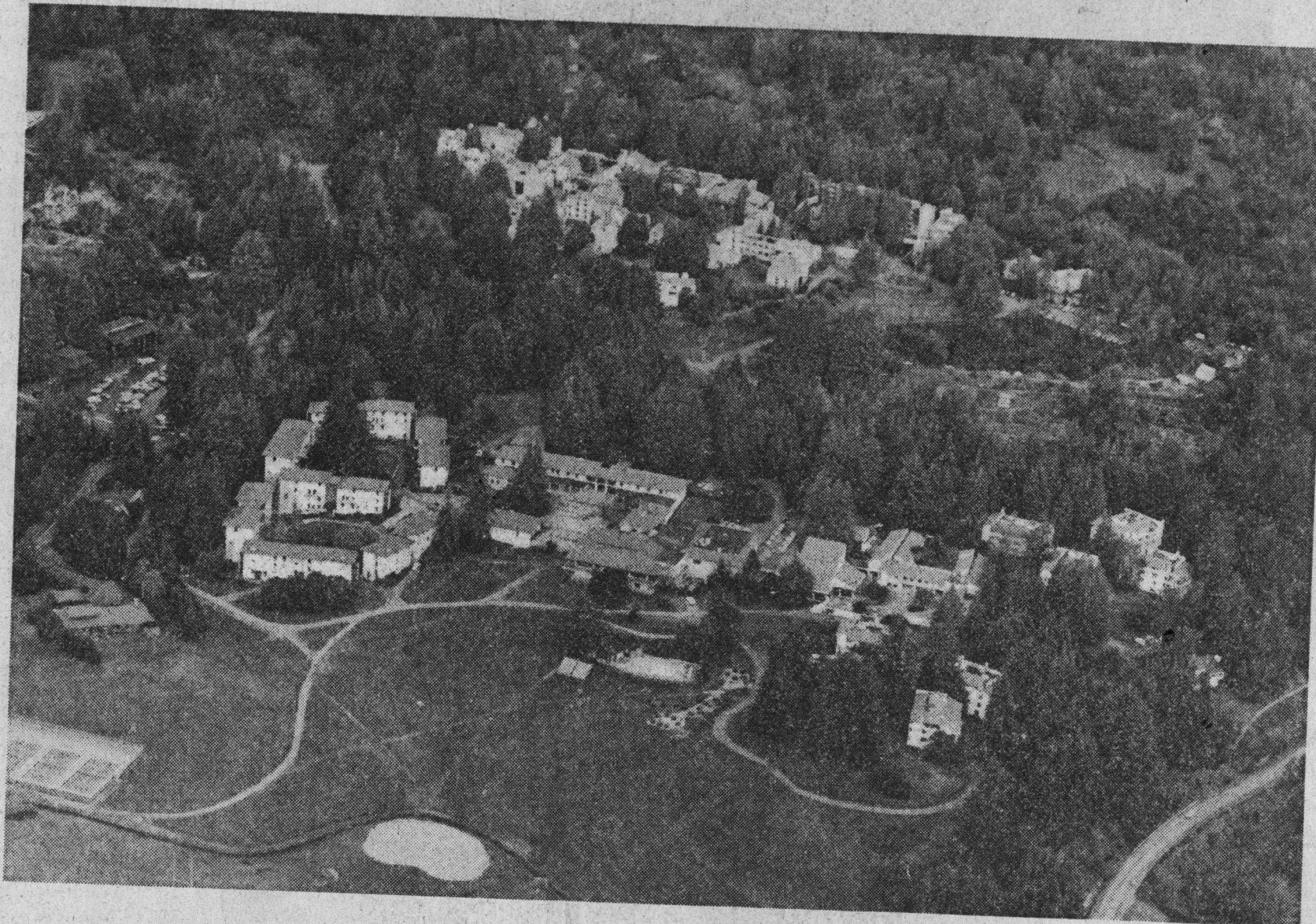
In 1972, "pass-fail" was changed to "pass-no record." What that means is that students who fear they will flunk out of a course can simply drop out, and there will be nothing on the student's record to indicate he or she ever took the course.

Unfortunately, all of these changes have been attractive to the wrong kind of student at times.

"The non-structured environment attracts two kinds of people, those who don't need structure and those who can't handle it — the misfits," said Pam Robbins, 33, one of about 450 "older women" attracted back to school by UC's excellent reputation and Santa Cruz' laissez-faire attitude.

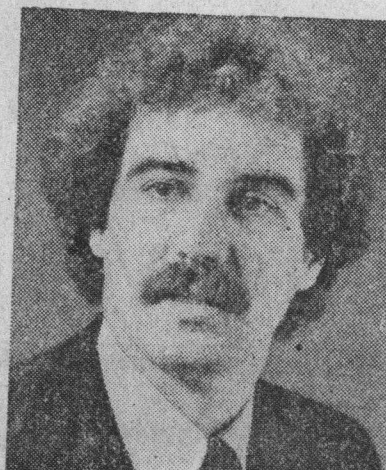
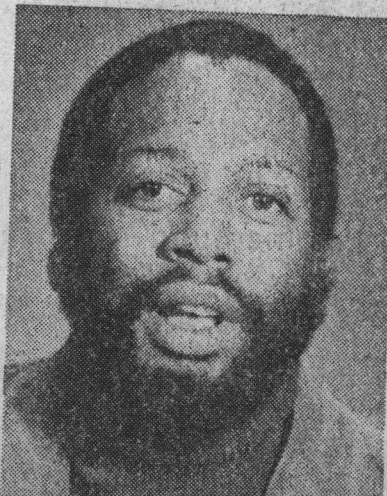
"They are why we get this hippie, freakie, weirdo reputation — and in some ways it's pretty justified. If they fail they can take a 'No Record' just as if the course had never happened."

Daniel Drell, 20, who said he is



An aerial view of the University of California at Santa Cruz with its redwood trees and its splendid buildings

Photos by Vincent Maggiora



ing students away and we grew complacent," said Peter Euben, a professor of political science who serves as chairman of the campus admissions committee.

"Because of our own ineptitude we failed to see the declining enrollment coming and once you start downhill, it's hard to turn things around."

Euben blames the decline on an "incompetent" admissions office at the time. He also says a spate of violence in the Santa Cruz area in 1973 and the campus "hippie image" caused some frightened parents to seek "safer" schools for their kids. Still others looked elsewhere, he said, because they "perceived liberal education as effeminate."

But he now recognizes the school's lack of structure as one of the main problems for the current decline.

"We overresponded to the campus revolution of the '60s," Euben said. "We were formed just in time to get the politics of social upheaval. We were staffed by people who didn't want authority and it took time for us to get serious."

While Harvard and other prestigious institutions were reinstituting required courses and stiffening grade requirements, Santa Cruz was going in the opposite direction.

Now, in the face of the drop in enrollment, Santa Cruz is backtracking — fast.

Last week, the campus' academic senate voted by a two-thirds majority to give students the option of receiving letter grades in addition to their written evaluations in every course offered on campus. Up to now that option was available only in science and mathematics courses.

Three special faculty committees also are at work designing a more rigorous list of required courses for next fall for all freshmen and sophomores on campus.

"We need more of a required curriculum again in the lower division," Euben said. "It would be a way of maintaining structure without precluding individual work majors or the closeness of the students and their professors."

I'm really studying literature," agreed. "It's always a tough place for people who don't have a definite vocational ideal in mind.

"If you need to get kicked in the ass to get an education, then you'd better go to UCLA or Berkeley. But if you're self-motivated, you'll do well at Santa Cruz."

Drell isn't doing well at Santa Cruz.

He dropped out of too many classes last quarter and was suspended for not completing enough work. But he's staying on campus this quarter until he can register again "just auditing classes" and enjoying the *gemutlich* environment.

"I couldn't have gotten

Professor Peter Euben
— 'Ten years ago we were turning students away. We grew Complacent.'

through UCLA," he replied when asked why he had chosen Santa Cruz. "This campus gives me a chance, and even if I don't graduate, I'm learning a lot here."

Another major reason applicants are choosing urban campuses instead of Santa Cruz is its location. Isolated on the top of a hill about five miles from even downtown Santa Cruz, the campus social scene can't compete with that of the big city schools and their rah-rah soror-

Ex-student Paul Mixon
— 'There wasn't the push-push, rush-rush...It was perfect for me.'

ity parties and fraternity beer busts.

Rick Laubscher, 29, a newscaster on San Francisco's KRON-TV, who graduated in 1970, said the social life on campus "was kind of a comedown from high school."

"I played a lot of basketball and that was it," he laughed.

"God knows we tried early on to liven up the place. We had water balloon wars, a Frisbee golf course

Student Felecia Johns
— When picking subjects, she found the counselor was too easy to convince

competition, and even a group that used to go off into the woods on Saturday night and have plastic machinegun wars. But there was no organized social life."

Alumna Meyer remembers her college days well as "the Santa Cruz rut."

"You find yourself with the same small circle of friends making the same rounds of the same classes, going to dinner at the same time, and eating with the same

Rick Laubscher said he found 'social life on campus was kind of a comedown from high school.'

people," she said. "You didn't have to decide what movie to see. You saw THE movie. It was the same with dances. You went* to THE dance."

Karen Janszen, a graduate student at Santa Cruz, added: "There isn't even a Macy's in town."

But while many complained about the small town atmosphere, others reveled in the tranquility.

Assemblyman Art Torres of Los Angeles, a 1967 graduate, remembers it as "a beautiful paradise."

"Coming from East L.A., it was absolute culture shock to see deer running along the paths and all those redwood trees."

Paul Mixon, 37, a black Illinois native who graduated in 1971 and now lives in Alameda, called it "perfect for me."

"I wanted to be in the wilderness. I wanted to read books and look at the sky. It was safe. It was warm. It was friendly, and there wasn't the push-push, rush-rush."

The first declines in freshman applications were slight and went almost unnoticed by campus officials, who were still busy turning students away. But the number of freshman applications by 1977 had dropped to 1941 for 900 freshman places whereas ten years earlier there had been 2535 applicants for 670 freshman places.

And total campus enrollment, which peaked at 6134 in 1976, declined to 5880 by last fall.

"Ten years ago, we were turn-

careful, however, not to make so many changes "that we end up doing poorly in what we used to do best."

Professor Goff echoed that warning. "We can't do everything," she said. "Either we continue what we're doing, the liberal arts, and do as best we can to train our students as intellectual human beings, or we do what the rest of the university campuses are doing and train them for professional schools.

"The pendulum swings back and forth and if we redirect ourselves now it would be at the expense of UC's offering an alternative approach to education."

Coupled with the move toward more letter grades and a more rigorous required curriculum, UC Santa Cruz is, for the first time in its history, actively recruiting students for the coming academic year.

Freshmen who apply to Berkeley and can't get in because of the renewed rush to go there are now being redirected to Santa Cruz. They are being promised that if they spend their first two years at Santa Cruz they will be guaranteed places in the junior and senior classes at Berkeley.

In addition, three Santa Cruz students — Bob Walsh, Susan Szabo and Eric Haiman — have been given a grant of \$5240 for their project to get more enrollment for the campus. Their goal is to convince 100 extra freshmen and 100 extra transfer students to register for the fall — a goal that assistant director of admissions Al Jackson calls "impossible" in the short time remaining.

Still, administrators are hopeful of a substantial increase both in the number of applicants and the number of students who will actually enroll next fall. So are alumni.

"It is really depressing to me to see stories about UC Santa Cruz scrounging for students," Newscaster Laubscher said. "When I applied it was a real mark of pride even to be admitted.

"When you went to Berkeley to use the library, it was a mark of distinction to be from Santa Cruz. Now it's almost something to laugh at, people who have been back tell me.

"I hope they're wrong. I hope it's not true. But I would certainly like to see Santa Cruz regain its prestige and be the toughest to get into again — the campus with the most exacting standards.

"The way it is, I somehow feel that my degree has been cheapened and it makes me every sad."



Student Pam Robbins, 33, was attracted back to the school by UC's excellent reputation and Santa Cruz' laissez-faire attitude

Key West Is Cracking Down on Violence

Key West, Fla.

For years Key West has attracted thousands of visitors bringing the city both fame and fortune. But it has also drawn a fringe element that threatens its tranquility.

Last week the city's most celebrated resident, playwright Tennessee Williams, attacked by a gang, and now a special police team is trying to clean up the community.

Key West has been a haven for rum-runners and dope smugglers. When the Navy was the city's

biggest business sailors would brawl with fishermen in the streets and bars. For years the town's balmy climate and easy lifestyle lured runaways and dropouts

The city, on the southern tip of the Florida Keys, has also attracted tourists and writers. Ernest Hemingway, Truman Capote, James Herlihy and lesser known writers and artists have lived and worked here.

In recent years random attacks on tourists and winter residents

grew to the point where some people stayed off the streets.

Williams was attacked by a gang of toughs as he strolled home from a discotheque with New York writer Dotson Rader.

"We were singing hymns," Rader said. "My father's a faith healer. We were singing, 'I Come to the Garden Alone.'"

When the two men met the gang, Williams told them, "We're itinerant choristers, trying to make an honest living," Rader recounted.

But the gang failed to appreciate the writer's wit and knocked them to the ground and kicked them.

Neither was seriously hurt and Williams shrugged it off. "Obviously they were New York drama critics," he said.

The reaction at City Hall was very different. City Manager Ron Stack instructed Police Chief Winston James to lead a sweep of Duval street — the main street where tourists and drifters jostle shoulders, amid clouds of marijuana

smoke.

"It's the scumbags we're after," James said the other night as he and a detective sergeant prowled the street.

James and his men have enforced the letter of the law and Duval street has grown much quieter. In one recent night the police team made 21 arrests in the neighborhood, mostly for public intoxication, panhandling and trespassing.

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