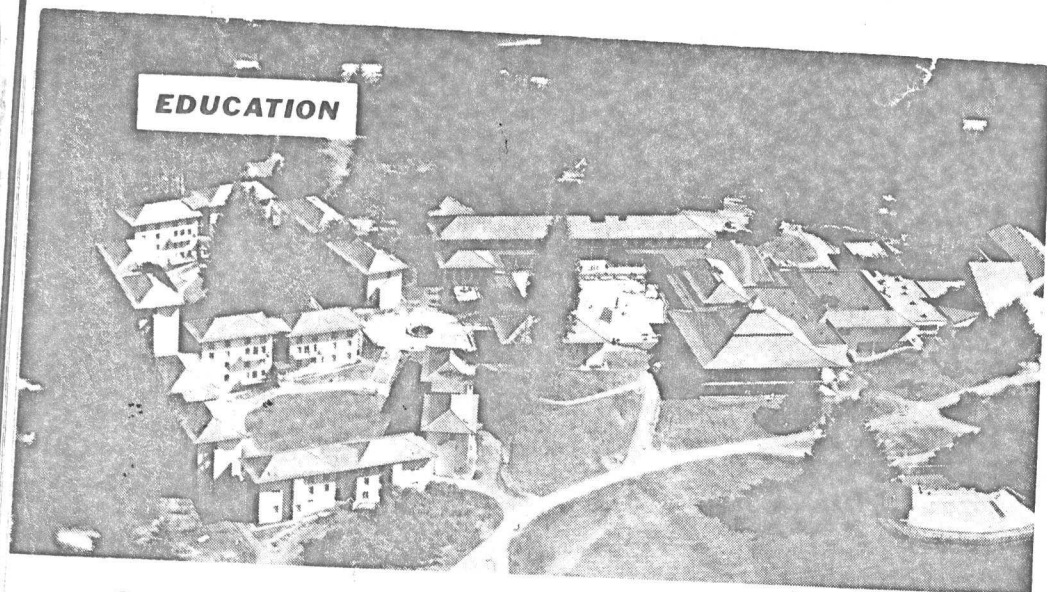


## EDUCATION



Santa Cruz campus, Reagan with McHenry: Town-gown tensions

## Groove With the Redwoods

These are rocky times for higher education in California. Radical students at Berkeley—the crown of the state's nine-campus university system—have tried to shut down their school in a running battle with the regents over an experimental course taught by Black Panther Eldridge Cleaver. Last week, San Francisco State—part of the state college system—erupted in violence over the dismissal of an English instructor, while the voters were defeating a bond issue for university construction. Amid this upheaval, the university's Santa Cruz campus is fighting to carry out its charter: to innovate and to experiment with new academic forms.

NEWSWEEK EDUCATION editor Peter Jansen reports on the experiment:

Santa Cruz sits in a setting of remote grandeur; a redwood forest overlooking Monterey Bay. But its commitment is to the real world. The campus opened three years ago with 652 students living in trailers. Today it has 2,500 undergraduates—and 110 graduate students—divided among four residential liberal-arts colleges. Each has its own academic area of emphasis: Cowell, humanities; Crown, natural sciences; Adlai E. Stevenson, social sciences, and Merrill, which opened this fall, poverty and human rights. The university plans to add a new college a year. Each college will hold about 700 students and have its own classrooms, residence houses, dining commons, libraries, provost and fellows' apartments. Undergraduates will take about half their courses in their own college—which they choose upon admission.

**Work:** Students at Merrill (named for a \$650,000 gift from the trust of Charles E. Merrill of Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith, Inc.) will spend as much as a year off campus—helping migrant workers in California, in community development in Peru or in primary schools in the Upper Volta. A first group of ten Merrill students is working now in Seaside, Calif., a black community near Fort Ord, trying to prevent school dropouts. On campus, students study Africa, Islam, Central and South America—and minority groups in the United States. "The main themes here are the kind of things young people are talking about all over the

country," says Stacey Widdicombe, director of Merrill's field programs and a former Ford Foundation representative in Brazil. "This place has a fantastic relevance to young people." Merrill provost Philip W. Bell, who taught economics at Haverford and Lincoln University and worked for the Rockefeller Foundation at the same time, is trying to make the college a "participatory democracy." He has divided Merrill into groups of fifteen students and faculty constituting a college-wide "town meeting" to set the school's academic and social policies.

Santa Cruz has thrown out formal grades, adopting instead a pass-fail system. Students are allowed to teach some courses and initiate others, such as Radicalism in American History and the Modern American Novel. The faculty works through campus-wide boards of studies, one for each discipline, instead of traditional departments.

**Garden:** So far, the school is very popular. It got 6,500 applications last spring for a 950-member freshman class, a higher ratio than any other school in the state except Stanford. The campus itself, on a 2,000-acre ranch about 3 miles north of town, is isolated. The administration discourages the use of cars; students move about on a red and yellow elephant train. There is little social life, so some students grow their own thing: about 50 of them tend a 4-acre garden in the middle of the campus, growing vegetables and flowers organically. They eat the vegetables in a small chalet-shack above the garden and take out flowers every morning to a stand on the main campus road where anyone passing by can help himself.

Santa Cruz is now in a crucial period. Its newness is wearing off. "Sure, it's a nice place," says a junior from San Francisco, "but you see the same people all the time, after a while you want to hide. At first everybody turned on. Now everybody works in the garden or grooves with the redwoods." Some programs, particularly in professional fields, have been delayed by the regents, Gov. Ronald Reagan and budget cuts; some faculty have left. There is a money problem. Santa Cruz cannot spend more public funds per student than any other university in the system; it therefore has

to raise about \$700,000 in private money to start each new college.

The very nature of the school, with its socially aware students and off-campus work, almost invites problems. During the summer, a local black militant proposed that one of the new colleges be named Malcolm X College and be devoted to "instructing in the black experience." The idea was popular with many students—although there are only about 30 blacks on campus—but university chancellor Dean McHenry dismissed it as "not a practical possibility." "We get in trouble with some of our bright kids here," says McHenry, a 58-year-old political scientist. "Our student body is young, a lot are 16 and 17. Many don't know what they want to major in, but they know they're going for a Ph.D. We need a balance of older- and business- and engineering-type students. I'm worried about a new conformity here, a liberalism bordering on radicalism, of too many people thinking the same thoughts." Those fears, of course, do not particularly bother the younger faculty or students. "I have complete faith we'll get into trouble," says Widdicombe, "but we'll survive."

## To the Drawing Boards

For years, Columbia University has boasted of a first-rate architectural school, and then steadily ignored its advice. In fact, students, faculty and neighbors fault Columbia's new buildings on campus—and its expansion into the Morningside Heights community on two grounds: architectural sterility and disregard of others' rights. Now new lines are being drawn. Last week the university hired I.M. Pei, the city planner and architect with a reputation for designing some of the most exciting buildings in the country (such as Harvard's John F. Kennedy Memorial Library and New York's Kips Bay Plaza), to plan its future expansion. Pei, the university's first long-term planner this century, said he will take about a year to develop a master plan—which will include a review of the gymnasium that helped set off Columbia's student revolt last spring. He promised to do it with "a minimum of dislocation."