

UC Santa Cruz

Out in the Redwoods

Title

Tchad Sanger: Out in the Redwoods, Documenting Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender History at the University of California, Santa Cruz, 1965-2003

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TCHAD SANGER



Interviewer, Irene Reti: *Tchad Sanger was interviewed on February 27, 2002 in the Regional History office at McHenry Library. Tchad was a UCSC student from 1989 to 1993, and a staff member from 1993 to present. He currently works at Stevenson College as an academic adviser. Tchad has been a member of the GLBT Concerns Committee and co-chair of the UCGLBTA. He has been a webmaster for both groups since 1994. He was co-organizer of the UCGLBTA “Exposed” conference in 1998. Tchad has also been honored by a Mayor’s proclamation for his service to the Santa Cruz community.*

Reti: Tchad, would you start by telling me about your early life?

Sanger: I grew up in Arroyo Grande, California, which is near San Luis Obispo, California. It was a very small town, pretty rural, very agricultural. Both my parents were educators. I have a sister who is seventeen months older than I am. I went through the high school. The UC system was where I was going to go to school. That was pretty



much decided. My sister went to UCLA. I'm not really a city person, and it turns out neither is my sister, really, or any of my family. And so, in the exploration of the UC campuses, it was pretty much down to the smaller ones. At the time it was Santa Barbara, San Diego, and here. I had visited Santa Barbara and San Diego. Santa Barbara was a little too close to home. It's about an hour south of Arroyo Grande. So I came to Santa Cruz, and it was absolutely incredible. I had never known gay as an identity existed, or the scope of different sexualities. I knew that I was different, and I knew that I was attracted to the same sex, to both sexes. But I had no language for the realization of it. There were names and there was name-calling, but I had no idea that I was a faggot, or that I was gay.

Reti: What year were you born?

Sanger: I was born in 1970. This was in 1988, when I was doing tours of campuses. So I came to Santa Cruz, and it was actually on a campus tour... Me and my mother and my father all drove up, and we had breakfast at the Whole Earth Restaurant. It was the quintessential Santa Cruz first experience. [laughter] Sprouts everywhere. It was great. A *Good Times* was there, the local Santa Cruz entertainment paper. I looked through it and there were classified ads. I had never seen anything like that at all in my entire life, that people would put personal ads out there. I was looking through it, and back then it wasn't segmented. It wasn't categorized. Everything was just out there. You had to look through every one. When I was going through it there was an ad that said: "Bi white male seeking similar." That's when it clicked. That's me! People identify like this. I could be here and be okay. It was funny. I was sitting at the Whole Earth Restaurant with my parents. And the exhilaration and the shame, such contradictory things. I felt dirty looking at it, but I was also totally exhilarated. So that's when I decided. Plus, Santa Cruz was the most gorgeous campus in the entire world. I don't mean to understate that. But that was a decision enough. I came here and it was an absolutely gorgeous day. I knew that was it. I wanted to come to UC Santa Cruz.

I had never seen someone able to express their identity, and I'd never seen a community that was open to that. It was really the first time I'd seen not only a gay identity, but an acceptance for that. I knew that Santa Cruz was the place for me to be.

Reti: That was the first that you knew that. You hadn't gotten any information from the University that indicated acceptance for GLBT students, or you hadn't heard anything from your peers?



Sanger: No. Again, this was 1988. I came here fall of 1989. The late-1980s were a very interesting political time for queer sexuality. A lot of borders were being tested and challenged. The big coming out push as a politically active environment, versus this is just our life. It hadn't quite really all the way sunk in, as far as admissions saying, we have the GLBT Center. We went by there. It was mentioned, but not explained. As a seventeen- or eighteen-year-old, I kind of needed that explanation. So we went on the campus tour. It was on a Friday. Right at five o'clock we were going through Porter College and people were coming out of everywhere. It could have been any college at five o'clock and it would have been the same thing, but it was the last college we went through, and it was Porter at five o'clock. It was just such a live environment. That's when I decided: it's Santa Cruz and it's Porter. That's how I came here.

I started in fall quarter 1989. When I think of fall 1989, I think of it as a kind of rebirth, this second life that I started, or at least thought about starting. When I first started at Porter, there were only two other identifiably gay people there. Now it has a reputation of being the freak college, the gender, sexuality... Everything is okay. But when I was first going there, it didn't have that reputation. It was the arts college, but there wasn't a visible gay presence. One of the [gay] people happened to live on my hall, and then another person got hired later. But the sexual identity of the college was still very open. People weren't willing to accept identities. It was just whatever happens happens. It was just crazy people in college. We hadn't quite gotten to the really big identity politics stuff, drawing lines and claiming identities, which I think is a really important thing. Or somewhat of an important thing. At the time it seemed important.

One of the people whom I lived on the hall with... In my second week here we were at a party and he asked me if I'd ever thought about, had ever been, or even considered being gay. I was completely horrified. I came here to be that, but to be *read* as that? I wasn't comfortable with it. I ran. No. Absolutely not. I wasn't ready at that moment. It was at a party. There were people there.

About two weeks later, after the [Loma Prieta] earthquake, on November 12, I actually came out to him. I told him that I was bisexual, and that I wasn't honest with him. Coming out for me was a very, very long process, from the first person that I told on November 12, until Memorial Day weekend the following year. Eight months. That's the period that I took to tell my family. From the beginning to the end. It was a gradual process. Later on at Porter I had a friend who asked me one evening, "How do I come out?" I said, "Well, I think you just did!" By twenty-four hours later his entire family



knew. Everyone knew. It took me a much longer time. I had to make sure that this was exactly what I am, who I am. I had to make sure that I was buying into something that I could believe in. I didn't know enough about it. I wanted to explore those options.⁴³

Reti: In doing that exploration, did you go to the [GLBT] Center? Or were there classes you took?

Sanger: No. For the remainder of fall and winter quarter I stayed pretty isolated. I told two people on New Year's. I struggled with it internally. I did a lot of journal writing. You go back and look and think, oh you were so young! What happened? I identify as gay, but I don't think that's really all that accurate. During the time I came out I was dating a woman and then spring quarter in Santa Cruz hit. I don't know what it is about spring here. It's like, the world's okay! It's so lovey. I really loved it.

Then I finally had that breaking point. This is it. It's okay. I'm bi. I'm queer. I'm gay. Whatever. But it's okay to be open and honest about it. I had these weeks when I'd tell people. No one was really surprised. I was somewhat injured at the time, just because you think you put up a good front. But apparently everyone was talking about it. Everyone was right. They could have told me and it would have been much easier! [laughter]

The first time I went to the Center was... There were two queer people at Porter who were residential preceptors. One was hired on mid-year, I believe, in the other quad, and the other was one of my preceptors. I wasn't sure if he was or not, and he was very ambiguous about it. But when I finally came out to him in a discussion about sexuality, I got the vibe that he was too, without him saying, "I'm gay." It was kind of strange. But part of that whole coming out was we took a walk to the Center at that point.

Reti: That was before it had a director.

Sanger: Yes, it was all student-run, and it was open primarily evenings. It was also at that time that I was hired on as residential staff. I can be very naive. Ginny Fitzmaurice was the housing coordinator there at the time. She still is now. She hired me and...I don't know, the internalized homophobia that I had, and that my family had was: you don't

⁴³It is striking to compare Sanger's coming out process, which he describes as "gradual," with that of some of the older interviewees, some of whom took decades to come out. The coming out process seems to have accelerated—Editor.



tell anyone because you'll be fired. That got played out a lot over the summer with fighting with my family. I knew I had to tell Ginny. I was hired, but I wasn't hired as someone who was gay. Not that she would really care, but I thought I owed her the truth. So I came out to her. She said, "Thanks for sharing. I think that's really great. I don't care if you are or not, but I admire your courage to do that." So that was my first employment coming out experience. I was really scared at the time, not knowing, and feeling like I was living a lie.

Porter was different then. It wasn't the kind of utopia it is now. I think during the following three years the work that we did in building up the gay community at Porter was in large part due to Ginny, and her wanting and allowing us to create an environment that was not just gay-tolerant, but gay-affirming. She allowed us to establish the Lavender Network and gave us a lounge.

Reti: What's the Lavender Network?

Sanger: Porter Lavender Network was something that Damon Jacobs and Michael Santos started. I was involved in it. There were the campus queer groups, and then there was this budding group at Porter. I came out. Other people started coming out. Damon and Michael and I felt the need to have a Porter Lavender group, a place for Porter students to go and feel comfortable, a safe space. Michael opened up his apartment and we'd have social hours, just hang out. We had every single residential assistant show up for these events. The support that not only I felt as a gay person, but other people going to these events and seeing leaders and pillars of the community there, supporting that and saying: I'm here in solidarity because I love, and live with, and work with these people. The change that happened at Porter was really, really quick. Four years and it's this gay utopia, or freak utopia. People can just *be*, and everything is pretty much accepted and okay.

Reti: Besides Lavender Network, what other kinds of projects were you working on to help create that environment?

Sanger: I was on residential staff for three years. I was peripherally involved on the campus-wide stuff. I went to social groups. Sometimes I went to the GLB Network. When I started going we didn't have the "T," around 1990 or 1991. But as far as what I did at Porter, a lot of it was just living very honestly, and letting my residents know me and take from me what I had to give.



That time was also Queer Nation and ACT UP stuff. I did get harassing notes on my door. I did get threats at my door. There was also rallying around it. We did have inflammatory things spray-painted or chalked on the sidewalks—"Queers Die" or "Faggots Die." With ACT UP and Queer Nation, we had the energy, the focus, and the anger to direct our community activism. It was very easy for us back then. We were arrested. I wasn't arrested, but groups of us were arrested for kissing in the Capitola Mall. It was a very powerful thing. We had kiss-ins up on campus, because at the time it was really, really important to be visible. So a lot of what I did back then was to be visible, to make sure that the queer portion of my life existed with honesty and integrity. Now, I see it a little bit differently, but then that seemed to be enough.

Back in 1989 or 1990 there was a UCLGB Association conference here. No "T." No "I" yet. So there was the UC conference here at Santa Cruz, and one of the things that was discussed was the use of the word *queer*, because with ACT UP, and Queer Nation that was being thrown out quite a bit in academia. That's when I latched on to the word and the identity of being a queer. At least within the queer community I'll use that label. With people that don't understand it, I might not use it.

Reti: You would say you were gay?

Sanger: Yes...

Reti: That is one of those questions we have been asking people for the Out in the Redwoods project, is how do you identify? It's complicated. A lot of people don't feel like they fit into one identity or another.

Sanger: No, I don't. I definitely use *gay* because it's easy. It's convenient. It's kind of a fun word. I guess my primary sexual relationships are mostly with men. But gender is no longer in my life, in my existence. I see *gay* to mean a similar thing as queer. But when I use *gay* it's not to imply maleness or male sexuality; it's to assume a sexual dissidence. To be sexually different and rebellious, versus—I am a man having sex with other men. When I was a student I wanted to do an individual major in sexual dissidence, but I wasn't really encouraged to do so. I didn't know the academic scene. I didn't know what I could and couldn't do. I was a student, and so I took advice and didn't do it. It's one of my great regrets. I really wanted to do that.



At the time I was using queer as a political and identity label. There's a conference here that's called Northern Rap, which is a conference of Northern California res life members, residential staff. There was a conference at Berkeley, and I presented a proposal for queering the academy, to talk about queer identity and politics in residential life, and programming support that can happen. It was actually a very tame presentation. There was nothing scandalous about the content. But I got rejected because of use of the word *queer*. I'm actually pretty good friends now with the person whom I was having the discussion with. They would not let me use that language as the title of the workshop, which was really interesting with regards to autonomy and ownership, and language and power. My question was, "You mean I can't use language to identify myself and present my life at this conference? At what point is this okay?" Having a queer person tell me that I couldn't do this...it was really, really interesting. I think there are a lot of people who think queer is a new label or identity, or it's something that only newer queers use. I was at the "Creating Change" conference in Milwaukee in November, and someone made a comment that they liked this new queer label. But I've been identifying with that for ten years now. For ten years I've accepted that was part of my life, and used that as part of my life. Especially within the queer community, that's what I see myself as. When I'm talking to my family members, *gay* doesn't quite do it. *Queer* is a much more descriptive word for me. But I've been going through that fight of what can I call myself. It was shocking. I can't call myself what I am? I ended up not presenting.

Reti: This would have been about 1992.

Sanger: Yes.

Reti: Because you were still on the residential life staff.

Sanger: Yes. I was on res life, and I was also working at Porter as a housing assistant, back when they didn't have just students doing these jobs. It was really interesting to be a part of housing and the back room—what goes on with policy change, and what could Ginny and I do to make this a more comfortable, not just queer-friendly, but a queer-advocating, recruiting place. That was definitely my goal. Ginny was very supportive of making it a very accepting place for everyone. There was also a push at the time of having queer-themed housing. Ginny and I were always staunchly against that. Our goal is not to say there should be themed housing. Our goal is to say that if we're not making it comfortable and accepting for everyone, [so that] everyone feels they have a



voice and a space here, then we're not doing our jobs right. We need to really examine what we're doing. Ginny taught me a lot of the ways of the world, how to see and look at things, and yourself in reflection. I'm very thankful that she allowed us such a great opportunity. A lot of the changes that happened at Porter were because of her. And Kathy Foley was the provost. It was a really unique, great experience in time, Porter College in the late-1980s and early-1990s. You couldn't have better—the people who were there, and the creative energy that came out of it.

Reti: What about the academic side of your life? Were there faculty whom you felt were mentors? Was there GLB or GLBT content in any of the classes that you took?

Sanger: Well, since I wanted to do my own queer studies major, a lot of my transcript is identity-politics related, and a lot of it is queer, HIV, AIDS-based. I'm definitely out on my transcript. I took one of the first classes offered at the University with queer in it. This was also in the time where narrative evaluations regulated what you could say about a person, or their character or nature. You couldn't say that someone was gay in a class [narrative evaluation]. So there were all these really interesting things that would happen with faculty saying, "If you want to take this as this class you can take it, but we can't say that you're gay in this evaluation." There were some pretty interesting preambles: "Before you take this class, this is what we can and can't do."

Reti: What was the class that you took that had queer in the title?

Sanger: Well, one was *Queer Life and Social Change*. That was taught by Allan Bérubé. Phenomenal. There have been some really great things here. That was a great class. I took *Gay Male Narratives* with Earl Jackson. I took *Queer Politics* with Dave Thomas. Dan Sullivan taught *Representation of AIDS*. Academics was very interesting. By the end of my first year, I was very out. I was very comfortable, very open. I'd done the struggles and was ready. A lot of my academics from that point on were being gay or queer in the academy. I had people come up to me that I'd had in a class two years before, when I was graduating, and they would say, "I just want to thank you for being in that class because you made sure that I was there. You made sure that your questions were always involving me, too."

I ended up being a psychology major, so I took a lot of psychology classes, which is a normative social science, normative in that no one studies any divergent population. It's all pretty much white male studies. In a lot of my classes, I would ask, "What about me?"



Where am I in this? I'm not anywhere, and people of color aren't anywhere in this." I struggled with, "How can you teach this when it's not applying to anyone who was in my life?"

I was always the gay one in class. I was always the one that people kind of groaned when I raised my hand. I was known as "the gay guy." Which is fine. I had a point to make and I'd always make it. It always seemed kind of relevant that I was bringing it up. I think people generally appreciated it. I did have some negative experiences in classes. People hadn't really thought about bringing gay people into the picture. When you talk about economic revolution, no one factors in gay identity. Is a queer revolution an actual revolution? I remember fighting for this point. You are degrading me to a category of a special interest group or a culture, rather than my own culture that has my own language, identity, development, but that we are ghettoized, that we make less to the dollar. To say that we don't have the possibility to have a revolution or to subcategorize us into a sexual revolution. What if we actually really bonded together and used our money wisely rather than these sellouts, mainstream media stuff? But typically, the classroom was somewhat of a safe space, primarily because I took a lot of queer classes, and also I brought up queer issues. The fields that I was exploring weren't necessarily the most homophobic or scary.

Reti: As a student, how involved were you with the Santa Cruz community, or the county?

Sanger: It's funny. There's a really big difference between when one is a student and when one graduates. I was always involved downtown, and part of it was because my best friend is a bartender at the Blue Lagoon [bar]. So when I was older I was very well connected. Once I graduated, it was almost like I'm out of the University and now I'm in the town. But I'd been working with these people for years, Merrie [Schaller] and Kaleo [Kaluhiwa], being involved in ACT UP stuff. I would just show up at their little rallies. One of the slogans was "Queer and Present Danger." That's one that's been sticking with me for some time now, I think partly because of some of the conflicts that are going on with the Supreme Court, their World War I resolution that people can be arrested if there is a clear and present danger. That got misused, with the police department saying it's a queer and present danger. But that's been coming up a long time, so I had a reminiscence of my ACT UP and Queer Nation days. The rallies. The Capitola Mall is a good one. That was one of the memorable ones. The kiss-in there. And then people being arrested for it. It was just phenomenal.



Reti: So as a student you were somewhat involved in the community, but not as much as later?

Sanger: Yes. Not as much as later. Terry Cavanaugh had a grant to do these dinners where young gay men would go to these restaurants. I was out of school by this point. We would assemble queer youth, and they would have a couple of speakers speaking about what it means to be out and gay professionals. It was a great program. It was the youth movement before it was called the youth movement. That was also what was interesting about ACT UP and Queer Nation and being involved in those times. As a youth at the time, I never felt like I wasn't invited to the table, that my issues and needs weren't being met. Maybe because on a bigger picture we had to deal with so much more than what is being brought up now.

I think a youth movement is definitely needed right now, but back then I don't think we did. Basically anybody was wanted, just because of the decimation of loss [from AIDS]. Of course my voice and opinion were heard, because I was one of a few. I don't think that's necessarily as much the case anymore. But when you are dealing with a community that was becoming extinct, I don't think that there was as much of a need to make sure my voice was being heard, because I just really felt glad, appreciated that I was there.

I never really got involved in organizing. I'm not involved in organizing the Pride parade, although I am considering getting involved in that now. I've always had my side projects, or things like helping organize these youth dinners. My primary activism in the queer sense has been on campus, mostly because this is ninety percent of my home. I work here. I have a huge investment here in the [GLBT] Center and the University. It helped me come out, and I feel very committed to helping other people feel as safe as I do.

Reti: So you graduated in 1993.

Sanger: I graduated in 1993. I made it in four years. It can be done. [laughter] I spent the summer working in the housing office, and I was applying for jobs. This was in the recession. There was a hiring freeze. No one had any jobs. I wondered, was I going to have to go home and move back in with mom and dad? Which wouldn't have been that bad—now I think I'd actually like to go and spend time with them. But back then it was like... I was looking everywhere from Oakland to Salinas. For three months nothing



stuck. And being at Santa Cruz, being very out... I had the advice to closet my resume after I graduated. A lot of the work that I did was queer-specific community organizing.

So I embedded my homosexuality in diversity training and multicultural issues. I would show up at these interviews with these packets of workshops and presentations that I did, and they are *very* gay! Very, very gay. [laughter] So there's that discomfort. I applied to do some res life at the California Academy for Arts and Crafts. Great school. They were very excited to meet me, but I shared that information and the perceptible backing off... It was part of being at Santa Cruz and being so comfortable and open here—people don't really care. If they do care they are so afraid of one's openness and honesty, it ends up not being an issue because they are more afraid than we are.

I spent three months looking for a job and couldn't find anything. At the end of September it was like, okay I have no place to live. I have no job. I had applied to a couple of places on campus. I had four days to make a decision. This was the most exciting time in my life, because I had been very safe and calculated but this was like, oh my gosh. What's going to happen? Am I going to stay here, or am I going to go? So I thought, I'm just going to put it to the wind. I'm going to stay and we'll see what happens. I have enough on my credit card to last for two months and that will be fine. Two days later I found a place to live. I still didn't have a job and I was going to take a week off. I'd been interviewing, but the University takes so long to hire that I had forgotten I'd applied for these jobs, and was interviewed. It was a Friday. I said to my best friend John, "Let's take a week off and go hang out in San Francisco and come back, and then I'll be ready to find a job." I checked my messages two seconds before we were leaving, and I was offered a job at the registrar's office.

It was incredible that I got the job because there was a hiring freeze. I'm just so lucky that I got it, because I was able to stay in Santa Cruz. It was a new position and it was basically designed for me. Someone to be in charge of publicity and trying to make the registrar's office a kinder, gentler, friendlier place. It was great. I got this message saying, "Can you come to work on Monday?" "Yes, I can come into work on Monday!" I still have yet to go through an employee orientation. I've never been. I had to start work because it was the first day of the quarter.

The registrar's office was really great, as far as one's first "professional" experience. At that time, it was such a loving office. My boss, Gloria Williams, was just phenomenal. She had spent time in the Village in New York, and was very comfortable with gay



people. It was a very family environment. Ellen Farmer was there. We had some great planning and interactions with the queer community on campus. A lot of groundbreaking stuff.

But when I first started in the office, I didn't know how to conduct myself professionally. It's one thing being a student and being queer, because you can ask questions and be vocal. But when you go into the professional world, it's strange and different. It's like, can I be gay in the office? And especially because after I was tired of getting these kind of shocked looks I said, well, I'm gay. My resume has to be gay and I will get gay jobs. So everything on my resume to the registrar's office was out and open. They knew exactly what they were getting. But when I actually showed up on the job, I was very ambiguous about who I was. Until one of my co-workers, who was a straight guy said, "So what are you? Who do you think you're trying to fool?" It was basically a very friendly reading of me. I had a date and he was like, "Well, is it a man or a woman?" [laughter] I said, "It's a man." I thought, what am I doing? I've spent the last three years trying not to do this and I did it again. There I am, back in the closet, or supposedly. I didn't fool anyone.

During my time there I was assaulted in a gay-bashing downtown. I called my boss, Gloria [Williams], the next day and said, "I'm not coming in today. Last night I was attacked." Gloria said something very important as far as moving on. She said, "It happened; you lived through it, and you'll move on." For an African-American woman to tell me this... It completely solidified and gelled the fact that this kind of cross-community, like...multi-issue activism and experience is completely relevant and important. She was able to do exactly what none of my gay friends were able to say to me. It was really, really important. We are not privy to the violence here. Gay people don't necessarily... It's not happening right here in Santa Cruz. And so when it does... It took an African-American woman to help me identify what I needed to do.

Reti: That's a very powerful story.

Sanger: Yes. And then they wouldn't try it as a hate crime because they wanted to make sure they won the case. There are so many offensive things about the legal system.

I tried going to meetings after I graduated, Stonewall and things like that. It was awkward.



Reti: What's Stonewall?

Sanger: Stonewall is one of the groups that meets at the GLBT Center. There's Stonewall; GLBTN, which is the political group; there is Sappho; and then there was Bi Women for Women. Stonewall was the regular men's meeting. I tried to stay involved. They said all people were welcome but I got this vibe that I was being creepy. This was a student space that just six months ago I was a part of, but when I showed up it was like, what are you doing here? I stopped going. I was invited to be on the Chancellor's Advisory Committee, which came out of the McHenry [Library] takeover in the spring of 1990. For three days we took over McHenry Library and the foyer with people sleeping outside of the chancellor's office.

Reti: Was the issue about gay students, or diversity?

Sanger: It was about everything, but one of the things that came out of that was making sure that ethnic studies courses were listed in the *Schedule of Classes*. *City on a Hill Press* had a people of color editor, a queer editor, a women's editor. I believe the GLB Campus Concerns Committee was another of the outcomes of the sit-in. Jean-Marie Scott was chairing the committee. She invited me to join it. We had one meeting, and then nothing really happened as far as the committee's involvement and what we were doing.

[Then] Sigrid Hvolboll became chair. She was great. I miss her a lot, because she was this activist bisexual woman. We'd have these meetings and we'd say, "What do you want to happen?" Since nothing was happening for faculty, staff, and students, it was like, "So what do we want to do?" She was the one who was able to pose that question, so stuff started happening. At [UC] Berkeley, they had a UCGLBA meeting, and I remember the meeting when she came back very clearly. She said, "We're eighty miles away from Berkeley and I was the only one from Santa Cruz there. What does that mean? What are we doing? How come we're not being involved in this?" I got sucked right into that one! [laughter] So Sigrid and I, and Laura Engelken, and Todd Bowser, who was really involved in the beginning... I started doing the web page for the Campus Concerns Committee. I was Sigrid's right-hand person. I would go to a lot of things. My involvement became real and concrete. I ended up going to the UCGLBA. Nancy Stoller and I were at a meeting in San Diego. It was the first meeting I'd ever been to, and Nancy volunteered me to do the website for the UC-systemwide committee. This was 1994. So I'm now the web person, and have been since 1994. The same with the campus one, too.



Sometimes the administration kills me, because there's been no recognition. When I was chair of the UC systemwide committee, there was no write-up in *Currents*. I had to say to them, "I'm doing this, you guys." There's such a lack of recognition of what the queer people are doing on campus.

Sigrid and I had fun because we were starting with nothing and creating something. We said, "We want 'T' in our group name. We want to be the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgendered Concerns Committee. So why don't we?" It was being discussed at the time at the UC level. No one here had any objections to it, so we went to Francisco Hernandez who was the one overseeing the group, and said "We'd like to include this in our name and in our mission statement." Francisco has always been pretty forthcoming in what we've wanted. His comment was, "I'd like some information on what transgender is." I think that was a very honest, great response. He gave us the autonomy to define ourselves and just asked what it was we were doing. I had great respect for him in doing that, because a lot of campuses aren't like that. There are some campuses which aren't as progressive as Santa Cruz. We started asking for money. We wanted to have a reception in the fall for people coming back and new students. So let's ask for money for a reception. And all of a sudden we had money for a reception and we were able to welcome people to the campus.

In 1996, Sigrid and I received an email over the summer from Ziesel Saunders, saying that she was closing the Center because she needed the space for a residential life office, or something like that. Sigrid and I thought, well, that's something, closing the Center. Her indication was that it was from lack of use. I hadn't been there for a long time. I hadn't been to meetings, and I didn't know what was happening. Sigrid couldn't go to our annual reception so she asked me to update everyone about what had happened over the summer. So at the reception I was the one that said to the campus, "The Center is closing. We're sorry the Center is closing." And the students said, "No, we don't want this. We can't have this!" They came to me to ask, "What can we do? We don't want this to close." That's when I started writing letters to Ziesel and Gail Heit, and stepping on toes. I wasn't politically savvy. I didn't know who to ask and what way to ask it. I just went to Ziesel's boss and said, "We can't have the Center close. You've said it's under-used space and I don't think that's true. And the students don't want this to happen." Through those letters we were able to keep the Center open. But I hurt Ziesel's feelings. She had been an ally for the Center for a long time. I didn't know how to go about this. The Center was closing and when the students said that was wrong, it dawned on me,



yes that's wrong. You can't close the Center! Well, you can, but you have to open it somewhere else. You can't say that there's no interest in doing it. Because it's obvious from the students' responses that there's a definite interest in keeping the Center open. Donna Lee was the student GLBTN chair representative. She was great. So that was a scary time when the Center possibly could have closed.

Reti: Was there more funding provided at that point?

Sanger: It was paid for by Merrill [College]. Merrill paid all of the expenses: the copying, the electricity, the cleaning. Merrill paid for everything because it was Merrill's space. She had given the space to the Center and now she was taking it back.

Reti: So it was considered Merrill space and they had just basically reversed their decision. That was before there was a director?

Sanger: That was way before. It was at that point we knew that funding was essential. Because the fact that it could have been closed meant that there wasn't the backing behind it to keep it successful. So that was when we first started talking about funding for the Center. Money was pretty tight then. The skinny was that there wasn't going to be the money or the funding for it. That was put on hold for another year or so.

In 1995, Shane Snowden was here at the Women's Center. She had a pretty good finger on the pulse of money and funding. She let Sigrid and me know that now was the time to act to get the information together and put in a proposal for the Student Fee Advisory Committee to fund the Center. So we scrambled, and got a bunch of information together. There was great survey that was done awhile back by Planning and Budget.⁴⁴ So we used a lot of those figures. On some lesbian flyers people had burnt cigarette holes in people's faces. I gave a personal testimony on what it was like to be a student and be harassed. So with that kind of testimony, and there wasn't a lot of money to go around, we got the funding for the Center to be autonomous, as good and bad as that is. With freedom comes responsibility. And so now they have a budget and have to work within that. We tried to get as much as we could but they funded us as much as they could. It was due to a very sympathetic Student Fee Advisory Committee, and a lot of political

⁴⁴Randy Nelson, "The Educational Climate for Gay and Lesbian Students," (Santa Cruz, Calif. : Office of Analysis and Planning, UC Santa Cruz, 1990). Available in the Out in the Redwoods archive.



savvy from Shane. That woman is brilliant. The University not being able to keep her is just a shame. She's just incredible, phenomenal.

In 1998, Todd Bowser and I brought [the conference] "Exposed!" to UC Santa Cruz. We got funding, and then Todd and I started working on "Exposed!" That took a year of planning. That was very revolutionary, what Todd and I did. We actually got put on the [list of] "Top 100 Queer Youth List of Youth to Watch Out For," which was funny because I was twenty-five or twenty-six, and Todd was eighty, or something like that! [laughter] I emailed him after I saw that website and said, "One of us is a liar!" But it was really phenomenal. The UC conference happens every year. In 1995, Todd and I go to this conference at [UC] Irvine and there were 200 people there. The whole time we were thinking, we could have a really incredible conference at Santa Cruz! I don't mean to put down other campuses, but the students at Santa Cruz are so cool. We could really put on an incredible conference that would do our students a service and justice. We know what Santa Cruz is. I know the students that I work with and for, and Todd does too. So after too much caffeine, we volunteered Santa Cruz to host the next conference. Every year, assigning the location of the next conference was like pulling teeth, because no one wanted to do it. It was a northern campus's turn, and it was going to be assigned to Berkeley or San Francisco, or Davis. Todd and I said, "We'll do it." It was the first time somebody had actually volunteered to do a conference.

We spent lunches at the Whole Earth [Restaurant] drinking coffee and talking about what we wanted to do. What did Irvine do, and let's re-position and look at it from a different angle. What exactly do we want to show of Santa Cruz? It was incredible. That's when we brought in the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and the Human Rights Campaign as co-sponsors. The Human Rights Campaign flew us out to Washington, D.C., to go through this training institute for these kinds of regional conferences. We were way ahead of the game already. Students were struggling to put these conferences together in groups that wouldn't support them. We actually served as a resource for them. We said: "Go to these places to get money. Go to the community. Start building networks." Todd and I were very good at doing that. Todd is phenomenal at doing that. We wanted to focus on the arts and entertainment. These conferences had never been entertaining or artistic. So we made it very performance-based, to a lot of criticism. We wanted it to be shocking. We wanted it to be scandalous. I think in many ways we were. We were on *60 Minutes*! We had Margo Gomez come. We had Annie Sprinkle come. Both Kerry Lobel and Elizabeth Birch spoke there, and it was the first



time they had ever been in the same room together, two directors of the top national organizations.⁴⁵ Todd and I did it, and we brought them to Santa Cruz. And we did it for free. They charged nothing. We did it during El Niño. We had the most severe weather storm in California and we had it that weekend. It was very exciting. We had a sex worker come and talk about sex worker rights, and unionizing prostitutes and sex workers. What we put on was a really incredible conference. We knew what Santa Cruz is, and the opportunity for education.

One hears criticism very loudly, and there was a lot of criticism. We let *60 Minutes* come, and there were people who weren't comfortable with being on national news, and being out, which I am totally sorry for, but you're coming to a conference called "*Exposed!*" Right? This is totally elitist, I know, but there is some point at which I am not going to apologize for being out in my life. I'm going to continue to be exactly how I am, and some of that is going to hurt some people along the way. I might hurt my allies. I might hurt people who aren't ready to be at the level that I want to engage the world at. And I am sorry. But it's a conference called "*Exposed!*" You are coming to Santa Cruz and playing with the big leagues here. Expect that. I think Santa Cruz really put its name on the map in being a resource for other campuses. It's turned into students wanting to put on these conferences now. It's fallen away from the resource center. While they coordinate, student chairs are doing a lot of the work, which is really great. The students have said, "We want it to be a conference like it was at Santa Cruz." I've heard that a couple of times from different organizers. The student involvement that we had, and what they did, was incredible.

Reti: How many people came?

Sanger: There were five hundred. To jump from two-hundred-something to five hundred is huge. We had people from all over the United States come, from Atlanta... They flew through an awful storm to get here, just because it was the most exciting student thing happening. If only we had a big conference center, something that could hold all these people.

Reti: Yes, UC Santa Cruz is a tough place to organize a conference.

⁴⁵Kerry Lobel was the director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, and Elizabeth Birch was the director of the Human Rights Campaign.



Sanger: Yes, UCSC is a logistic nightmare, but Porter was a great place to have it. We had trans art there. Loren Cameron did an exhibit. We were attacked by the Religious Right. We had a mole from the Religious Right, Accuracy in Academia, come in and write something about us. What came of it was that these conferences now are big pullers. This one that happened last weekend at UC Berkeley had a registration of seven hundred people. Sure that's the same number jump as ours over Irvine, [but] percentage-wise it's not the same; it's about a two-hundred-person increase, but we're Santa Cruz. This is not an easy place to get to. We paid a faculty person to go to the conference and give a faculty report.

Reti: Who did that?

Sanger: He was a former faculty member here, Tomás Almaguer. I had a sexuality and culture class from him. His son went to school here. We had him give the closing remarks. We had art faculty involved. Receptions. We tried to make it very lively and very different. We didn't know you were supposed to have a meeting for the general assembly, which was just a little oversight. People from the UCGLBTA were upset with us.

Reti: What is Todd Bowser's position at UCSC?

Sanger: Todd is the Assistant CAO for Porter. He started at Porter right as I left, which was kind of an interesting transition. It's okay to leave because there's another gay... He had really long hair at the time, which I tease him about.

It was also about that time that I started getting interested and involved in trans issues and rights. We wanted to continue to talk about things happening at Santa Cruz, things like trans discrimination and health care. We wanted to make sure that our vice chancellors and chancellors were aware...

M.R.C.'s [Greenwood] reception too! There's so much stuff that happened! Before the conference we had a reception for the new chancellor, M.R.C. Greenwood. We brought her to the Center. I was so nervous introducing her. That was one of her first experiences at Santa Cruz. We wanted to make sure that she knew what was on our plate, so we had a meeting with her, Mercedes Santos, myself, Laura Engelken, Sigrid... Julia Armstrong-Zwart was there as well. We had talked about the meeting and what we wanted to bring up. The big things for me were gender inclusion in the non-discrimination statement,



continuation of health care benefits, and equal access to Family Student Housing. Those were the big three that we wanted to make sure were addressed. Mercedes had just seen this show on the Discovery [television] channel talking about intersex, so she felt we should talk about this too. At this meeting we said we wanted gender inclusion in the non-discrimination statement; we want your support on domestic partner...

Reti: What point were we at with domestic partner benefits then?

Sanger: We had medical. That was part of the UCGLBTA stuff. We had the medical, but there were still no retirement or pension benefits. We made these demands, and we thought that we could do a local UC Santa Cruz non-discrimination clause for trans and intersex people. But when it was brought up to General Counsel, it ended up that intersex, because it's illegal to discriminate based on sex, is protected by the University non-discrimination statement, but gender or gender identity is not. They are not protected. So we said we want them protected. And that's where we got into this dialogue with General Counsel, who said, "Well, you don't have to protect them." We said, "But we are saying to you that we would like that." So it stirred up this hornet's nest.

A year later I was chairing the UCGLBTA, so I brought these to the University-systemwide group as well. And all of a sudden we are having a meeting with the Office of the President, saying, "We want gender and gender identity to be included in the non-discrimination statement. And we want health care." Then it exploded. I was just working off of what I thought was right. It's wrong for someone who is transitioning to lose their job just because they are transitioning. That to me is wrong. I can easily see, in my simple yes-no, right-wrong world that that's wrong. That's bad. I want to make sure that these people are protected. It's not subtle what could happen. I [advise] students. I would die if they continue to face the harassment that they face, with no protective recourse. That's one of the places where I'm coming from. All of a sudden, I'm chairing the UC-systemwide group. There were a couple of years where I was chairing both the UCSC group and the UC-systemwide committee. It was a little too much for me to be involved in. It was a lot of work.

But adding gender identity to the non-discrimination statement... It's also health care. There was a lot of horrible bureaucratic stuff. People wonder why they don't get involved in this stuff. Because it's extremely unsexy. [laughter] You can not imagine anything less sexy than having someone from the Office of the President take a nap at



your meeting. [laughter] It's not the fun aspects of politics, especially for someone who came from a theater politics background, like ACT UP and Queer Nation. For me to be involved in this! I'm the one who blew whistles and caused Pete Wilson not to be able to do his convocation speech at Stanford after he didn't sign AB101. I actively assaulted Pete Wilson with noise and disruption. I committed civil disobedience against him. Now I am having to sit in a meeting with his representative. It was a very strange place for me to be in. But also very learning... Being able to see how the political machinery works. Very interesting. But now we're on the eve or the dawn of implementing retirement and pension benefits, or at least the regents will start discussing it in a regents meeting.⁴⁶ Almost every single UC campus has student housing without a marriage certificate required. Trans insurance is being sent to bid. This is going to be the largest employer in the nation that could offer trans health care.

The non-discrimination thing is actually very interesting, because they thought it was going to be the easiest one, because sexual orientation was added, and so there was precedence. There shouldn't be a problem of adding gender and gender identity. It was already done with sex and sexual orientation. This should not be a problem. Well, it's kind of looking like the [UC] president in the late-1980s, [David Saxon] when he left, it's looking like he just threw that in. It's looking like it was a really nice gift. I don't even know if anyone asked for it. It's just kind of strange. It's going to be harder to get gender and gender identity put in. But hopefully we can take it and expand the definition of what sex discrimination is.

The city of Santa Cruz's anti-discrimination policy is based on sex, which includes gender identity. Hopefully we can do that. But when I think back on how this ball got rolling, and I think about that meeting that happened, there's somewhat of a disbelief: one, that I was involved in it; and two, that I kind of made it come about. In disbelief I wonder, did we actually do that? I have notes from the meeting, and I know it's happening now, but were we actually the ones who started it? To me it's such a big deal that it's hard for me to accept that yes, it's something that we did.

The UCGLBTA asked for a meeting with UCOP [University of California, Office of the President] and they granted us a meeting. We had all nine campuses present. People were wearing ties. [laughter] I even wore a tie. And I chaired the meeting. It was so funny, Irene. We get there. We asked for the meeting, and since they were the big

⁴⁶This was achieved in 2002.



powerful people I thought they were going to run the meeting. But then everyone started looking at me. They fed us lunch, and then everyone started looking at me. I said, “Okay, I guess we’ll begin. I just want to thank everyone for coming. Maybe we can introduce ourselves.” Then I started sweating. I thought, what do I have to say? I mean, very, very scary. This isn’t the chancellor. This is the Office of the President! These are the big, big guys. Big women. Incredible. So we said everything that we wanted. We had nine people; they had nine people. It was like: our side, their side. It was one of these big power meetings that you hear about. I had no idea that this is what was going to be happening. Here I am, from Santa Cruz. So we presented our demands and they said, “Okay, I think we can do that.” I think they were just so blown away. They thought, where is this coming from? We had no idea, even though we sent them the agenda.

Reti: You really caught them off guard?

Sanger: I think so. They read the agenda but they had no idea of what was going on. They had no idea that people buy illegal hormones. They had no idea that people can get kicked off their insurance if they bring up any kind of gender issues, or the transitioning issues. They had no idea.

I think the UCSC chancellor had that same reaction. It was like okay, get to work, Julia [Armstrong-Zwart], find out what you need to find out. That’s when we started getting information back that we can’t just do it at Santa Cruz. We can’t just have our own anti-discrimination statement. It has to be UC-wide thing. Everything is UC-wide. But it gave us the groundwork for people outside of just the GLBT Committee to be talking about it.

Reti: Please talk about your work with the Diversity Dialogue Groups on campus?

Sanger: That was very interesting. It was a program that Gwendolyn Morgan started. It was a great program. It was a dialogue group to talk about diversity among staff. You get release time. It was done through EEO/AA [Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action office]. I was hired and trained to be a Diversity Dialogue Group leader. I had been doing diversity training workshops all over campus for a really long time. I’ve done my CLUH workshops. I’ve done my own variation of CLUH workshops. I’ve always been involved in this. Going to this was a natural progression.

But I had this person in my group who was really problematic. He joined the group basically to challenge its existence, to say that it didn’t need to happen, that the



University and tax money should not pay for this, because he is a white male and... It was really, really trying. It was really, really painful. This is someone who works on campus. He had such erroneous assumptions about me as a gay man. He even said at one point, "I don't like gay men because when I was younger and hitchhiking, someone tried to hit on me." He just kept disrupting the group. I saw him driving one day a couple of years later, while I was in my car, and I had a physical fear reaction, a fight or flight thing. I don't think about it that often.

The program was really great. It had the potential that we could have really challenged some of our belief systems, but as it was, we were reduced to having to continually justify our existence. It's typical minority identity politics. Of course the dominant paradigm has a right to be there. But to continually question why we exist, and why there is a need for this. It just was very problematic.

Reti: Are you talking about this particular group that you were facilitating?

Sanger: Yes. I think that the program was actually very great, and if I hadn't had a bad experience I would have continued on with it. I would love to do the same group with the people who were in it. They were so phenomenal. I would even like the person in the group who provided continual resistance... I would like him to be there, but just as an observer. We wouldn't even know that he was there. We had an incredible group, but we had a painful outcome. It's one of those reminders that yes, we're at UC Santa Cruz, and Santa Cruz is a great place. But there are people who are at this University who are bigots. They can keep quiet and be good. They leave the University at night and have this whole separate life. They can don their Klan outfit or do whatever they do. Just because I live my life with integrity, and how I live here is pretty much how I live my life, doesn't mean everyone at this University is doing that. Not that I think there is no place for a person like that, but there was no attempt to co-exist on his part. None at all. We couldn't continually make efforts to satisfy him and make sure that he's okay.

The Diversity Dialogue Groups were a learning experience, and painful. That's also part of life and learning. There is bad stuff out there. I see one of the people in that group and it's like seeing another survivor. We went through hell and back.

Reti: So in terms of your career as a staff person at UCSC, you worked at the Office of the Registrar, and then you changed positions?



Sanger: I started out at the registrar's and I worked four years there. The registrar's office went through some staffing changes. Nancy Pascal [the associate registrar] was such a good person. Her institutional knowledge and her being in the registrar's office for my God, twenty-two years—longer than I had been alive at that time... She was just phenomenal. She was getting ready to retire. A lot of the really important people to me in that office. Ellen Farmer left. Gloria left. Then Jim Quann left. He was the registrar at the time, and also the acting vice chancellor of admissions. And after I was assaulted, not only did I get support from Gloria, but... I never saw him in the office anymore because he was doing this upper administration stuff, but he [Quann] saw me on the bridge and said, "I heard about what happened and it makes me sick. If there's anything I can do for you just let me know." The amount of support that I got was really incredible. And this was from someone who was real old school, from Washington State, [at] retirement age in the mid-1990s. This was like my grandfather talking to me. It was a wonderful office. Nancy Pascal talked about retiring, and I said, "Nancy, if you say that you're retiring I'm leaving. That will really break my heart." Two weeks later she turned in her letter of resignation, and two weeks after that I found a job at College Eight. I said, "I told you so. If you go, I go."

That's when I got into the advising element on campus. First I was at College Eight, being the records coordinator there. I had spent some time a couple of years previously as a residential preceptor at College Eight, so I was familiar with the staff. It was kind of interesting. I was a residential preceptor with one of my friends, a straight woman. And it set up this interesting relationship between us, because there would be this assumption that we were a couple. So we toyed with the novel idea of getting the "I'm Not" T-shirts. "I'm not straight but my girlfriend is." The lesbian equivalent for the gay male: "I'm not gay, but my boyfriend is." We wanted to play with that whole model of male homosexual equals gay. It doesn't really.

I started doing advising at College Eight and that's where I started to find my passion, my niche. Advising is a really incredible thing that I do. I change people's lives every day. I make the world a little bit better every day. Not in a gay sense. That's not even a big part anymore. For a long time it was a focus, when I was younger. It was an identity. Now I see the possibility in people, and it's really exciting to be doing what I'm doing. The people are challenging and questioning their goals, and they are looking for help and inspiration. I can do that and I'm afforded the opportunity to do that. While I came to Santa Cruz in part to discover and be who I am, I'm here to pass that on, to make sure



that other people are doing the same thing, and that other people are taking every single advantage from this University. Let no goal be unchallenged.

I'm presently at Stevenson in a solely advising capacity. And if one of my students is not doing everything that they want to be doing, or if they leave the University saying, "That wasn't a big deal," then I've failed, and that person's classmates failed. Because this is a cooperation. This is an education. It's not a challenge. It's not a competition. With the changes in the University in the grading policy, I'm really trying to make sure people know to take care of themselves and other people. I see my job as part of that. It's hard to live life. It's really hard sometimes to live life and be a student. It can be impossible. I know that. I've been there and I have students who are there all the time. I just try to make sure that they are taking care of themselves and making good healthy decisions for themselves. Part of that involves education, and part of that involves making really hard decisions. I *love* my job.

Reti: Do you see yourself as a mentor for GLBT students in particular? I realize that you have a lot of students, and you care about all of your students. But are you known as someone whom GLBT students come to?

Sanger: That's not an identity I would take on. I think I'm a mentor by design, or perhaps an accidental mentor. But I probably learn more from students than they could from me. I just have a very large knowledge of the University, and I would hope that people use me and my resources. I know students do that. But for me to assume that students don't have what it takes to get by seems kind of patronizing.

Reti: How has the working environment at College Eight and Stevenson colleges been for you as a gay man?

Sanger: I could never prove it, but I think there's somewhat of a glass ceiling for not just out gay men, but extremely gay men, for gay men who are proud of their gayness and that they have queer weird sex that involves other men or other women. Or trans people. That is a challenge for a lot of people. I look around and I see men who aren't out but they are gay, and once they are in the inner circle... I'm extremely out, but some of the highest figures on campus are not. But moving up at the University isn't an ambition of mine, fortunately. I'm not here to make money. [laughter] I'm here to change the world. I think there is a definite glass ceiling for the male side. I think it's true for women too, but they have to become more professional. It's impossible to be flamboyantly gay in a good



sense, and professional. Because it means that you're going to have gay paraphernalia and iconography on your desk. It means that you're going to be talking to a colleague or a friend or a loved one and say, "Oh girl!" It means that people are going to know that you're gay. I think in the professional world they still don't want that.

As far as problems, it's all subtle stuff. There's no proof. When I was a residential preceptor, we were asked to leave because they were changing the structure of the preceptorship. But it didn't happen right away. But that is a subtle thing. I was supposed to leave. My tenure was up, but other people stayed. The married couples stayed. We were the subversive gay male/straight woman relationship, challenging boundaries. I was seen by my residents in drag, off to do a performance. That's how gay I am! I'm not gay just by what I do. I'm *very* gay. [laughter]

I know residential life. I did it for three years and I'm good at what I do. I was at College Eight, which had the reputation for being College Straight. I'd been on a queer Take Back the Night march and people at College Eight threw pennies at us, so I knew the homophobic history of College Eight. We were at this preceptor meeting. One of the gifts that I could bring as a preceptor is my knowledge of the queer community, and that's a big resource. We were asked two questions: "What do you think your strengths are; and what can you bring to the table?" Both my answers were gay. I was pulled aside and asked, "Why are you bringing up the gay stuff? I know you have several years of residential life experience. Why are you bringing up the gay stuff?" It's those subtle kinds of things.

I really, really like Stevenson. I don't know if you read what I wrote for the GLBT Center's *Queer Resource Directory*, but I believe that Stevenson has its kind of quietness about its diversity. When I was a student, the East side [of the campus] was kind of the white [side]. Sure it has that. I wouldn't deny that it's there. But I've been different places on this campus and I know the kind of respect that I'm getting there. I know what the staff has planned there as far as what they want to do, and how they want to change the world. Just in my advising unit, there are four of us. I've never had such a gelling of ideas. This is what we want to do. This is what we see our jobs as advisers as doing. We're here to be that leg-up for people, not only students but other staff people, for each other. We are a team. While the registrar's office was a big family, this is a coalition. They are so completely supportive of me. I'm very happy there. And I'm very happy with the diversity at Stevenson and that we're not blowing our horns saying, "Look how diverse we are." There's this subtle quietness about it that's typically more my style.



I also realize that as a student I had made assumptions about Stevenson. The only people I saw were white people because I wasn't looking for anyone else. That's my problem. That's me making every queer person and every person of color at Stevenson invisible. I can name, right off the top of my head, five students who are gender queer there. That's amazing to me, at a college that when I was student I thought was the jock, hateful people. I think even the jock students like me. They don't know what to make of me but they are okay with it. But I really like advising and I really like the environment that I'm in at Stevenson.

Reti: So in terms of the future, what other GLBT issues do you think need to be addressed at UCSC?

Sanger: I think one thing that is imperative is the union organizing that needs to be done at the University for staff. We can no longer be treated how we've been treated. Advisers at Cabrillo who are my equivalent start at a level higher than what we start at here. The bottom of what they're starting at, without any experience, is ten thousand dollars more than I make. That is in no way a dig at Cabrillo. They do a great job as far as giving us students who are ready and capable to come to the University. That we're not even on par—that's wrong! That the University could lose me. I see myself as a great asset to this University, even if I'm never going to be recognized by the administration. I see these Alumni Association awards. I see these things that people have done. Sometimes I wonder if I've ever been nominated. I guess part of that is being this kind of quiet guy in the back. I had to let the University know that I got a proclamation from the mayor. The University needs to start really recognizing staff, and part of that is pay. I can't go through another twenty-five percent housing increase with a two percent wage increase. I can't! The math does not add up. My loyalties are with Santa Cruz and it is my second home. (In fact, I'm starting to get to the point where I've been here longer than I've been there. Katia Panas, the student psychologist when I was at Porter, her line was, "I've been working here longer than you've been alive." [laughter] I'm almost there.) But the University could lose me because I'm not going to get my meager two percent wage increase. That's a big issue.

There has been a huge disjuncture in what the GLBTI communities have done for advancement for themselves, and what the unions... We never worked with the unions as far as getting what could be considered union accomplishments. Benefits for trans employees. Domestic partner benefits. Both medical and retirement. These could be huge union rewards.



Reti: These are not issues that are on UPTE or CUE's agenda?⁴⁷

Sanger: Well, I'm sure that they are, but we have not been working together, which is silly. There's no reason why I shouldn't be more involved in the union, because it's important for me to stay here, and in order to do that I need to make sure that I am taken care of. The union is the only place that's going to take care of me. I'm part of the union, but it's hard to do everything. It's part of that minority politics experience. I seriously empathize with the students of color on campus who are just overwhelmed and say, "I can't go to every meeting and I can't be tokenized." So that's in the future. I need to step up and make sure that I'm there and present in the union.

Trans rights and care is a big thing on my radar screen. Also I'd like to get back into the feminist movement. There was a point where it was really important in my life and identity formation. I sometimes wonder, where did I let it go? Where has it gone? What does it mean to be a man in a feminist movement? And how does that fit in with the union and making sure that there is equal work for equal pay? So as far as future work in union organizing, when I go to the table it's going to be with health care rights, and it's going to be with making sure that the University is equal work for equal pay. Maybe some of the reasons that we are not compensated could be from that old concept of—these are typical women's jobs. While we're called administrators, are we considered secretaries? These caregiving positions like advising are not deemed as valuable and important. But I can guarantee that my students will remember my name. They'll have trouble recalling M.R.C. Greenwood's name. I have trouble recalling Robert Stevens's name.

Multi-issue work has always been important to me, seeing the correlations between race and sex and sexuality, the multiple oppressions and how they all fit together. I think, I'll just have this one epiphany and I'll know how to solve all the world's problems, just because they're so similar.

My [most recent] project has been the establishment of the Jay Walker Memorial Scholarship. For my last birthday, family and friends kept asking me what I wanted for my birthday. There's a strange capitalist culture around birthdays, and I felt a sense of obligation to come up with something I wanted or needed. I felt people seemed

⁴⁷UPTE is the University Professional and Technical Employees and CUE is the Coalition of University Employees. Both represent UCSC staff employees.



obligated to buy me something. Giving gifts should be inspirational, not obligatory in my book. This is when I came up with the idea that I wanted to start a scholarship for GLBTI Stevenson students. Instead of giving me a gift, I wanted my friends and family to contribute to sending someone through school. I think the idea is fantastic. First, the idea is great because I am making a change and a difference, kind of like the power of one concept. Second, it's brilliant because many can contribute to achieve higher success. If forty people gave twenty-five dollars, that's a thousand to the fund; if one hundred, that's 2,500 dollars. Small contributions of many can have great effect. Finally, we're all working to get someone through school. It's just great.

So, I came up with this idea and shared it with Provost Hendricks. She instantly latched onto the idea of starting the scholarship for Stevenson GLBTI students. I think it is the first UCSC GLBTI scholarship. She added on an event in conjunction with my birthday and the scholarship, the Santa Cruz screening of *Daddy & Papa* at the Rio Theater. It is a film about gay male adoption, a very powerful film. We had a reception before the screening, and a Q and A after. It was fantastic, and in the spirit of the film and the idea behind the scholarship, we expanded the recipients to include children of GLBTI families.

While honored that a scholarship could have been named after me, I was somewhat disturbed, too, that this somewhat selfless act could become this Tchad Sanger GLBTI Scholarship. It just seemed vain and wrong. That's when I decided to name it after Jay Walker, and now it seems perfect. Jay Walker was the director of admissions when I first came to Santa Cruz. When I came out he was one of the few out gay male administrators on campus that I knew of. People have asked if I knew him well, and I can honestly say that I never met him. But, just knowing he was here and out was really important to us at the time. Important whispers that, "Jay Walker's gay" often circulated in excited groups, like we could make it too. He was HIV-positive, and died before I could meet him or even graduated. He was really involved on campus, at Merrill College, and loved it a lot. Jay was a HIV-positive, black, gay man who loved UCSC, and I can think of nobody else I would like the scholarship to be named after. It's perfect. It keeps his memory alive. He keeps helping people who never had the opportunity to meet him, like he did with me.