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A Life of Learning and Teaching at the University of California, Santa Cruz, 1965-2000

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<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/24z7r5bh>

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Regional History Project, UCSC Library

Publication Date

2012

Supplemental Material

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/24z7r5bh#supplemental>

JOHN DIZIKES:
Reflections on
A Life of Learning and Teaching
at University of California at Santa Cruz
1965 - 2000



Founding Faculty

Provost of
Cowell College

Founder and
Professor Emeritus
of American Studies

An Oral History
Interviewed and Edited by
Cameron Vanderscoff

for the Regional History Project
UC Santa Cruz Library
2012

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John Dizikes, Ph.D

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Introduction

John Dizikes first saw UC Santa Cruz when it was still rolling hills and the buildings were only artist's renderings. He agreed to stake his career on this new, untried campus because he understood the vision of UCSC as a place where higher education would be reformed and teaching would be a priority—and he followed through on the gamble, coming here as one of UCSC's founding faculty in 1965. In his ensuing thirty-five-year career at UC Santa Cruz, he was a professor of history, a professor and co-founder of the American Studies Department, a provost of Cowell College and chair of the Council of Provosts, and throughout and above it all a dedicated educator and an ongoing student.

His own educational exploration carried him all the way from his rural childhood in Utah to a Harvard doctorate, and then on to his career at UCSC, where he made a name for himself as, above all, a teacher who made it his goal to engage with students and inspire them, in turn, to carry out their own explorations. His long-term involvement at UCSC as a teacher, a provost, a thinker and an ongoing student of culture and history has given him a unique vantage point on the evolution of the university as an institution and education as not just a single class or a curriculum, but as an ongoing pursuit, built on conversation, interchange of ideas, personal initiative and encouragement.

John was born in 1932 and raised in Draper, Utah, in a Greek-speaking immigrant family in the heart of Mormon country. His father had emigrated from Greece at the age of eleven, and worked their chicken farm with his grandfather. In spite of the fact that neither of his parents finished high school—his mother went through the 11th grade, his father through 5th—he lived in a house where a broad range of interests and discussion were normal parts of life. His father had a love of sports, and his mother a love of arts—rather than view these as mutually exclusive categories and make a choice between the two, John began to form a mentality that would later coalesce into a philosophy of “don't subtract—add.” As a child in Utah, he used his radio—his “contact with the outside world”—both to follow Joe DiMaggio's 1941 hitting streak and to stay tuned to weekly Metropolitan Opera broadcasts. This approach to life and thinking, of viewing diverse areas of knowledge and interest as cumulative and mutually illuminating rather than

mutually exclusive or limiting continued to inform his thought, his teaching and his publications in later years.

It was clear to him from an early age that he wanted to be a teacher. Having grown up in a Greek immigrant family surrounded by Mormons, John came to have an impression that his community was not “typical” of America, and he gradually developed a fascination with what it meant to be ‘American.’ This, coupled with his family’s love of conversation, gave him a drive to have an intellectual life of ideas and interchange, and in particular to help “explain” who he was as an American through the study of history.

John relates that a key facet of his path to teaching was the encouragement he received. Throughout his young life, the support of family and teachers gave him a motivating compass and inspiration to go farther and do more. His parents never prioritized money as a primary goal for him—the family was poor, but they didn’t view finances as the most fulfilling part of a life or a career, and were supportive of what their children wanted to do, regardless of monetary rewards. They ultimately left Draper, and then Utah altogether to move to the Los Angeles area in order to give John and his brother more opportunities and support them in their ambitions.

After graduating Duarte Union High School in California, John made plans to start work to help support his family and assumed he would have to postpone college, but a school counselor encouraged him to go to Pasadena City College part-time—a possibility that had never crossed his mind. He started at Pasadena City College the following fall, working as a clerk for as many as 40 to 48 hours a week and completing a two-year associate degree in three years, a length of time he felt was quite reasonable. The local draft board disagreed, arguing he hadn’t made “normal progress,” and John was inducted and served in the Army at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. Following his two years in the military he utilized the GI Bill to fund an education at UC Los Angeles. He studied history, taking classes from Dean McHenry, Bill Hitchcock and Page Smith, forming connections that would be renewed and deepened through UC Santa Cruz. He earned his Bachelor’s Degree and, due to the encouragement of Page Smith and other faculty—left to his own devices he would have started his teaching credential, he’d never considered going for a doctorate—he stayed on at UCLA for his graduate studies. Again at the inspiration of Page Smith and his colleagues, and through their influence and support, he

went to Harvard to finish his doctorate. His thesis, on the British opinion of the New Deal, ultimately became his first book¹.

The key factor in this journey to Harvard was encouragement. The pivotal figures in his young years took the time to talk with him and suggest alternatives and, in doing so, opened new horizons that helped him change the course of his life. They gave him crucial fuel that drove him beyond his conceptions of what was possible for him, of what he would do, could do and where he would go.

After graduating Harvard and a brief tenure teaching history at the University of Connecticut, John accepted an offer from Page Smith to come as one of UCSC's founding history professors in its pioneer year, 1965. In this oral history John details the exceptional energy and character of the early faculty, and the general aura of experimentation and excitement that attached itself to UCSC, both in the sense of educational reform and cultural fermentation. John has a lasting investment in the campus and the changes it has gone through—as a pioneer faculty member, he has a great admiration for UCSC's original distinctive characteristics, in particular the collegiate system and the narrative evaluation system. However, he reached the zenith of his involvement with Cowell College and the university as a whole when he was provost and chair of the Council of Provosts, at a time when the university was undergoing a centralization led by Chancellor Robert Sinsheimer, and the very collegiate system he loved was being drastically eroded. In retrospect, between the dismantling of the colleges and the cessation of the pass/fail grading system in favor of letter grades, John argues that the university today has very little to distinguish itself from the other UCs—in the ongoing institutional dynamic between the traditional and the non-traditional, the former has become the dominant force here.

Beyond the larger changes in the institution as a whole, John provides his history on how this insular campus on the hill was shaped by broader social dynamics, including the Vietnam War and student protest. He has an intimate perspective born of his propensity for engagement with students and his explicit drive to pass on the

¹ His complete books are; *Britain, Roosevelt, and the New Deal: British Opinion, 1932-1938*, *Sportsmen & Gamesmen*, *Opera in America: A Cultural History*, *Yankee Doodle Dandy: The Life and Times of Tod Sloan*. He also has a book on American women poets that has not yet been published.

encouragement that was so pivotal in his own life. In the late 60s, students concerned about the draft and aware of his time in the Army utilized him as a resource for discussions about the ethics of fighting or not fighting in Vietnam. Like his own parents, he avoided placing confining expectations—he placed a primacy on personal will and freedom of choice. “Do I think, if you want to go to Canada, it’s traitorous and dishonorable?” he relates he told students. “No, I don’t think so. You have to decide. You yourself.” Indeed, this oral history demonstrates that, throughout his career, he maintained an accessibility and openness relative to students. He says that he has “six words of wisdom;” “I don’t know” and “look it up.” These words, while simple on the surface, demonstrate a willingness to be direct with students, to go about teaching as a modest and honest process. He denies that he is an “expert” in anything, a statement that runs counter to the expectations of academics to be specialists—instead, he favors breadth over depth, pursuing a wide range of interests. The American studies major he co-founded was grounded in this eclecticism, this approach to academia and learning with a wide net, including traditional history, but also literature, social studies, the arts, architecture and sciences. The expansive scope of this major allowed both John as a teacher and his students to approach American life with an eye to connections between diverse areas of study.

John relates that throughout his career, when faced with the choice between being an author to further his discipline and a teacher to connect with students, he consistently chose the latter, a move that cost him his first bid at tenure and functioned as a willing rejection of a more traditional career path focused on writing and academic conferences. His interests lay elsewhere. His love of teaching, a pursuit that he argues is sometimes disparaged in academic circles focused on publishing and grants, came to define his time at UCSC and gained him a reputation among students and peers as a professor with a willingness to not just lecture, but teach with an eye to generating conversations and inspiring students to their own further studies. He is a passionate defender of the narrative evaluation system because of what he characterizes as its potential to start interchanges with students, to engage with them in all of their passions and interests and shortcomings, instead of lumping them together under an arbitrary mark of ‘A,’ ‘B’ or ‘C.’

John's career, in spite of—or, in the end, because of—his prioritization of teaching has received remarkable recognition. His passion for students, his understanding that the teacher-student dynamic can be a reciprocal and mutual one, was one of the factors that led to the Humanities-wide teaching award named in his honor in 2002. The John Dizikes Teaching Award is given annually to one teacher in all of the Humanities, based on their ability to “arouse curiosity in students, encourage high standards and to stimulate students in original and rigorous work.” Beyond the Dizikes Teaching Award, his ongoing involvement with Cowell College and his promotion of the arts has led to a series of annual Dizikes concerts. The college's academic essay prize, awarded annually to an undergraduate student, and student art display cases are named for him; they are the John Dizikes Writing Prize and the Dizikes Cases, respectively.

As an emeritus, he stays engaged in the UCSC campus. Several days a week he takes the bus up the hill to campus to get his mail and walks back down, and remains a presence at Provost House events, 28 years after stepping down as provost and eleven years after retiring.

I interviewed John over there days in November 2011 in the living room of his Arts-and-Crafts style home on King Street in Santa Cruz, which is surrounded by gardens and adorned with a historical plaque marking the year of its construction, 1919. I came to interview him through a winding process. In spring of 2011, I won the Dizikes Writing Prize. In spite of the fact he had retired well before I came to UCSC as a freshman in 2007, I was aware of his reputation as a teacher, and had briefly met him at a reception hosted by Faye Crosby, the current provost of Cowell, at the provost house. I asked Faye if she could arrange a second meeting with John, since I'd enjoyed our short encounter and wanted to continue our conversation. We sat down over the summer and had a wonderful exchange—in spite of the fact I was essentially a stranger, a random student he had no connection or obligation to, he welcomed me into his house and talked with me for an hour. I was struck by his friendliness, perceptiveness and ease, and the presence of a rare balance of qualities—he is both an informed, interesting speaker and a respectful, attentive listener. When I asked him his advice about whether or not he regarded history graduate school as a worthwhile endeavor, he told me, both then and in our later interviews, “I never said to anybody, ‘Go,’ or ‘Don't go.’ But if you want to try it, if it's

important, try it for year. Don't reach the age of thirty and say, "I wish to hell I had gone and tried it, I'll never know." This open-minded encouragement, in which he aimed to help me understand myself without imposing his own views over mine, proved to be a consistent part of his personality and philosophy when we later conducted the interviews. A few months later, in the fall of 2011, Faye told me that, while many founding faculty had been interviewed by the McHenry Library's Regional History Project, John had not yet given an oral history. She invited me to conduct one. I researched the existing oral histories conducted by the Regional History Project, and studied their topics and conversations, particularly those pertaining to UCSC and Cowell College history.

Based on this research and my readings, I prepared questions and provided them to John. We met and added some questions and scheduled a series of meetings. This document provides a transcript of these meetings. The tape is also archived—to get the full context of the interview, I strongly recommend listening to the tape as you read along, it adds a wonderful color and character to the text. In our interviews, John had an easygoing sense of humor and tangible and infectious delight for academics, characteristics that are particularly clear on the audio. He closes out this record with a reminder that, beyond the changes in the university, a larger community has been created here in Santa Cruz, and he has been fortunate to have been a part of it with his family and his wife, Ann. After the recording was shut off at the end of our last session, in which he expressed the view that UCSC has become homogenized with the rest of the UC system, he further clarified his abiding gratitude for his time here. He emphasized that in spite of his attitudes relative to the university's growth, it has been a profound privilege for him to live and work at UCSC, and to have been not only a professor, but to be "Ann's husband" and a part of her own experience of Santa Cruz.

Our interviews were held on November 2nd, 7th, and 8th, 2011 and I transcribed them verbatim from the master recording, reviewed and edited them for clarity and subdivided the transcript and audio into topic sections. John has reviewed the transcript and made edits and explanations that have been included in the final draft. In places where I felt additional clarification would be helpful I have added footnotes. I have included these primarily for basic biographical details, and for links to other oral histories

conducted by the Regional History Project, which were essential in the creation of this record and provide varying perspectives on many of the issues discussed here.

There are copies of this oral history archived in the stacks and Special Collections of the McHenry Library at the University of California, Santa Cruz.

This project was facilitated by the help of a key group of people—I would like to thank Katie Linder and Tony Stark for their gracious logistical assistance in this process. Furthermore, I'd care to acknowledge the two people who were essential to the project lifting off the ground; first, Provost Faye Crosby, for thinking of me for this wonderful task, and her continued support and assistance throughout—her commitment to Cowell and its community of students, teachers, staff and emeriti made this history possible. A huge thanks is also due to Irene Reti, Director of the Regional History Project, for her indispensable guidance and expertise on interviewing and transcription procedures, and her patience in answering my many questions. And, in close, thank you to John and Ann Dizikes, for opening their home to me.

-Cameron Vanderscoff

Interviewer

December 2011

From Rural Utah to a Harvard Doctorate

Cameron Vanderscoff: It is Wednesday, November 2nd, [2011] we are at John Dizikes' house on King Street in Santa Cruz and we are conducting part one of his oral history. My name is Cameron Vanderscoff, and I will be conducting the interview. John is here with us. With that, let's get started. What made you want to be a teacher?

John Dizikes: Well, that's the—curiously, the ultimate 64 million dollar question. I'm not sure what made me want to be a teacher. I grew up in a family that had very little education. My father came from Greece when he was eleven, he'd gone through the fifth grade, my mother left high school in the—I think the 11th grade—but they were very interested in contemporary affairs. My father would bring magazines home—he worked as a night watchman many years—and so we read and talked about things. I had an older brother who was not very interested in politics, but I was, my father and mother were, and I was a bookish student. I was good at school, I liked school, they encouraged me of course, always, and I think I just assumed—since I did not know what it would be to become a lawyer, or a doctor—I assumed I would be a teacher. That seemed agreeable, and it always did seem agreeable, because you're dealing with ideas, with people, with things I cared about. So I think it was just an assumption that was never very seriously questioned thereafter, and later on, when I became a little more sophisticated and went on to college, I tried different subjects. Literature was a great interest; the classics were an interest, psychology—. But I knew I didn't do science, wasn't a mathematician, and that what I really wanted was American history because it helped explain who I was—or am.

Vanderscoff: Right.

Dizikes: So I think it was partly the circumstances in which I grew up, and the fact that many, many students have come to understand, and that is if you want some kind of intellectual life—that sounds pretentious, but a life where you talk about ideas with people, and things, not professional, not commercial, teaching is what you have in American culture.

Vanderscoff: To really get some sort of engagement.

Dizikes: Yeah, sure. I think so. I mean as far as—I grew up in Utah, we lived on a farm, my grandfather and father farmed the farm, we were the only non-Mormons in the little town.

Vanderscoff: Really?

Dizikes: Draper, Utah, in which I grew up. And I was always conscious of being odd. I never had any problems at school, I liked school, people were polite, but I didn't have any friends, I never went to anybody's house. I was a very different person, a different name; I had a different religion, a different language, because we spoke Greek at home. My father and mother would always say, "Oh well, some day you'll leave here and you'll go out into the world and you'll see what the world is like, New York City, Europe," who knows where. And so I always had this idea that eventually, maybe I would be able to travel around the world and learn something about the world, and learn what it was to be American.

Vanderscoff: So that all held a certain glamour, to you?

Dizikes: Yes, I think so.

Vanderscoff: Growing up in a rural setting, as you did.

Dizikes: Yes, excitement and glamour, that's right, an interest. I would listen to the Saturday afternoon Metropolitan Opera broadcasts on the radio. The radio was my contact with the outside world. I would listen to baseball and sports; I remember avidly following Joe DiMaggio's fifty-six-game hitting streak in 1941, I was nine years of age then. And so it was my connection with the outside world, and I understood that the world we lived in right there—Greek, Mormon, immigrant, Utah—was not typical of

America, whatever that meant. So I think, partly, I became a teacher of American history to find out what it was to be American.

Vanderscoff: In some sense discovering your own larger context.

Dizikes: Yes, exactly.

Vanderscoff: As the son of an immigrant in this country.

Dizikes: This is very common with enormous numbers of people who are from immigrant families, so there's nothing unusual about it. Maybe what was a little unusual was that we were Greeks, and the Catholics, the Serbs, whoever—these other little groups whom I never met, living in their own little ghettos in Salt Lake City—they were odd elements, in what was also an odd element, that is, Mormon culture.

Vanderscoff: Right, so you were a subset of a subset.

Dizikes: A subset of a subset. And so again, I realized that some day I would find out what Americans were like.

Vanderscoff: So you always felt some sort of draw to understand what was going on outside of your own community?

Dizikes: Yes, undoubtedly. That's right.

Vanderscoff: So hence, academics.

Dizikes: Hence academics. And I always assumed for years, quite understandably, that I would be a high school or junior high school teacher, and that seemed to me very attractive. I knew right away that meant that I would never make very much money, but that didn't—honestly, though our family was very, very poor, that didn't make any

difference. And my parents never, ever said, “Oh, you must become this, that or that to make more money.” That was not what their primary concern was for me, or for anyone else as a matter of fact. Whatever it was I would do best and wanted to do was what they wanted me to do.

Vanderscoff: So they were essentially quite supportive.

Dizikes: Oh, always, tremendously. Indeed, supportive in a very special way; that is, they never presumed to give me directions or tell me intellectually where I ought to go. They assumed I would find my own way so that I was freed of that kind of external pressure that I came to realize many college students felt. Their parents sent them to college, but with quite specific expectations about what they were doing. I had none of that. Whatever I chose to do, God knows what it might have been, my parents would have been highly supportive.

Vanderscoff: So what was your initial impetus to leave the farm, where did you go?

Dizikes: We moved into a suburb of Salt Lake City, and then moved to Los Angeles, because my father—though all his siblings and other relatives lived in Utah—my father felt that my future and my brother’s future would be very circumscribed there, and he wanted to get us out into a larger world. So we moved to Los Angeles and it was a revelation for me. I was in the 11th grade. We moved to East Los Angeles, Garfield High School, which was in a mixed Latino, Anglo, Jewish neighborhood and culture, and it was very exciting for me.

Vanderscoff: Well, coming from—.

Dizikes: Yes, coming from Mormon Land, which was—and I want to emphasize that we had very fine relations personally, but they were always absolutely distant, and we were always aware that we were regarded as odd characters, as we regarded them.

Vanderscoff: As Gentiles, in some sense.

Dizikes: Yes, that's right, the only place where Jews can be Gentiles.

Vanderscoff: (Laughs)

Dizikes: You know, we were all Gentiles, and they were all strange in what they believed, though as individuals they were very decent and polite and friendly, but there was no social—.

Vanderscoff: There was a certain inevitable larger disconnect going on.

Dizikes: Oh, tremendous.

Vanderscoff: So, you're in Los Angeles, you graduate high school, where do you go from there?

Dizikes: We moved to Arcadia in the 12th grade, I moved year after year after year, I only went two years to the same school once in that period of time. And I always thought it was good preparation for American culture, since you're always on the move. I didn't know it at the time. And then I graduated from high school, and we had bought a house in Arcadia, my older brother went to work, I went to work. I got a job working for the Department of Justice as a clerk in Los Angeles from four in the afternoon to midnight, and I enrolled in Pasadena City College in the morning and early afternoon. So I went to Pasadena from 9:00 to 2:00, 2:30 to 3:00, and rode the bus downtown and worked until midnight, and I did that for three years. And at the end of three years I got my AA² degree, because I'd finished two years in three years and I thought I was doing quite well to do that. But I got a letter from the Alhambra draft board—I had registered for the draft at eighteen, Korean War was on—informing me that I had not made normal progress. And of course, it wasn't normal; in this instance it took me three years to do two years.

² Associate of Arts Degree

And I went to the draft board, and I remember rather plaintively I said to this little group of people, “Well, I think I’ve done pretty well to do that. You know, working 40 and 48 hours a week sometimes.” And they said, “Oh, right, but it isn’t normal progress, and so you’ll be inducted,” and I was then inducted in the Army. And I went and served two years in the Army. I came and did my basic training at Fort Ord, and then I went to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, where I was assigned, the artillery center of the American military culture—Lawton, Oklahoma. And I spent the next twenty-one months at Lawton, Oklahoma. And at the end of which time I came back and I had the GI Bill, because in those days the citizens, taxpayers, rewarded servicemen very handsomely. I had the GI Bill, and in fact I did better with the GI Bill than I would have been able to do had I tried to save money for college, because I was helping the family, and I didn’t make very much—couldn’t have made very much. Anyway, I then went to UCLA as a junior and senior. I have this very broken and odd academic career, it’s by no means a direct line to anything.

Vanderscoff: A bit patchwork.

Dizikes: Patchwork, ultimately patchwork. And at UCLA I encountered faculty members who impressed me enormously—Page Smith³, teaching American history. I took his American colonial history class, and it was a wild and wonderful class, and it introduced me to a different level of higher education. The years of Pasadena were first-rate. I had very fine instructors there, but here at UCLA there was an added excitement, sophistication, a broader emphasis, and the students, who were surprising to me because 10% were very engaged and lively and everything, and 90% were out to lunch most of the time (laughter). The students surprised me. When I first went into an American class on the history of the West by a once-distinguished American historian at UCLA named John Caughey, who had resigned in an anti-McCarthy protest because he wouldn’t sign

³ For Page Smith’s perspective on early UCSC history, see Elizabeth Spedding Calciano, Interviewer and Randall Jarrell, Editor, *Page Smith: Founding Cowell College and UCSC, 1964-1973*, (Regional History Project, University Library, 1996), at <http://digitalcollections.ucsc.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/p265101coll13/id/3479>

the loyalty oath in 1950 that was required; and he was fired. When the state Supreme Court ruled that was unconstitutional he was brought back in, and he was teaching this class, and admittedly, he was not a dynamic and exciting lecturer, and you found that in a very large classroom, the students who were very interested sat down in the front. And I came in the first day of class from Oklahoma and found about a hundred young men and women sitting in the back of the room, reading newspapers and playing cards, while Professor Caughey was muttering down in the front (laughter). I thought, “God, this is really a weird circumstance,” but it was amusing and interesting, and I realized that I liked—I’d always liked school. I never skipped class. I later found out how many students only went occasionally to class, and I went to class all the time. The only time I skipped a class was to go the first Dodgers’ game in Los Angeles, in the Coliseum.

Vanderscoff: Oh, when they moved from Brooklyn to LA?

Dizikes: Yes. Now that was a special occasion, so I had to go to that.

Vanderscoff: But other than that, I guess, academia always held a certain inherent interest for you; it wasn’t something you had to try at.

Dizikes: I liked it, I found the subjects interesting. Not uniformly interesting; sociology turned out to be a disappointment, and psychology in some ways. I took a couple of math classes because I thought I ought to learn, and I realized I didn’t have a clue about that, but I was interested in geology and so forth. But the literature and history classes were wonderful, and the instructors, different as they were, were wonderful, and it made me very impatient later with students who would say, “Oh, X is very good, but he’s boring, or she is not really very compelling,” or this or that, and I’d say, “Look, do you like the subject, are you interested? You have a lot to learn, go and listen and learn, it isn’t amusement, it isn’t entertainment.” I’ve really always felt that, because the first few years at UCSC there was an extraordinary fluorescence of very, very dynamic, colorful characters. And they were wonderful teachers in their own way, but that was not a world I was going to inhabit, I was a very ordinary character. I liked to teach, I found that I was

not nervous or concerned about getting up in front and talking with people, but I think partly because for two decades we'd been talking at home about things, and relatives and people would say, "No, yes, disagree, what do you mean, explain what it is." So that seemed to me quite natural. But what I couldn't be was a dynamic—as people now talk about the personalities, the archetypal personalities, all the rest of it. Well, that was remarkable, but that was not essential for learning. And one or two instructors I had at UCLA were, by any reasonable measure, boring—but I was not bored.

Vanderscoff: Right.

Dizikes: I really was not bored. I liked taking notes, I liked listening to them, and I found, on occasion—not often—I could go into their offices and ask questions about aspects. And that made me realize that I belonged in a university, because you have to realize, when I got the GI Bill and came out of the Army and went to UCLA, for a while I wondered, "What will it be like? This is a university, what am I doing here?"

Vanderscoff: Right.

Dizikes: And I found I liked it very much. I commuted for two years from Arcadia, because I couldn't afford to—. But later I rented an apartment and I lived in Westwood, we'll get to that. Anyway, I found undergraduate education very exciting, and one or two wonderful teachers, several, who really encouraged me, and when I was graduating—I didn't go to commencement, because I had a job delivering beer and that was—.

Vanderscoff: A priority (laughs).

Dizikes: Absolute priority (laughter). And so, I was delivering beer while they were commencing (laughter). I was there in spirit and so forth. But several of them encouraged me to apply for graduate school at UCLA in history. I'd never thought—I'd thought I'd then get my credential and start teaching.

Vanderscoff: Right, as per your original plan.

Dizikes: Yes, and they encouraged me very much. I was made a reader in a Russian history class in my senior year, because I had taken the class and done well, and the professor, a man named Fisher, Raymond Fisher, said, “You know, you did very well, you’d be able to read.” And I said, “How could I read people’s blue books⁴?” He said, “You know enough. Read the blue books, and when you have any doubts you bring them to me.” And so I read the blue books with great eagerness and interest. And it helped me understand how students think, and what it is to answer questions, both as a student and as a reader. And so I applied {for graduate study in history}, and I remember Page Smith said to me—I said, “But it’s very late in the year to be applying for next fall.” He said, “Don’t worry about it, you’ll be accepted (laughs).” So I applied, and I did two years in graduate work at UCLA. And that was even more exciting because I then shared an apartment with a friend in Westwood, and I didn’t have to do all the commuting. I did a little extra work, part-time work, because I still needed more, the GI Bill was just barely enough to survive on. I lived very modestly. So, it was very exciting. And then, in the course of the second year, several instructors said to me, “You should go on somewhere else to get a Ph.D.” I’d never thought of getting a Ph.D., but they said, “You really should and you should not do it here, you’ve done your undergraduate work, some graduate work, you need a Ph.D. elsewhere.” And I remember Page Smith said, “Get a form and apply to Harvard.” And I thought, “Sure, okay, I’ll do that,” and then I thought, “I have as much chance to go to Harvard as I have to fly to the moon.” I mean, I’d never been to Boston, I’d been East, while I was working I took the bus and took a three-week tour.

Vanderscoff: A little jaunt.

Dizikes: Yes, yes, it was really fantastic. Anyway, again, the excitement of going to New York, Philadelphia, Washington, the rest of it, but Boston? I’d never been there. Harvard, this remarkable place. And he said, “Well, do apply, come on.” And I got the

⁴ The blank books used in tests and final examinations.

forms and applied, he said, “I’ll talk to people who will write letters for you.” And I guess that April, my second year, I got a form back from Harvard, a small little letter envelope. I opened it and it said, “We’re so pleased you applied, your application is remarkable and we were delighted,” and the rest of it. “Unfortunately, the places have all been taken and we are not able to accept you.” And I was neither surprised nor terribly disheartened, because it had always seemed to me a kind of—not a joke, but a flight of fancy.

Vanderscoff: Sure.

Dizikes: Well, “I’m going to go to Harvard,” sure. Right, okay—okay (laughter). So, a week or two later—I think it was even in May—not Page but another instructor, a younger instructor, who was a wonderful, encouraging teacher, said to me, “What did you hear? Have you heard from Harvard?” I said, “Oh yeah, I got a letter a couple, three weeks ago, they turned me down.” He said, “They turned you down? Oh,” he said. So, the next day Page Smith looked me up. I was in the TA’s room and he said, “You were turned down?” I said, “Yes.” I remember he said, “Goddamn it,” and he threw something down and walked out. And I’m sure they all went to their phones, and phoned the people they knew at Harvard. They never said a word to me, I didn’t—I was still finishing up the year. And about a month later came a big, bulky envelope (laughter), and I knew this is probably good news, not bad news. And it said, “We’re so pleased that it turns out there was an opening for you. And you’ve been accepted and must come by September, and this is—.” And so forth and so on.

Vanderscoff: That’s fascinating. So you got into Harvard with this collaborative effort?

Dizikes: Yes, of course. They sent me there, they got me there. I would never have applied or gone on my own or anywhere else. It may sound that I was very unimaginative; why didn’t I think about applying and going somewhere else? Well, A; I had absolutely no money, other than the GI Bill, and where was I going to go? The

University of Chicago? I mean, or Yale or somewhere? What was that all about? It was another world to me.

Vanderscoff: Your scope was still expanding.

Dizikes: Sure, of course. There was UCLA and that was wonderful, and then I guess I decided when I was turned down by Harvard, "I'll stay here and get my Ph.D. at UCLA." "Not ideal," they said, "for the future it'd be better, you know, if you had a Ph.D. from somewhere else," but my God, that would be far more than I ever expected I would do.

Vanderscoff: Right, because you'd already come so far in some sense from—

Dizikes: Yes.

Vanderscoff: —the farm in Utah.

Dizikes: And none of this was involved with, as far as I can recall, any great anguish or stress or anything, it was all opening up and expanding.

Vanderscoff: Rather providential, in some sense.

Dizikes: Yes. So, and then that September I ended up at Harvard and I had a marvelous time there. I made very good friends, I found, again, very interesting faculty, less accessible than at UCLA, but very famous and distinguished people. I ended up auditing a dozen classes that first year by famous instructors in all kinds of subjects because I knew about them, had heard of them, read some of their books and so forth, and it was very exciting. I guess—this will sound perverse, or egotistical, I think—I took a seminar, my American History seminar, from Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. He was a famous name. I had read what he had published already on the New Deal and Franklin Roosevelt, and he was very, very kind, very thoughtful. But I remember in the seminar I was surprised that

the students were not all uniformly brilliant. I thought I would probably be able to do it, to hold my own, but I would be surrounded by people who were extraordinarily brighter than I was. I didn't find that. It turned out that there were a few people who were very much brighter and that was very encouraging, in a way, but I found that I belonged there. I could understand what was being said. I was older, I was several years older than almost all the students who had just come from their BAs, and had applied at twenty-two or twenty-three. I was twenty-eight, twenty-nine, something like that, and I think that also helped me in terms of maturity. I didn't panic about things; I also realized right away that I was not there to try to end up at Harvard. I was there to get a degree and go somewhere else and teach and start my own career. And there was, in Cambridge, as no doubt in New Haven and Berkeley and Chicago, a tremendous sense on the part of many students that they were working, if they could, to stay there, somehow to get a position to do some work, maybe to be able to be employed. And that hardly ever happens, because those institutions bring people in for faculty and they rarely keep their own people. Some, but rarely. But I was free from much of that, and I made a lot of friends in other subjects than American history, and that was a great relief, because I wasn't a part of the whole gossipy network about what was going on and who was doing what. It was an experience. And then—I'll wind this up, this is much too long.

Vanderscoff: Oh no, it's just fine.

Dizikes: Then I took Schlesinger's seminar in history of American science by a brilliant man from Yale named Donald Fleming, who had just come to Harvard as a full faculty member, and that was an extraordinary thing because I knew nothing about the history of American science. Anyway, several of them and Schlesinger in particular said to me—I wrote a paper for him about British attitudes towards the New Deal, using the Harvard archives, sources, the libraries—he said, "That was very good," he liked it. And he said, "If you're interested, you could turn this into a thesis." I said, "Yeah, but wouldn't I probably have to go to England?" He said, "Of course you would have to go to England. Well," he said, "Apply for a Fulbright." I thought, "A Fulbright, how am I going to get a Fulbright?" He just said, "Apply for a Fulbright, will you (laughs)?" Well, I applied, and

I got it. In fact, I got it—the announcement I got my Fulbright—the month before most people did, by which point Kennedy had been elected President, Schlesinger had gone to Washington, and a friend of mine said, “The goddamn Fulbright application probably went right to the White House, approved and sent back (laughter).” I’m joking, but I mean there again it opened up Europe, England. I would go—and so I did.

Vanderscoff: So your horizons continued to expand.

Dizikes: Exactly. Every step of the way people were encouraging and supportive. I only ever had one teacher, from first grade through graduate school, who was not really encouraging.

Vanderscoff: Really?

Dizikes: She was a teacher in high school, in Monrovia, Arcadia—Duarte Union High School—and she taught a class in civics. And I was in the 12th grade, I read newspapers voraciously and the rest of it and listened to radio. She was very conservative in her views, and it turned out within a day or two she would ask students for their opinions about things, and I was the pro-Union, pro-Truman, right? And most of those students, from wealthy, upper class Monrovia, Arcadia families, were amiable and friendly but they didn’t give a damn about politics. So I would be the spokesman. So she would say things, and then she’d say, “Well I suppose we have to hear another view—John, what do you make of this?”

Vanderscoff: Just the token radical (laughs).

Dizikes: And I would do my little thing. And near the end of the academic year, the 12th year, she was very polite, but she was obviously also very critical, she would sometimes say to me, “You get away with a lot because you can convince the students in this room, but don’t you think that your ideas amount to very much, because they don’t, okay?” I didn’t think her ideas amounted to very much, either, because it was just the level of

ordinary political gossip and discussion, but what I do remember is sometime in the spring we took an exam, some kind of IQ exam or college preparatory exam. It was the 12th grade. I wasn't going away to college, but we took it, and the next few days she would call students up to her desk and give you your score and talk to you about it. And when she called me up I remember she said, "You got a very good score. But I don't want you to think that that means you're exceptionally bright, or that you necessarily should go on to college." Well, it wasn't very encouraging, but it wasn't discouraging either. I didn't care what she said, but also I knew I wasn't going on to college until I then realized—one of the counselors said, "You need to work, you'll get a job, go to PCC, Pasadena City College." It'll seem odd to you, but I had never really thought that I could go to junior college as a way of starting college. I was going to have to work and then, someday, maybe I'd go to college. But Miss Bradley was the only teacher who ever discouraged me, and in some funny way, I didn't and I still don't resent it terribly. I just knew she didn't like me.

Vanderscoff: Right.

Dizikes: I didn't like her very much. But we were never impolite. I remember she said, "Don't let this go to your head, your score. You're not as smart as you think." Well, I didn't think I was very smart anyway.

Vanderscoff: So that sort of chimed in.

Dizikes: Yes, but she's the only one, other than that I had never had anybody except people say, "Good work, do more, do this, what about this?" and so forth and so on. And so I went to England, did two years, the Fulbright, came back, and in my last year at Harvard I had met Ann, and I wanted to marry her, but not until I got a job. So I came back and I got several teaching jobs as a teaching fellow at Harvard in classes, and I was writing my thesis. I wrote it a chapter a month and turned it in. Schlesinger was in Washington, but there was another once very well known American historian named Frank Freidel, who'd written a several-volume biography of Franklin Roosevelt. So he

took me over as a Ph.D. student and he was very supportive and kind. I turned in the thing, he accepted it, one day he said to me, “People at the University of Connecticut phoned me, they’re looking for an American historian. It’s a nice place. Would you be interested?” He said right away—he had come from Stanford to Harvard—“Don’t think that you’re going to go back to California, everybody wants to go to California.” But he said, “It doesn’t matter to you, you’re going to spend your life in the library.” I felt like saying, “Well, you were in California (laughter).” Anyway, so he said, “Go down there.” I borrowed a car and drove down to Storrs⁵, met with the committee and had an interview about what I was doing, what my dissertation was, what I wanted to teach. I remember they were very polite and very nice people, and at one moment the head of the department, a very, very wise and sensible person, said, “Now,” he said, “If you should come here—we’re not making any promises—but one of things you should understand is that you’ll have to teach the introductory class, a big class, twice a day, morning and afternoon.” And I said, “Oh, okay.” He said, “Does that worry you, because I don’t know what that would be like.” “That’s interesting,” I said, “I guess the second time that day I’ll know what I’d done wrong the first time. On the other hand, it may be hard to sustain your interest if you’re giving the same lecture again.” But he said, “But here’s the thing,”—I swear to God I’m not exaggerating—and everybody is sitting around the table, he said, “The morning class would be at eight o’clock.” Silence. And I said, “Oh, I like eight o’clock classes.” And I looked around and could see them all smiling (laughter). I’m sure I got the job because I was willing to teach at eight o’clock in the morning.

Vanderscoff: Willing to get up.

Dizikes: And I always did like early morning classes, I used to teach up here {at UCSC} at eight o’clock, and would say to students, “I know you’re grumbling and grouching about coming here, but if you really want to come, here you are, it’ll be a smaller class, and as a teacher I know the people who show up want to be here. If you miss the bus,”—because I’d ride the bus up too—“I understand if you’re five or ten minutes late, just come in and

⁵ Storrs, Connecticut, the central locale of the University of Connecticut

sit down. But the advantage of a morning class is that very few people just wander into it because they don't know what it is, right? Not at eight o'clock in the morning.

Vanderscoff: It's a very quick litmus test.

Dizikes: Yes, absolutely, and I always felt that. And the seminar, the freshman seminar in Cowell, a wonderful class that I taught years and years and years, was nine o'clock, I think, and that for many students was early. We used to teach it in room 224 in the corner on the second floor. We were about twenty-five yards from Adams House and I'd say to them, "You only have thirty yards to go, get up at five to nine and get in here on time." And I tried to be really tough and say, "If it's after nine o'clock, stay away. Don't come barging into the seminar." I had terrific attendance. (Home phone rings; John rises to answer it. The interviewer pauses the tape recorder. The recorder is turned on a few minutes later, as John just begins to discuss his marriage and continues talking about his appointment at the University of Connecticut, and how both events led to his first exposure to UC Santa Cruz.)

The Experiment and its Context: Cowell and UCSC in the Early Days

Dizikes: I got married after I finished, graduated, got my Ph.D. in June of '64. I had proposed to Ann over the phone at Christmas, I flew to England and we got married. And then, after a honeymoon and some time, we came back to Los Angeles so she could meet my parents. They couldn't go to England for a wedding, in those days people didn't just fly all over, there weren't credit cards. Anyway, in the course of my Fulbright years in England, I had kept in touch with Page Smith and a couple of the other people at UCLA. They had sent me a postcard, "How are you doing," and after the first year saying, "We hear you've done well," and so forth and so on. And then Ann and I were to drive to Connecticut in the fall of '64 to start teaching, and we came via Santa Cruz and went to Bonny Doon and spent the night with the Smiths. Page said, "I want to show you and Ann where the college is going to be." So he took us up—there was no Provost House—we stood on the hillside there, he said, "They're going to build a house here, the college

will be there.” We had seen that once quite celebrated photograph of Dean McHenry⁶ sitting at a desk in an open field.

Vanderscoff: Yes, I’ve seen that photo.

Dizikes: To everybody, then, that was Santa Cruz. And he said, “It’s going to be very exciting.” He said, “I can’t make any promises, and I don’t know because I’ll be teaching American History.” And I am sure he had other people in mind, but he said, “In the next two or three years, if there was an opening, would you be interested?” I said, “Of course, it sounds very exciting, I would like—.” “What about Ann?” “She would be happy to come to California,” and so forth. So he said, “Well, keep us in mind, I’ll keep you in mind, and let you know how things go. But just so you’ll know....” And he talked about the college system and what it would be, and especially because Ann had come from an academic background—her father was a fellow of King’s College, Cambridge, her mother was a college teacher—he understood she knew about tutorials, colleges, college culture. And he said, “Would you be—for instance, we’ll have faculty living on campus.” And we said, “Well, that would sound very exciting and interesting,” and so forth. So off we went to Connecticut, and just around Christmas I got a letter from him, and he said, “It turns out that I’m going to be so busy as head of the college I’ll hardly have time to do any actual teaching. Would you be interested in coming next year?” And he said, “Dean McHenry is flying to Boston to interview people. Would it be possible for you to meet him and talk with him?” So I did and he was very encouraging. I had taken a class of his at UCLA. He didn’t know that because it was a big class years before, but he was very encouraging and everything and I got an offer shortly thereafter from Santa Cruz. And the people of Connecticut, the chairman who had hired me, really was very understanding. I said, “I honestly feel,”—when I got the

⁶ Founding chancellor of UCSC, and important force in the planning of the campus. For McHenry’s perspective on early UCSC, see Elizabeth Spedding Calciano, Interviewer and editor, *Dean McHenry*, (Regional History Project, University Library, 1972, 1987) at <http://digitalcollections.ucsc.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/p265101coll13/id/3700>

offer—I said, “I’d like to go, but I really do feel as though I’m letting you down, I’ve just been here for not even a year, I didn’t come with the intention of leaving.” He said, “I understand all of that, I understand about academic life. Look,” he said, “that’s a very exciting thing, and the University of California.” He said, “You know, it’s a big step up in terms of prestige and everything, you’re not letting us down, for heaven’s sake, if you want to go, go.” And that made it much easier for me, because I really felt maybe I should say no and stay at Connecticut. I liked it there, it was a pleasant place, but—so I accepted the offer, and then went to Cambridge, Mass several times and met other people who were coming to Santa Cruz, who were already at Harvard or whatever. Bruce Larkin, who taught politics, Kenneth Thimann⁷, the biologist, who was going to head Crown College, and the Thimanns were very welcoming and friendly and it became very exciting. Even before we got to Santa Cruz we found out other people who were coming.

Vanderscoff: There was a certain ethos about it.

Dizikes: Yes, and there was a lot of publicity, and at the same time several Connecticut friends, Wesleyan and Harvard friends said to me, “It’s the end of your career. You’re going to go there and you’re going to end up doing the plumbing, starting a place. You don’t even know what it’s going to be like, it’s going to be fun and exciting and you’ll disappear, we’ll never hear of you again.” I said, “Well, who knows,” right? But it sounded exciting to me.

Vanderscoff: So, in some sense, other people regarded it as a gamble, relative to academic careers. Did you personally feel there was a high element of risk, in terms of prestige, in terms of your career?

⁷ For Kenneth Thimann’s take on UCSC, see Randall Jarrell, interviewer and editor, *Kenneth V. Thimann: Early UCSC History and the Founding of Crown College* (Regional History Project, University Library, 1997) at <http://digitalcollections.ucsc.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/p265101coll13/id/3382>

Dizikes: Yes, if there was some risk I wanted to take it, because it seemed to me an ideal place to teach. It wasn't until I came here that I really understood a little more fully in terms of my background where I was. I think I had always seen myself, and rightly so, as a person who was going to concentrate on teaching. That didn't mean I couldn't write some. I wrote a Ph.D., maybe I would write a book or two if there were things I wanted to write about, but my emphasis would be on teaching. I should have been thinking about a place like Connecticut, or smaller colleges that emphasize teaching. What was I doing at UC? Well, because Santa Cruz was different. And here I could combine the college that I never went to, in a sense—one of the things I realized was that I was excited about a residential college because I had never been to a residential college. Because you know, I was a commuting student at a big public university and so forth, and so I think I shared some of the excitement and admiration, and also rebuked students who weren't taking it seriously, who took it for granted. It was not to be taken for granted.

Vanderscoff: There was something exceptional going on.

Dizikes: Well of course it was exceptional, and we knew it, and a lot of people felt it. And Page Smith propagated overwhelmingly the idea shared by most of us, to a great degree, that we were now going to help with the reform of American higher education, which had become too impersonal, too large. And here was Clark Kerr⁸, who'd written *The Idea of the University*, and a lot of other people, talking about the fact that university education had—once again, in the big institutions—to become more personal. And that's what was so appealing for me especially, that I would be able to talk to students I had as a TA at UCLA and as a teaching fellow at Harvard. I didn't lecture. I did give classes. But it was mostly, in classes, question and answer and office hours, and that's what I liked, and that's what I felt I did best.

⁸ President of the UC (1958-1967) and central impetus for the creation of UCSC. For more on Kerr, consult Randall Jarrell, interviewer and editor, *Clark Kerr and the Founding of the University of California, Santa Cruz* (Regional History Project, University Library, 1988) at <http://digitalcollections.ucsc.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/p265101coll13/id/3369>

Vanderscoff: So there was some sense that this new experiment, UC Santa Cruz, was part of a larger movement, a part of a larger change in higher education that you were excited to be a part of?

Dizikes: Oh absolutely, very much, and what has to be understood—and this is what McHenry and Kerr and Kenneth Thimann and all of us felt—but what has to be understood; that's what the townspeople felt. The townspeople felt that they were getting Bryn Mawr or a Williams or something, and these very sober, attractive, bright students. We were creating these colleges and everything.

Vanderscoff: This rarefied atmosphere.

Dizikes: We were overwhelmed by the concurrent development of the counterculture. Flower power, the Vietnam War, and all those things while we continued our focus on what we were teaching, we were also tremendously involved in other elements that I think broke the focus for many people about undergraduate teaching. And it became other important aspects; what's the role of the university in terms of American political culture and so forth, and I was sympathetic to the protests about Vietnam, but I was far from being one of the more radical faculty members. And as a matter of fact I think politically all of the way I was regarded very much as—quite accurately—a quite conventional sort of New Deal liberal. I wasn't about to reform the world, overwhelm it—.

Vanderscoff: Center-left, in some way.

Dizikes: Yes, and I had sympathy for and skepticism about the left, the political left. And so I think I also appealed to a lot of students who were uncertain themselves about where they were culturally and politically, because I was essentially quite—as I am—a very conventional person. And for better or for worse, I didn't put people off exactly, but they didn't take my class because they wanted flaming rhetoric about something. I didn't do all of that. I didn't know what I did in class.

Vanderscoff: (Laughs)

Dizikes: I'll be honest with you.

Vanderscoff: It's a bit of a mystery to you, even now?

Dizikes: Oh, it's a tremendous mystery, and I think often, "Thank God I don't have to hear again some of the inane clichés I probably propagated with students."

Vanderscoff: (Laughs)

Dizikes: No, I wonder, I wonder, wonder, wonder all the time, and students often will say, "You know that idea you gave me" about this or that. And I always think, "Good God, I never had any ideas (laughter)." No, really. I was certainly never theoretical in that way. But then, most students are not into high theory and that sort of thing. What I felt from the beginning was I had been encouraged every step of the way, and what I wanted to do was to encourage students. Most students, twenty-four out of twenty-five, need encouragement, even if they don't always think so, or reveal it. Every once in a while there's a guy or a woman who knows it all and comes breezing in, but that's fun. You can then say, "Wait a minute, maybe there are one or two things—could I ask you a few questions about some of this stuff?"

Vanderscoff: It can be reciprocal in some situations, the educational process?

Dizikes: Yes, right. But what do most students need? I remember when I'd read a paper, and with—and the rest of it, criticisms, whatever, I made many comments, underlined everything. But I would almost always emphasize something that was positive. And I'd begin with it; "You write well, on the other hand the development of your ideas is very incoherent" and so forth and so on. And I think most students felt I was honest, serious and encouraging. They could do better. And I'd say to them, "This is good—but for

God's sake don't think—I hope you don't think this is the best you can do. Or the best that is to be done.” And often I'd say to students, “I only understood about half of what you were saying. Do you let other people read it? Have somebody read your paper back to you.” This is, by the way, a very good thing to say to somebody; “Write a paper, and then have somebody else read it to you.” And you listen to this, and you say, “Oh my God, what the hell am I doing (laughter)?”

Vanderscoff: There's been disconnect somewhere.

Dizikes: Yes (laughter). So you see, this is the perfect institutional setting for all of this, and then to have been the first, when it was tiny; that made an enormous difference. I then felt—not that I was naïve and thought the university could always be made up of twelve and fifteen and eighteen students, seminars and very small classes, but the ideal was, as Kerr had said, to keep it intimate in a large institutional setting. And that's what we were trying to do, and with some success.

Vanderscoff: So, certainly a very distinct experience, teaching here at Cowell in those first couple years as compared to teaching at Connecticut.

Dizikes: Oh yes, yes. For one thing, Connecticut was a state university, a small state, where the students—it wasn't residential. There were dorms, but on the weekends everyone went home. I mean, home was only twenty miles away or forty miles away or something. There wasn't a very vibrant culture throughout the week. There were dorms, and I got invited right away by students from one dorm in particular to give a talk.

Vanderscoff: Really? Within the dorms?

Dizikes: Yes, and—you want hear all this?

Vanderscoff: Yes.

Dizikes: This student came to me and said, “We like your American history class, and would you come to dorm such-and-such and have dinner with us and give a little talk? Any subject you want.” I said, “Oh, any subject?” He said, “Yes, please, anything.” I said, “I have a really good lecture on the protective tariff, would you like to hear it?” (Laughter). I remember the guy said—(laughter). I said, “I’m joking, I’m joking. I’ll come and talk about sports,” because I’m interested in sports. So I went along, went to the dorms, and there was a house mother, a dorm mother. She lived in the dorms, four floors, all men, and she greeted me and sat down and gave me something to drink, Seven-Up, or something, and she said, “I’m so pleased you’ve come, it matters so much to us, it’s helping us make up for those troubles we had last year.” I said, “Tell me more, what troubles?” “Oh,” she said, “I don’t want to even talk about it, it was just awful. But we were put on probation. And the way we get off probation is by having six or seven professors come (laughter).” So I said, “Oh well, good work son, doing a good thing. Have me again, I’ll count for two or something like that (laughter).” But you see, that was such a sort of artificial sense of any kind of residential culture. They were doing the best they could, and very bright students and faculty. But Connecticut still, I think, is overshadowed by the big Ivy League powerhouses. Anyway, so I had an idea of what I wanted to do, and Santa Cruz turned out to be far more exciting in many ways than I thought it would be, because it turned out not to be just a city on a hill, but a city involved deeply in the politics and agitation and the culture. And everyone was influenced; Page Smith, the younger faculty. Alas, we had a high incidence of marriages breaking up, because young faculty, only five, six, seven, ten years older than their students, living in the dorms, faculty in each of the dorms. Things happened.

Vanderscoff: Did they?

Dizikes: Oh, did they ever. Sure they did. Stevenson College was an absolute snake pit of desire (laughter). Cowell, once again, was the most conventional, traditional.

Vanderscoff: But none of that went on at Cowell?

Dizikes: When we started at Cowell, there were parietal rules. Men could not be in women's dorms after a certain hour. If you went to a woman's room—I swear to God they had written all this out—you had to be seated with at least one foot on the floor.

Vanderscoff: Stay grounded.

Dizikes: Yes, stay grounded (laughter).

Vanderscoff: Can't make any sudden moves.

Dizikes: No, no (laughter). Well, of course, the first year they lived in trailers, and stuff went on. And I was called at twelve o'clock or one o'clock by the campus police. "Please come up, we found three Cowell students in a woman's trailer, you're in charge of disciplinary action for them" and the rest of it. So I saw these three guys and I said, "Come to my office tomorrow, it's two AM, I'm not going to talk to you now. You knew you shouldn't have been there, right?" They knew it, yeah, yeah. "Well," I said, "I don't know what the hell's going on around, what we're supposed to do." I noticed⁹ Dean McHenry said Cowell was the strictest or most conventional?

Vanderscoff: Yes, he says that in his oral history, characterizing Cowell as the most dogmatic—

Dizikes: Well, because I think we began by thinking maybe we could sustain these regulations and rules, which derived from the men's and women's colleges of the east, right? At Mount Holyoke¹⁰—I went out with a woman from Mount Holyoke—and she said, "We couldn't even smoke in our rooms, you had to smoke and blow the smoke at the chimney, so they wouldn't find you—."

⁹ "I noticed"-in reference to the list of topics and questions provided to John prior to the start of the recorded conversation

¹⁰ A women's college in Massachusetts

Vanderscoff: That's what students do now (laughs).

Dizikes: Do they?

Vanderscoff: Give or take.

Dizikes: You see, I found, of course, all of this to be exotic and weird. I mean, I believed there ought to be some rules and regulations, and anyway, these three students came to me the next morning, and I said, "Look, I don't know what's going on here. I'm supposed to talk to you about disciplinary action, as far as I'm concerned you recognize you made a mistake, you violated the thing, I'm not recommending any punishment, but don't do it again, the second time I will have to do something. Some kind of academic discipline will have to be imposed." But it was all very strange and weird, and as then Stevenson was built and Cowell, more students came in—San Francisco, one of the centers, and Berkeley, right, of political protest, cultural protest—.

Vanderscoff: The SDS¹¹ and all that.

Dizikes: And because we were so backward, several times Berkeley faculty and students came down to agitate and stir us up, and there were some wonderful moments, I have stories, encounters with all of this business as well. And I was sympathetic, but students also found out, a number of them—the men—that I'd been in the Army. Almost nobody else in the faculty—Page had served in World War Two, so had one or two of the others, but most of the senior faculty were younger than that, they hadn't actually been. I'd been in the Army, and for the next few years students, men, would come and talk to me in the most serious way about conscription, the draft, Vietnam—what should they do? And I would say to them, "I'm never going to tell you what to do. But I'll talk honestly to you." And mostly it was, "Why had I gone in the Army?" "Well," I said, "I was drafted, and it was a UN peacekeeping force in Korea. The Russians voted in favor of our going

¹¹ Students for a Democratic Society, one of the main protest organizations of the 1960s

to Korea. This was the first of the united political actions, okay?" I later came to have great skepticism about it.

Vanderscoff: But you did not at the time?

Dizikes: No, I didn't at the time. But on the other hand, I was in the Army for economic and social reasons. I was drafted because I wasn't rich enough to be able to go to a college and maintain my deferment. It wouldn't have been hard to maintain a deferment, all you had to do was do 'C' work, you know what I mean. I thought I had done awfully well, but I ended up in the Army. And the other people in the Army who were from colleges had also had these kinds of experiences where class really mattered if you didn't have money and couldn't stay in. The one guy had had to drop out because of illness in the family for one semester and he lost his deferment, and so forth and so on. So, I was deeply sympathetic to the students, and I could say to them, "Do I think, if you want to go to Canada, it's traitorous and dishonorable? No, I don't think so. You have to decide. You yourself." And two students of my students decided to go in the Army, and they're the ones who are commemorated in the goat¹².

Vanderscoff: The sacrificial goat, yes.

Dizikes: They were both students of mine.

Vanderscoff: Really?

Dizikes: Yes. And the one, Jon Warmbrodt¹³, came in time after time to talk about the morality of fighting, or not fighting, and why he felt ultimately he should go. And it's the

¹² A sculpture in the Cowell courtyard by Jack Zajac. It depicts a sacrificial goat wrenched around a wooden stake in honor of Cowell students Jon Warmbrodt and George Skakel, who died in Vietnam.

¹³ Killed in action in Quang Ngai, Vietnam crossing a known minefield to evacuate wounded companions, for which he was posthumously awarded the Silver Star. For

most tragic kind of story, right? So this was not just, as they say, an academic issue, this was a real issue, and it pertained to people. And I had a colleague, a mathematician, Ted Youngs, come to me. He had been very critical of some of the things I represented in the college. But eventually he came to me and he said, "I have an older son, Bill, whom you know." Bill was a student at Berkeley. I invited him to come down and give a lecture to one of my classes to encourage him; he was very bright, very attractive. The younger brother went to Canada. And the father, the mathematician, came and said, "What the hell do you think I should do?" And I said, "What should you do? Support your son. He took his moral action by going to Canada, and I sympathize with him. What else?" He said, "You don't think it's shameful?" I said, "I think not to raise questions is shameful." He went to Canada and he stayed, he's still, as far as I know, there.

Vanderscoff: As far as you know he's still in Canada.

Dizikes: It's a very livable place. But all of this turmoil, on the other hand, was not irrelevant to how we were studying and what we were learning.

Vanderscoff: Because of course Santa Cruz, as an experimental endeavor, was growing up in this radical political context.

Dizikes: Exactly. And the question was, "What is the meaning of what we are doing?" Why do we read Plato when hell has broken out in Vietnam and elsewhere? And these were issues I was happy to engage, because I said over and over that in my own experience these ideas in these things were the things that were central to the way I lived. Of course I didn't spend my life going around reading Plato and doing other things, I think I was quite grounded in the ordinary world that I grew up in. But it's what mattered to me. And I was a little impatient, I think, rightly so, with students who took for granted that they could come to this place. I thought that they were incredibly lucky to be coming to Santa Cruz, and to have full time study at Santa Cruz.

his Silver Star citation, see <http://militarytimes.com/citations-medals-awards/recipient.php?recipientid=24002>

Vanderscoff: And to get the deferment, right?

Dizikes: Yes, all of that. So I—you know it's the first bona fide college I really attended. How was Cowell different¹⁴? It wasn't very different, except Jasper Rose was a tremendous influence, coming from King's College, Cambridge, in conveying what it was to have a fully integrated college life, college night, college activities, not just in class, but other things as well. Then characters like Mary Holmes¹⁵ were just a godsend, because she was so charming and captivating. And the most crucial intellectual influence the first three or four years was Bill Hitchcock, the lecturer in World Civ, and he was a marvelous lecturer. I'd taken a class from him at UCLA, where he was. He was tremendously unhappy at UCLA, because he was primarily a teacher. He had got tenure, but he was regarded by the faculty as sort of a failure because he had done nothing more, he'd written his dissertation and that was it. And so Page, who knew him well, thought he was ideal for Santa Cruz, and he was for a while. He was a tremendous influence. And students of the first few years—Page, Mary, Jasper, Maurice Natanson¹⁶, Harry Berger¹⁷, yes—but Bill Hitchcock was the captivating central figure for them, those lectures on all sorts of subjects. And they weren't irrelevant, because he would continually refer back to contemporary events. But so did Page, so that there was never a sense there was an academic subject here and everything else is over here.

Vanderscoff: So part of what was going on at Santa Cruz in those early days was sort of a rejection of the notion of academics as the ivory tower?

Dizikes: Yes, absolutely.

Vanderscoff: You were trying to draw some more concrete ties, would you say?

¹⁴ "How was Cowell different?"-Reading from the provided list of topics and questions.

¹⁵ Art historian at UCSC.

¹⁶ Professor of philosophy in the early years at UCSC.

¹⁷ Professor who came to UCSC in 1965, taught culture theory, including art history.

Dizikes: Yes, and I quite sympathized with all of that. It wasn't an ivory tower, but that in this place—which was very much connected with the world—it wasn't separate, it's connected with the world. It's an anti-intellectual thing to think that professors live in this ivory tower, so honestly most of the time we have to deal with the world as it is. But are we fortunate to be able to talk about these ideas and issues and fundamental questions? Absolutely right. And my argument for the students was, "This is a capital investment, I'll put it in language that all Americans can understand, you invest in this and you'll get a payback for the next fifty years of your life. And these are the things that ultimately will engage you, even as much as or even more than the way you make your living, or what your profession is, or what you do." And try it—should I go to graduate school? I never ever said to anybody, "Go," or "Don't go." But I would say, "If it's important to you, if it's a thing you think you might want to do, try it for a year. Don't reach the age of thirty and say, "I wish to hell I had gone and tried it, I'll never know, maybe I could have been a dancer," or whatever it was. And so, it was exciting in reinforcing academic life and breaking down artificial notions about what academic life was.

Vanderscoff: So, you said that there was something unique in the character of the faculty who were coming to this place; it was attracting a certain caliber of people who were passionate about teaching in particular.

Dizikes: Yes.

Vanderscoff: What about the students—relative to the students who you had experience with at Connecticut, your peers at UCLA?

Dizikes: For a few years, judged by scores, we got the top students in the state because it was new and exciting and many of their parents thought, "Aha, not 30,000 people at Berkeley or Los Angeles but this intimate thing." And they were top-flight students. They've always been very good students, because, to a great extent—I don't know that

this is true now, I'm not talking about now, or even the last twenty years, maybe—but for most of the time, they selected Santa Cruz and wanted to come here. I know there were redirects who didn't make it into Berkeley, and many of them flourished here, because it turned out it suited them very much.

Vanderscoff: Right.

Dizikes: And there were lots of students who came because they were put on the college conveyer belt at age twelve.

Vanderscoff: And were shuttled along.

Dizikes: You know what it's like. There it is, right?

Vanderscoff: That's bigger now than ever.

Dizikes: Bigger than ever, fantastically bigger than ever. I mean my God, the stuff I hear from my children and their children and others and all of that. But what I would guess one of the crucial elements—and this, I think, goes back to Page Smith—it took me quite a few years to realize this. But there is, inevitably, in professional life, and not just academic life—medical, legal, whatever, engineering, science—there is a tendency, when you recruit people to want people who share your views. You may say, “Oh I don't care,” but you're sympathetic to certain things you hear, and you do. Page Smith was absolutely unusual because he went out of his way to recruit strong, dynamic people who didn't share his views, some of whose views were very repugnant to him. But he brought in a faculty of people who were very strong personalities and intellectual characters. And it's very, very rare—still—that you find that, and most faculty are sympathetic to people whose views they share, and hence you get departments that are tremendously lopsided in one way or another, right? And it's hard to combat that, because you bring in people you like, who are very bright, and you think they are very bright—they share your views.

Vanderscoff: Naturally.

Dizikes: Naturally. What more do you need? What do you say about the level of character and engagement of your colleagues and students?¹⁸ About the students, I think a good number of students were initially overwhelmed by the place because of the freedom it gave, or seeming freedom it gave, and they wanted direction. And many of the familiar forms of direction didn't exist here in some ways. And I was really aware of the extent to which students got swamped by the place—if they were not determined enough to go knock on a faculty member's door they didn't get very much direction and guidance. And the emphasis on difference, on being unconventional, made many conventional students feel—.

Vanderscoff: A little out of place.

Dizikes: Ill at ease. Out of place. And again students would come to me after a while, eventually, because the office hours that I required of all the freshmen and almost all my students. I required that they come in and see me, because I could understand much more about them in one minute listening and talking with them than otherwise. And many would say, "I don't know what I'm doing here in many ways, I wasn't sure what it would be like."

Vanderscoff: Well of course, no one knew to some extent.

Dizikes: No, they didn't know, and I'd say, "Join the club. I mean, a lot of us don't know what we're doing." But it took—the very shy, retiring students I think had a harder time, especially because the emphasis was on these dynamic, colorful faculty members' 'personality.' And you might say, "Well, gosh, I can write papers and everything, but I'm not a personality." And again I would say most of us aren't. No, truly, not in the way that some of these colorful people were. They were remarkable, and they weren't

¹⁸ "What do you say about the level of character and engagement of your colleagues and students?"-Paraphrasing from the provided list of topics and questions

replaced later on. But other colleges also recruited them, and there were some extraordinary characters everywhere.

Vanderscoff: A certain extroversion—

Dizikes: Yes.

Vanderscoff: —among the faculty in those early days.

Dizikes: Oh very much. And provosts and deans recruiting people because they would be, right? Some of them later then running into trouble because they weren't conventional, academics publishing as they needed to do, there was that whole thing underneath all of this; how would we really fit in with publish or perish?

Vanderscoff: Yes, yeah, I have some questions lined up about that, we'll talk about that probably the next session I think. But, I guess—so, staying with the topic of Cowell in those early days, it seems to me there was a very strong sense of community going on in those early days.

Dizikes: Tremendous.

Vanderscoff: How did that manifest itself, relative to your other experiences?

Dizikes: Every seminar, freshman seminar I ever taught we had them come to the house within the first week or second week in the evening to sit and just talk. Big deal, coming to a professor's house? No. But unusual for many of them. And to say, "You see, this is how we live. You see me up there lecturing, but actually I pick up the paper in the morning, I have to write bills, we have children, we have this and that. Here we are, this is what we do." And also it gave students, in this kind of social setting, often times a much better chance to size each other up than in class, or from dorm to dorm. I don't know how a lot the dynamics of the dorms worked, because I wasn't in them, didn't live

in them. I heard lots about it, but it is true that you learn as much, probably, from your peers as from your instructors. What you learn, of course, depends and varies, and how valuable it would be. And I really was conscious—by the way, this is where the written evaluations were for me an enormous advantage. A tremendous amount of labor went in to them. I used to say, ‘I’ll publish my goddamn evaluations, you want to see why—you want to promote me or not, you want a few hundred thousand words, right?’ I wrote written evaluations for a 150 students at a time and so forth, and I wrote them seriously and tried to say something and again, many times no doubt did not succeed, but often succeeded. And I know in the last forty years, when students come back and talk to me, honestly they often mention evaluations as a way in which they could size up the instructor as well as being sized up by the instructor.

Vanderscoff: It was a mutual process.

Dizikes: Exactly, and shared in the notion that teaching is a mutual process.

Vanderscoff: Right.

Dizikes: And my six words of wisdom, which I think I communicated from early on, I said ‘six words,’ the first three are especially hard for faculty; “I don’t know.” And unless you’ve taught, you don’t know the pressure to feel you ought to know and maybe could sort of suggest you know even if you don’t know.

Vanderscoff: And admit that you do.

Dizikes: Yes, come on. And they expect you to know, for God’s sake. Everything. “I don’t know,” and the next three, “Look it up.” Now it still applies, even in the world you now live in.

Vanderscoff: Sure.

Dizikes: Whatever you do, however you get to it, look it up and make up your own mind about that. But the “I don’t know” was crucial as a way of saying “It is a mutual chance to start develop—.” And one other advantage, and I made a note in the other thing¹⁹ to be sure and say this; I was incredibly lucky here, because though I came to teach American history, had I stayed at Connecticut I would have been the New Deal historian, the 20s and 30s, 30s and 40s, maybe the whole 20th century, but the New Deal—.

Vanderscoff: Working within a certain proscribed niche.

Dizikes: Absolutely. And narrowly proscribed; you do Civil War, and you do Civil War, beginning and end.

Vanderscoff: Those are your four years.

Dizikes: That’s your fate. But here, I taught everything. And one of the important things was I taught with colleagues. What was crucial about the collegiate system for faculty; you had next door to you not another historian but literature, whatever it might be. Not science, they were up there²⁰. It was a division we could never really—

Vanderscoff: Couldn’t quite bridge that.

Dizikes: No, we couldn’t, not even “quite.” And we didn’t do the more dramatic, radical things we might have done. Clark Kerr was more open to that than Dean McHenry was. But anyway, so I had Gabriel Burns in Spanish literature across the way, Mary-Kay Gamel and John Lynch, classics people, a psychologist, sociologist, anthropologist, and it really made a difference. I’d go around, we’d talk, we’d have lunch together, a lot of times in the dining hall, and in the senior common room where we’d have our get-togethers and things. And you really had a sense that we were engaged in a collaborative

¹⁹“I made a note in the other thing”-in reference to the preliminary list of topics.

²⁰ “They were up there”-in reference to science classes and science offices traditionally being housed on Science Hill.

process, even though we didn't often understand much about each other's subjects—and some people understood a lot, were very wide-ranging in their reading. But I ended up teaching 18th, 19th, 20th century, mostly political and social and intellectual history, and my interests more and more became interests in the arts and I and Michael Cowan created the American Studies program. And for twenty-five years I taught the history of the arts, and I moved from History to American Studies, staying in Cowell. And that made, for me, an enormous difference, because honest to God I was learning, I wasn't just saying it to the students, I was reading along with them and learning about architecture, painting, poetry, whatever, and those were interesting.

Vanderscoff: And UCSC allowed you that latitude.

Dizikes: Absolutely they allowed me, and I taught a class with Bert Kaplan²¹, Norman Brown²², Todd Newberry²³, Rich Randolph²⁴, Karl Lamb²⁵, Page of course, even others that'll come back to me. Virtually—almost any subject you can imagine. I taught a class with Todd Newberry the biologist on a sense of place, and taught a class with Karl Lamb, who was in politics, on national identity and things that were also not the conventional academic—now, by the way, I do not subscribe to the view that other universities were deeply skeptical about our written evaluations. The better the universities the less skeptical, the more they learned. I know many instances where admissions committees said, “We really learned something by reading those evaluations.” At their best—not all evaluations were well done. They came to be rather perfunctory. And the reason they finally were abandoned was the faculty didn't have the time and energy to do them. The faculty abandoned them and betrayed the whole system. Students still wanted them, and

²¹ Professor of psychology and history of consciousness.

²² Professor of literature and history of consciousness, and prominent psychoanalyst.

²³ Professor of biology, also has an oral history focused on Cowell. See Randall Jarrell, interviewer, and Irene Reti, editor, *Andrew Todd Newberry, Professor of Biology, 1965-1994* (Regional History Project, University Library, 2006) at <http://digitalcollections.ucsc.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/p265101coll13/id/3375/rec/9>

²⁴ Professor of anthropology.

²⁵ Professor of politics.

the faculty couldn't go on doing them. But teaching those classes, and collaborative classes, three and four together teaching a class on Western Civ and certain ideas. I taught a class on important novels with Sig Puknat who was German literature, Mauri Natanson who was philosophy and I, the three of us picking a novel—Henry James, Thomas Mann and Sartre and all kinds of things. Did I know very much about it? Something, but I learned a lot. And it was, for me, life sustaining.

Vanderscoff: So the collegiate system, to some degree, it seems encouraged a multi-disciplinary approach to education.

Dizikes: Oh, it was based on that.

Vanderscoff: That was the foundation, in a sense.

Dizikes: And we didn't follow through as rigorously as we should have done. Clark Kerr said to me he had really initially intended the colleges to be fully autonomous, the provost head of a college that made its own academic decisions. Dean McHenry, right at the beginning, introduced boards of study, departments.

Vanderscoff: Right, I have several questions about boards of study, I think we'll—

Dizikes: Yes, so we'll come back to that maybe another time. Oh, I've gone on much too long. No, we must stop.

Vanderscoff: Well, I guess just to wind down our conversation on the early days of Cowell; were there other features of Cowell that were relevant in creating that community, say the college nights, or the college staff?

Dizikes: Well, the college staff was wonderful, I think I said to you²⁶ they are the heart of the college. The people students encounter daily are the staff members behind the counter or answering questions or the rest of it. And they were wonderful because they understood they were dealing with a lot of odd characters and they were very supportive of what the faculty was trying to do whether they understood it or not or whatever they personally would've thought about some of these prima donnas and characters.

Vanderscoff: They suffered through it.

Dizikes: Yes, they suffered through it. And in the physical proximity in the college, being right there, being able to go and ask questions and talk to the senior preceptor. I was a preceptor for off-campus students. I was a preceptor for other kinds of students. I became senior preceptor. I did all these kinds of—chairman of the faculty. I did all these different things, and they were ways with dealing with my colleagues and it took some time and energy and was very, very rewarding. And I think I was lucky because I could escape from the conventional rigidities of “You’re a historian” and “He’s a literature person.” The first year we were in what’s now Thimann labs, we had our offices there, and next to me was Tom Vogler, the American literature person, and it was a delight, because I could periodically knock on his door or go in and say, “I’ve just been reading ‘X,’ tell me what I should think about ‘X.’”

Vanderscoff: Right.

Dizikes: Melville or James or whoever, whatever it was.

Vanderscoff: So it was an educational process for you?

Dizikes: Oh, tremendously, for me.

Vanderscoff: An ongoing student.

²⁶ “I think I said to you”-in reference to our pre-interview talk.

Dizikes: Yes it was, right to the end. I went to the library a couple years ago and found on sale a book of short stories by John O'Hara, fifty cents, and I went in to the desk and I said, "I'm not sure if I pay you or leave money out there." And the woman said, "You don't remember me, but I was a student." And I looked down and I said, "I do remember you, actually, though I don't remember your name." "Oh," she said, "you told me to read John O'Hara thirty years ago." You know, you never—.

Vanderscoff: How these things come full circle in some sense.

Dizikes: You never know. And not by any means what you said in class—other times, in the office, office hours, college night. That was a wonderful thing, college night, I felt. We came together. And when I was provost Ann and I had someone from the staff divide them out, and every Thursday night we had a group of students come, we'd have drinks and food and walk over and sit together at the head table. And we had every single student at least was invited from all the dorms in the course of the year. Just once—maybe they'd come other times, for other things—but our hope was that they understood that there was no rigid distinction between living in academic life and studying in academic life and being part of academic life. And there were faculty and grad students with children in the dorms originally, for many years. I always felt that was a wonderful sort of thing—this is ordinary life. It's not a separate entity.

Vanderscoff: Right.

Dizikes: It may be separated in some ways, but it's not, and I encouraged students and teachers in the secondary schools to bring students up and make tours of the university so that at an early age they would see that the university was just another school. Older, bigger, but another school.

Vanderscoff: Under the banner of the college there was a larger coherence to things.

Dizikes: Yes. And we used to invite teachers to bring their classes to the Provost House to look around, to go to college night, to go to college functions. Music was an important thing. Before it became more focused at College Five, the arts college, we did a lot of theater in Cowell, theater and music. That brought students together in different ways.

Publishing, Perishing and Teaching

Vanderscoff: It is Monday, November 7th, my name is Cameron Vanderscoff, I am here with John Dizikes, and we will be conducting the second session of his oral history. We're going to start out today talking about publishing, perishing and teaching. I'd like to talk about the expectations of faculty at UCSC, and in particular your own experiences with teaching and publishing. Did you ever feel pressure to publish from your department?

Dizikes: Well, I could call this section 'I did publish, I almost perished, and I always taught,' so we could go on from there (laughter). Trying to recreate the atmosphere of the 60s, I think it's important to say that it was not limited only to UCSC, but there had grown up in many universities in the early 60s this sense that universities needed reforming in terms of getting back to teaching, being more intimately related with their students. That's what Clark Kerr had said in the lectures he gave, the Godkin lectures²⁷ at Harvard, which were very influential, widely read. And many other places; Columbia University wanted to—they had a splendid undergraduate college for decades, but they wanted to reinvigorate it. And that preceded the political upheaval that came because of Vietnam. It's important to say that, because much of the reform of universities initially was not political at all; it had to do with the structure of the universities. And we came here and within a year or two were then also swept up in the political protest. But the two are related, but separate, and I came here, to a great extent, to some great extent, because I understood from Page Smith and from others—Kenneth Thimann, who was an eminent scientist, cared passionately about publishing, but who left Harvard in his 60s to come out here and found Crown College. He was a wonderful man, easily the most distinguished academic figure at UCSC in my lifetime. Had there been a Nobel Prize for physiology,

²⁷ A lecture held by Harvard once a year. Clark Kerr was gave the lecture in 1963.

he would have received it without any question. He was one of the important figures. Anyway, we needed to teach more, or teach better, or teach differently, right? They were all, and there were many, many fine teachers in many institutions, I want to emphasize that. Most institutions of higher learning are centered on the teaching of their faculty. Because remember, other than 100 most eminent, most famous and the rest of it, there are 3500 hundred other ones where the business of education is teaching—teaching and learning. And I think it should also be emphasized that I remember, after I'd been here I think just a very few years, someone published a study which revealed what I think we—most of us—knew. That is, that most professors—now I'm talking about history, but I think it's the humanities and the social sciences, but history—most professors of history did a dissertation, Ph.D. dissertation, which in most cases became a book. That's the thing they did, and it would become the book which was their main publishing effort. One half of all those instructors never wrote another book. The book they had inside of them was the dissertation; that was the subject that absorbed them, that got them involved. They did it, in many cases—if you went into this you'd find it took many, many people years and years to finish that dissertation, they didn't just do it in a year or two, they would often take a number of years and get a job pending the dissertation, waiting for it and so forth. Then when they finished it there was a question of whether it would be published or not. And that was essentially the publication that most people did. Some then would go on to write articles, give lectures, go to meetings, and a lot of what I think was very important intellectual, academic work for professors would be talking in the local community. People invite them to give a talk for whatever reason, they go to schools, they do that. All of that was—it seemed to me—at the center of what we did. I had finished my dissertation, I wrote it in a year at Harvard and finished, and my advisor, Frank Freidel, the New Deal professor, liked it—he took it over from Arthur Schlesinger, who'd gone on to Washington in the Kennedy Administration.

Vanderscoff: Right.

Dizikes: Freidel said to me, “You know, I was a little apprehensive when I found out what you were doing, but you've turned out to do a very good job, studying the general

newspaper and radio influence in Britain about the New Deal, and you should get it published.” Well, I wanted to wait—this is also not untypical—I wanted to wait a while, think about it, add to it, do some things I hadn’t had a chance to do. So I waited. In my case, it was actually unfortunate. I had done quite a bit of re-writing, and in 1968 we—Ann and I—went to England for the summer, and in shipping things back from England, various things, modest things we had bought, the revised dissertation was lost.

Vanderscoff: So several years of work.

Dizikes: Yes, so that was a setback, I would’ve had to go on and do quite a bit more, and I wasn’t embarrassed by it or unhappy with it as it was, but I wanted to do more. Well, that was a setback. But in the meantime I came to realize that here at the University of California there was a very different expectation, that while Page Smith and most of the faculty emphasized teaching at the expense, even, of publication, saying, “We will be a teaching generation, rather than a publishing one.” And I think maybe that was overdone, to some extent. I think maybe it wasn’t appropriate. I remember a friend of mine, a colleague, a very good teacher I thought, who said to me, “You know, we’re developing this notion of really superlative, excellent, outstanding teachers—I’m not an outstanding teacher. I do what I can do. I also want to write some. I’m neither a publisher, star publisher, star teacher, I don’t know where I am.” And I remember several people said to me, “We’re building up this notion that we’ll all be remarkable teachers when we know that most of us aren’t remarkable teachers.” Anyway, but in that mix of things I unquestionably felt personally committed to the teaching aspect, almost to ignoring the publication aspect. I know a couple colleagues came to me and said, “Here, I want you to write a review of this and a review of that.” And I said, “Okay,” but I didn’t go out of my way to find those things, I didn’t go out of my way to become professionally connected. And a very big difference among faculty members is whether the faculty member joins his American Historical Association, or the Publication—the Modern Language Association for the literature people—.

Vanderscoff: The prestigious organizations.

Dizikes: Right, all those organizations. I went to a couple meetings of those. To begin with, the American Historical Association always held its meetings over Christmas. Maybe the day after Christmas or something. The hell with it, I was not going to leave my wife and family, kids eventually, all the rest of it, to go to New Orleans or Kansas City or anywhere. Early on, the first or second year we were here, the annual meeting was in San Francisco. So I went up with Jasper Rose and with Page, went a couple times. And I went to a meeting in Los Angeles, I didn't—I wasn't very interested in all those professional connections. I don't know, I like people. It wasn't that I didn't want to meet new people. I had lots of friends as it was from Harvard, from Connecticut, from California, but I also didn't want—which is one of the things you do—to make connections about giving talks, being invited to lecture, going to conferences. And that, might I say, is an aspect that has grown enormously more important in the last twenty or thirty years.

Vanderscoff: Does it strike you as something of a status thing, a way of building reputation, and that's why people are drawn to it?

Dizikes: Well, it is a status thing that comes out of that, you're invited to go to Johns Hopkins to give a talk, or who knows, overseas, whatever it might be. There's no question there's some status. Also, to be absolutely clear, for many people that's what they really want to do, they want to stay abreast of the new developments in publication; who's doing what, listening to the talks, knowing who is doing unusual work, or who isn't and so forth. I'm not in any way denigrating wanting to do that, but it was simply not what I wanted to do. I had a professor at UCLA who liked—he wouldn't fly—getting on the train and going to the American Historical Association, wherever it was, for a week or ten days. He had a family, but “so long,” off he went (laughter). Well, you know, they lived with him. I didn't want to do that. I wasn't interested. Nor did I ever see myself as being a person who would advance the knowledge of the discipline particularly. I would develop some new theory about the New Deal—no. I never thought I had an original idea in my head. And I said to students and continue to say, “I

have no theories and no new ideas.” What I do is to try to summarize, to some extent, what is the current, current thinking. I read, I kept up with the publications, but there’s an enormous amount of publication. If you want to stay abreast in American history of many aspects it’s a full time job, right? And that must be at expense of something else. Either maybe your own writing, or your teaching, or your committee work, or your local connections, or whatever it might be. I think there are different emphases, there were and there are. The difference now, by the way—I have a daughter-in-law who is a professor of French History, she’s very, very good, very bright, she’s published a book, is working on a second one. She loves going to conferences, she likes keeping up, she knows who’s doing what in French History everywhere, in France as well as America. Bravo. Brava, as they say, and good luck to her. I think it’s wonderful. It wasn’t what I saw myself as doing. And she really does keep up and know about who’s doing what. Invites people back, she invites people. The conference thing is very important because you put that in your dossier, and that shows your professional advancement even if you’re not writing very much. But if you go and give a talk, then eventually probably a group of people will publish those talks, and yours is one of those, so it’s a form of publishing, important for the profession, but a matter, to my mind, of individual choice. And I never did much of that. Well, within two or three years or four years, the thing arose; after five or six years I would be up for tenure. And I remember a couple faculty members coming to me, older faculty members, and saying, “You know, you’re doing well, we all know you teach a lot.” I taught more, I taught extra classes. I don’t know if you went back and looked at the record, but a number of years I taught an extra class. There were only three American historians here for a good number of years; Larry Veysey in Stevenson, Page and I, and Page had so many administrative duties that he didn’t really teach very much. Anyway, I taught a great deal, and then I realized that there I was, and I felt I would be a sort of test case; would I be promoted because of my teaching? And I then realized I ought to think about getting my dissertation published, and I didn’t do anything immediately, but eventually it was published, and so that gave me a publication. But in my fifth or sixth year I was up for tenure and I was denied tenure. And I know Ann and I had talked—by this time we had children, we liked it here, we wanted to stay here—I said to her that, “If

I don't get tenure here, I'll see if I can go to Cabrillo²⁸, I would be very happy to teach at Cabrillo." Again, my junior college background made me very sympathetic. I didn't want to leave; where else would I go? Maybe San Jose State to commute, something like that. Anyway, I was denied tenure, and the chancellor called me in to talk to me about it, and he said, "Very, very sorry" he wasn't able to grant me tenure, but I hadn't published. And he asked me, "Wouldn't I try to write some articles, do something?" And then, if I might say, he said this thing that I always thought was so characteristic of the way these things work. He said, "I know you were very well regarded at Connecticut, and I've talked to people and they would like to get you back. As a matter of fact at one point they approached me about going back to be in charge of some Dean of Undergraduate Education," because teaching was the center of what I was doing. And I thought that was very flattering, but I did not want to go back to Connecticut. And Dean McHenry said to me, "Couldn't you possibly get Connecticut to make you an offer to come back?" He said, "If they made an offer, I would have to match it by giving you tenure." This was the way things worked, in many ways.

Vanderscoff: A way of evaluation, in some sense.

Dizikes: Sure, sure, if they think you're good enough to go back, then we can say, "Well, he or she is good in what he or she does, we want to keep them." Anyway, I didn't get tenure. And he said to me, "I regard you—" This is immodest of me, probably, but remember I have to tell you the story to get it on record if you don't mind—but I went up to see him, and came back and Ann said to me, "Well, what did he say?" So I told her, in general; "And then he said to me, 'I want you to know I regard you as the sixth most important faculty member in the faculty.'" Now it's typical of Dean that he wouldn't just say you were good or this or that, he would've established a numerical (laughter)—.

Vanderscoff: Some chart.

²⁸ "Cabrillo" College, the local junior college.

Dizikes: Yes, a chart (laughter). No, it's really true. On this chart. And he said, "I have a lot of reasons for thinking that, but that's what I think, and you're the sixth most valuable, but you're not going to get tenure." I came back and I told this to Ann, and she said, "What happens to people who are fifteen or eighteen or twenty-five or thirty (laughter)?"

Vanderscoff: They're in the bleachers at that point.

Dizikes: In the bleachers, right (laughter). Anyway, so I came up again the next year, and I did not try to find out, I didn't try to inquire. I just let it go, but I couldn't help but realize that people who supported me put me forward again, created a review committee. The history board recommended me unanimously for tenure, each—as far as I know, I think it was unanimous—enthusiastically. And the personnel review board—outside committee—the second year reviewed me positively as well. And the chancellor then promoted me. And I'm sure that supporters here rigged the committee to get people who were in it who wanted to make me an example of good teaching. And I always felt—I think that really among my colleagues this established me as a teacher. And I was proud of that, but I also felt, as I still feel, very embarrassed, because there were lots of good teachers around. Many, in Cowell College and Stevenson and elsewhere. I was struck then and am still, in retrospect, thinking about it, struck by the number of people who really put in a very great deal of time, were remarkably good lecturers, seminar leaders, whatever it might be, so that I was promoted and other people were not. As we went along, a colleague in physics, a colleague in chemistry, colleagues in a number of subjects were not promoted—I thought grossly unfairly. But, there it was. And I was promoted.

Vanderscoff: So, was your promotion—being granted tenure—would you say that was more of an exception to the rule that was being created, relative to publishing?

Dizikes: I don't know that it was a great exception, because I know there were other cases of people who hadn't published much or very little who were also granted tenure.

But we were already thought of as exceptional in the university system, and here one has to say, that after all this was not just a matter of Santa Cruz, because the tenure thing involves outside people coming in the committee, evaluations, and I think Santa Cruz was established as a place where teaching would be emphasized. I believe, I have reason to believe, talking to colleagues, people at Berkeley—a number of their children were students here, and I got to know the parents through the students, and a number of them said, “Oh yes, we approve of what you’re doing, we think that’s a very good thing, Santa Cruz should be thought of as a place that emphasizes undergraduate education.” But at the same time there was always the great concern that we’re not really simply going to promote everybody because they say they’re good teachers and they like teaching, which brings us to the question about how to evaluate teaching. And one of the things that struck me at the time and since has been how little formal procedure there was in this regard. There was a very distinguished anthropologist from Cambridge University, England, who had come for a year, and Ann and I—Ann’s parents and Ann knew him from Cambridge, but I got to know him here—and I remember once, here at dinner he said to me, “You know, in Cambridge when a faculty member comes up for promotion, I, as chairman of anthropology, and others go and listen to this person lecture. Not just once, but several times, to go and get an idea of what he or she is developing. Is he just a personal performer or is he a person who really is also trying to develop ideas, maybe not publishing them but developing them in some way? What does he or she do in class?” He said, “I’m amazed that apparently that doesn’t go on here.” Now, I know some individuals would go and audit other people’s lectures, I went to a good number because I was interested in what they were doing, but I wasn’t evaluating them for promotion.

Vanderscoff: Right, it was not a formal process.

Dizikes: And I wondered why—I still wonder why we didn’t make a serious effort to say it’s not just a matter of friendship or personal evaluation, but a number of us can evaluate teaching in the way we evaluate writing, for God’s sake. And it never was done. I think it’s because teaching is thought of as some kind of personal attribute, while publication is a thing that you can evaluate.

Vanderscoff: Objectively.

Dizikes: Objectively, of course. You understand. And I've always thought that's crazy. Crazy, crazy. Because I believed, I tried to promote, without any success of course, the notion that we would definitely formally divide the faculty—I think I said this last time—into publishers and teachers, both of whom would be rigorously examined and evaluated over a period of time. And the teachers would teach more, because that was what their emphasis would be, and when there was the matter of, “Well, who's going to teach an extra class?” or “We need this,” one of the teaching faculty would take that responsibility. The same time, then, they wouldn't be expected to go to professional meetings, to do a lot of this, or that it wouldn't be held against them if they didn't go to those things. And the teaching faculty, in my view, could've moved from teaching faculty say over a five-year period to publishing faculty, and back to teaching faculty. They would be distinctly defined, but they could be and would be interrelated, and the person who had worked ten years on a project and published it and then said, “You know, for the next three or four years, I'm not going to be writing much probably, I'll be thinking of something else. I'll move into the teaching faculty for a while and maybe do extra teaching.” I think we could've done—we could still do something much more respectable and serious about defining these two functions so that they weren't antagonistic to each other but related to each other. And I know faculty members who weren't promoted, got tenure, because tenure is only the first step, and then you get the tenure and then you're not promoted for years, and you're maybe never promoted to full professor, the rest of it, and they come to be very embittered, very unhappy. Not all—some are quite content to say, “I got what I wanted; security. I'm here, I'm a teacher, I'll go on and do it. I know I'm not going to be advanced.” But many people are very unhappy, and I know that there were some of these people who could've been given extra responsibilities related to teaching; evaluating teaching, doing a lot of aspects that would've given them some function that could've been rewarded that would also return something to the university.

Vanderscoff: So, I guess on that note; is being a good teacher, relative to the education the students receive, is that synonymous with being a good professor, relative to your department and the university, or is there some sort of conflict there?

Dizikes: No, I think it's synonymous with. I mean, there are very good teachers whose emphasis is maybe publishing, very good teachers whose emphasis is teaching more, spending time with students in a way that the publishers don't do, because—again—one of the fundamental ways here that made the teaching important was the intimate relationship through office hours, through people coming in, through seminars, through extra work. I did a lot of independent studies—many of them, students would say, “I want to do something that doesn't fit entirely into one department or another, would you—coming from music to, say—.” When people found out I was interested in opera the rest would come to me to say, “I'm a music major but nobody does the history of this or that, would you do something of it?” And there's this marvelous man, Robert Kraft, the astronomer, who's very knowledgeable about 18th century music and who's given classes here on 18th century music and does for lifelong learners—he's giving a big class of that again this next year. Well, you know, there are a lot of people around who have a particular interest that doesn't fit into their own professional thing and their emphasis, and that could be used in the university in many ways. But there was very little of that. Some people not promoted should've been given administrative responsibilities; but they never are. And there's a tremendous waste of talent in the university, I think.

Vanderscoff: There's too much of a bottleneck created by the nature of the standards.

Dizikes: Yes, and if I might say the other side of it, I think, I encountered reasonable people who would say to me—I had two or three people come in and say to me, “I'm awfully sorry I couldn't support you for tenure, because I believe in the University of California; someone should publish, absolutely. But I want you to know I realize you're a good teacher, you've worked very hard, it was not easy for me to make this decision.” I really felt, well, they're honest and the rest of it, even though I felt a little bit, “Well, jeez, thank you,” right? “I think what you're doing is very important but it isn't grounds for

tenure.” But let me say that there are a lot of publishers, people especially in the sciences, who regard teaching as so secondary that if a person establishes a reputation as a teacher they’re contemptuous of it. They will often say, “Well, give the big introductory class to ‘X,’ because he can’t do anything else except teach, he’s not publishing anything.” And I don’t know enough about the quality of the teaching in science—I knew once quite a bit. My ears and eyes were open and the rest of it, but I can’t help but think that there is—some of it is a tremendous intolerance. I remember a colleague who got a distinguished teaching award, and when I said—a scientist—when I said, “God, that’s really terrific and I’m sure people are very proud of you,” he said, “Are you kidding? I have colleagues who thinks this proves the fact that I’ve been wasting my time.”

Vanderscoff: So sort of—I suppose—espousing the notion that those who cannot do, teach, or something like that.

Dizikes: Exactly, that’s right, those who cannot do the serious thing, teach. My only sense is that even those people should realize there is a tremendous need for someone to teach the students even if those people are not, by any definition, original creative thinkers. And might I say, I’ve been around long enough to begin to distinguish the truly creative and original thinkers from the people who publish a book that gets some publicity and is thought of, and—like most of our books—within four or five years has disappeared into the morass. No, it’s really true. Who are the truly original thinkers when I think in American intellectual history? And American political, any kind of American history. When I think of the various phases and fads, the kinds of subject matter and development that we’ve been through, each of which was interesting, informative, but itself did not mark a superior achievement that put everything else in the shade. It takes years to really identify the scholarly work that is most influential, because over time you come to realize ‘X’ wrote a book that didn’t receive much attention, but developed an idea that other people have gone on to develop. They may not even pay much attention to ‘X’ as the originator of it, but you can tell that that’s the case.

Scholarship is a complex and subtle matter. It's not to be determined by one committee making a judgment, one day.

Vanderscoff: So some of the judgment even of research can get somewhat arbitrary.

Dizikes: Of course it is, of course it is, I've had prominent and distinguished scientists who've said to me, "80% of the grants for research that were received, that are justified—intelligent, good people working on it—do work that comes to nothing." Nothing. It turns out it's a dead end, especially, I think, in science. One of the ways that science moves forward is not by establishing what is the definitive thing, but revealing the interpretations, the notions, the ideas that are not grounded properly. And science moves forward by rejecting continuous procedures and ideas until eventually something else develops. So, I mean these were some of the most distinguished scientists here who would shake their heads and say, "You see what happened in science, now—it has been for years—it isn't even publication, it's the grants you get to do research to bring the money in." Kenneth Thimann had said to me once he thought half of the grants were justified; "Try it, see if there's anything to that," but nothing came out of the research. Was that wasted money? No, no, not at all wasted, but the notion that everything had to produce a specific result that is concrete and specific. Maybe a good historical scholar is the person who, as a teacher, continually takes the prevailing ideas and fads and fashions and reveals their shortcomings. That person, he or she, for graduate students especially, is invaluable, but he or she may not be much of a publisher. Some of the most distinguished American historians published very, very little, and became notorious for not publishing very much. They did other kinds of work. Or there's the person who has one idea, and it's a real one and it's a good one, and she publishes it and then has nothing else to say. It's still a considerable achievement, but what about the next thirty years? Should she not be advanced or promoted because she doesn't have any more—other ideas. This whole thing seems to me grotesquely oversimplified and crude. If you have any sense of historical movement and development you realize that the real contributions to a subject are not individual but collective; a group of people work along one way and

find out something, and there are many people who work towards and think about it, but don't actually publish something.

Personal Research: Understanding What It Is to Be American, from Opera to Poetry to Yankee Doodle Dandy

Vanderscoff: Well, while we're on the topic of research, can we talk about some of yours?

Dizikes: Sure.

Vanderscoff: So you've published on a spectrum of subjects.

Dizikes: Yes.

Vanderscoff: From the New Deal to racing horse jockeys to opera.

Dizikes: Right.

Vanderscoff: Is there a coherent thematic thread tying these diverse areas together for you, or do they represent entirely separate areas of inquiry?

Dizikes: Well, very good question. People are struck by the range of my knowledge, and I say to them, "Yes, a number of different things, all of them pretty superficial." I just flip around. But it's partly that my interest is breadth, maybe not depth. I've never pretended that any of those books—I think the biography of Tod Sloan, the jockey Yankee Doodle Dandy, I think that summed up his career. I don't know of anybody who said I left out important things, or who's written another biography of him, insignificant as that figure might seem to some people. But no, I think I'm a person who is—I have a wide range of interests. I've been able, in the family, to sort of define that. Through my father I got an interest in sports, through my mother I got an interest in the arts, and both of those were parallel, and nobody said—and I've never felt—you have to give up one to

do the other. I said to students over and over, “Don’t subtract.” Because you like Melville doesn’t mean you can’t read Henry James. Because you like Broadway musicals doesn’t mean you can’t like jazz, or because you like opera doesn’t mean you can’t be interested in folk music. Don’t subtract—add. Do more. But of course this runs counter to the notion, which is a powerful and important one, of the person who masters a subject and has read everything. I never pretended to be one of those people, and I don’t think they really often exist. Unless the subject is so small that you are the master of the head of a pin of something. But there is a difference. There is the scholar who wants to master the resources and have read everything, and believe me, as you know, in literature, science, philosophy, history, to read everything is a full time job, and nobody could read everything. And there are those people who want to establish relationships, to move from one to another. My books have come out of my teaching; my books are the result of my teaching classes with people who got me interested in things. I have this manuscript I’m still trying to get published on women poets. I taught in the arts in America, among all the other subjects I taught some poetry and I specialized in introducing students, however briefly, to a handful of women poets, some of whom they wouldn’t have heard of. And I remember saying to students for a decade-and-a-half, “Look, if you’re going to graduate school, these women—some of this poetry is a very good subject. You might keep it in mind, and maybe you’ll want to do a dissertation.” And when I retired I thought to myself, “You know, nobody’s ever taken me up on that, I ought to do it.” Well, am I an authority on poetry? Far from it. But I’ve always believed that you can know enough to teach and discuss. You don’t have to be a master of it. I said to students, “I’m often just one jump ahead of you in reading about these things. I think I said last time it’s very difficult for faculty to say, “I don’t know.” But I think it’s very important that they should say, “I don’t know, but I’m reading more.” And I taught classes on American women artists, not because I was a feminist, though very sympathetic to women students, here particularly—they were so much more mature than most of the men as freshman and sophomores. No, it’s really true, right? Wonderful students, many of them. And I decided, “Why not?” Now, when feminism evolved, there were people who said to me, “You need your head examined. You can’t go around as a man teaching women writers.” I got a phone call from a faculty member in Washington, the state of

Washington, who said, “A former student of yours showed me the syllabus; you teach this class in American Women Writers.” ‘Women Artists and Writers,’ maybe one year it was writers. She said, “How can you do that? Why don’t you call them female?” I picked up the phone, I heard this, and I said, “Excuse me, but first of all, James Fennimore Cooper in his novels referred to women as ‘females,’ I don’t call them females, they’re women. Is that what you’re arguing about? Can I teach a poet, an architect, a novelist? Why not? Because they’re women? I’m interested. Do I have any definitive answer about what it—nothing. Do I know what it means to be a woman? No. But can I respond as a man to this art, to their lives? Of course I can.” And I think most people are sympathetic, though I must say, my agent has said to me, “One of the things we’ve encountered with the poetry book, the women poets, is that you’re a man. Some publishers are probably leery of publishing a book about women poets by a man.” To which I say, “God help us, have we come to that point?” I mean, how absurd.

Vanderscoff: Have things gotten that divisive....

Dizikes: Yes, I mean, come on. They haven’t, they’re better now than they were, but fifteen or twenty years ago, when feminism was—had to be—more aggressive and everything, I mean, there were women who said, “Men have nothing to tell us about women in any respect.” And I’ve had colleagues who’ve said that to me, and I’ve thought, “My goodness, what a simple-minded view that is.”

Vanderscoff: Well, that goes—that goes back to your opinion that, you know, there is no such thing as mastery (inaudible).

Dizikes: Yes, of course. No, absolutely right. I mean, what I like is the notion that you can put an idea forward in a civil way, seriously, and say, “This matters to me, but I realize that other people will see it in a very different way from a very different perspective.” Some subjects are especially hard to do that with—religion (sigh; laughter). That’s one I’ve left—I don’t want to get in to all of that.

Vanderscoff: Steer clear of those waters, yeah.

Dizikes: Right? But no—so, is there an interrelated theme? I suppose it is that I've been interested to see what was it that made these artists 'artists,' politicians, figures, and American. What did it mean, as it did for me? What does it mean to be an American? What is your culture? What is it that you represent? What is most important? And I found in all of these, whether it was the sportsmen of the 19th century or New Deal figures or women poets or all these wonderful people who made opera possible, but that was it—my opera book is not about opera, it's a history of opera in America, it's an American history book. I became aware, when I started to write it, research it, I kept waiting to find the definitive books that had been done about it, and there weren't any. There are lots of books about opera, books about the individual artists, but to try to trace the evolution and development of opera in the United States, as we would whether it was agriculture or anything else—there wasn't, as far as I could tell. And that's what I tried to do, to say to people, "If you want to find out how this art form has been accepted or not or developed in many parts of the United States—." That's what I was trying to do, paying attention to the biographies of the people, because I am very keen on biography. I like people's lives. My books are, if I were to say anything, a series of profiles of people. If there's a unifying thread, I think it's—.

Vanderscoff: And all of them navigating being an American one way or another.

Dizikes: Yes. One way or another, in different periods, in different forms and the rest of it. And it seems to me that I could be as interested in the form of horse racing—I came back Saturday, a former student got an award as a lawyer in San Jose, I went over to the Fairmont Hotel, he gave a wonderful talk, it was very moving. I came back, ten minutes later, after I was back, I turned on the TV and watched the Breeder's Cup—the race, right? Well, I don't find anything contradictory in caring about major league baseball—I went to the opera yesterday, to *Carmen*. A lot of different things. Am I perhaps superficial in my understanding? Perhaps. Really, truly. I've not knowingly written

about anything without thinking I know enough, but I'm not a master of any one of these forms, nor do I care to be.

Vanderscoff: But it seems you approach them all with a certain honest inquiry.

Dizikes: Seriousness, yes, and honesty, and I've read quite a lot. You know, people say, "God, you know quite a bit." I know how much I don't know, but yes I've read quite a lot, and quite widely, I'm very interested in European history, European culture. The last twenty years I've read more about European literature than I did American literature, I think. I've read lots of musical biography, I played the piano, the bass fiddle, I know a little bit about music but I'm not a musician—but I've never written as a musician, I've written as a historian or a biographer of people, that's all. And that's perfectly valid, I think. I don't have any doubt about it.

Vanderscoff: Wonderful. Well, we can move on to the original academic system of UCSC, its pros and cons, if you like. Unless there's anything else that you wanted to say?

Dizikes: No, no.

Reflections on the Narrative Evaluation System

Vanderscoff: So, one of UCSC's most distinctive characteristics was, for many years, its grading system. How successful was the pass/fail system as a means of assessing student productivity and acumen?

Dizikes: On this matter I don't want to be impartial or evenhanded. I'm very partial. The written evaluation system was infinitely better than the conventional letter grading system. For what I taught and what I did and what I wanted to do. I found out far more about my students in having them write and writing about them. I felt I could tell them far more about my evaluation of their work by writing out a few sentences than by putting a letter down. I didn't realize until I was well into it how much the written

evaluation system mattered to me, and how much I preferred it. I went through a conventional letter system everywhere. I collected lots of A's, I know what that is. I thought they were probably justified. But they didn't tell anybody very much. I didn't know. And I know that in a few instances at UCLA and at Harvard when I wrote something and the instructor was able to evaluate and write and call me in to talk about it, it was infinitely more rewarding than simply getting the letter, however that might be good or not. And I got B's sometimes when I thought I had done work that was at least as good as when I got A's. I couldn't tell the difference sometimes, I really couldn't. And also, I know of many instances where faculty in other institutions said to me, "The written evaluations are far more valuable for us if we take our time and read them, as you took your time to write them, for us in evaluating people." Then they would say, "Everybody gets A's." At Stanford the average grade, fifteen or twenty years ago, was A, so that means all sorts of people were getting A plus plus and whatever. Grade inflation has been a fact of the last twenty-five or thirty years of American higher education, so that I would not take straight A's at more than face value. To get straight A's from a lot of faculty would mean you must be pretty bright, but beyond that, how do I know what it is? Maybe they were all true-false questions, multiple choice.

Vanderscoff: It conveys no details about the students.

Dizikes: Yes, right. I want to know more about how people think about things. And I tried to say what they were trying to think, and what was satisfactory and what wasn't. I don't remember who it was who wrote the classic ironic pass/fail evaluation. Have you—you've probably heard this.

Vanderscoff: I don't know that I have.

Dizikes: He said of a student, "Pass, complete. But for very little yardage (laughter)." Look, the very top and the very bottom are the easiest ones to write about. It's the ones in the middle about whom you have to say, "God, what is it here? It's not outstanding but it's pretty good. What makes it pretty good, what is deficient so that it isn't really

first rate? And the struggle to write it out I think helps students realize that it is not a simple matter of saying, “You’ve covered everything, it’s brilliant, A plus,” or whatever it might be. I had a friend who said, “Grading is only for vegetables.” We wouldn’t dream of doing that in other ways (laughs). We *do* do it in other ways. I liked it very much. It saved me, also, from students demeaning themselves by coming in and saying, “You gave me a B+, why couldn’t it just be a little—.” What’s the difference between A minus—

Vanderscoff: At what point is it arbitrary, or do you draw the line.

Dizikes: Of course, you know all that, you know all these things. All I can say is I put in a God-awful amount of time writing those evaluations. I didn’t resent it, I really didn’t resent it. I wrote evaluations for up to 150 students in classes. I couldn’t do it for four or five hundred. I know that there are other problems. I’ve had teachers who teach those very big classes who say, “You still—with TAs—you could write good evaluations for students. Reasonable, informative ones, if you’re willing to put in the time.” And the faculty finally gave it up because it was too much time and work at the expense of publishing.

Vanderscoff: You think that was the motivation?

Dizikes: Oh, there’s no doubt.

Vanderscoff: Because that was just within the last two, three years.

Dizikes: Yes. But when I retired, in 2000, they had still maintained the written evaluation system. Students were the ones who were agitating to keep it and faculty were the ones who were eager to abandon it. And when they finally arrived at this

compromise where you get letter grades and evaluations, seemed to me the goofiest compromise possible; one or the other, maybe²⁹.

Vanderscoff: Well, now evaluations have been largely phased out.

Dizikes: Of course they have.

Vanderscoff: So they've been made optional.

Dizikes: Yes, you know that's what was going to happen, once it became—.

Vanderscoff: It's a gradual erosion at some point, right?

Dizikes: Yes, and do I understand why it happened, and do I understand that other people maybe didn't think my evaluations were as useful as I thought? Okay. But the students I think by and large did. Or, if they weren't very useful, they didn't cause much harm, right? I said, "Very good work," or something, and it was hard to find the language that didn't itself just become routine; "Very good, very good, very good—."

Vanderscoff: The template evaluation.

Dizikes: Yes, well, oh God, now what does excellent mean (inaudible).

Vanderscoff: Fill in the blanks like a Mad Lib.

Dizikes: Fill in—yes, all of that. I know the problems, but I struggled and they struggled and they often learned something from it, and I believe finally it really mattered because it seemed to students that they were taken seriously. I read the work; there was never a

²⁹ The pass/no pass system as the main mode of grading was voted out by faculty in 2000 in favor of letter grades, effective 2001. Narrative evaluations remained mandatory of professors until faculty voted to make them optional in 2010.

paper I didn't read—really read. And sometimes I'd read them and late at night I realized I wasn't reading anything and the next day I'd try to read them again. Was it hard to write—did I write evaluations, many, that were probably bland and pointless? Sure. But I tried. And I think students often understood that.

Vanderscoff: So you think it sort of conveyed to the students a sense that they were being taken seriously, that their work was not just arbitrary?

Dizikes: Seriousness of purpose, that's exactly the thing. It matters to write, it's hard to write, and you write and then you should get an evaluation of the paper and the work that is an evaluation of the weeks and the course. It's often crude, it's often problematic, but it's an effort, and it's better, more revealing than simply a letter, I think. And there are lots of students, I am sure, who prefer letter grades. Or maybe there are, I don't know.

Vanderscoff: I think there definitely are, I think there's a lot of students who just like that—again, I keep using the word arbitrary, but that arbitrary category, say, "Oh, I am an A student," rather than "I am a good-to-decent evaluation student," you know?

Dizikes: That's right, that's right, "I have trouble in expressing myself in certain ways—no, I'm an A student, straight A student." And I don't dispute that they are very good students. I would like, myself, to evaluate them in a different way, and to see what I make of their work, because one of things you can do in an evaluation is to say, "There's seriousness of purpose, there's a real effort, mastery of the reading material, but this person does not write very clearly, and doesn't do himself or herself justice in expressing these ideas." And I would say, "What you need to do is to rewrite and rewrite a second and a third time. And your paper—you will do justice to the effort you put in and the knowledge you have." And many students, many of us, cannot do that because we don't express ourselves very well. Writing, to me is—I like to write, I like to rewrite, but it's a labor, it's a grind, hour after hour, day, week after—. The opera book took me twelve years to write. Mostly because I did it in the summers, I didn't have much time during the year, are you kidding? But it was a struggle. But I also liked the struggle. There

were times, a few times where I felt I finally got it. It might not be a very important idea, but I said what I thought I could say. And that's wonderfully satisfying when it happens. You know.

Vanderscoff: Yes, I do.

Dizikes: Occasionally we express ourselves effectively, lucidly, persuasively.

Vanderscoff: It's wonderful, isn't it?

Dizikes: And it is.

Vanderscoff: Always a surprise (laughs).

Dizikes: Yes, you say, "My God, did I actually say that." That's right (laughter).

Vanderscoff: So, a criticism that's often leveled at the narrative evaluations in particular is that graduate schools wanted letter grades on transcripts. Was that issue blown out of proportion, or was that a very real issue?

Dizikes: Blown out of proportion, though I guess it's true medical schools were notorious for wanting letters, not evaluations. But I found in my own experience talking to people when—especially if there were problems about accepting somebody and I would phone, they would phone, wanted information, talking later to people, four out of five said to me, "We learn more from written evaluations than from letters. Everybody gets A's who apply here. Are you kidding? You think that tells us very much? Maybe we can learn something from your evaluation." To be fair, without exaggerating, that's what—that's a compliment. So I by no means think it was a handicap. It may have been in some instances, I don't deny that. Some departments somewhere would say, "The hell with it, we're not going to spend our time reading their evaluations." Okay, but what can you do with that? Not much. It's not to their credit.

Vanderscoff: No. It does indicate, probably, something about that institution.

Dizikes: Yes, indeed.

Vanderscoff: And the nature of effort they're willing to put in.

Dizikes: Sure. And after all, if you're on the admissions committee at Yale, Stanford, of course you're getting applications from outstanding students. You probably would do just as well doing it by lottery, right? No, honestly. Do you think—it's a lottery anyway, as a matter of fact. Four out five students are turned down at these institutions, not because they're not good enough, but somehow it just didn't ring anybody's bell when they—I don't know how they would do it. What does that prove? If it was just random you would probably end up with as good a representation of ability as anything else. But of course we couldn't do that, I understand. So I wasn't on admissions at Harvard, but I've been on admissions and been involved with it at UCSC, and I can only tell you when I would look at those applications most of them seemed very attractive and important to me. And how could I choose? Well, we're groping around trying to find somebody who was maybe more seriously dealing with intellectual life, even if they weren't as sophisticated and articulate at eighteen or nineteen, or whatever it might be.

Vanderscoff: So you knew about the narrative system and the pass/fail system when you came out here in 1965?

Dizikes: Oh, yes, yes.

Vanderscoff: Were there any other public institutions that were doing it at the time, or was that a part of what made us unique?

Dizikes: No. I'm sure there were colleges, St. John's College, other colleges that were doing it. The University of Michigan, the first great public university, in the 1840s and

50s had a written evaluation, no letters system. They really understood that it was probably more important to find out if people were articulate in some way. That's a limited thing itself, not the only thing you want. People sometimes groping with serious ideas, you realize that they're potentially very creative—they lack the ability to organize their ideas. But no, it was not first with us. And the tutorial system, in a verbal sense; "Go in, sit down and read your paper," and the instructor listens to this and then says, "Now, what did you mean by this, what did you mean by that." And the instructor in the best tutorial doesn't say, "Ah, A minus, now you can leave." No, no. You then talk about it. That's what's crucial. And above all, hearing yourself reading this succession of banal sentences that you thought last night made some sense. You know if you've got any hair it's standing straight up (laughter).

Vanderscoff: So, evaluations and that level of engagement, you would say, give students the chance to grow more seriously to fill out those shades of gray.

Dizikes: Much, Much. "Next time I go into see him, I'll have to really be prepared. I'll have to have an idea of what I'm trying to say instead of just blathering or hoping I say the things that he or she likes or whatever." No, no, I've always thought that's—I like conversation and evaluations were a form of conversation.

Vanderscoff: So I suppose, in summation on this, evaluations offer a certain—it allows students to be portrayed by a more full spectrum as compared to the letter grades system, which is more students by these categories, by these little cubbyholes.

Dizikes: Yes. Again, I don't have any doubt in my own mind of the superiority of the one. The problems of being able to do it in a big institution, especially those that grow in size—the crucial, the single crucial distinction between Santa Cruz earlier and later is size, scale, the number of students. When I was provost of Cowell it was, what, eight or nine hundred. Now it's probably twice that. What in the world? How much harder it is to reach those students. Many of them now, of course, live off campus, countless—

Vanderscoff: Oh, sure.

Dizikes: All right, lots did then, but we had, after all, a majority of the freshman class living in the dorms. Whereas now every year I guess you have to start over again, introducing what it is to be in a college to a new freshman class—the others have all moved away. Well, there are real problems about scale and size, and the colleges were that—cliché though it is—that effort to remain small as the larger institution grew larger.

Vanderscoff: Right. And so these changes impacted the efficacy of the pass/fail system and the narrative evaluation thing?

Dizikes: Of course, of course. And would I—could I, if I knew enough, make the argument that a university of twenty thousand could sustain pass/fail, maybe not. I don't know.

Vanderscoff: Well, of course in the larger classes, you would get, sort of—I mean, I certainly did receive just these form evaluations.

Dizikes: Sure, form evaluations, and they tell you something and it may be enough, and it may be accurate. But much of what you read, what you find with students is that they don't fit quite into all those simple categories.

Vanderscoff: Right. There's more to a student than that.

Dizikes: More to you. Much more to you. And more varied, and more unfinished, and more developing. And one of the pleasures was to have a student as a freshman later on take another class, and find how much they had developed and how much more they could express their ideas and were more confident in what they were doing. And a lot of very shy students who didn't speak up in class—seminar or no seminar they'd sit silently, week after week, unless I had to say, "Would you please tell me?" And they'd look at me (laughs). "I'm sorry, but I want to hear—speak, speak to me!" (laughter). I'd say,

“Come on.” But shy students who could write, and would come in and were so, I think, gratified to see they had a receptive audience through their words—I mean through their prose, not through their words in class. And there are students who spoke up in class because they’d been talking ever since the third grade, and they were articulate and bright, but often didn’t have a very great deal to say, or it was just what they had learned, and then there were those other students who were struggling with something else. And this is why a class of fifteen or twenty, meeting three times a week—the freshman seminar—and having them come in every other week, requiring them to come in for ten or fifteen minutes to see me, to talk about their work. A paper every week, a couple pages. I really thought that was a way in which I could get an idea of what they did and encourage them to do more. To do more. Most students don’t take themselves seriously. They’re not willing to challenge themselves by not doing the safe thing. They know what Dizikes likes to hear so they can write it, but what about something else? If they really believe it, or to see if they could communicate it and persuade me or somebody else. That’s part of really learning—pushing yourself beyond what you think you can do. And I know the tremendous satisfaction, every once in while, in having a student come in when I thought the paper was first rate and they were filled with apprehension because they honestly weren’t clear whether they were saying much or not saying much. And by the way, I found this especially true, of course, of the junior transfers who would come in, coming into a sort of settled pattern in which they might not feel very much at ease, and coming maybe from junior college, and “What was expected at the university,” right? And the papers, the office hours, the discussion in class would often reveal to them that they belonged here, not only belonged here but were really good and better than they knew. There’s the one out of twenty-five who isn’t quite as good as he or she thinks he or she is, and there are the other twenty-four or twenty-five who need to be encouraged they can do more. You’re not going to set the world on fire—they can do more and they can feel themselves gratified at what they’re doing.

Vanderscoff: Right.

Dizikes: I think. I mean, it's—I can only extrapolate from my own experience, after all, that I felt by the time I was a senior and then in graduate school that I really could do decent work, that I really began to distinguish between what was better and what was not as good. What else was there?

Vanderscoff: That's true, well, because of course, even for me in school it used to be a huge mystery as to, "Oh, why did that paper get this mark and that one got the other?"

Dizikes: Yes, you know, and could the reader be capricious? Of course. Inconsistent? Sure. That's also one of the things. You come to say, "Look, this is as good as the last one, and you loved that one and you don't like this one. Have you been drinking or what are you doing (laughter)?" They would never say it, right? Students were so polite, always, with me. I never, ever had any incident about any rudeness or anger or anything, I don't know—I think.

Thoughts on Student Protest and Political Engagement

Vanderscoff: Well, wonderful. Well, actually that works as a good segue while we're on the character of the students, and not so much the civil students but I suppose the more vocal students, and the question of student protest, and whether it's been helpful or hurtful to the institution of UCSC. UCSC, of course, through the years, from its founding to now, has had an alternative reputation.

Dizikes: Yes.

Vanderscoff: One way or another. Do you think this reputation is earned or is it exaggerated, particularly in regards to the UCSC student body?

Dizikes: Well, in the very early years we were thought of as backward, and Berkeley would send down delegations of people to stir us up. Oh yes, I went to talks where they

came, Mario Savio³⁰ and others, who came down to fire us up and do the rest of it and everything, and I was amused at that, and aware that many of our students were more placid or accepting. On the whole I have no—again, as with the narrative evaluations—I think the student protest, involvement, concern was enormously productive and made it a much better place to teach and to learn and I only had a modest role in that. I mean, my own role was not as a protester but a person who talked to students about it, especially the students who were uneasy about protesting and political activism. I think we then reached a stage where we were regarded in a clichéd and trivial way as a sort of radical place when we weren't really. We never were very much.

Vanderscoff: So you'd say it's been exaggerated to some degree.

Dizikes: Yes, it's largely been exaggerated. If you're a non-conformist in American culture, while the culture formally pretends it likes non-conformity and individuality, it's a bunch of sheep, it has a herd-like instinct, and the minute anybody or any group is genuinely independent then the culture as a whole is nervous and worried.

Vanderscoff: They see some people up in the trees (laughs).

Dizikes: Yes, "Oh my God, Oh my God, think of those—." Oh, please. They care. Would I climb up in a tree? No. That's my problem (laughter). Did I protest? No. But I didn't think it was my role to protest but I taught lots of students about what was involved in it, though the Vietnam War was a catastrophe and students were right to identify it as such, and eventually they helped get us out of it. We would not have withdrawn from Vietnam had it not been for the protests, however difficult they were for many people to accept. And do we—did we deserve our reputation as a radical place? No, not really. But there was some.

Vanderscoff: A vocal element.

³⁰ Activist and leader in the Berkeley Free Speech Movement.

Dizikes: Yes.

Vanderscoff: Whoever shouts loudest, perhaps.

Dizikes: Sure, sure.

Vanderscoff: Sure. An interesting thing that I discovered upon reading Clark Kerr's oral history—he talks about the 1969 takeover of the commencement, and he remarks as to how shocked he was that many of the faculty seemed actually in solidarity or in support to some degree with the students who took over the commencement.

Dizikes: I was there and I was deeply embarrassed by it, and I found it a form of protest that was completely unsatisfactory and destructive. That's not what I really meant about protest, and that was a cheap, symbolic and rude effort to show that they were not to be intimidated by authority and whatever. And I didn't like it at all. And that's—again, that was one of the no doubt numerous cases of protest that took a form that seemed to me unproductive. I also didn't think taking over places, administrative centers, was very effective, but I came to wonder about that, because actually it made the administration take students seriously, and if you did it my way, standing outside and arguing and discussing, you might do that for ten years and not get anywhere. No, I realize that. So I think some of it was excessive, okay, but much of it ultimately was justified, and it is better to be excessive in caring, in being involved, than to be indifferent. And the tendency for students in institutions is to be cautious and careful and indifferent. I always taught my classes, and always said that if there were students who, out of principle, would not come to class because they weren't going to come on campus that day if there was a strike, I would offer an alternative class for those people who wanted, if they wanted to have one in one evening or another time. I felt it was my responsibility to go to class for those students who wanted to be in class, that I was not then ruling them out because a minority or even a majority said, "No, no, you can't go to class." To me, going to class was a crucial thing.

Vanderscoff: Sure.

Dizikes: I was there to offer class. But if people out of principle didn't come, I was perfectly prepared to meet them, and if they thought they needed it at another time. So that's how I dealt with that, from beginning to end. I tried, in that sense, to represent the students who, for whatever reason, weren't protesting, who were fully students, engaged maybe as good citizens as the others—but also to respect the courage of the people who protested.

Vanderscoff: Well, I think that has been a source of conflict, you know at what point should—I guess, is it proper for a protest to interfere with the educational process, given that's what's going on at the university? And I think there's historically been some conflict with that.

Dizikes: Sure. Sure, disagreement. And I've colleagues who've felt very strongly on both sides; "Cancel them all," or "Don't cancel anything—what are you talking about, they want a protest, well, don't come, but let us go on with our—." Right?

Vanderscoff: Right. So, I suppose in conclusion on this topic, do you feel UCSC's reputation in that sense, is that something that's somewhat placed on it by—I guess external forces, the sheep-like mentality has perhaps exaggerated—.

Dizikes: Yes, yes, just as its parallel there were a series of violent murders here³¹.

Vanderscoff: Right, in the 1970s, yes.

Dizikes: Yes, and Santa Cruz is a wicked and dangerous place.

³¹ Santa Cruz experienced a spate of violent murders in the 1970s, including the killing of the Ohta family in 1970 and the serial killings of Edmund Kemper and Herbert Mullin.

Vanderscoff: Murder capital of the world is one label—.

Dizikes: Murder capital of the world, please. All of that stuff. And the murders were real, it was undoubtedly—. Women should not have been hitchhiking by themselves as they did, that always surprised me and, you know, I would stop and pick up students and say, “I’m going to pick you up and take you where you want to go, because I want to urge you not to do this again.” They must have thought, “God, who is this wacko (laughter)?” That’s what I felt, that’s all.

Vanderscoff: Right, right.

Dizikes: Right. No, it was exaggerated, but there was ferment and concern and that was wonderful, because education mattered to me, and it was good to know that it mattered to many students above and beyond their own success in the place as an institution. That was wonderful. I was proud to be part of an institution that had that reputation.

Vanderscoff: You thought it was a broader sort of education, a more total education?

Dizikes: Sure, sure, of course it was. Why am I here, after all? Does it matter to me here that we’re involved in an immoral war, whether it’s Iraq or Vietnam or wherever, and how should that reflect on my status as a student? Can I say it doesn’t matter at all? I know why we put up with a lot of these wars; because we don’t have conscription. When students were being drafted, middle class, upper class students, whatever, in Vietnam, then their parents got involved. Now we have a professional army, and most people really are not affected by it at all. Yes, they read about the casualties and everything—please. I don’t mean to be cynical, but if we still had a draft we wouldn’t have been in Iraq for more than two or three years.

Vanderscoff: The average person’s involvement....

Dizikes: Of course, really it hit home.

Vanderscoff: We have more detached citizenry now than we did forty years, fifty years ago, so on?

Dizikes: Oh yes.

Vanderscoff: Huh. (Pause) Well, I suppose just—I suppose we should wind it down, actually, at this point, because our next topic is ‘colleges and boards of study’ and we can do that next time.

Dizikes: We can do it next time. Is there anything—anything you’ve thought of that we didn’t cover or where my response was sufficiently puzzling or incoherent (laughter) but you wanted to hear some more? You could always pick it up next time.

Vanderscoff: Exactly. No, nothing comes to mind, I’ll review the transcripts.

Dizikes: All right.

Vanderscoff: Thank you for your time.

Dizikes: Yes, it’s a great pleasure.

Vanderscoff: For me, too.

Tension in the UCSC Experiment: The College-Board Dynamic

Vanderscoff: It is Tuesday, November 8th, we are here conducting part three of John Dizikes’ oral history. We’re going to start out today talking about the colleges and boards of study and some of the dynamics and forces that led to change within the university relative to its original vision. What is your take on the relationship between the colleges and boards of study in the first ten, fifteen years of the campus?

Dizikes: Well, I guess the basic thing is uneasy, lack of clarity, considerable tension. It is easy to see now, but I think I felt it at the time, as other people did, that once we'd perpetuated the college/board dichotomy—we didn't call them departments, we called them boards—and Dean McHenry called the first meeting of the historians together and talked to us about what it was that we were going to do as a board of study, and there would be an outside person from another board who would be a member to give us a different perspective. The minute that was done we'd perpetuated the department versus the colleges, and it's an exaggeration and melodramatic to say once that was established the colleges were doomed, but there's no question in my mind that if you were to have colleges at the center of the campus, the colleges had to be autonomous, and that was Clark Kerr's view, too. And Dean McHenry was much more timid and cautious in this regard and wanted to perpetuate both of them and keep them in some balance. Now, the colleges, to really function as interdisciplinary colleges, should have had autonomy to hire anybody they wanted, with reference to the needs of the campus overall in the various departmental subjects. But once you introduced the dichotomy, the boards were bound to get stronger and stronger because they were the traditional way. I think a more fundamental—I mean, that was resolvable—but a more fundamental failing was to come to terms with science and non-science in regard to the colleges, because science was centrally located up there in then what came to be called Thimann labs, where we had our first offices the first year. And the city on the hill, the Acropolis, a lot of things used to cross my mind about what to talk about it, and some of the scientists were very active in the colleges, very much wanted to—did believe in them and wanted to continue to work in them, but by and large the sciences were a different world, set off on their own. They had different expectations for publication and for teaching, as I think I said last time.

Vanderscoff: As you mentioned yesterday, yes.

Dizikes: We talked about that. But I mean, it seems to me that that was the—once the dynamic was established, the traditional department, whatever you call it—then it was bound to flourish and to grow because that's what people were familiar with.

Vanderscoff: Right, and that's what generated research and so on.

Dizikes: Yes, of course, that's it. And could the colleges have been genuinely autonomous? Of course they could have been. But that would have been a real departure, unusual, and remember 'unusual' in the University of California system. The thing that we were conscious of—only gradually—was that we were far from free to do what we wanted to do at Santa Cruz, it was part of a larger system, and an immensely bureaucratic and conventional one. And I remember the first few years when I was on university-wide committees and I'd go to Berkeley or Los Angeles or wherever for meetings, the other faculty members there from the other campuses, while always polite and interested, would be amused because we had a different nomenclature for things. And we were odd—why were we so odd, and what were these odd things we were doing? They actually weren't very odd. I remember a faculty member at a Berkeley meeting said to me, "You know," he said, "I heard the wildest thing about something going on down there." He said, "You're in humanities, history." He said, "I heard that there is a student who has a project to sail down the Mississippi as an independent study, or something." I said, "Did you hear that? That's great. I'm the person who's sponsoring that." I said, "He's a very good student who's going to recreate Huck Finn's—." A wonderful subject, and he wrote a wonderful paper about it. But what was so odd, that this man thought this a wild kind of enterprise and notion?

Vanderscoff: Just eccentric, or—?

Dizikes: Yes, just eccentric. And, if I might say even as much as that, Santa Cruz—because it comes into later what happened under Sinsheimer³²—Santa Cruz was saddled

³² Robert Sinsheimer was UCSC's 4th Chancellor (1977-1987). For his take on UCSC, see Randall Jarrell, interviewer and editor, *Robert L. Sinsheimer: University of California, Santa Cruz during a critical decade, 1977-1987* (Regional History Project, University Library, 1996) at <http://digitalcollections.ucsc.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/p265101coll13/id/3491>

with this reputation for being odd, eccentric and weird. As the town still is, and as we wanted it to be in some ways. I was proud of saying, “We’re unconventional,” but that’s really different from saying, “We’re just weird, flaky.”

Vanderscoff: Outright weird, right.

Dizikes: Yes, you know.

Vanderscoff: That’s a bit more pejorative.

Dizikes: Yes, indeed, of course, and was it important in determining the course of UCSC? Of course. The division was fundamental in determining—the odds were always against the colleges. And you see, once you start hiring people through the boards, not through the colleges, then you immediately perpetuated that division, because people would come in, many of them vaguely aware of the colleges and what we were doing, but not really conscious of it. They were coming because they were in philosophy, or whatever it might be.

Vanderscoff: And how was your personal relationship with your college and your board? Did you feel any sort of conflict over where you should devote your time and energy?

Dizikes: No, I didn’t, because I taught my board courses fully and, as I said, I sometimes taught extra. I know three or four years I taught an extra class when we really needed it. I didn’t see any great conflict, but then, Cowell was the founding college and was established in the minds of many people, for better or for worse, as more of a college than some of the others. Others were trying to do some of the things we did, others wanted to avoid very much some of the things we did. A lot of it had to do with the personality of Page Smith and Jasper Rose and the way in which they stood out, for better or for worse. But I had no difficulty, not that I ever was aware of, and we would be advanced or up for promotion or advancement with a vote from both the college and the board.

Vanderscoff: Like fifty-fifty.

Dizikes: Fifty-fifty, right, and I had—I think I said to you, I had one or two members of the college who were in other boards, of course, come and say, “I’m awfully sorry, but I had to vote against you,” and this and that for promotion or this or that. But I didn’t have any sense of any great strain or difficulty. I do remember there was a very distinguished historian of Japanese history who was in Stevenson College, and I got to know him a little bit, we had infants of the same age, and he said to me one day, “I want to come and have lunch, I’ll come to your office and then we can go for lunch.” And he came to my office and the door was open and there was a mob of students for office hours. And it took ten or fifteen minutes. He said, “Oh, I’ll come back, I’ll come back.” And anyway, eventually he came back, I saw the students, we went down for lunch, and he said to me, “Do you do this a lot?” And I said, “Yes, quite a lot, they’re college students, but also history students.” He said, “I don’t want to spend my time doing all of that.” And within a couple years he left and went on, had a very distinguished career at Chicago and Harvard. But he saw right away that the college did impose demands that he was not prepared to have as a very ambitious historian, professional historian. And he was very frank about it, he said, “My God, I don’t want to spend my time—.” And of course he didn’t because he didn’t encourage people to come in, his subject was a narrower one, and he didn’t teach in the Stevenson core course.

Vanderscoff: So, as a result of this conflict there were some faculty who were hired who were very detached?

Dizikes: Very, very. Oh yes, they didn’t know, and if you were wondering, “How am I going to advance myself?” you couldn’t help but imagine that it would be in terms of your work in your discipline, which was your board department, not your college. If we had made it clear at the beginning that advancement was determined in the college, not in both but in the college, then that would have been profoundly different. But Dean McHenry couldn’t imagine doing that, and, as I say, in his memoirs Clark Kerr makes clear that he had a much more radical notion of the colleges being autonomous and that

that didn't follow on, and once he was then dismissed as president by Reagan³³ and the rest of it, the real impetus for support of the colleges diminished at university hall. As far as I know—I think I really can't speak about the direct influence that the president and vice presidents and everybody had on Santa Cruz and what difficulty the chancellors here had in dealing with them.

Vanderscoff: But the colleges as an institution became increasingly beleaguered?

Dizikes: Yes, vulnerable and beleaguered, that's right. That's certain.

Vanderscoff: Well, Page Smith has said in his oral history that there should have been no boards of study—

Dizikes: Yes.

Vanderscoff: —due to the conflict of interest that arose between them and the colleges. Do you think the college as originally envisioned was important enough that this step should have been taken?

Dizikes: Sure, we know of other universities in England, I mean, where there are colleges that are autonomous and able, and there are small colleges all over America where you can understand that that's a model for what the colleges were here. We could surely have gone on if we had begun that way if it was clear that authority—final authority—was vested in the colleges. Then people would've taken maybe a greater interest in teaching in the college, in talking about how the college should be modified or adapted, because the—remember, the notion was originally that each college would be entirely independent and have people from all the various disciplines. One thing that was proposed that I think might have made the collegiate system more successful as a modification of the collegiate system would have been if we said that the colleges would have a very specific emphasis and that people who wanted to come into that college

³³ Kerr's dismissal occurred in 1967.

would have to fit into that emphasis; American humanities, or the humanities, social sciences, science in Crown. There was that thrust, but they weren't fully developed in those terms.

Vanderscoff: And it certainly wasn't formalized.

Dizikes: That's right, and we would have given up then having members of every discipline in each college, but we would have had, as it were, the boards built within the colleges. The anthropologists would have been in college X and the historians in the humanities college. And as historians, board members, department members and collegians, they would have done their work within the college. But that was not acceptable to people and why—I never understood why not. It seemed to me I would have given up the full multi-disciplinary thrust of the colleges if they had had an emphasis that allowed us to escape from the board and college tension.

Vanderscoff: In exchange for some clarity.

Dizikes: Yes, clarity, that's right, more limited, but in exchange for clarity. The College Five, the arts college, would genuinely have been the arts and that's where they would've come. But the cost, of course, would have been great, because some of the colleges couldn't have done some of the things they wanted to do. For instance, when I was provost³⁴, because the thrust of the arts was in College Five, Porter, I really went out of my way to emphasize theater and music in Cowell, the students (inaudible), and we had lots of it, and very bright and able students who did those things. But it took a special effort to compensate for the fact that much of the emphasis was elsewhere, in other colleges. You see what I mean?

Vanderscoff: I do.

³⁴ John was provost 1979-1983

Dizikes: Looking at the time, I was aware of it, other people were aware of it, but tradition in universities is so powerful; you do what you've always done.

Vanderscoff: You were working against the tide.

Dizikes: Oh tremendously, tremendously. And people who were willing to be independent-minded in their own subject, in many other ways, in academic terms were always very cautious and conservative. I had my own little private joke, because for a while I was an outside member on the sociology board, and I used to say that the sociologists would've—many of them more radical politically—would've changed the entire nation if they could by edict, but they would never modify the sociology curriculum. Oh no. My God, they were so concerned.

Vanderscoff: That came down from the Mount.

Dizikes: Yes, they were so traditional in their—many of the more radical faculty members were, about academic things, highly traditional. You could almost draw up a chart; the more left they were in political terms the more they were liable to be very, very cautious and careful in professional terms. I can't explain it, but it was—seemed to me to be interesting. Universities are traditional places, as you know. And that's why students exerting a role, taking over, speaking up, that seemed frightening and terrifying to many professors, many academic people and administrators themselves. They didn't know how to deal with it; "What in the world was going on?"

Vanderscoff: Right, because they viewed it as a challenge to their authority.

Dizikes: Yes, "Universities are peaceful places, where people don't make a fuss like this."

Vanderscoff: Sober learning, and so on.

Dizikes: Yes, that's right. Because they're saying in America there isn't the same tradition of protest, political protest in the streets. That's why the 60s were frightening to so many people. For the first time, there were people agitating out in the streets, taking over buildings, blocking this, doing that, doing this, and people were genuinely horrified. What can you say?

**The Experiment Changes: The Growth of Central Administration
And the Decline of the Colleges**

Vanderscoff: So, I'd like to talk about the changing role of central administration in UCSC, which was in part prompted by the conflict between the colleges and the boards. Ken Thimann has said that central administration was originally a sort of "handmaid" to the colleges. It would seem to me that the authority of central administration is no longer quite that dainty.

Dizikes: That dainty, yes (laughs).

Vanderscoff: So, in those first ten to fifteen years how did the role of central administration evolve?

Dizikes: Well, it expanded and took over many functions. I mean, advising, you see, was advising to be done entirely in the colleges? Well, then they established a very elaborate—in central services—apparatus for advising students. I take it that in some ways it must have been necessary. I take it that some students could not find the kind of advice, guidance they needed in their college, so they had to go. But once you centralize anything in an American bureaucratic system it's going to grow at the expense of all the peripheral things. And that's why central services came to be the place that was centered for doing things that I always thought could perfectly well have been done in the colleges. Now there were certain things that no doubt had to have an overall central supervision, but you could've had those central administrators coming to each of the colleges and working out whatever difficulties or issues or problems arose. But the centrality of administration inevitably grew greatly, very greatly. And then, you see, you

had for the first time, after five or ten years, I first heard faculty—new faculty—who would say, “Why the hell do we have to have all of this stuff in the colleges? We’ve got a central advising system to do all of that.” And I would say, “Actually, it’s more efficient here in the colleges, students get the advice they need, at its best it’s more personal, somebody understands them, but, “No, no, no, the administration is administration and all this other business is extraneous.” And that’s why, especially in the 70s, when the decline of enrollment³⁵, when Santa Cruz lost prestige, which we will come to, many—a good number of people said, “Well, you see, that’s because the colleges are extraneous, we can save money, deficit reduction, make all the cuts in the colleges and emphasize the central administration.”

Vanderscoff: So, actually on the notion of that declining enrollment and things like that, Chancellor Sinsheimer has said, when took office, which I believe was 1977—.

Dizikes: Yes.

Vanderscoff: He felt there were substantial issues in UCSC, relative to—again—declining enrollment, the reputation of the campus, and unfounded but pervasive rumors of campus closure. Do you think there had been some sort of decline in the institution relative to when you started here?

Dizikes: Well, there’s no question it had lost popularity, the initial popularity it had, remember, in which the very top students came here instead of going—many of them—instead of going to Los Angeles and Berkeley. We lost that, and not surprisingly. The two dominant institutions in the University have always been, number one, Berkeley, and number two, Los Angeles, and their rivalry is an interesting part of the history of the University of California. But yes, there was that, there was worry, there was talk, but it was wildly exaggerated. I used to say, “Look, there was a once a rumor that the Mormon Church was going to buy the campus.”

³⁵ For historical UCSC enrollment figures, consult <http://planning.ucsc.edu/irps/enrollreports.asp>

Vanderscoff: (Laughs)

Dizikes: Yes—and I said to people, “Well, that suits me because I’m from Utah, and I’ll ask them if they’ll employ me and I’ll be a guide.”

Vanderscoff: Like going back home (laughs).

Dizikes: Yes, going back home and talking about UCSC and Utah and what it was like. That was all crazy and they were not going to close this campus. The redirect program—students who couldn’t get into Berkeley were redirected here—that was regarded as an indication of how we had failed, were slumping in our popularity. The colleges go up and down—universities—in terms of their popularity and the students they attract. I remember the 1980s, the single most popular university in the United States in terms of the percentage of top students who applied for admission was Brown University, not Harvard, not Chicago, Berkeley, anybody else, but Brown, for various reasons. But it was wildly exaggerated, and Sinsheimer took advantage of that to impose the changes he always wanted to make. He was not happy with the collegiate system; he did not really believe in it, he recognized that he had to put up with it, because so many of the faculty were still associated with it. And when I was provost and chair of the council of provosts, he and I used to have lunch about once a month, and he would talk to me quite candidly about his complaints and his concerns. He was willing to make some radical changes in the conventional university. He once said to me—he was a biologist, remember—he said, “You know, we don’t need a physics department, physics had its great phase fifty years ago, that’s all over, we should just have some grad students who can do introductory physics and the rest of it.” And I said, “I suppose you also don’t think we need to have a philosophy department?” “No,” he said, “as a matter of fact that’s probably true. I don’t think we do. We could really be more radical in changing the university. What do you think?” And I remember saying to him, “I don’t know, but I don’t want to be in a university that doesn’t have a philosophy department. I believe in philosophy, it can’t be taught by other people.” But about the colleges he was not open

to radical notions, or even modest notions of change or challenge to the conventional system. And undoubtedly he would say—I haven't seen him now for quite a while, but we always had a very good, amicable relationship—but I think he would say, “No, no, nobody knows how critical the situation was as I—.”

Vanderscoff: “There was a state of crisis.”

Dizikes: Yes. Well, I believe that's wildly exaggerated. They were not going to close it. It would have been a time where we could say, “What we need to do to restore our popularity is to reinvigorate the college system. We can never compete with the bigger campuses in traditional terms. And the history of the UC, the last twenty-five years, has made that clear, right? But what we could do is to reestablish ourselves as a modest alternative while being within the university system. But none of the chancellors we had, very good people who followed Sinsheimer—they were reasonable people, but none of them had any interest in really getting into such a radical change again, or getting involved with university hall to the extent where they had to really have a struggle.

Vanderscoff: Right.

Dizikes: And we had a number of chancellors—I used to say we had as many chancellors as we had provosts in Cowell over the first twenty-five or thirty years—and that probably had we had a chancellor more collegiately related, interested, who stayed on for ten or fifteen or twenty years—but we didn't have that. There was continuous change at the top, and that always leads to reinforcing the traditional structure, whatever it is.

Vanderscoff: It certainly would seem to demonstrate, particularly to external watchers, that there is some disarray within the university, when you're getting that sort of—.

Dizikes: Yes indeed, I think so, and there was, and the challenge to the university. And universities are deeply challenged now, but you don't find—I think right now you don't find many people saying, “Look, we're looking ahead trying to see what is the future of

the university in this new age of communication.” I think there is a real question whether we need residential colleges in universities, or there might be in a few years; people call that into question. But what you don’t get is to say, “Well then, we have to make sure that the residential university has a purpose that justifies its existence.” So far as I can tell right now, the only discussion about universities is money; is there enough money in the budget? And I’m not pooh-poohing that, it’s central, it’s crucial, but maybe there’s another way to deal about what the university should be besides simply the budget and the number of students who come in. But could you change the whole relationship of the campuses in UC? I believe there are people in university hall, or whatever they now call the center of the thing, who are probably very anxious to radically reorganize the campuses. Berkeley and Los Angeles have—for a half a century many of the faculty in administration wanted to be graduate centers, maybe exclusively graduate, but that’s never politically been possible because so many people want their children to go as undergraduates to Berkeley and Los Angeles. But I don’t know where we’re going now, but what I’m struck by is that there is largely an absence of very much discussion—I think I’m right—about the nature of the education. It has to do with the resources that are available for education. I don’t know, maybe I’ve drifted off the subject, but—

Vanderscoff: No, well, I think the headlines certainly support what you’re saying.

Dizikes: Right, right.

Vanderscoff: So, Chancellor Sinsheimer, of course, makes the decision to remove the colleges’ hiring power, among other things.

Dizikes: Yes, that was the death knell of the colleges, absolutely. Once they became simply peripheral social centers with a modest intellectual thing—we still had college core course, and they still go on, though much diminished. Remember, the original, actual college core course in Cowell was two years; the second year was non-Western, American and non-Western. We did Asian and Middle Eastern history and African history; people now must think they’ve invented those subjects in America. But we did

that then, and then couldn't sustain it because we didn't have enough faculty to continue to do it. It was immediately thought that was too great a demand—students needed to start doing their major in their freshman year. And I believe we could have had majors that were established allowing the freshman year to be entirely interdisciplinary. But maybe I'm wrong—especially in the sciences the argument was you had to start earlier to major in the major, not to do this interdisciplinary thing. Anyway, what was lost or gained? A great deal was lost intellectually, but colleges remained socially important, and—. (There is a knock on the front door of the home. John excuses himself to answer it and the tape recorder is turned off. The interview picks up when he returns about a minute later.)

Vanderscoff: So, given the curtailment of the colleges and what you're discussing about what was lost, how had the role of provost changed from the time Page Smith or Jasper Rose held the position to the time you held the position³⁶?

Dizikes: Well, let me get the chronology clear. We opened in '65, and I became provost in '79. So that's a decade and a half. When I was provost it was still formally and obviously very much the same kind of position. We had independent budget, we were still consulted in terms—up until that point—in terms of who was hired, what people were brought in, how they became faculty, became college members, what went on intellectually in the colleges. But my years mark the change from the original notion of the colleges to a very different notion. I was able, I hoped and I thought, to maintain much of what had been important in the college. I had lots of support from the faculty who were friends and we'd been around for many years, and while I was provost the core course was largely taught by faculty members. Within a very few years, almost everywhere that had changed. Graduate students, part-time faculty were brought in. I hasten to say that doesn't necessarily mean the teaching wasn't as good. Part-time adjunct people, graduate students may be better teachers than the regular faculty—of course. But in terms of the commitment of faculty time and what that represented there

³⁶ Page Smith and Jasper Rose were the first and second provosts of Cowell, respectively.

was a profound change. And I remember how shocked I was to find out that when new faculty who were hired came, Sinsheimer had organized an orientation program in Asilomar³⁷, in Monterey. All new faculty went to be oriented, and colleges were prohibited from having any representation there, saying anything about it. All the new faculty were brought in to understand that they were coming to a traditional place; it was their department, their board-department that would really determine their future.

Vanderscoff: That was the power in the land.

Dizikes: That was perfectly clear what that was intended to do. What is my assessment of his {Sinsheimer's} legacy? Well, I think it was ultimately a profoundly destructive legacy in terms of being able to sustain the collegiate system as such. He was an extremely bright person, wide-ranging in his interests. I enjoyed talking with him, he used the university house still, for many, many occasions, bringing in outside people to talk—a lot of things—but he really stayed away from the colleges. I don't think he came but one time in four years to Cowell, and when I went to talk to him about establishing a joint relationship with Crown College, that is, I said—and I went and talked to the Crown faculty—Cowell would take all Crown students in the fall in the freshman seminars, core course, and in the winter Cowell students would go to Crown for a course in the nature of science. I went up twice or three times to talk to the Crown faculty, a few of whom were responsive and most of whom were either shocked or baffled or (inaudible). And I went to Bob Sinsheimer and said, "If you would come with me it would strengthen my hand." He had said, "Well, go ahead and do that if you want to do that, it's up to you if you can manage it." But when I asked for his help, I said, "It would also be a tremendous help if you would agree to come if we established this and give a lecture or two in the core course in the winter," showing that the most serious and senior faculty could take part.

Vanderscoff: To lend his authority.

³⁷ Asilomar Conference Center is in Pacific Grove, just outside Monterey.

Dizikes: Right, right. “No, no, no,” he said, “I can’t do that, I can’t involve myself in that way,” and I think partly it was because—I think—he thought it wasn’t worthy of his time, but he respected the traditions of scientific independence and of faculty independence, and being simply faculty members, not collegiate members in any way. Anyway, it was clear in my mind that I was a transitional figure leading to an entirely different and new period in the history of UCSC. And John Lynch, who followed me, had to deal with diminished resources and diminished expectations.

Vanderscoff: So that process continued after your tenure.

Dizikes: Oh sure, it was amplified and speeded up. Once the reorganization was done, it really meant the boards were dominant, it was a conventional university; now let’s see if there might be a marginal, minimal role for the colleges, and if some faculty wanted to be provost, or whatever, and take part and do it, it was up to them. Our stipend was profoundly reduced from what it had been before, until after reorganization. That tells you enough there. There’s very little support in terms of budget for the colleges for activities. Ann and I—Ann did an enormous amount of work, cooking, preparing, entertaining, not because it was, you know, farmed out for anybody, but because she felt she should do it. And it was a wonderful time for us, very engaged and involved, but we were drawing on a rich history and personal support, and within a few years that began itself to diminish. People died, changed, moved away. I think my period, without any question, marks the profoundest transformation of the old Santa Cruz into something else.

Vanderscoff: And you were there witnessing it all.

Dizikes: Yes, I was right there, at the center of much of it. The provost still had a lot to do; they always have a lot to do. The current provost of Cowell, Faye Crosby³⁸, has been wonderfully energetic and imaginative in doing things, but it isn’t as part of a full academic—well, full academic support. It’s on her own, with whatever resources she can mobilize.

³⁸ Faye Crosby began her tenure as provost in 2010.

The Relevance of Multi-Disciplinary Classes: ‘Mickey Mouse’ or Not?

Vanderscoff: One of the criticisms that were leveled against the colleges and the way they ran were the multidisciplinary courses within the colleges. I’m speaking of courses such as Page Smith’s ‘chicken course,’³⁹ which is perhaps the most famous instance of those.

Dizikes: Notorious.

Vanderscoff: Notorious. These were criticized from some quarters as ‘Mickey Mouse courses,’ and I was wondering if you—what relevance do non-major, multidisciplinary courses have in higher education?

Dizikes: Well, I’d say they not only are relevant but are crucial. And their absence reveals, produces a situation we have where, with all due respect, we have many bright students who are extraordinarily narrow in their understanding. They have their major, they have that and that’s what they understand. This is what I can gain by listening to them talk on the bus as I ride up, I used almost every day to ride up and walk down—but talking to many students, talking to faculty. First of all, ‘Mickey Mouse courses;’ I can identify a lot of ‘Mickey Mouse courses’ that are traditional academic disciplinary courses. If it’s ‘Mickey Mouse’ it’s because of the shocking failure of the faculty member to be serious in any real way. And something can be conventional, a traditional introductory course in a discipline, and be routine and intellectually undemanding and unexciting. I think the courses—and this is purely a subjective, maybe arrogant response—but the dozen or so multidisciplinary courses I taught with other faculty members were the most exciting courses I ever took part in, because I learned a tremendous amount from Todd Newberry, from Norman Brown, from Maury Natanson, Bert Kaplan, Karl Lamb, all the various members that I taught with. And we taught

³⁹ The ‘Chicken Course’ was co-taught by Page Smith and Charles Daniel, a biologist, and focused on the chicken in history and science, and was lauded by supporters of multi-disciplinary classes, but was also infamously criticized by detractors as frivolous.

classes that we thought attracted students—we know they did, and students who were very much engaged. Now, the notion of the university as a place of breadth as opposed to specialized concentration has, of course, gone in the direction of specialization for the faculty as well as for the students. I lament it, I think one of the things we have is increasingly citizens who are educated and trained, but have very little interdisciplinary intercultural understanding of the culture they live in. The shocking inability of most young Americans to say anything about American history is not surprising, and I'm not making it up, I think almost every study has shown—as you probably have read—that there are students who don't even know anything about World War II, or who Hitler was. Well, I think that's not only lamentable, I think it's destructive and dangerous. 'Mickey Mouse courses?' Well, it depends whether Mickey Mouse is teaching whatever he's teaching, or she's teaching. But the Page Smith course was a deliberate provocation.

Vanderscoff: The chicken course.

Dizikes: Right. There was a very important history book written about the history of the potato in European culture. You might take something like that and develop it and show that it has very rich and important ramifications, and that's what Page was doing in the chicken book and the chicken course, but people who wished to denigrate that kind of study seized on it as a mockery. And he was delighted with their mockery—he invited it.

Vanderscoff: Was he?

Dizikes: Oh sure. He invited it, he knew that they were being absurd, they didn't know what his course was, they never came and heard about it, they only heard of it and said, "Ah, you see? Page Smith and the history of the chicken," and this and that. I disagreed with him about his interpretation of the chicken. I grew up on a chicken farm, and I used to say to him, "You have a romanticized notion about this, you don't know what it is to gather eggs and clean them and deal with these stupid creatures."

Vanderscoff: (Laughs)

Dizikes: So one year, when our son was just—maybe he was a year old or something, Page came by at Christmas and he brought a little box filled with chicklets, little chickens. Yes (laughter). And I said, “Thank you very much,” and took them back and gave them away to somebody. No, no, a lot of that was—and, you see he was entirely undaunted by criticisms from his fellow faculty members. He was actually, as an administrator, he was not very interested in the faculty, he was far more interested in the students, and when I was senior preceptor and did various things to try to help out in the college, I would go around and talk to faculty members about things he wanted to do. He was bored by it, he was not very interested, he was convinced that young people were more interesting than old professors. All of these things are certainly arguable.

Vanderscoff: I have heard from reading the other oral histories that Page Smith was certainly very willful in a lot of these regards. Professor Newberry says in his oral history that Page Smith apparently asked all the faculty how often they wanted college nights, and most everyone said, “Oh, about once a month.” And then he, without consulting anyone, wound up making them once a week (laughter). And everyone was astonished.

Dizikes: Well, I don’t know about that, that may even be true, that’s right. But after all, the head of an institution makes decisions sometimes unpopular with his own staff. That we had it weekly—we were able to sustain it for twenty-five years, and then gradually it began to diminish.

Vanderscoff: Now it’s several times a quarter.

Dizikes: Yes, it’s only a sign of how much less important the college is in the lives of the students. I would like to think, and this may be self-indulgence, that the college nights we had every week for four years when I was provost were an important way in which we existed briefly as a collective. There weren’t too many other ways in which we could do that, but we did it there, and the students seemed to enjoy it, the attendance was

always very high, they came to the house, we went to college night—it was a great pleasure. It was demanding; it took a lot of time and energy. All right, I suppose it couldn't be sustained, but to end up in a situation where Stevenson College doesn't even have a dining hall that they can use for their own, but they come to Cowell, is a revelation of the extent to which the colleges as residential places in the campus are so much diminished. I lament it. But as far as Page's role in it, he felt that he was there to provoke the complacent faculty.

Vanderscoff: Right. And he had a lot more autonomy to do that under McHenry, relative to you under Sinsheimer.

Dizikes: Yes, absolutely, and he had the personal courage and conviction and arrogance, or whatever you want to say, to do it. That's all. He didn't need to get support from too many people. If he felt it was an important issue, and he spoke out and stood up for what he wanted. And you see, he came to be much more sympathetic to the students and the students' criticism of American culture in the late 60s and early 70s. He was very influenced by the counterculture, though he was by tradition and by family and everything a very traditional person from a very old family.

Vanderscoff: Veteran of the Second World War, as you said in one of our other sessions.

Dizikes: Yes, yes.

Vanderscoff: And I'd actually like to ask a question briefly about Jasper Rose, what was his style as opposed to Page Smith's?

Dizikes: Well, he was a transplanted Englishman, and he cultivated his Englishness, and he cultivated his personality. He was a crucial figure in the early years because he knew what a college could be. He had many different ideas about involving people; he was a very captivating person. He put people off because his style was one of going overboard. He did not believe in personal restraint (laughter), and he was a person who

was interested in colleges, interested in American students, but not very interested in American culture. And when he was provost he lived in the Provost House in a very real sense of isolation. I remember once saying, “Don’t you think you ought to at least take the Santa Cruz *Sentinel*, and find out what’s going on in the town?” But that was not his primary concern. And after he, he felt he belonged here, and yet he always felt very estranged in American culture.

Vanderscoff: Well, he did ultimately leave Cowell, I understand.

Dizikes: Yes, Cowell and the university, and went back to England. He was a very remarkable person with a tremendously wide range of interests. I really regarded him as a very good friend and admired him, though I also was aware of what an odd character he seemed to so many American students. And he gloried in that, he developed it.

Vanderscoff: Relished it.

Dizikes: He accentuated it, relished it, right, he played it all out. He was not nearly as eccentric as he seemed to many, many people. But again, it was his way of dealing with the culture and with the more cautious and timid people. And that’s the same thing with Page; he wanted people who were more confident and bolder in their initiatives, or whatever they wanted to do. And I used to talk to Page and say, “But you really simply don’t understand that most of us don’t have the kind of temperament that you have, the kind of confidence and boldness. I admired it tremendously, because he was very open to argument and disagreement, and I want to say absolutely that Page Smith stood out in every way in one respect that I’ve come to see as unusual. As provost of Cowell at a time when he was most influential in employing people and bringing people in, he did not look for people who would be his satellites and supporters. He brought in very independent-minded people, many of whose views were repugnant to him, but he felt the college should be a place of great diversity of type and of ideas. And he brought in a faculty that was about as diverse as you could imagine, and many of whose ideas he not only didn’t share but were repugnant. But that was not the issue. The issue was what would

stimulate the students, and that's very rare, because most of us want to have colleagues who are—.

Vanderscoff: Molded in our image.

Dizikes: Of course. Think the way we think. Oh, of course we want diversity, but what we really want is to have people who agree with us. And he wasn't looking for that all.

Vanderscoff: He had a unique vision that sort of transcended that.

Dizikes: Oh, totally. And it's so rare, I realized—it took me many years to realize how rare that actually is. Very many splendid colleagues really, when they had any authority in terms of hiring, wanted to bring in people who were sympathetic.

American Studies and Thoughts on Teaching

Vanderscoff: Well, shifting gears, I'd like to talk about the American Studies department, which you've been involved with.

Dizikes: Yes, well, Michael Cowan and I founded it, and we founded it because we realized right away—he was a professor of literature, American literature—and we realized and we became aware of how many students would come and say, “I'd like to do an interdisciplinary independent study, and I want to do something.” And I would say to them, “Well, sure, I'll direct it, but you realize I'm not an authority in that regard, you want to write about James' novels, I like Henry James, he's my favorite novelist. Sure, I would read it, but I'm not an authority.” And Michael Cowan would have people come to do subjects in American culture and history, and we began to collaborate, and the American Studies moved through all the metaphysical levels of university bureaucracy. It began as a series of independent studies, it then became an independent major, it then became a committee, and it then became a board, and then we could employ people and bring other people in. It was enormously important to me because though I enjoyed, relished teaching American history—political history is what I mostly was asked to teach,

18th, 19th, 20th century, many aspects—I was conscious from early on of wanting to avoid that business of getting stuck in a narrow subject, and I had to keep myself alive intellectually. And the way I found I could do it was to move into a broader series of subjects, above all, in American studies, the history of the arts, and that’s what the last twenty years of my career here I primarily taught. For two or three years I was both in American Studies and History, but eventually I moved formally from History to American Studies. Not because I was unhappy with my colleagues in history or the subject of history, American history, but I wanted to do something else. Something to nourish me intellectually, not simply to spend the rest of my life talking about the New Deal, or just 20th century American history, and it was a godsend for me.

Vanderscoff: And American Studies was a way to realize that.

Dizikes: Absolutely. And the arts, reaching people—I reached many people who didn’t know even as much as I did, which was not very much about the 19th century. I’m exaggerating a little, I had always read a lot of literature. I cared about architecture, poetry, painting. But to be offering courses, American Studies, the arts, 19th century, 20th century, two-quarter courses, seminars and courses in women in America, the arts, short stories, novellas, independent writers, a series of classes on Henry James and Melville and others, all of that impinging on other people’s territory. I was doing literature, I was doing architecture, I was doing painting, all these things, I know that some of my colleagues undoubtedly—probably rightly—thought, “God, I mean, talk about trivializing, you know he’s not an authority in any one of those.” I wasn’t teaching them as an authority. They were introductions to students of subjects they otherwise would never have had. And I always saw myself as a teacher who introduced students to subjects, didn’t master them, didn’t convey some overarching interpretation, but tried to encourage them to see how exciting it was to learn about them. And I remember Mary Holmes, who was a wonderful teacher and whom I would invite always to come and give a class in painting in the 19th century, the 20th century, which she did very professionally and very highly organized. She’d say, “What have you been doing, how far have you got, whom do you want me to talk about?” But at the very beginning she said to me, “I

know you spend a lot of time in the slide library, you're always showing these slides and music tapes and everything." She said, "What is it you teach?" And I said, "Well, we start with architecture and art and poetry and philosophy." "Oh," she said, "I see. A little bit of this and a little bit of that." And I thought to myself, "That's a very good description of what I do." A little bit of this, a little bit of that.

Vanderscoff: A richness in eclecticism.

Dizikes: Well, I will say I think the classes were well regarded, that is, the evaluations I got were, and many of the students I taught were not just Cowell students or history students, but students who did these other things. And I've had, you know, many students stay in touch and talk about what they read and what they did and so forth. I don't want to go on and on, but about three years ago Ann and I were at the Metropolitan Museum in New York, there was a big show of the Italian painter Giorgio Morandi, and we went for that and that was marvelous. My niece, who lives in New York, was with us, and just before lunch we finished the Morandi show and I think my niece said, "What would you like to do?" And I said, "Let's go look at some of the American rooms, just two or three of the things," they had a wonderful collection. We went through, and as we came out we were standing in a room looking at a painting by Edward Hopper, the American painter, of a service station with the dark all around it. Extraordinary painting. And we were looking at that and someone tapped on my shoulder and I turned around. It was a young woman who said, "Maybe you'll remember me or maybe not, but we studied that painting in your class." Then she turned and walked away, and I thought, "How wonderful, if she associates me with this painting, this music, this building, something." I could ask for nothing better. I maybe opened up an interest, and that's the best I ever assumed I ever could ever do as a teacher.

Vanderscoff: So a privilege for you, in some sense.

Dizikes: For me, of course, and Ann would say to me, "Do you know how lucky you are? You can do anything you want in this university." I said, "Well, not quite, but you

more or less grasp the point, that's right." Was it—did I take advantage wrongly? I don't know. I didn't think I did. God knows they wrote papers, had exams, quizzes. I thought they were pretty demanding courses in the formal ways, but the point of the course was not that I was going to demonstrate, and they demonstrate to me they had mastered a subject, but that they had gotten involved in it and were interested. And the papers I assigned gave them a chance to write about a whole range of subjects and everything, and many of the papers they wrote were highly imaginative and obviously the product of some genuine excitement. They'd go to the library, go look at the slides, listen to the music. We'd look at the slides of buildings. The architecture section that I would do was for many students, I think brand new, they didn't know much of anything about 19th century, let alone the end of the century, the tall building, the evolution of the skyscraper and all of that. And that seemed to me—it was exciting for me, and wonderful, and it was part of my wide range of interests as well. You see, it came out of the fact that I was interested in a lot of those different things, not because I, again, I was an authority; I didn't pretend to be. I didn't even, in a real sense, want to be. What I wanted to do was to relate one thing to another, Jacksonian Democracy to Gothic Revival. This sort of thing and say, "What's the relationship?"

Vanderscoff: And see what sort of connections can be drawn.

Dizikes: Yes. Can you see connections in this? And to say to students when we got to the 20th century and did post-modernism and modernism, post-impressionism, and inevitably there'd be students who would say—because I encouraged them to be candid—I put up a Picasso or whatever it was, and somebody would always say, "Oh God, my five-year old sister can do as well as that." And I'd say to them, "Please, introduce me to your five-year old sister, I'll become her agent (laughs). Really, she can do as well as this? Are you sure? Just because you don't like it, do you really know what it is? I don't like it, in a way, but we ought to ask ourselves, 'Why are they painting that way? What is it in the culture that has led them to do this? Brilliantly talented people, at least as smart as we are, and why are they doing it?' That's the question. Not whether you just like it or not."

Vanderscoff: Well, it sounds like you were approaching culture with all of its complications and facets with a wide net.

Dizikes: Yes, that's right, I hoped so. I mean, this is self-serving, I make it sound as if—no, it is; “These wonderful classes.” Well, I hope that they were wonderful for many students. We used to hire a bus—the university allowed me to have a bus—and we'd take a busload of students one day during the week up to the de Young, the old de Young museum in the morning, and then the modern museum in the old Veteran's Building in the afternoon. And I think honestly, without a single exception, riding up or riding back, we'd then go look at the pictures, many of which we'd seen slides of and talked about, and we'd just walk around and look at the pictures. I wasn't lecturing, I wasn't—. Every single time—I did that for about ten or twelve years, until it was impossible for the university to pay for insurance, so we had to stop. It was voluntary, and I'd say to students, “I know all of you can't make it, but what about Thursday, could we go up and do it?” Anyway, every single time somebody would come up to me and say, “This may shock you or surprise you, but I've never been to a museum before.” And I'd always say, “It's a wonderful experience. Turgenev said he envied the person who read *War and Peace* for the first time.” I said, “I envy you going to a museum for the first time, but promise me one thing; some time in the future, you'll take somebody else who's never been before. That's all.” That's the experience that I wanted. Not that what I had to say about Edward Hopper—what I had to say was what I had read in all these books. What did I have to say? But it was something to be said that maybe would stimulate them to say something else.

Vanderscoff: To conduct their own exploration.

Dizikes: Yes. In Santa Fe one time, Ann and I were in a restaurant—we go every other year to the opera and chamber music and this lovely place, and the wonderful museums they have—and we were sitting in a restaurant, one of those where you could see the cooks, cooking in the open sort of thing. And a young woman came out—again, I

identified her immediately as a former student—she came out and she said, “How wonderful to see you here, Mr. Dizikes. Do you know why I’m here?” I said, “No (laughs). Why are you here?” She said, “Because you got me so interested in Georgia O’Keefe and the Southwest.” Wonderful. I don’t mean that I transformed her life, or that we added anything greatly to the stock of knowledge about it, but her own life was richer for having had that experience.

Vanderscoff: Which is huge.

Dizikes: Exactly. What more could you ask? That’s what I got out of junior college and college and graduate school: a wonderful excitement about the possibilities of learning many different things.

Vanderscoff: Well, events like that demonstrate that your intentions are being heard, or are being translated clearly to your listeners, to the students.

Dizikes: Yes, I think so. I think that—and often I have thought, “I don’t imagine that students remember a single idea that I propounded. They might. God knows what I said, I said so much over thirty-five years of teaching, thank God I don’t have to—there isn’t a recording of all the nonsense (laughter). It’s not any idea I communicated, but maybe excitement, interest in learning, right? And I think I was pretty open to students who disagreed profoundly with whatever it was I was saying, because I was not—I’m not fixed in my own notions about these things, about American culture as a whole or in particular about any of the other aspects of the arts in American culture.

Vanderscoff: Well, it may be that that openness is what makes good teaching, I mean, you do have the definitive teaching award in the Humanities named after you.

Dizikes: And I’ve had a wonderful experience of countless students coming back and writing me and visiting and saying hello and phoning and all the rest of it, which makes

me feel that they look on their time as not wasted, something that encouraged them. I told you at the very beginning I saw myself as an encourager of students.

Vanderscoff: As someone who was so much encouraged in your own educational experience.

Dizikes: Yes, exactly, exactly. I was encouraged and pushed along, otherwise I would've done who knows what? I would have been all right, I would have been a high school teacher; fine. I admire that. But I did more, I did other things I never thought I would do.

Thoughts on the Relationship Between the University and the Town

Dizikes: Now, you want to talk a little bit about town-gown relations?

Vanderscoff: Yes, please. You mentioned, I remember, in our first session that the townspeople were expecting they were going to get some sort of small Ivy League-esque institution up on the hill and these very dignified students.

Dizikes: Absolutely. Right, well-pressed students. And instead they were all barefoot and smoking dope (laughter), and the town; “Oh my God! What have you done to us all?”

Vanderscoff: Because the town was quite conservative in those days.

Dizikes: Yes, oh, listen; but also very receptive. We got here, Ann and I—Ann was pregnant, but we had no children—we settled down and within two or three days went to the old public library, which was down on Lincoln and sort of Center—not Center. Anyway, on Lincoln. It was the original building that had been built—Carnegie Endowment, though the woman who had spent her life as librarian, planning and hoping for the new, bigger library, was able in those years to build the new—where it is now. Anyway, we went to the old, little library and the woman said, “Oh, before you can check

out any books you have to be here two weeks, we have to know some things, some identification, who you are.” And I think I said, “Oh, okay,” and my wife said, “Oh, I’m sorry, because we wanted to check out a couple books to read.” And she said, “What do you do? What are you going to do here?” And I said, “I’m part of the new university.” “Oh,” she said, “In that case, of course we’ll let you check out books immediately.” There was a tremendous sympathy, encouragement for, interest in, and that remained, but at the same time the reality of what it turned out to be those first four or five years was shocking to many people. How many doctors and lawyers at parties in the evenings would say, “What in God’s name is going on up there, what are you doing, what are those—?” And I’d say, “They’re your kids, they’re all middle class children from professional families, who do think they are?”

Vanderscoff: (Laughs)

Dizikes: I didn’t train them, I didn’t tell them how to behave, God knows I’m shocked too. But what? What are you—it’s a university, they’re here, they’re expressing themselves.”

Vanderscoff: Did you find the character of the students here substantially different from the students you had at Connecticut or as a teaching fellow at Harvard—in those early days?

Dizikes: Yes. Remember, I didn’t go back to Harvard to teach then in the Vietnam years, maybe I would have found the same. I know what went on at Columbia and Harvard, other places. What I found was the students became more and more engaged in their culture, less and less willing simply to accept authority and very, very provocative in their analysis and criticism. I remember there was a man who’s a lawyer, a prominent lawyer here in Santa Cruz who was a student, very good, very counter-suggestible, argumentative student, and he was a delight to have in class because he provoked discussion all the time. Genuinely, right? And at commencement, just before commencement, for some reason he came up to me and he said, I think he said, “I want to

thank you, it's really been a lively time and everything." And I said, "Well it's been wonderful for me, and I'm really grateful to what you brought into class." But he said, "One thing only I'll tell you. In the future, you better devote more time to the study of women in American culture." And was he right. This is 1968, '69, and after that the feminist movement, and I had a growing recognition that I had taught political history more or less without reference to women. Well, after all they didn't vote, right? And I think it was partly because of all of that that I started doing much more formal work about women artists and women in American culture those last twenty or twenty-five years. But I had students who were extraordinarily perceptive and lively and generous in what they did. I never had any incident or experience that was distressing or upsetting, but I wasn't that provocative, I think. I mean, I don't know. I was lucky, mostly.

Vanderscoff: But the town perhaps was not quite so receptive to the students?

Dizikes: Oh, no. Oh God, no. Horrified, after a while, really (laughs). On the other hand, the students came in and shopped and spent their money, right? Come on. And I'd say to them, "Look, all you really care about is that they be good consumers. What do you care about whether they're dressed or not dressed or what they're drinking or whatever?" No, and it was a shock, as it was to the country as a whole. The counterculture was terrifying, and people never recovered from it. Truly, years later I would encounter administrators who would be nervous about what would happen if there was student protest or the rest of it. And several chancellors invited me over to talk to groups of students who had come to protest or argue about something.

Vanderscoff: You had a reputation as a conciliator.

Dizikes: Wheel me in, they'd wheel me in as the kind of collegiate sort of spokesman. Not because I shared their views, but because I think I never found it difficult to talk to them, right? Did I share many of their cultural views? No. For God's sake, I mean, I'm twice their age, after a few years. It was a different thing. But I regard those 60s and 70s as wonderfully exciting and provocative years.

Vanderscoff: Relative to the town, of course, it set off a tone that I think hasn't quite entirely changed, I mean because to this day there are huge struggles over campus expansion, water, things like that, and so it seems that a relationship that was originally envisioned to be rather harmonious has actually played out in a rather contentious fashion.

Dizikes: Yes, but universities are terrible neighbors. They really are everywhere, in England, in America, wherever. They're devastatingly self-centered and selfish. And enough of the innumerable chancellors who would say to people in the town, "Well yes we're located in Santa Cruz, but we're actually a statewide institution. We're not just Santa Cruz." Yes, but you're located in Santa Cruz and you impact this local community, and I think the current chancellor is one of the very best in being able to go and talk to people in the town.

Vanderscoff: Chancellor Blumenthal.

Dizikes: Yes. And they varied in their interest in doing that and their capacity for doing it. Dean could do it very well, in a very practical, matter-of-fact—talking about the expansion of the university, what it would do for the town, and values in the town. And remember, many people would say to me, "Well I'm not happy that you're all here, but my God, it's helping real estate values." Yes, okay, fair enough.

The Experiment in Retrospect: Thoughts on Where UCSC Is Now

Vanderscoff: Well, I'd like to close out our sessions with some thoughts on the evolution of UCSC in retrospect, and what UCSC is now, as of your retirement and as of this year, 2011. It seems very clear that UCSC was a unique institution in the beginning, founded on these unusual principles. Today, what sets UCSC apart in either a positive or a negative sense from the other UCs?

Dizikes: I'm speaking from a position of very considerable ignorance. Well, I really am. I live here, I'm still in touch and everything, but I don't actually know what's going on in teaching and the rest of it. If I taught the students I'd have my own. But I have some views, strong views about that. What sets UCSC apart from the rest? Very little. It is a very conventional American university. The students, former students whose children are thinking of coming here talk to me fairly often. "What's it like? Should we send our daughter or son?" and the rest of it. And I say to them, "It's not the place it was when you were here, for better or for worse." It's a place where there are still many very fine instructors, many people who work very hard. It is a place where a student who wants to learn can learn an enormous amount. But that's the case in any college, anywhere. Students who want to learn will learn. The paradox of higher education is that the good students who want to learn almost don't need the whole institution, they'll find their own way. Of course I know they need instruction and guidance, but there's much to commend coming here for an education. But it is not the place it was thirty or twenty-five years ago. It is—in no way could it really be. It is ten times as large. There are profound differences. And the students themselves, I think, must be different in what they're seeking. Now, this particular time is very precarious, right? They are probably hoping they can do what they want to do, learn what they want, and find a job and be employed. And the future I think is going to be precarious and hard and grim for them. But if they want to learn this is still a very good place to learn.

Vanderscoff: Todd Newberry characterizes UCSC—he says that it is turning out to be “just another research university,” and I quote him there. Is this change in UCSC, this shift towards falling in line with the other UCs; is this some sort of an effort to imitate UCB and UCLA?

Dizikes: Yes.

Vanderscoff: You think so?

Dizikes: Yes, sure it is. The little satellites revolve around the big ones, and the system imposes uniformity. I mean, maybe it has to, to attract tens of thousands of people in different places. There's still differences in the campuses, I'm sure. Santa Barbara, Riverside, Davis—Davis had its own, and continues I think to have especially its own unique kind of culture, given where it is and everything. But they're all part of one larger mass, and a rather indistinguishable one I would guess. I think I quite agree with Todd. It's just that I don't want to say, "Nothing remains," because something remains. And every year there are faculty who help students discover things they never imagined they would discover when they come here, and there are people like Faye and the many other teachers who teach very vigorously and imaginatively and very well. It's a good place to come and learn, but it's a different place.

Vanderscoff: I think to this day, UC Santa Cruz still retains a reputation for being different, for being alternative.

Dizikes: Is that so?

Vanderscoff: I think so, and that reputation has certainly also bled downhill to the town, at this point.

Dizikes: Yes, yes.

Vanderscoff: Between the university and the city, why do you think that is? Is that something that's more based on the—perhaps the alternative character of some elements of the students—.

Dizikes: Yes.

Vanderscoff: —or is there still some basis in the educational system or what's left of the college structure in that?

Dizikes: Well, as long as there are colleges, which don't exist in other places, and they are social centers and still maybe, to some degree, intellectual activity goes on, then they are something different. So, it's easy for me to say, "It's not what it was," but it's still something other than the conventional ones around. I think after all in American culture people who are very cautious and very, truly very conservative with the small 'c' and traditional, at the same time have a yearning for the unusual and the different. And 'Keep Santa Cruz Weird,' I like that.

Vanderscoff: That slogan, yeah (laughs).

Dizikes: That little logo. Well, yes, I really sympathize. It is fundamentally not very weird, but it is in some ways still different from many other little towns and cities its same size, and I value that, and I think many of the students who come in value it, and the townspeople have a very mixed feeling about that. Yes and no.

Vanderscoff: They go back and forth.

Dizikes: Yes, back and forth.

Vanderscoff: In a conversation with Todd Newberry about the question of UCSC's failure or deviation from its original mission, Helen Morris, your mother-in-law, once said, "Never judge a university during its first 500 years," referencing King's College in Cambridge. Is it too soon to judge UCSC?

Dizikes: Yes. Because I'll conclude with this; after my time, but some time in the next ten, fifteen, twenty years, a group of faculty and administrators are going to get together, whatever the situation is in the nation, and they'll say, "My God, I just had a really brilliant idea. There are these colleges, these architectural, distinct things. We could really develop something here that would be very different and very interesting." And maybe there will be a time when they want to come back and develop that. Of course it's too early to say. Kenneth Thimann used to say, "A hundred years, there's no point in

saying anything about a university unless it's been around for a hundred years. 500 is a very Cambridge and Oxford thing to say (laughter).

Vanderscoff: Yeah, a couple regime changes (laughs).

Dizikes: Harvard isn't yet 400 years old. But no, it's too early to say. Is there a possibility that it could be refashioned in a very different way? Yes, of course, there's always that possibility. I think it is, however, harder and harder the more an institution remains a traditional one. It's harder to break out, bring in new people or reinvigorate the people who are there. But students might lead the way. Students might, at a certain point, five, ten, twenty, thirty years from now, say, "My God, I don't want just that. I want something else." And then who knows what would come out of it. Helene Moglen⁴⁰ used to say, "Our architecture is our future, our destiny. We can't escape the fact that we're not built like a conventional university." And I think this is why I say some time somebody will say, "Hey, what a brilliant idea, there are these colleges. Let's do something with them." Who knows?

Vanderscoff: So, even though there's a lot of forces contrary, there is some spark that remains.

Dizikes: Yes, there could be. Nobody predicted the 60s in '58 or '59, believe me. All of sudden—indeed it was in reaction to the dismal and bland and suffocating 50s that many people in the 60s wanted to explore something else. So, who knows? Maybe the period of austerity will lead people to say, "Look, if we're paying this much money, and it's this difficult and the rest of it, we ought to at least get something more out of our undergraduate experience, not just what goes on everywhere else." Who knows? And then maybe the regents and the university administration would have to listen to that. Maybe they'll decide at a certain point to make it entirely an undergraduate campus. There's always been talk of that. I don't know what would happen to the faculty here who want to do graduate work, but suppose they decided they would, and over a period

⁴⁰ Professor of Literature and Feminist Studies

of time that faculty would migrate and this would just be—well, who knows what could come out of that? That's not beyond the realm of imagination.

Vanderscoff: So things remain in flux.

Dizikes: Yes, I think so. It's American culture, which is still pretty—.

Vanderscoff: Volatile.

Dizikes: Volatile. That's the word, you got it (laughter).

Vanderscoff: Well, is there anything else you'd like to say?

Dizikes: No, nothing. Just that what a wonderful place this has been to raise a family. Our children, who grew up here and then went away, as they should have done, on their own. But how many friends and the children of friends we know we have. And the things that have turned out to be so incredibly important for us here have not been only university-related. Ann is a weaver and a craftsperson, has been in touch with this wonderful culture of crafts people, and we have always had as many non-university friends as university friends. And it's been wonderful for me to go to many, many places and be introduced as Ann's husband. It's been a lovely place to grow up.

Vanderscoff: So beyond the question of the institutional changes, a certain community has been created here.

Dizikes: Oh yes, it has, and wonderfully within range of San Francisco, right? If we lived another hour away, you couldn't drive up two-and-half or three hours, but an hour-and-half? Concerts, theater, shopping, museums, the city itself, visitors who come in. It's been wonderful, absolutely wonderful. And this magnificent drive up the coast—for forty years I've loved driving up and getting away.

Vanderscoff: Up the Highway One.

Dizikes: Yes, you know (inaudible). I want to thank you for taking the time and trouble to do all of this.

Vanderscoff: Not much trouble. Some time, not much trouble (laughter). It's been my pleasure, though (inaudible). All right, with that we'll close off this record.

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About the Interviewer:

Interviewer Cameron Vanderscoff is interested in stories, whether he is talking with his WWII-veteran grandfather in his Ventura County living room or a Midwestern rancher in a farm town diner. He feels that beyond their entertainment value, stories are a bridge to history, a way to connect to an individual, a topic or a society that is otherwise distant, whether due to a gap of time, culture or experience—and as a result, the power of a story is incredible, and invaluable. For Cameron, conducting John Dizikes' oral history was, above all, an opportunity to learn from and record an exceptional narrative about a teacher's philosophies about living and learning.

Due to this interest in stories and human connections, Cameron studied history and literature with a focus in creative writing as an undergraduate at UC Santa Cruz. He also worked as a library lead at Cowell College's Page Smith Library for four years and, concurrently, as a resident assistant for three years, two of them at Cowell. Beyond his academic pursuits, he enjoys writing fiction, playing music, particularly blues, and traveling when the chance occurs. He is a recipient of the Dizikes Writing Prize, and graduated magna cum laude from UCSC with honors in both majors in June of 2011. Cameron hopes to ultimately find a career that, through its expectations or its character, involves writing and the opportunity to engage with history and literature.