

"Don't make me angry... You wouldn't like me when I'm angry" 2/12/79

UCSC 1970-1979 anon

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

What Life and Education Are All About at UC Santa Cruz

Editor — Anybody reading Ron Moskowitz's strange collection of comments about UC Santa Cruz February 5 would never guess that the University has a superb faculty — distinguished, dedicated scholar/teachers at all levels. As for the appalling fact that dropped courses are not recorded in student transcripts, Stanford has the same system, without obvious detriment either to academic standards or to students' chances of getting into professional schools. To any bright person eager for a fine education in beautiful natural surroundings and an unthreatening intellectual atmosphere, I would say: you can't do better than Santa Cruz.

I write as a long-time friend of the institution and parent of a senior there.

THOMAS C. MOSER
Stanford

Editor — ... I came to this campus from a "prestigious" Eastern college, and I can assure you that the quality of my education has increased since that move. The student body here is genuinely excited about learning, and, due to the narrative evaluation system, the source of their motivation is of a much higher caliber than at similar universities...

JUNE BEITTEL
Santa Cruz

Editor — Dreams have not faded at UC Santa Cruz. Its academic spirit lives among those who are here. The educational experiment has not failed. The school has been a success and its graduates are well-received by employers and graduate schools. Declining enrollments are only a sign of a society strained and confused by economic uncertainty — a society afraid to understand or accept the value of a liberal education in a noncompetitive environment.

LARRY OSTROFF
Santa Cruz

Editor — I am a student of the humanities at UCSC, where I wanted to go precisely because it

gave no grades. It also has no profit-making football team, no fraternities or sororities, and no atmosphere of cutthroat competition. The things I value most about my education are the relations between students and faculty, the sharing of education among one's peers, and the ideal of learning as its own reward...

JANET E. NEWMAN
Santa Cruz

Editor — ... I transferred to UC Santa Cruz from UC Santa Barbara because I wanted to be in a more intimate and challenging intellectual atmosphere. I was tired of competing against 20,000 strangers. I was tired of being a grade-point average. I was tired of being in classes with students who cared only about the occupation their degree would win them rather than the educational process that leads to that degree. When students have the attitude that they will cheat, lie, or steal for a good grade, then I believe we have lost touch with the true meaning of education...

DIANE ROSEN
Santa Cruz

Editor — ... Even the best systems have their problems and UCSC is no exception. These latest attacks, however, are not based on a critical awareness of the university's problems, but rather come from reactionary politicians, conservative endowers and a misinformed media.

For instance, many students do not want the grade option because grades bring competition into the classroom and thus undercut the quality of education offered. The Narrative Evaluation System places the responsibility on the faculty to analyze the work of the student and to be involved in what she or he teaches and how it affects the student. The NES does not hurt those who wish to go on to graduate school. UCSC has a higher ratio of its graduates in advanced programs than its counterparts in Berkeley or Los Angeles. The NES, when written properly can act as a series of letters of recommendation. The problem is

not the NES; the problem stems from too many outside forces who wish to destroy the experiment known as UC Santa Cruz,

JOSEPH LUBOW
Soquel

Editor — I thought Moskowitz's piece was the most comprehensive and sensitive done about UCSC to date, and reflected my many ambivalences about my alma mater.

Santa Cruz offered tremendous challenges and opportunities to those of us who were students in the '60s. It was ripe with all the problems facing all college campuses — the war, drugs, and a myriad of questions by students challenging traditional values, etc. Santa Cruz was touted as the "experimental" campus, and it truly lived up to its reputation as same. Students explored academics, life styles, and just about everything else.

Academically, Santa Cruz was unparalleled — offering close contact with a first-rate faculty diverse in both background and disciplines. Teachers who always had time to talk with undergraduates — really talk. I have rarely found that since. They offered support, interest and role models to the students.

But the "experimental" concept has its weaknesses — and many a student could not cope with the weaknesses. You got exactly out of it what you put into it. For me, it was truly a "growing" and learning experience at all levels — academically, and personally. I had opportunities I probably never would have had elsewhere. But while I would never reject those experiences which helped shape the person I am, I would not willingly relive either the time or the place.

I found Santa Cruz to be exactly what it advertised: a beautiful paradox. A glorious campus, a little too isolated, a little too intense, and definitely out of touch with the "real world" — but isn't that what college used to be about...

MONICA BAY
San Francisco