

UCSC - History

UCSC: 65/85

# The early years: a search for creativity and truth

By PAUL BEATTY

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SANTA CRUZ — UCSC's first class of 652 students came to the redwood glades overlooking this coastal city in the fall of 1965.

They came from 13 other states and 39 counties in California. Two of them were UC Board of Regents scholars, 71 were honors students and 168 had scholarships. Seventy of them were hometown kids from Santa Cruz County.

They came, they were told, to search for truth in the company of friends.

They found a sylvan campus, barely bothered by buildings, nestled among redwoods on 2,000 of the most beautiful acres in memory.

An infant campus that would grow, they were told, to 20 colleges and 27,500 students by 1990. They were promised that even when the university was completed, it would never be bigger than any of its singular colleges: a university of colleges that would avoid the faceless centralization of large institutions.

There was one small problem when the doors of UCSC opened: There were no colleges there at all. Not yet.

During the summer of 1965, strikes by iron, cement and painters' unions slowed construction and Cowell College — the first of today's eight colleges — was unfinished. It would not be completed until the fall of 1966.

Caught with no college and more than 600 students to house and educate, founding Chancellor Dean McHenry and Cowell Provost Page Smith leased 48 mobile units with eight beds each and opened the newly built Natural Science Center for classes.

The arrangement prompted Smith to issue a pamphlet to his young wards, advising them, "The sexual relationship needs the support, the nourishment and the stability that marriage provides."

Cowell College was named in honor of Henry Cowell, founder of the foundation that, in effect, gave

ultimately hold 350,000 books and provide 1,200 reading stations. It began with 100,000 books tucked into its shelves.

From the beginning, UCSC was a financial boon to Santa Cruz County, spending millions on construction and operations. When plans called for building 20 colleges, it was estimated the average construction budget would be in the millions each year through 1990.

In a quick three years, the annual operating budget reached \$30 million.

let the U.S. Army send in a team of parachutists to drift onto the quad. The military presence was received with no outcry from students or faculty. The only mishap was that three of the soldiers lost their parachutes. After they landed.

But a little more a year later, in November 1967, students raised hell when the U.S. Air Force wanted to recruit on campus. The military backed off and stayed away. It was one of the first steps in a long march of protests against this country's war in Vietnam.



Covello & Covello/photo

Early arrivals in 1965 do the 'Bunny Hop' outside their mobile home dormitories.



Pete Amos/Sentinel

## Today's look

SANTA CRUZ — UCSC has come a long way since it was forced to import trailers to serve as student dormitories. The campus has grown, both philosophically and physically. Its direction has be-

come more focused. Its students have a new look, too. Karen Wuelfing and Tasha Edwards reflect the student of the '80s as they stroll along a path through Kresge College's stucco buildings.

colleges.

"As the state administration and the Regents grow more conservative and the faculty and students become more liberal, the gap becomes very great ... it has already widened to a vast chasm," McHenry said.

College Seven became Oakes College in 1976. It cost \$8.8 million and has come to be known as the ethnic studies college. Its first provost was J. Herman Blake, a black, who stayed on until 1984. The college was named after Roscoe and Margaret Oakes after they contributed \$1 million to the campus.

The same February that Moore's cry went unheard, environmentalists were taking temporary leave of UCSC, heading for Santa Barbara where an oil rig had spewed a 20-square-mile oil slick that was drifting toward shore.

Racial demands and the anti-war movement quickened the pulse of all campuses across the nation and UCSC's bucolic temperament began to heat. Its peaceful search for the truth along idyllic redwood paths hurried into a footnote for immediate and real change.

Environmentalists, black leaders and the anti-war movement stirred the once-calm academic waters.

Toward the end of 1969, the Santa Cruz Radical Union formed and peace marches were planned locally to coincide with the national peace movement.

Radical Unionist David Zeiger was saying, "We want to look into the war and use the university for alternative education ... to look into the roots of the war."

The union's plans were backed by such people as ex-Marine and student Mike Kohler who said, "You don't have to believe in everything the Radical Union espouses to go to (their) march."

"After next month there is no way of telling which way it will go. Next year, there's going to be change."

His prediction of the time it would take was overly optimistic.

But his words were prophetic.

In the next three years, the nation's youth, its students and their professors would go into the streets to meet America's TAC Squads and its militia.

Their day of innocence was ended.





UCSC its land.

The Cowell Foundation was paid \$2 million for 2,000 pristine acres, but gave back \$950,000 toward the building of Cowell College and later gave \$750,000 for a student health center.

The first 652 students were culled from more than 1,500 applicants and the following year, nearly 700 more were picked from among 2,500 applicants.

That year, with \$16.9 million in construction money spent, Cowell College and Stevenson College, named to honor the memory of statesman Adlai Stevenson, were completed. Also finished was the library.

For \$3 million, the library would

**'We want to look into the war and use the university for alternative education.'**

**— David Zeiger, radical unionist in 1969**

The second year, the student population grew to 1,350 and entry applications were coming in at two and three times the number UCSC could accept.

Princetonian Charles Page was named provost of Stevenson and with plans under way for College Three, nationally known biologist Kenneth V. Thimann was hired as the provost.

Thimann's college was named Crown College, in honor of a \$750,000 gift from Crown-Zellerbach.

In May 1966, Chancellor McHenry celebrated his inauguration and honorary degrees were awarded to columnist James Reston, Lord Murray of Newhaven, David Packard of Hewlett-Packard, conservationist Samuel F. B. Morse and Max Thelen, president of the Cowell Foundation.

UCSC's population — its students, professors and administrators — seemed at peace the first two years. Even the student power movement at UC-Berkeley caused no more than a ripple of interest at this placid "Oxford by the Pacific."

It was the year the college celebrated National Defense Week and

That same month, 20 professors held an open class called the "Vietnam Education Project." They condemned U.S. actions in Vietnam and called for an end to our involvement there.

In May 1967, the fledgling university awarded its first Ph.D to Michael Evans, a 25-year-old graduate student from Michigan who took his doctorate in biology home to teach at Kalamazoo College.

In June, UCSC held its first baccalaureate ceremonies and awarded degrees to 20 students from Stevenson and 66 from Cowell.

Stevenson Provost Page resigned and Stevenson Professor of Government F.M. Glenn Willson took his place.

Professor Paul Lee and Englishman Alan Chadwick started the UCSC garden and the "French intensive" method of gardening was embraced by Santa Cruz.

In 1968 and 1969, an additional \$6.3 million was spent on construction of colleges four and five. Colleges six and seven were in the planning stages.

In a milieu of growing war re-

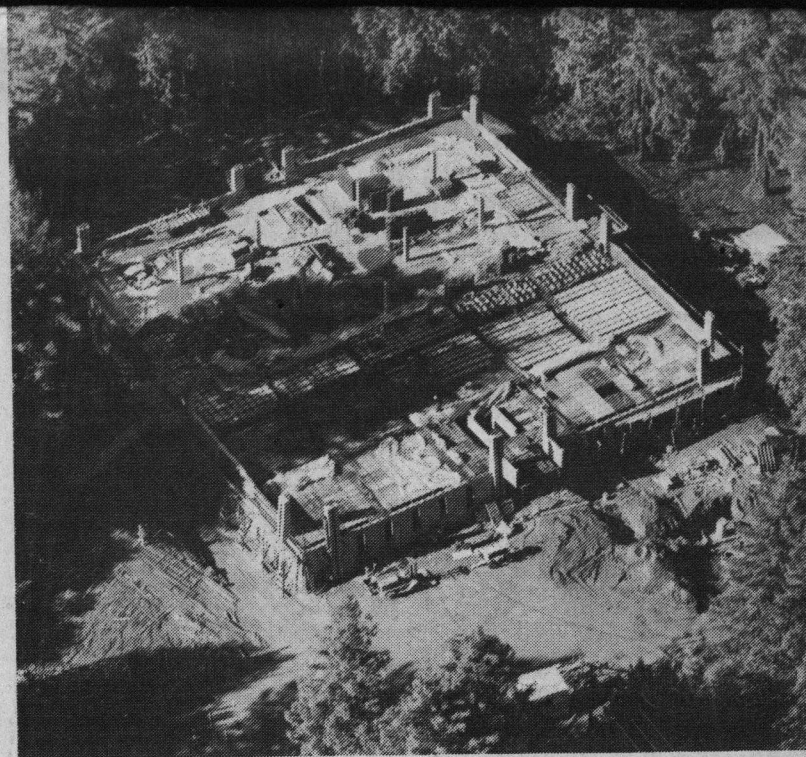
sistance, local leaders of the black equality movement in 1968 put pressure on Chancellor McHenry to name College Seven in honor of Malcolm X, the black muslim leader assassinated the previous year.

The chancellor had proposed the college be devoted to the study of urban problems, with emphasis on black and Mexican-American life in a white-dominated world. But he resisted the demand to name the college after the militant black leader and commit it to the study of the black experience.

At a meeting attended by 1,000 at Cowell dining hall on Feb. 3, 1969, Bill Moore of the Black Liberation Movement in Santa Cruz called McHenry's proposal "a watered-down version of nothing."

"Now he says we'll set up a school for cities (but) the problem in the cities is racism, that's what the God damn problem is," Moore thundered.

McHenry was barely heard as he tried to tell the black leaders and the many white students supporting them that it was the Board of Regents who chose the names for UC's



Pete Amos/Sentinel

College services building rises from the forest

# Chancellor sets his sights on an Oxford on the Pacific

By HERON MARQUEZ ESTRADA

Sentinel Staff Writer

SANTA CRUZ — As UC Santa Cruz Chancellor Robert Sinsheimer likes to point out, 20 years in the life and evolution of a university is a relatively short time.

Especially if you are in the process of "building a university for the ages," as Sinsheimer and the rest of the leadership at UCSC are attempting to do.

"I think that it would be hard to recognize the Harvard of today from the Harvard of 1856, 20 years after it was founded," Sinsheimer said during an interview. "I would like to think that you would recognize certain standards, even then, of quality."

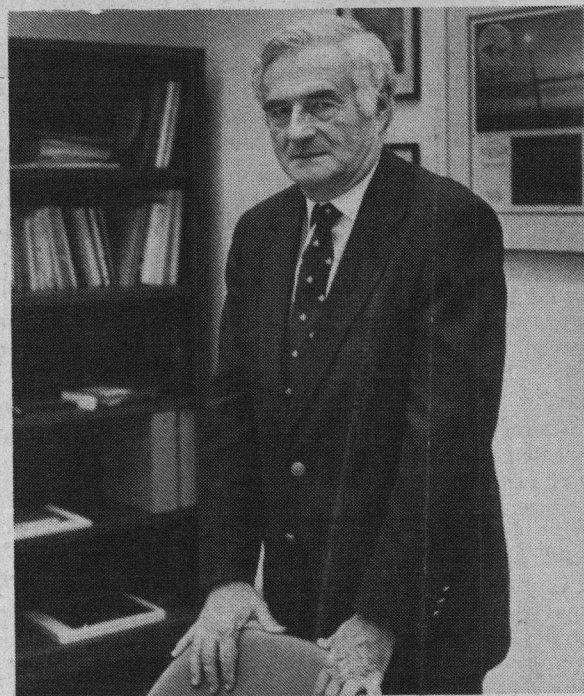
Sinsheimer and other university officials point this out as a means, perhaps, of indicating that UCSC has still a long way to go before it can be compared with some of the great universities in the country.

Sinsheimer's statement is also significant, not only because it comes from the top official at UCSC, but also because it indicates the goal the university is pursuing as it enters its 21st year of existence: to be regarded as one of the best schools in the country.

Since its inception in 1965, but especially during the Sinsheimer era, UCSC has been attempting to lay the foundation and standards of excellence which officials hope will carry the school to the lofty academic plateaus of a Berkeley, Harvard, UCLA, or Stanford.

Sinsheimer realizes that it is a goal which will be accomplished long after he is gone, but he continues to work to make UCSC, and the surrounding community, into what he calls "a university town, in the best sense of the word."

He likens the possibilities in Santa Cruz to those of Cambridge and Oxford. Inherent in this is the assump-



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**— Robert Sinsheimer**

tion that UCSC will one day be the same caliber of institution.

"There is absolutely no reason why UCSC should not stand at the very forefront of higher education. That should be our goal," Sinsheimer recently wrote in analyzing the school, present and future.

One way Sinsheimer would like to do this is by increasing the graduate studies and research divisions within the school in order to actively participate in the race for knowledge and scientific breakthroughs, which bring with them the public recognition which helps establish the reputation of an institution.

Thus it is one of the goals of UCSC to become, within the next 20 years, one of the top 100 research institutions in the country, as measured by the amount of federal research dollars given to the school.

At the moment, the list of the top 100 reads like a Who's Who of American higher educations with the top 10 including Johns Hopkins, MIT, Stanford, Harvard, UCLA, Columbia, and Cornell.

Also there, at number six, is UC San Diego. In fact, of the nine UC campuses, all but Riverside and Santa Cruz are listed in the top 100.

At the moment, UC Santa Cruz receives approximately \$11.2 million in federal support, but only about \$400,000 in private support, which places it far behind other institutions in what it can spend on research.

As Sinsheimer sees it, the next two to three decades will find UCSC focusing on expanding the depth and breadth of its offerings and faculty in order to improve the overall university.

One way to do this, he said, is by increasing the amount of money the school is able to spend on faculty salaries, benefits, and research facilities. Another is by recognizing up-and-coming talent and holding on to it.

In many ways it is the same philosophy followed by professional sports teams: recruiting those you perceive to be the best available talent and making it worth their while to remain, or grooming people internally until they can make a significant contribution. The result in sports, and academe, should be a winner, and the recognition as one of the best in your field.

The means for reaching these goals are formulated in the school's 20-year plan, now under consideration in the UC president's office.

Among the highlights are increased student and faculty, and research projects ranging from the natural sciences and human reproduction to the economics of the Pacific Rim and the mathematical study of chaos (nonlinear phenomenon).

All of which, Sinsheimer said, are needed if the school is to develop along the path of excellence. The ultimate goal is for the school to become "one of the great research universities in the world."

"I really do believe we should be going ahead for the next couple of decades, strengthening our programs," he said.

Sinsheimer sees this as necessary if the school is to fulfill its research obligation as a UC campus. Additionally, he said, if the school is to produce top-flight students, it must be at the forefront of knowledge acquisition.

"The rate of accumulation of knowledge has increased to the point where it has almost taxed our ability to assimilate it," he said.

One way to prepare students for this event, is by having those breaking the frontiers directly explain to students their findings and their consequences.

"In the next 20 years what's critical is that we really insist on quality in the the faculty," Sinsheimer said. "Success engenders success."