

## Experimental Activism at UCSC, 1965-1970

By Robbie Stockman

The 1960s shifted Americans' consciousness from complacency to dissatisfaction and revolt. The Civil Rights, Free Speech, Third World and antiwar movements together with the hippie subculture plunged the nation into chaotic liberation. In response to student concerns, University of California administrators created an ideal learning experiment at Santa Cruz. UC president Clark Kerr, UC Dean of Academic Planning Dean McHenry and University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) history professor Page Smith dedicated the University of California, Santa Cruz (UCSC) to undergraduate education. Through a series of academic reforms and innovative techniques, UCSC administrators and faculty created an intellectually stimulating, communal university. Students at UCSC were compelled to create the culture of their university in this tumultuous time. Though UCSC student activism involved intellectual discussion and peaceful protest, they were ineffective at creating social change and as the campus developed, UC Berkeley and San Francisco State University (SFSU) began to control the direction of UCSC thought and action.

### **UCSC: The Creation of an Aesthetic**

The dilemma at previous universities resulted from professors torn between their own research and educating undergraduate students. In the "publish or perish" world of higher education, professors focused mostly on their own research at the expense of student learning. UCLA history professor Page Smith considered such actions wasteful, considering doctoral research to be "pedestrian work" that "need not and should not be

done."<sup>1</sup> By 1960, the University of California was designing three new campuses<sup>2</sup> to accommodate the rising number of college students. Universities at Irvine and Santa Cruz would be the first completely new campuses in the history of the University of California as all others were built from preceding institutions.<sup>3</sup> By this time Santa Cruz was a small, conservative retirement beachside community surrounded by redwood trees and the coasts of the Pacific Ocean and Monterey Bay. The tranquil, isolated location seemed to be an ideal spot for university administrators who wanted to create a peaceful, intellectual atmosphere. UCSC's Academic Plan of 1965 notes: "although insulated from unfavorable environment, the campus is within easy travel distance of urban centers and the busy life of metropolitan areas."<sup>4</sup> Major colleges like San Jose State, Stanford, UC Berkeley and San Francisco State were all less than a hundred miles away. UCSC was isolated from everyday controversial issues of urban life<sup>5</sup> yet close enough to encourage academic relationships with other universities. UC Berkeley would provide a major influence on UCSC activism in the sixties.

UC Berkeley students organized the Free Speech Movement (FSM) in 1964 to protest the university's refusal to let them organize and discuss political issues on university property. On December 4<sup>th</sup>, FSM students organized a sit-in at Sproul Hall and when Governor Edmund "Pat" Brown ordered police to end the protest, the result was the

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<sup>1</sup>

James J Rawls and Walton Bean, *California: An Interpretive History*, 8th ed., (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2002), 538.

<sup>2</sup> San Diego, Irvine and Santa Cruz, chronologically.

<sup>3</sup> Carlos G. Noreña, *The Rise and Demise of the UCSC Colleges*, (Santa Cruz, CA: UCSC, 1999), 53.

<sup>4</sup> University of California, Santa Cruz (corp. author), *Academic Plan: University of California, Santa Cruz, 1965-1975*. (Santa Cruz, CA: UCSC, 1965), 1.

<sup>5</sup> Downtown Santa Cruz was 2 1/2 miles away from the UCSC campus.

"largest mass arrest in the state's history" with over seven hundred arrests.<sup>6</sup> As University of California campuses were becoming overcrowded, class sizes swelled and students became separated further from their professors and academic goals. According to UCSC students of the Cowell History Workshop, "the riots signaled a growing student awareness and concern for academic freedom."<sup>7</sup> In 1961 Dean McHenry, the Dean of Academic Planning of the University of California, gave a speech at Cabrillo College in Santa Cruz County proposing a communal university "by ordaining a 'collegiate' campus."<sup>8</sup> Henry Cowell's large Santa Cruz ranchlands offered the perfect setting for this plan and later that year McHenry requested and would be named chancellor of UCSC.

Modeled after schools like Oxford University, separate colleges could "make the campus seem small as it grows larger,"<sup>9</sup> in the words of UC President Clark Kerr. Kerr wanted each college to be "as autonomous as possible,"<sup>10</sup> so each college served the dual functions of an academic department and a residence for students. Students therefore lived and studied with people involved in similar interests.<sup>11</sup> The pioneer Cowell College declared as its focus: "the importance of history and the relevance of philosophy and humanistic studies in modern life."<sup>12</sup> Chancellor McHenry chose Page Smith, an innovative and idealistic history professor at UCLA, to be the provost<sup>13</sup> of Cowell College. Smith created several of the university's unique ideas, including the core course:

<sup>6</sup> Rawls and Bean, *California: An Interpretive History*, 8th ed., (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2002), 428-9.

<sup>7</sup> Pat Berdge, et al., *Solomon's House: A Self-Conscious History of Cowell College*, (Felton, CA: Big Trees Press, 1970), 4.

<sup>8</sup> Berdge, *Solomon's House*, 6.

<sup>9</sup> UCSC, *Academic Plan*, 3.

<sup>10</sup> Noreña, *The Rise and Demise of the UCSC Colleges*, 30.

<sup>11</sup> Catherine Howells, interview by author, telephone, November 20, 2006.

<sup>12</sup> UCSC, *Academic Plan*, 9.

<sup>13</sup> UCSC's version of the "Dean" or department head.

a year long, mandatory freshman class focusing on world civilizations "to bring students together while compelling them to confront world problems."<sup>14</sup> This would ensure that important issues around the world would be discussed in an intellectual and civilized way. By 1970, UCSC established five different colleges.<sup>15</sup>

The college would encompass the majority of the student's life with "living, dining, social, cultural, and athletic activities,"<sup>16</sup> the result being that "student life will be centered in the residential colleges to such an extent that there will be less than the usual level of campus-wide activity."<sup>17</sup> Examples of these activities included the weekly "College Nights" in which every Thursday evening Cowell students, faculty and administrators gathered together for a formal dinner and discussion with special speakers or performers. The College Nights were intellectually stimulating and helped reinforce the community feeling, according to Cowell students.<sup>18</sup> The "Culture Break" occurring in the middle of every quarter presented lectures, seminars, films, plays, concerts, and other presentations on a given theme over a four-day period.<sup>19</sup> UCSC was so successful at engaging students in creating an intellectual community that one Cowell student complained that instead of students separating their academic and social lives, "Santa Cruz has done it so that education and social life come together."<sup>20</sup>

To break further away from traditional university methods and help undergraduate students reach their full potential, UCSC emphasized a "concentration on liberal arts

<sup>14</sup> Berdge, Solomon's House, 21.

<sup>15</sup> Cowell, Stevenson, Crown, Merrill, and College V, chronologically.

<sup>16</sup> UCSC, Academic Plan, 6.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>18</sup> Cowell College 1966 (Santa Cruz, CA: UCSC, 1967), 180.

<sup>19</sup> Cowell College 1966, 175.

<sup>20</sup> Calciano, Elizabeth Spalding, Student Interviews: 1967 (Santa Cruz, CA: UCSC University Library, 1968), 12-13.

education," "a restricted curriculum, designed mainly to serve students' needs rather than reflect faculty interests," and "stress on tutorials, seminars, and independent study."<sup>21</sup> Clark Kerr, Dean McHenry and Page Smith created a school focused on undergraduate education, and each of them was dedicated to that goal. Smith also proposed to replace letter grades with pass/fail grades "to reduce anxieties and to focus attention on learning rather than memorizing" as well as "a brief summary of the student's capabilities and achievements"<sup>22</sup> in the course. This system could work only in a school where class sizes were small enough for the instructor to get to know their students. UCSC designed "a student/faculty ratio of 16 to 1 and student/teaching staff ratio of 12 to 1"<sup>23</sup> within the first ten years. Students would therefore be more interested in performing well in the course than calculating test scores. McHenry fought hard for the pass/fail system and the state assembly approved a five-year test of the system, though compromises were made for some upper-division classes to use letter grades if they chose to use them.<sup>24</sup> According to UCSC psychology professor Robert Frager, idealistic young professors were lured by the emphasis on undergraduate teaching, but within a few years older professors from UCLA and UC Berkeley brought with them their publish or perish model, and over time teaching became less important.<sup>25</sup>

In September of 1965, UCSC opened with 665 students and 65 faculty members.<sup>26</sup>

Radicalism was immediately obvious as the school's chapter of the Students for a

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<sup>21</sup> UCSC, Academic Plan, 2.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 12.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>24</sup> Berdge, Solomon's House, 92-93.

<sup>25</sup> Robert Frager, interview by author, telephone, November 18, 2006.

<sup>26</sup> UCSC, Academic Plan, 22 and Ronald J. Webb, "A History of Student Activism at Santa Cruz," (B.A. thesis, UCSC, 1971), 1.

Democratic Society (SDS) stated in its charter that "every student was a member unless he specifically asked not to be."<sup>27</sup> Due to construction costs Cowell buildings would not be ready until the Fall of 1966,<sup>28</sup> so to solve the housing problem the university leased sixty-five trailers "in eight clusters of eight plus one extra", giving on-campus life a "summer camp feeling,"<sup>29</sup> according to students. The first few weeks of Cowell College were chaotic with incidents involving firecrackers, water fights with fire hydrants and other pranks.<sup>30</sup> Although more than half the students lived on campus,<sup>31</sup> the rest stayed in houses rented by the university or tried to find their own place nearby or downtown.<sup>32</sup> The students who came to UCSC described themselves as "social nerds" who were "creating the university while you're getting your education."<sup>33</sup> One of the earliest creations of UCSC students was agricultural, as students used the open spaces of the campus to grow their own marijuana<sup>34</sup> and by the second year "perhaps 75% of the student body had some experience with marijuana, LSD, or amphetamines."<sup>35</sup> The drug culture at UCSC resulted in a generation divide between the students using them and faculty not wanting anything to do with it.<sup>36</sup>

The 1960s also generated a sexual revolution, as hippie counter-culture preached people to live more authentically, including more open sexual relationships.<sup>37</sup> The

<sup>27</sup> Webb, "A History of Student Activism at Santa Cruz," 4.

<sup>28</sup> Berdge, Solomon's House, 7.

<sup>29</sup> Cowell College 1966, 69.

<sup>30</sup> Berdge, Solomon's House, 29.

<sup>31</sup> Webb, "A History of Student Activism at Santa Cruz," 1.

<sup>32</sup> Cowell College 1966, 30-35.

<sup>33</sup> Howells, interview, November 20, 2006.

<sup>34</sup> Howells, interview, November 20, 2006.

<sup>35</sup> Berdge, Solomon's House, 116.

<sup>36</sup> Howells, interview, November 20, 2006.

<sup>37</sup> Jacqueline Jones, et al. ed. *Created Equal: A Social and Political History of the United States*, (New York: Longman, 2003), 888.

intimacy of trailer life did not go unnoticed by the UCSC administration, which imposed inter-visitation rules upon on-campus students. The inter-visitation policy was the first heated debate between the students and the university. The university declared that students were not "to be in the trailer area of the opposite sex after 10 [p.m.]" and "barred [boys] from girls' trailers at all times, and vice-versa."<sup>38</sup> Obviously, inter-visitation was only relevant to those who lived on campus. *The Pioneer*, UCSC's first student newspaper, discussed the fight over inter-visitation, which lasted almost two years, as students eloquently voiced their grievances for a rule they found insulting and unfair.<sup>39</sup> Although "faculty members (in varying degrees) supported a standard moral credo; the students saw it as an ideological question and took morality down to its basic ethical roots."<sup>40</sup> The issue blew out of control when a letter written by Page Smith regarding his support of inter-visitation rules was sensationalized in the *San Jose Mercury News* and other papers, inaccurately portraying UCSC students as uncontrollably sexual.<sup>41</sup> Finally in February of 1967 inter-visitation between men and women's trailers was allowed "between the hours of five and eight in the evening."<sup>42</sup> By this time, the administration had bigger problems to deal with as the very university's future became endangered.<sup>43</sup>

### **Endangered Learning: The Governor's Plans for the University of California**

The student protests at UC Berkeley caused anger and anxieties among many Californians who feared for their safety and the security of their way of life. Politicians

<sup>38</sup> T.M., "Intervisitation: The Time for Solutions," *The Pioneer*, December 10, 1965, 2.

<sup>39</sup> Webb, "A History of Student Activism at Santa Cruz," 1.

<sup>40</sup> Berdge, *Solomon's House*, 60.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid*, 62.

<sup>42</sup> *Cowell College 1966*, 108.

<sup>43</sup> For more information on the UCSC Trailer Park, read Adrian Wilson's *Oh What a Special Place: A Look at the Value of the UCSC Trailer Park*. (Santa Cruz, CA: A. Wilson, 2000).

used these fears to get elected, attacking the universities which had grown out of control. In 1966 California voters elected as governor a conservative Republican Hollywood action hero named Ronald Reagan, a man with no political experience but plenty of ideas. His main platform was a reduction in government services and cutting the state's budget, a reversal of his predecessor, Governor Edmund "Pat" Brown.<sup>44</sup> Reagan's position of the University of California was clear when in 1966 he demanded closing the new campuses.<sup>45</sup> Although this was not accomplished, he "reduced funding for the state's colleges and universities, and proposed significant increases in tuition to make up part of the difference."<sup>46</sup> Reagan did not approve of the direction university students were headed in, saying that he was "sick at what has happened at Berkeley. Sick at all the sit-ins, the teach-ins, the walkouts. When I am elected governor I will organize a throw-out, and Clark Kerr will head that list."<sup>47</sup> In their January 1967 the regents fired UC President Kerr over his inability to control the events at Berkeley, which "sent shock waves throughout the national academic community, where it was angrily denounced as an anti-intellectual assault on academic freedom."<sup>48</sup>

UCSC students and faculty were outraged by the governor's attack on higher learning. The 1966-67 school year split students and faculty into two colleges: the earlier Cowell College and a new college named for the late U.N. Ambassador Adlai E. Stevenson. In January 1967 student governments in Cowell and Stevenson Colleges passed resolutions condemning Governor Reagan's "efforts to crack down on the

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<sup>44</sup> Rawls and Bean, *California: An Interpretive History*, 259.

<sup>45</sup> Berdge, *Solomon's House*, 6.

<sup>46</sup> Rawls and Bean, *California: An Interpretive History*, 260.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid*, 460.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid*, 460.

university" and a petition of Santa Cruz students "drew 98% opposition to the [g]overnor's plans."<sup>49</sup> On January 23, 1967, a rally was held for the first time in the history of the campus to protest the firing of Clark Kerr. On the Cowell courtyard nine hundred students gathered as five faculty members and three students spoke to denounce the regents' decisions. Cowell Provost Page Smith suggested that "students should be consulted in the selection of the new [p]resident" and Stevenson Provost Charles Page seconded the suggestion, saying "this is a time for calm outrage."<sup>50</sup> Later a march to the capital was called for "to show the people of the state that the Berkeley stereotype is not accurate for most of the students and faculty at the [u]niversity."<sup>51</sup> Students also organized a letter-writing campaign between "UCSC students and their parents... to oppose tuition and a budget cut."<sup>52</sup> Students resented being treated like enemies by their government when all they wanted was the freedom to learn.

This relationship would only grow stronger in the heat of the anti-war movement and continuing resentment of Governor Ronald Reagan and the unfeeling bureaucratic machine. Further conflict involving the governor continued when the UC regents returned to the campus on October 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>, 1968. Students marched from Crown College to Cowell College (in a spectacle involving the campus guerilla theater, two horses and a pig<sup>53</sup>) where regents discussed plans for the academic year. Student

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<sup>49</sup> Webb, "A History of Student Activism at Santa Cruz," 4.

<sup>50</sup> "UCSC Stirs to Protest the Dismissal of Kerr," *The City on a Hill Press*, January 27, 1967, 1.

<sup>51</sup> "UC Students Plan to March to Sacramento for Thursday," *The City on a Hill Press*, February 3, 1967, 1.

<sup>52</sup> "UCSC Stirs to Protest the Dismissal of Kerr," *The City on a Hill Press*, January 27, 1967, 1.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid*, 121.

representative Ho Nguyen and Black Student Alliance president Rich Townsend presented their proposals to the regents at the Cowell dining hall.<sup>54</sup> They demanded the right to earn credit for a black studies course called Social Analysis 139X, the establishment of an ethnic studies college named for Malcolm X and regent support of the grape boycott in prohibiting grapes from being served in dining halls.<sup>55</sup> These demands were not unique to UCSC as they were largely in recognition of similar movements at UC Berkeley and SFSU.<sup>56</sup> Ho Nguyen wrote in the student-controlled newspaper the *Stevenson Libre* that the regents are "a few wealthy men" who "run the [u]niversity on the basis of their corporations' or their own political interests."<sup>57</sup> Although the regents could only respond by saying they would look into their proposals later, Page Smith "lauded students for their positive activism."<sup>58</sup> The next day when the regents were to take a bus tour of the campus, students frustrated by the lack of recognition they had received surrounded the bus and then sat down in front of it.<sup>59</sup> When students surrounded the governor at the end of the day's open session, he eventually agreed to respond to their concerns. They attacked his ideas for university objectives, particularly his attempted "resolution reasserting the [r]egental powers over curriculum and hiring and firing powers — powers held by the faculty since 1920."<sup>60</sup> As he left the campus, students spit and threw rocks at his car.<sup>61</sup> In response to the student protests that weekend, Dr. Max

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<sup>54</sup> Webb, "A History of Student Activism at Santa Cruz," 26.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, 25.

<sup>56</sup> To be discussed later.

<sup>57</sup> Ho Nguyen, "The Regents are Coming, the Regents are Coming!" *Stevenson Libre*, Year 2, Issue 3, 1.

<sup>58</sup> Berdge, *Solomon's House*, 122.

<sup>59</sup> Webb, "A History of Student Activism at Santa Cruz," 28.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, 29.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, 30.

Rafferty (California's Superintendent of Public Instruction and regent) proclaimed: "I used to think that the Communists were responsible. I now know that what went on at Santa Cruz yesterday was communist inspired."<sup>62</sup> In the Cold War era, this accusation appeared to be a declaration of war and Inter-College Board Chairman Drummond Pike and campus representative Ho Nguyen vehemently opposed Dr. Rafferty's opinions in the campus newspaper *The City on a Hill Press*.<sup>63</sup>

### **The United States of America vs. UCSC**

UCSC students shared a common resentment toward American foreign policy that began surging in universities across the country. In August 1965 North Vietnamese ships fired on the U.S. destroyer *Maddox* in the Gulf of Tonkin, triggering a response by President Lyndon Johnson and the U.S. Congress to pass the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, a substitute for a declaration of war.<sup>64</sup> College campuses all over the nation protested America's involvement in Vietnam even before this resolution was passed. UCSC students created the "Vietnam Education Project" and organized a mass teach-in on Friday, November 10<sup>th</sup>, 1967. *The Santa Cruz Sentinel* sensationalized the event in an article titled "America Under Attack At UCSC Teach-In." Presenting the teach-in as "impassioned pleas for resistance to the draft, continued opposition to the war and expanded civil disobedience" which "were coupled with sweeping denunciations of America and the American economic and political systems."<sup>65</sup> The teach-in was only one

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid, 32.

<sup>63</sup> "Pike, Ho Request Rafferty Substantiate 'Commie' Charge," *The City on a Hill Press*, October 25, 1968, 1.

<sup>64</sup> Jacqueline Jones, *Created Equal*, 846.

<sup>65</sup> Mel Baughman, "America Under Attack At UCSC Teach-in," *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, November 12, 1967, 1.

form of peaceful protest against the war. Students also organized silent peace vigils every Wednesday night in the Cowell courtyard to protest the Vietnam War as "a recurrent visible expression of our concern, a loving confrontation... with our policy makers, with our fellow citizens, with one another, [and] with ourselves."<sup>66</sup>

Meanwhile a Cowell College student named George Walter Skakel was expressing his concern of the war, writing weekly letters under the name "Corporal Calibernus" during his tour of duty as a Vietnam soldier<sup>67</sup> from the fall of 1967 until he was killed in action on March 9, 1968.<sup>68</sup> His vivid depictions of the war helped UCSC students humanize the distant conflict:

The American voting public doesn't know what war is--neither the immense boredom of the business nor the moments of living horror. And the murky pits it leaves in a man's soul--the night we shot down a little girl or one of our own men or the pathetic gook dragging rotten bananas through a rice paddy. I think they fail to comprehend that war can never be civilized.<sup>69</sup>

His letters depicted the cruelty of war and he attacked the American people for their complacency and ignorance. He condemned the "American voting public" for electing congresspersons who were not sympathetic to all of the families who were currently losing their loved ones in Vietnam. Despite these condemnations, however, UCSC students did not actively participate in voter registration in the Santa Cruz community to get the local unsympathetic representative out of office.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> "Students hold Peace Vigils on Wednesday," *The City on a Hill Press*, January 27, 1967, 1.

<sup>67</sup> "Corporal Callibernus" letters brought to the author's attention from Ronald J. Webb's "A History of Student Activism at Santa Cruz," 11.

<sup>68</sup> "Skakel-'Callibernus' Killed in Action," *The City on a Hill Press*, March 29, 1968, 1.

<sup>69</sup> Corporal Callibernus, "Vietnam Letter," *The City on a Hill Press*, October 27, 1967, 1.

<sup>70</sup> Frager, interview, November 18, 2006.

Student responses to military recruiters were also negative in this period as an event in November demonstrated. On November 1<sup>st</sup>, Air Force recruiters intending to come to UCSC cancelled their plans when learning that three hundred students were there to protest their arrival, spawning a debate over whether students wanted the military recruiting on their campus at all.<sup>71</sup> Incidents between military recruiters and angry student dissenters continued to occur at UCSC, including confrontations with Coast Guard recruiters in April 1969 and Marine recruiters in February 1970.<sup>72</sup>

### **The Fight for Understanding: UCSC and Ethnic Studies**

Third World movements at UC Berkeley and SFSU in 1968 brought attention to the necessity for studies relating to the experiences and cultures of minority groups. UCSC students inspired by these movements demanded Afro-American and ethnic studies in the university as an expression of free speech and ideas. 1968 also brought with it the assassinations of presidential hopeful Robert Kennedy and black activist Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Students began to question the effectiveness of non-violent resistance preached by Dr. King when their enemies practiced such rampant acts of violence. Groups like the Oakland Black Panthers emerged as powerful and militant organizations for African-Americans and universities soaked up its ideas. At SFSU, African-American students of the Third World Liberation Front demanded a black studies department and a violent student strike ensued. UC Berkeley organized a lecture class by Black Panther member Eldridge Cleaver,<sup>73</sup> but Cleaver's prison record and rhetoric were

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<sup>71</sup> Webb, "A History of Student Activism at Santa Cruz," 12.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, 43 and 72, respectively.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, 24.

too controversial<sup>74</sup> so they refused to grant credit and terminated the course.<sup>75</sup> Students at UC Berkeley, SFSU and even UCSC were outraged by the regents' decision. . Although UCSC has never had a large minority student body, many students considered it to be "a threat to the 'liberalism' of Santa Cruz's student-taught classes, the student 'right' to entertain off-campus speakers, and student field study programs."<sup>76</sup> Students like Charles Durning feared for the future of student-taught classes at UCSC. Previous classes included "Bob Lubin's Vietnam class, Scott Sullivan's Karl Marx class... and Clint Taylor's Power class,"<sup>77</sup> demonstrating that radical political discussion was considered mainstream at UCSC.

On August 6, 1968, the Black Liberation Movement of Santa Cruz (with student leader Bill Moore) wrote to the administration demanding the proposed College Seven be dedicated to teaching the minority experience.<sup>78</sup> They wanted the college to "be Afro-American instructing in the Black Experience. They also wanted instructors "of the Black Experience," that the college will grant degrees in Afro-American studies, and that the college should be named after the late Black Muslim activist Malcolm X.<sup>79</sup> According to the Committee for the College of Malcolm X (CCMX), "this name speaks directly to the majority and minority groups in this country... identifying the program with the

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<sup>74</sup> Cleaver had twice been in prison: the most recent time for raping white women as a form of white insurrection according to Rawls and Bean's *California: An Interpretive History*, 433.

<sup>75</sup> Webb, "A History of Student Activism at Santa Cruz," 24.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid*, 25.

<sup>77</sup> Chester Dunning, "Inside Job," *Stevenson Libre*, Year 2, Number 3, 3.

<sup>78</sup> Committee for the College of Malcolm X (CCMX), *College of Malcolm X pamphlet* ("College of Malcolm X" folder, Box 163A, Miller and Bunny Outcalt Special Collections Reading Room, Dean McHenry University Library, UCSC), 2.

<sup>79</sup> "Black College at UCSC?" *Stevenson Libre*, Year 2, Issue 1, 1.

ideals of this great man."<sup>80</sup> Chancellor McHenry responded saying that a college created "exclusively for ethnic people would be in violation of the Civil Rights Act and... the study of the ethnic experience was not a broad enough discipline to warrant a college committed to it."<sup>81</sup> The original theme for College Seven was "the relevance of historical inquiry and classical thought to modern problems,"<sup>82</sup> and students stretched this focus to the problems of minorities. Leading the Malcolm X College movement were student Bill Moore and faculty member J. Herman Blake, a sociology doctoral candidate at UC Berkeley.

As Cowell's only black faculty member and someone who actually knew Malcolm X personally, Herman Blake was a powerfully influential force in the UCSC this protest.<sup>83</sup> Chancellor McHenry called Blake "one of the most valuable members of the entire UCSC faculty."<sup>84</sup> Blake had gained a lot of press in campus newspapers in the fall of 1966 for his lecture on black power and accusations that the SDS and UCSC students were not sincere in their protests<sup>85</sup>. Blake commented that "what many of these kids want" was "a vicarious existence."<sup>86</sup> In the spirit of the Third World strikes at SFSU and UC Berkeley, the Malcolm X College movement embraced the study of third world struggles, paralleling them with the black experience, and therefore other UCSC minority groups such as the Asian-American Political Alliance and Chicano Liberation Front

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<sup>80</sup> CCMX, College of Malcolm X pamphlet, 3.

<sup>81</sup> Webb, "A History of Student Activism at Santa Cruz," 23.

<sup>82</sup> UCSC, Academic Plan, 10-11.

<sup>83</sup> Art Seidenbaum, *Confrontation on Campus: Student Challenge in California* (Los Angeles: Ward-Ritchie Press, 1969), 19.

<sup>84</sup> Noreña, *The Rise and Demise of the UCSC Colleges*, 161.

<sup>85</sup> "Blake Defines Black Power," *The Fulcrum*, November 18, 1966, 1.

<sup>86</sup> Seidenbaum, *Confrontation on Campus*, 19.

joined the fight.<sup>87</sup> Malcolm X College was to be a "people's college", and faculty member David Kaun suggested that money be raised for the college by the university and outside community."<sup>88</sup> Chancellor McHenry was responsive to their demands and decided to create two committees for the development of College Seven. The Ethnic Studies Committee headed by J. Herman Blake would plan an ethnic studies program and architectural design for the college, and the second committee would look for a provost and faculty.<sup>89</sup> Blake eventually created a college focusing "on the experience of ethnic minorities in the United States" that would "go beyond the often narrowly conceived 'ethnic identity' approach."<sup>90</sup> Although the attempts to create a college named after Malcolm X failed, College Seven opened in 1972 with J. Herman Blake as its founding provost.

### **Universities Unite: The Student Strikes of 1968, 1969 and 1970**

UCSC followed activist movements of SFSU and UC Berkeley in the student strikes between 1968 and 1970, but were more peaceful in their protests than the other schools. In the fall of 1968 at SFSU the Black Students Union (BSU) organized a massive student strike on campus. The confrontation quickly turned violent as local police were called in to control the strikers. In what *Los Angeles Times* reporter Art Seidenbaum described as "the longest, bloodiest confrontation in the history of American higher learning," resulting in "more than 300 arrests, dozens of injuries to students and police, several bomb incidents, a few fires and a partial faculty walkout."<sup>91</sup> Ronald Webb,

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<sup>87</sup> Webb, "A History of Student Activism at Santa Cruz," 33-34.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid, 34.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid, 39.

<sup>90</sup> Noreña, *The Rise and Demise of the UCSC Colleges*, 163-164.

<sup>91</sup> Seidenbaum, *Confrontation on Campus*, 60.

a student at Stevenson College, explained that student strikes at UC Berkeley and SFSU "stimulated a great deal of discussion over tactics and their effectiveness; not only as expedients but also their effect on image and conversion of the 'public' to their point of view."<sup>92</sup>

Although student protests often turned violent in this period, UCSC protests remained peaceful partly due to its isolation and also due to the hippie subculture. On this non-violence, UCSC psychology professor Robert Frager considers that "there may have been the sense that we really were a 'city on a hill' and somewhat insulated from the police and society."<sup>93</sup> An unnamed student explained how the UCSC resistance movement "was always more concerned with humanistic questions than military questions,"<sup>94</sup> as intellectual discussion defined the campus. The hippie philosophy also preached non-violence and non-cooperation, along with drug use. According to correspondents of *Time* magazine, "Acid is truly crucial to hippiedom"<sup>95</sup> and according to Catherine Howells, UCSC students had perfected the drug culture and "a lot of the people very, very involved in student protests were also dropping a lot of acid."<sup>96</sup> On April 26, 1968 UCSC students organized a general student strike to protest the Vietnam War and the draft. Although speakers at the strike included such recognizable figures as UC Berkeley Free Speech Movement leader Mario Savio, the strike was "largely a failure in terms of the number of people that refused to go to classes."<sup>97</sup> Speakers blamed "the university—first students for their general apathy and lack of commitment, and second,

<sup>92</sup> Webb, "A History of Student Activism at Santa Cruz," 31.

<sup>93</sup> Frager, interview, November 18, 2006.

<sup>94</sup> Seidenbaum, *Confrontation on Campus*, 20.

<sup>95</sup> Joe David Brown ed., *The Hippies*, (New York: Time Incorporated, 1967), 171.

<sup>96</sup> Howells, interview, November 20, 2006.

<sup>97</sup> Webb, "A History of Student Activism at Santa Cruz," 20.

the research orientation of the university and its participation in war-related projects."<sup>98</sup> In a letter addressed to the faculty, Chancellor McHenry warned that any faculty member taking part in the strike or refusing to teach their assigned classes would be fired in accordance with the board of regents' policy.<sup>99</sup> Despite the warning, however, UCSC faculty supported students' protests admirably. "There was general agreement that students could miss class and still get academic credit while the campus was basically almost shut down during the demonstrations. I think we actually bent over backwards to support that."<sup>100</sup>

On February 1<sup>st</sup>, 1969 UCSC's Third World Political Alliance (TWPA) organized a rally followed by a boycott of classes. About twelve hundred students, faculty and community members met in the Cowell dining hall to discuss the inclusion of ethnic studies into the curriculum.<sup>101</sup> In a front-page article and following advertisement in *The Santa Cruz Sentinel*, the chairman of the conservative group Taxpayers for Higher Education (THE), Chuck Grimshaw, planned to save the chancellor from student revolt. He accused UCSC's "red-oriented Third-World Liberation Front" of planning "to harass and intimidate Chancellor Dean McHenry at his home on UCSC campus... the usually ridiculous, non-negotiable demands."<sup>102</sup> Speaking for the Santa Cruz community, he claimed that College Seven was their college, that "we don't want a Malcolm X College"

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid, 20.

<sup>99</sup> "Concerning the Strike," Stevenson Libre, Year 1, Issue 6, 1.

<sup>100</sup> Frager, interview, November 18, 2006.

<sup>101</sup> Berdge, Solomon's House, 124-5.

<sup>102</sup> Chuck Grimshaw, "Good People Get Involved," *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, February 3, 1969, 9. Advertisement brought to author's attention by Ronald J. Webb's "A History of Student Activism at Santa Cruz," 36.

and "we want this college turmoil to stop now."<sup>103</sup> In response to the rumor, a large posse of Santa Cruz residents met at the base of the campus to rescue the chancellor.<sup>104</sup>

On February 5<sup>th</sup>, 1969 "a general boycott of classes was urged" to facilitate discussion of organizing the ethnic studies program and "alternate education seminars."<sup>105</sup> During the boycott students were given their choice of more than twenty-five workshops, covering such interests as women's liberation, student power, the ethnic experiences, politics, and the church. During the afternoon, a rally at Stevenson was held in which student Barry Fader poured a gallon of Red Mountain wine on the courtyard "to baptize the therefore nameless expanse of cement as the 'Che Guevarra Plaza."<sup>106</sup>

A second student strike was also called after the May 15<sup>th</sup> People's Park Massacre in Berkeley occurred. As police forcibly removed homeless people from the lot and as UC Berkeley students came to protest the action, some protestors began to throw rocks and bottles resulting in the police using teargas and guns. The resulting chaos ended in one death and 116 people wounded.<sup>107</sup> The next day two UC Berkeley students came to UCSC and narrated the event as a rally-cry.<sup>108</sup> UCSC students who joined the People's Park Negotiating Committee issued five strike demands, including having University of California and law enforcement agents involved compensate for their overreaction by paying the victims' medical and legal expenses and face possible prison time.<sup>109</sup> These

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<sup>103</sup> "Silent Majority Urged to Face UC Dissidents," Santa Cruz Sentintel, February 3, 1969, 1.

<sup>104</sup> Webb, "A History of Student Activism at Santa Cruz," 36.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid, 37-38.

<sup>106</sup> Berdge, Solomon's House, 126.

<sup>107</sup> Webb, "A History of Student Activism at Santa Cruz," 43-44.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid, 44.

<sup>109</sup> Strike Coordinating Committee, "Strike Demands," The City on a Hill Press, May 23, 1969, 1.

particularly unrealistic demands were emotional reactions to the People's Park Massacre and UCSC as a whole supported them throughout the strike. On May 22<sup>nd</sup>, Chancellor McHenry announced that classes would be cancelled for Monday the 19<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday the 20<sup>th</sup>, the days of the strike, and "encouraged faculty and students to 'engage in meaningful dialog' and avoid all violence."<sup>110</sup> As campus police began issuing restraining orders to the strikers, students added a demand for McHenry to repeal them.<sup>111</sup> Students picketing at the kiosk near the main entrance chanted "On strike! Shut it down!" and confronted drivers trying to enter the campus by engaging them in a discussion of university policy.<sup>112</sup> The strike ended a week later and debates between moderates who felt the strike had been a waste of time and radicals who refused to end it until their demands were met led to the creation of the Santa Cruz Radical Union.<sup>113</sup>

The National Student Strike of 1970 was almost exclusively a response to the announcement of the invasion of Cambodia and Laos on April 30, 1970 and the protest and subsequent shootings of college students at Kent State University in Ohio. According to Stevenson student Ronald Webb, the shootings at Kent State triggered UCSC students for a campus-wide strike.<sup>114</sup> San Jose State University responded by gathering student representatives from across the country "to plan a national strategy" although most of their time was wasted trying to form a national protest.<sup>115</sup>

Although not a genuine strike, earlier in January 1970 a group of UCSC students

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<sup>110</sup> Webb, "A History of Student Activism at Santa Cruz," 51.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid, 53.

<sup>112</sup> Charles Stern, Michael Stusser, and Andrew Wilson, Begonia Festival, Santa Cruz, CA (n.p., 1969), video, 10 min.

<sup>113</sup> Webb, "A History of Student Activism at Santa Cruz," 54.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid, 75.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid, 83.

set up "a pair of geodesic domes... to begin to build a viable community from the ground up."<sup>116</sup> A documentary showed students from SFSU, UC Berkeley and Stanford University staying in the ecologically friendly units. The builders (still visibly intoxicated) described the project as a new way of living and that although the administration "[doesn't] believe in anarchy... we do."<sup>117</sup> The commune, while lasting only a few months, was a truly creative expression of political and ecological disagreement as students tried to set up their own ideal society.

Among the colleges, Cowell, Stevenson and Crown voted within their college to strike. Few Merrill students attended their strike meeting and those who did were deadlocked over what to focus on.<sup>118</sup> The faculty of College V said they couldn't officially support the strike but would participate, and College V students formed a Draft Committee collecting draft cards for the national turn-in.<sup>119</sup> J. Herman Blake criticized the students for not being seriously active in their protests. According to faculty member Robert Frager, Blake got up in front of them called them "a bunch of white, middle-class kids" and their protests were just their "equivalent of spring panty raids."<sup>120</sup> Protesting on campus, according to Cowell student Catherine Howells, had always seemed pointless: "like preaching to the choir... we already agree with you."<sup>121</sup> UCSC students' protests were not changing anyone's opinions.

One major off campus protest was made on Wednesday, May 13<sup>th</sup> when "440

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid, 64.

<sup>117</sup> Dome City, UCSC, Santa Cruz, CA (n.p., 1969), video, 10 min.

<sup>118</sup> Webb, "A History of Student Activism at Santa Cruz," 70.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid, 79.

<sup>120</sup> Frager, interview, November 18, 2006.

<sup>121</sup> Howells, interview, November 20, 2006.

students and sympathizers gathered at the courthouse" to prevent a groups of drafted men from leaving on army buses bound for Oakland.<sup>122</sup> Activists put nails under the tires, sat down in front of the buses and blocked the street with pipes.<sup>123</sup> By far the most well received achievement from the 1970 student strike was the UCSC delegation sent to Washington, D.C. Faculty members David Thomas and Lawrence Chenoweth, along with several students, traveled to Washington, D.C. "to lobby with the Congress to stop the invasion of Laos."<sup>124</sup> With the help of a Quaker group they lobbied for the ten days for the repeal of the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, "supporting the Cooper-Church and McGovern-Hatfield amendments establishing deadlines for ending the war, and against increased military spending."<sup>125</sup> All of these events demonstrate that "Santa Cruz was not the 'riot-proof campus' which students accused of administrators of trying to plan,"<sup>126</sup> and if anything, the uniqueness of the campus and its goals convinced many young people to test the waters of student activism at the experimental university.

### **Conclusion**

Many other events occurred in this period,<sup>127</sup> although UCSC's longest battle was for the college mascot: the banana slug. Students "were always reminded that Cowell College and UCSC were to be different, unique, [and] experimental,"<sup>128</sup> so their mascot had to be equally unique. Students adopted the banana slug in 1965 to protest the

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<sup>122</sup> Webb, "A History of Student Activism at Santa Cruz," 85.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid, 86.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid, 78.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid, 87.

<sup>126</sup> Berdge, Solomon's House, 128.

<sup>127</sup> Read Ronald J. Webb's "A History of Student Activism at Santa Cruz" for more events.

<sup>128</sup> Berdge, Solomon's House, 44.

competition of other universities.<sup>129</sup> They didn't want a mascot and only chose the banana slug after biology students studying native creatures discovered the impressive sexual behavior of the banana slug: "so we decided that would be a great mascot,"<sup>130</sup> according to UCSC student Catherine Howells. The administration refused to use the slug, so UCSC students protested by continuing to refer to themselves as banana slugs until a popular vote in 1986 convinced the chancellor to adopt the banana slug as the official mascot.<sup>131</sup> In May 2004 *Reader's Digest* named the banana slug the best college mascot.<sup>132</sup> UCSC's legacy has always been non-conformity, but the forces of traditional university culture have chipped away at its greatness. The power of the colleges have been sublimated by academic departments, class sizes have swelled, letter grades are replacing the pass/fail system and professors are focusing more on research than teaching, all in accordance with UC policy. The official motto of UCSC is "Fiat Slug,"<sup>133</sup> and for the survival of UCSC's original ideals, let there *always* be slug.

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<sup>129</sup> J.C., UC Santa Cruz - Campus Mascot, November 03, 2006. <http://www.ucsc.edu/about/campus-mascot.asp>.

<sup>130</sup> Howells, interview, November 20, 2006.

<sup>131</sup> J.C., UC Santa Cruz - Campus Mascot, November 03, 2006. <http://www.ucsc.edu/about/campus-mascot.asp>.

<sup>132</sup> "America's 100 Best: Best Mascots," *Reader's Digest*, Vol, 164 No. 985, May 2004, 141.

<sup>133</sup> A parody of the University of California's official motto "Fiat Lux," meaning "let there be light."

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