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A Different Model for the UCSC Colleges: Colleges Nine and Ten, An Oral History with Deana Slater and Wendy Baxter

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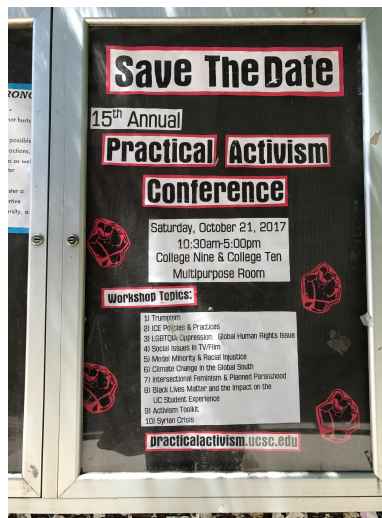
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A Different Model for the UCSC Colleges:

Colleges Nine and Ten

An Oral History with Deana Slater and Wendy Baxter



Interviewed and Edited by Irene Reti

Santa Cruz

University of California, Santa Cruz

University Library

2018

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Interview History

The genesis of the vision for UC Santa Cruz's newest colleges, College Nine and College Ten, dates back to the 1988 Long Range Development Plan (LRDP)¹, which responded both to faculty members who argued that the Social Sciences Division needed academic space in the campus core, and the demographic studies that demonstrated that UCSC would be experiencing rising student enrollments and would need to house more students on campus. The 1988 LRDP thus called for planning two new colleges that would integrate academic and residential facilities.²

Fast forward to May of 1999, when under the chancellorship of MRC Greenwood and the vice chancellorship of Francisco Hernandez, The Colleges Nine and Ten Planning Advisory Committee issued a report entitled "Opening College IX and X."³ Among its recommendations were for these two colleges to "continue the tradition of the current UCSC colleges concentrating upon community life and student affairs," while also "being centers of interdisciplinary curricula and courses, intellectual stimulation, research, conferences, and student projects." The proposal was also for these colleges to be affiliated with the Social Sciences Division, as per the 1988 LRDP.

The authors of this report also stated, "...we have come to believe that the opening of Colleges IX and X represents a major new opportunity for UC Santa Cruz [which would build] upon the successes and learning from the failures of the past..." Embedded in this allusion to the past lies a complex, and often contentious history of UCSC's

¹ Long Range Development Plan, 1988. Available in the UCSC Library's Special Collections Department.

² See the discussion of planning for College Nine and College Ten in Irene Reti, Interviewer and Editor, *Frank Zwart's Four Decades at UC Santa Cruz* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2011). Available in full text at <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/3nf9m5pr>

³ A digital copy of this May 1999 report, "Opening Colleges IX and X" is in the College Nine and Ten University Archives at Special Collections at the UCSC Library.

relationship to its residential college system. In the early 1960s, the colleges were the vision and invention of founding chancellor Dean McHenry and then-University of California President Clark Kerr and were intended to make UCSC “seem small” as it grew because students would live and study in the intimate environment of their themed college. The idea was to combine the advantages of small liberal arts college (such as Swarthmore) with the resources of a major research university. Some of the inspiration also came from Oxford University and other British universities.

Faculty were appointed half time in their college and half time in their board of studies, which had less institutional power and resources than a conventional department. Each faculty member was expected to teach both for the college and the board. While college teaching and service yielded a rich plethora of innovative classes and interdisciplinary collaborations that still benefits UCSC today, it was not given much weight by the traditional University of California in tenure decisions. As the relatively affluent and fiscally expansive era of the 1960s faded into the inflation, austerity, and more conservative 1970s that was less open to innovative public education and more interested in job training, UCSC entered a crisis marked by declining enrollment and financial pressures.

Dean McHenry had also originally promised the Regents that the UCSC college system would not result in higher costs, but this was not proving to be the case. In addition, after UCSC opened, the funding formula allocated to the UC campuses per student was altered to allocate more money per graduate student than to undergraduates. This had a significant impact on UCSC, which had been founded with a focus on undergraduate education and had very few graduate programs. (The campus has yet to catch up in this area.) By 1974, Dean McHenry retired and was replaced by a

chancellor who lacked leadership experience and left after eighteen months. Angus Taylor stepped in as acting chancellor and the search for a new chancellor began.

Enter Chancellor Robert Sinsheimer, who arrived from Caltech in 1977 to a campus ringing with rumors that UCSC, which once held the distinction of being one of the most prestigious and attractive campuses in the United States, might be closed for budgetary reasons. Sinsheimer's response (he was educated at MIT to be a problem solver) was to develop and implement Reorganization, a plan which proposed a new vision for the UCSC colleges and ultimately was approved by the Academic Senate.

This plan excised most of the academic role of the colleges (with the exception of a freshman core course) and assigned the academic mission of UCSC mostly to the academic divisions. (The exceptions to this plan were Oakes College and College Eight, which retained more of the original model.) The central mission of the colleges became residential life. Faculty members were relieved of curricular obligations to the colleges.

Reorganization eliminated the McHenry-Kerr model for the colleges. It was and still is criticized as part of one might call a "narrative of decline" at UCSC, the loss of a unique creative, interdisciplinary vision, a brave new model for undergraduate education in a public university. Even now, forty years later, the pros and cons of Sinsheimer's Reorganization remain a heated topic in many of the oral histories conducted by the Regional History Project with longtime staff and faculty. In an oral history conducted in 2004, Chancellor Greenwood quipped, "Some people call it the third rail of politics at Santa Cruz. If you touch the colleges, you're dead."

¹ See Randall Jarrell and Irene Reti, *From Complex Organisms to A Complex Organization: An Oral History with UCSC Chancellor MRC Greenwood, 1996-2004*. (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2014). See p. 52 for a discussion of College Nine and College Ten. Available in full text at <https://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/from-complex-organisms-to-a-complex-organization-an-oral-history-with-ucsc-chancellor-mrc>

The writers of the report “Opening Colleges IX and X” acknowledged this sentiment when they wrote, “While we can learn from some parts of the McHenry model, we cannot return to it. It has been rejected by the campus.” Instead they call for a third model of how colleges could work at UC Santa Cruz, which they call the Greenwood Model. This model builds on the post-Reorganization college focus on community life and student affairs and “engages faculty members and students in a way that the current colleges do not.” The writers were astute not to imply that the existing eight UCSC colleges should adopt this Greenwood Model, arguing instead that the two models could exist side by side.

In her oral history, Greenwood articulated her support for this vision for College Nine and College Ten.

We can't operate the way we were founded. But we still have got, among research universities in this nation, one of the most unique residential environments for students anywhere. Our faculty are increasingly recognizing that that's what will bring good students to us...So now we have to figure out what would bring faculty back into the colleges in a different way. My view is that what brings faculty anywhere is the opportunity to interact with each other and with students over serious intellectual issues. So I feel that rather than trying to argue over this core course or whatever, we ought to be putting research units into the colleges, so that there's a group of faculty that want to be there, that are going to be there. That's what we tried to do with Colleges Nine and Ten.

The vision for these two new colleges was soon realized, with the exception of the endowment for the colleges, which the writers of the report emphasized would be important to its success. To this date, these colleges are awaiting endowment. College Nine opened its doors in fall quarter of 2000 and College Ten in fall of 2002. College Nine's webpage articulates its philosophy: “College Nine has worked hard to successfully develop a strong community, build meaningful traditions, and emphasize our theme through co-curricular programming. College Nine's theme of International and Global Perspectives recognizes the importance of cultural competency in the 21st century. The College Nine community offers students a range of opportunities to explore

these issues and to develop skills as dynamic leaders. College Ten's website states, "Consistent with UCSC's founding vision, College Ten creates an integrated living-and-learning environment through engaging academic and extracurricular programs focusing on the theme of Social Justice and Community." The two colleges retain a separate identity, but work closely together and share many staff members.

This volume documents some of the history of College Nine and College Ten through two oral history interviews: the first with Deana Slater, who has served as college administrative officer for both colleges since their founding and was part of planning the colleges even before they opened; and second with Wendy Baxter, director of academic and co-curricular programs for both colleges, also since before they officially opened. By focusing on the efforts of these two longtime dedicated staff members in founding and building these new UCSC endeavors, we also pay tribute to the sometimes invisible contributions of staff to this enterprise of higher education.

In this oral history Slater and Baxter discuss some of the key elements of the structure, philosophy, and programs at Colleges Nine and Ten, including the Co-Curricular Center (The CoCo), the Leadership Certificate Program, the Practical Activism Conference, the International Living Center, Alternative Spring Break and other service learning programs; The Garden Project, and the relationship with the Social Sciences Division.

I conducted the oral history with Deana Slater in a room at McHenry Library on May 5, 2017 and the oral history with Wendy Baxter on June 15, 2017 at the "CoCo" (Co-Curricular Programs Office). I also transcribed and audit-edited these interviews. The transcripts of both oral histories were returned to the narrators for their review; I wish to thank both Baxter and Slater for the attention they gave their narratives in the midst of a

busy academic year. I would also like to thank Teresa Mora, University Archivist at Special Collections and Archives, for her assistance with this project.

Copies of this volume are on deposit in Special Collections and in the circulating stacks at the UCSC Library, as well as on the library's website. The Regional History Project is supported administratively by Teresa Mora, Interim Head of Special Collections and Archives, and University Librarian, Elizabeth Cowell.

—Irene Reti, Director, Regional History Project, University Library

University of California, Santa Cruz

January 2018

Deana Slater, College Administrative Officer, College Nine and College Ten



Reti: This is Irene Reti and today is Friday, May 5, 2017. I'm here with Deana Slater, who is the college administrative officer for Colleges Nine and Ten at UCSC. We're going to do an oral history together today about the history of Colleges Nine and Ten, how they got established, and also their current themes. Colleges Nine and Ten—I have to say that the Regional History Project has not devoted the space and attention to documenting—perhaps because they feel so new, like they arrived yesterday. But actually, it's been a number of years. (laughs)

Slater: (laughs) Yeah, just like I've aged, the colleges have aged.

Reti: So, this is long overdue and I'm very happy we're doing this together, Deana.

Slater: Thank you.

Early Background

Reti: So, let's start out with you telling me a little bit about your early life, where you were born, grew up, and how you got to where you are today.

Slater: Thank you. I appreciate the [opportunity to tell that] story because I really do see a connection between my values and what I got interested in at a young age. I feel so lucky because they've meshed very well with my career.

I grew up in Ames, Iowa, home of Iowa State University. That's in the center part of Iowa. So, it's about half students and half townspeople. In fact, I've ended up working at universities or university towns a lot, so it was a great place to grow up, and to live. I went to Iowa State and I double majored in psychology and family studies. And then I moved to Minneapolis, where I worked at a treatment center for emotionally disturbed adolescent girls. It was a really great job and a very intense job. A lot of the work we did was based on the psychology that I learned in college, which is about being direct, sharing your feelings—very much a Western approach to how one would deal with family issues, psychological issues, etcetera.

I'd always wanted to live outside of the United States, but I didn't know where. My parents valued having international students and colleagues in and out of the house. So, I got a lot of that growing up but I had never had a chance to live outside of the United States. In fact, I hadn't even seen the ocean until high school, when I went to Hawaii once. So that was super exciting.

I ended up finding out about a program teaching English in Japan with the Catholic Church. It had nothing to do with "missionary work." It was simply to raise money for

programs that they had there. So, I went to Niigata, Japan, and I taught English there for a year and a half. After that, I spent the next year traveling around the world, like one sometimes gets to do when you're in your twenties and you save every penny and get to travel.

When I got back to the U.S., I was about twenty-seven and I had a chance to go back to Minneapolis and was offered a job to work with my mentor as a youth minister at an upper middle-class white suburb. If I took that job I could also have started work on a master's degree in counseling that I was interested in. I had done an internship with this mentor at the Catholic Youth Center in Minneapolis my senior year, and that experience was very powerful and enriching. At that same time I got an offer for a job at the International Living Center at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York.

I had to choose between these two opportunities and that became an important crossroad in my life. The ILC job was like \$9000 a year at the time. And the job in Minneapolis would have been like \$30k a year, which was a lot of money back then. So, I was very conflicted. Ultimately, I just had to follow my heart and go with the ILC. When I was living in Japan and throughout my travels, I deeply experienced how culturally relative so many things are, like my background with working with these young women in Minneapolis—the idea of sharing your feelings, being direct, those types of interpersonal skills just didn't work in Japan, where it's a collectivist culture and the polite thing is to not be sharing or showing up as an individual, but rather to be oriented toward the group and to be much more deferential to the group's needs. And also in terms of my faith development, I had grown up in a very progressive post-Vatican II church and the potential to stay in Minneapolis would have allowed me to work more in this area;

however it was in a white upper middle-class parish and it felt too restrictive to me at the time. As I was debating, I realized how changed I was after having been gone for two and a half years. I'd been able to travel for several months in Nepal and India and Thailand. I moved on to Europe and Israel and spent the next six months or so cycling. I really did have a chance to see people from all different walks of life and different faith experiences, how they lived their lives. And I felt a stronger pull to explore other cultures and other religions rather than to go back to what I was more familiar with.

So anyway, this job at the ILC at Cornell was fabulous because I continued to get to work to build a vibrant community with international students from all over the world. I was there for three years. After that, I learned about the International Living Center at Eleanor Roosevelt College at UC San Diego, which at that time was Fifth College, at UCSD. They were just opening the new college and I got a job as an assistant resident dean, then resident dean and then interim dean of students. I was there for the first nine years and helped to establish the college, their new International Living Center and many of their co-curricular programs.

Coming to Merrill College at UC Santa Cruz

After nine years at UCSD, I was ready for the next career move. A college administrative officer job, a CAO job, opened at Merrill College. Merrill also had themes that were similar. And I loved Santa Cruz. I now had a partner and two very young kids—it was a great time to move and get settled. That would have been in 1997. I was at Merrill for three years.

So, when I started at Merrill, there was one CAO for each college. All of the colleges had their own staff and their own structure and they were really autonomous in many ways. When Colleges Nine and Ten were opened, there was this idea that there could be one college administrative officer for both colleges. I was drawn to the colleges because of their themes, because College Nine's International and Global Perspectives and College Ten's Social Justice and Community were a perfect combination of my interests from way back, as I've explained already.

Reti: Sure, I can see that.

Slater: So, I was super excited to hear about this opportunity. And some of my colleagues thought, well, that's a big shift, to do two colleges for one position, instead of just one. The vice chancellor was Francisco Hernandez at the time and he thought I might be interested. I think most of my colleagues were like, "I don't think so. That's just one person doing two colleges. That's too much." And I thought, no, this could work, because I'd worked at San Diego and the scale was about the same as what was proposed for Nine and Ten. At UCSD, we had three thousand students and that's about the same as what was projected for the two colleges starting here. I had a lot of confidence because of my understanding of the college system at UCSD and UCSC and the dynamic themes of these two colleges were so interrelated. One of your questions [on the topic outline] is about how we hold these themes distinct but still get to use them on both sides.

Reti: Yes

Slater: My goal was to leverage the distinct qualities of each of those themes and still find opportunities for economy of scale, collaboration, and cross-college pollination.

Envisioning Two New Colleges for UCSC: Colleges Nine and Ten

So, I volunteered and applied for the job. There was no competition (laughs) and I got the job. I think they did an internal search and Francisco was happy to have me. Those were wonderful times, early on.

Reti: I don't know how much you know about the pre-planning stage for Colleges Nine and Ten. You came in 1997. I think the planning for Colleges Nine and Ten started in about 1988, with the 1988 Long Range Development Plan.

Slater: I brought this with me. It's the *Report of the Advisory Group on the Colleges*, dated fall 2000. This gives a lot of history about the colleges and how they decided to align the colleges with the themes. And it may be that you're right that that's when the planning for these new colleges began. They put together an advisory group for the colleges, which I sort of knew about at Merrill, but I wasn't on the advisory group at that time. Probably there was planning for it long before. So, you may be referring to the initial planning, thinking they were going to grow the campus and two more colleges were coming.

Reti: That's what I'm referring to.

Slater: The colleges were growing. I don't have many of the details on when those ideas started to percolate, or the Long Range Development Plan.

Reti: That's okay. You weren't here, so I wouldn't expect that you would.

Slater: But I did find this report helpful because it helped guide my thinking about how we should develop the colleges, and this notion of why should the colleges should be affiliated with the Social Sciences Division.

Connecting Colleges Nine and Ten with the Social Sciences Division

Slater: Okay, so at that time all of the colleges had rich traditions, activities and faculty affiliations etc. that were unique. And then, we know the way back early history of UCSC, and I think that you may even know it better than I right now, about how initially the colleges were part of the divisions. Do you know this?

Reti: Initially, there were no departments at UCSC. There were boards of studies and the faculty held dual appointments: in their board and in their college. This all changed after Reorganization in 1979, which removed academic teaching from the purview of the colleges, with the exception of the core courses.

Slater: Yes, and I was really excited about this idea of connecting the colleges again with the academic side of the house. I felt that these themes of the colleges would have much more depth and richness with the opportunity to combine the resident/student life side with an academic side much more vibrantly, if they were connected. In fact, that's precisely where my passion lay: with the intentional partnering of these important components of the student experience, where these two things come together. Student Affairs professionals can do a lot with experiential, hands-on learning with students, but it is more powerful when we can combine it with faculty who share a similar vision and have their own academic expertise. There are many research centers in the Social Sciences Division and many faculty who have very similar research interests and values around social justice. These themes permeate the Social Sciences Division, as well as UC Santa Cruz in lots of other areas, but in the Social Sciences Division, in particular. So, again I think the rationale for the affiliation with the Social Sciences Division is well articulated

in the *Report of the Advisory Group on the Colleges, 2000*. I think it's important to look at that.

But going back to this initial question of how did we get started, I knew that we would be affiliated with the Social Sciences Division. I knew that we would have these themes. And I knew what the scale of the college would look like. But the colleges were already being constructed. The apartments had already broken ground. I remember a photo opportunity commemorating that moment. We were out there with students with hard hats on. They were taking a picture of us and the apartments were just getting finished. They completed the apartments at Colleges Nine and Ten before the residence halls were completed.

When I was selected, I went to visit with Marty Chemers, who was the dean of the Social Sciences Division. He was so generous and flexible with his outlook. He had been approached: "What do you think about this college affiliation?" And his attitude was sort of, "Why not? Let's give it a shot." That type of attitude was so refreshing because I really did feel like we had flexibility to try things a little bit differently. In fact, it was supported here. Marty was really open to new ideas.

So, what I came up with was this idea of: how about having one provost for two colleges, instead of a provost for each college? I wanted there to be staff that had developed community around these themes with unified leadership. I didn't want to be doing half time with one provost and trying to follow their vision half time with another provost, but rather the provost and I could work really closely together and combine our visions for how we thought the themes could be implemented. I've had several provosts now,

and I always look to the provost, who is affiliated with the division, to leverage their academic interests, and to support them in that, and have worked well with them to then focus on developing the skills, passion and interest of all of our fabulous staff.

So, Marty is like, "Great idea, let's have one provost." He was completely open to it. So, one provost. Next, I was on the search committee for our first provost and Cam Leaper was selected. An advisory committee was then convened to help develop the curriculum. I believe there is a report on that as well and we can get to that later.

Organizing the Colleges: Creating a New Structure

But let's go back to how we organized the colleges, with Marty saying it was fine. So, the vice chancellor of student affairs was Francisco Hernandez. He was working at the same time as Marty Chemers, the dean. And I was the new CAO. Both of those leaders were very flexible and open, and were really wonderful and easy to work with.

My goal was to bring these themes to life in a way that we hadn't quite been able to do at other colleges, simply because they were no longer affiliated with an academic division. So, this was a new opportunity now to re-envision the colleges. I thought we could use some salary savings from hiring one provost, to create a director of co-curricular programs. At that point, there was funding for one associate college administrative officer for College Nine and another associate college administrative officer for College Ten. So, I used the funding for the ACAO, for one of those positions, combined with some of the provost's salary savings, to create a director of co-curricular programs. The ACAO then, who worked still with Residential Life, would do the scalable job that I had just left at UC San Diego. I felt like there were pieces of that job that could be taken out for the co-

curricular director and that the ACAO would then be able to oversee College Nine and College Ten, with these similar themes, and it was a do-able job. And for any ACAO who might be listening, I get that that job is never do-able. It's a lot of work, those jobs. (laughs) Very much so. And since that time all the colleges have gone to one ACAO for two colleges, as well. I think some of this early model helped guide later decisions.

After getting the clearance to launch this new model, we were able to create a co-curricular unit and start the process of hiring staff. We hired Wendy Baxter, who is fabulous, and is still here as the director of the Co-Curricular program. We've had different ACAO's over the years but they've all been really excellent and committed to the themes of the colleges as well. Rachel Bauman was our first stellar ACAO and Sarah Woodside Bury is our current ACAO and started here as a college program coordinator (CPC). She, too, embodies the themes of our colleges and has been instrumental in laying out our programs, as has Abbey Asher who oversees our Service Learning Program.

So, there's more technical things around the college that I'll mention briefly. We also had a college program coordinator (CPC) for College Nine and funding for a college program coordinator for College Ten. So, we kept one of the FTE's to do more of the traditional job of the college program coordinator and we had that person do it for College Nine *and* College Ten. That person continued with College Nights, planned orientation, and graduation, and other things. The other CPC we put under the director of the co-curricular program, in two half-time positions. So, we created a half-time CPC for College Ten and a half-time CPC for College Nine, supervised by the director of the co-curricular programs.

So once again, we used the same funding model that all the other colleges had at that time, and very intentionally created a unique Co-Curricular unit that over time has indeed allowed us to elevate and enhance the awareness and implementation of our themes. It naturally followed that we attracted staff who had strong passion and commitment around these themes. We helped keep the distinctions of our themes by having a half-time CPC position that was distinctly for College Nine, and another that was distinct for College Ten.

Reti: Yes.

Slater: I think it's maybe too much detail [to go into here] but we did the same thing in Res Life with some of our coordinators of residential education, who are the professional staff who work in the colleges. Those professionals—some are distinctly assigned to the College Nine res halls, some to College Ten res halls. And they really do focus particularly on the themes of their distinctive colleges.

Reti: So, this may be a really wacky question, but why not have one big college?

Slater: I still like the scale of the smaller colleges and wanted to replicate what other colleges had. I think it was really important that your college not get so big that you really wouldn't know everybody. The core courses are also really distinct. And students take the core course together. I think that's very similar to the other colleges. I think that that's something very unique and special about UC Santa Cruz that is still really important to pay attention to.

Reti: The scale.

Slater: The scale and the distinction of the core courses, which have fluctuated in terms of campus support and financing. But I still strongly believe that the core courses are critical in defining UCSC in many ways. They are small classes that help ground our students, introduce them to our themes and introduce them to college-level discourse. That develops their critical thinking and writing skills and so on. I think that that is unique and important, as well as the geography in the college system here. I think the scale is good.

Reti: Okay, I just wondered.

Slater: Yeah, it's a good question. That's one reason: scale. But the other is that even though the themes do overlap, they're distinct.

I'll talk about that a little bit. So, the theme of International and Global Perspectives looks at issues around globalization. And we highly encourage our students to study abroad and to think about the opportunity to live in the International Living Center. I'd love to talk about that more [later]. We wanted it to be a very attractive college for international students, as the campus grew, and really be a welcoming place. So much of my own development came from really wonderful exchanges that I had with these international students over the years. And I wanted students to have that real-life experience of living with somebody who came from a very, very different place. I know we have that at UC Santa Cruz because our domestic diversity is so rich and far-reaching right now, especially more than when I came here twenty years ago.

Reti: Absolutely.

Slater: It's fabulous but this is even different than that. So, the international theme of that is to go out and really think about how one might become a global citizen. What does it mean to contribute to the world? What are your own cultural biases? Those are the issues that we want people to look at, both as an individual, but also as a person from the United States, regardless of your own ethnic background, or whether you're a first-generation student, or hold a lot of other rich identities. How do you then relate as a person from the United States when you go to a different continent and an entirely different place, and then interact with others? At that point, our identities are reframed and become even more complex and interesting. That was really important. I don't think one can become a global citizen without really understanding issues of equity and social justice and what that means across the globe.

So, for College Ten, when you look at Social Justice and Community, you can look at it from a global perspective, *and* you can also look at it from issues of inequity from a more localized perspective. When you have Social Justice and Community as your primary focus, there're a lot of ways that you can focus more on systems that perpetuate inequity and how that disproportionately impacts certain members of society. We've been able to have students engage in these themes in ways that allowed them to think more distinctly about themselves and their communities. And we've done that through different programs that we can talk about a little bit later. They're very synergistic.

I always caution—I still work on this—about people saying “College Nine-Ten.” I always stop them and say, “No, no. We're Colleges Nine and Ten. Or we're College Nine *and* College Ten.”

Reti: (laughs)

Slater: Part of that is that I do want to hold those distinctions. And part of it is also budgeting issues. You bet, we're not one college, where you're just going to give us one budget line instead of two— So there are lots of reasons why I've done that but that's something I still have to do today.

Reti: Can I ask you one more follow-up question?

Slater: Sure.

Reti: I'm interested in the fact that you were at Merrill before you came to Colleges Nine and Ten.

Slater: Yes.

Reti: And, of course, Merrill has had, over the years, themes that have to do with international, "Third World."

Slater: Yes.

Reti: When I was a student at UCSC in 1978 I took the Merrill Core Course, which was entitled *The Third World and Us*.

Slater: Oh, okay! Yes.

Reti: Of course, Merrill is not divisionalized. So, I see that as a huge difference. But how would you compare the theme at Merrill—and I don't even know how they're defining it now, exactly.

Slater: I think they're defining it in some ways that are similar. Now, remember, that's why I was so excited to come to UC Santa Cruz at that time, because Merrill College had that international theme and had a focus on developing countries. When I got here, it had a service learning program. John Isbister was here and he had done work to reinvigorate the service learning of the core course in Live Oak. He started a very successful honors program there and now UCSC has a campus-wide honors program. John Isbister also had a long history with the colleges here and was a provost for a long time. So, I do think that the themes were similar. We thought about that when we started College Nine and College Ten. Latin American and Latino Studies [LALS] was in Merrill College. We wanted to be distinct from Merrill and we didn't want to overshadow them because we were new. We wanted Merrill to be able to have a tradition but we wanted to be a little bit distinct from that, so it wouldn't be too blurry.

So, part of my excitement about getting to help start Colleges Nine and Ten was this idea of starting an International Living Center. You know, a lot of the experiences that I'd had before—I thought, oh, we're starting from scratch. It would be easy to do this. And the affiliation with the Social Sciences Division helped to leverage the themes as well. I think there is overlap.

³ Merrill College's theme is now Cultural Identities and Global Consciousness.
<http://housing.ucsc.edu/colleges/merrill.html>

Reti: And I'm sure you work together with Merrill.

Slater: Oh, yes!

Reti: I've seen that you co-sponsor events with a lot of different entities on campus, including Merrill.

Slater: Yes.

Reti: Okay, great. Thank you. So now I've completely derailed you.

Slater: No, it's a long story and it's good that we have a lot of time.

So, I was talking about how we structured the college. I think that there's a good story in all this. Social Sciences 1 and Social Sciences 2 were already built. And they were to have been called College Nine and College Ten—the buildings. But the colleges hadn't opened yet. The residence halls weren't built yet. So, they were already named Social Sciences 1 and Social Sciences 2. It's kind of a minor thing, but I remember thinking, well, do we change the names of the buildings now? Is it the College Nine Academic Building or does it stay Social Sciences 1?

Reti: That's significant.

Slater: Sure. And I remember having a conversation with Marty and he was saying, "Well, why would you want to do that?" I thought, it's probably not that important. We're affiliated. I didn't push it. I had gotten so much support from Marty and the Social Science Division that I didn't feel that strongly about pushing at the time. And as we see the future, who knows what will happen in the future, but I think there have been a

couple of times where there's been the question about: why do Colleges Nine and Ten continue to affiliate with the division, when none of the other colleges have a divisional relationship? It's been re-visited. And so, one of the questions would be, well, if we're not affiliated, the names of the buildings should be changed to reflect the names of the college. That's really an aside.

Reti: In some senses, but this really gets at the heart of this whole question of the relationship between colleges and departments on this campus, which some people have called "The Third Rail of UCSC politics." (laughs)

Slater: Yes.

Reti: That relationship is still really complex. It's interesting that you did this groundbreaking thing in terms of organizing it and divisionalizing it. But that has not continued with the other colleges, maybe because you were new—maybe other colleges are not able to do that as easily, or maybe they don't want to affiliate with a division. I don't really know.

Slater: I think there are a lot of reasons. The Social Sciences Division is the biggest division, with the most undergraduates on campus. Our themes are very clearly related to the work that's already valued and taking place in the Social Sciences Division. Other colleges may not have themes that perfectly align with various divisions. I had a very supportive dean when we began this affiliation. That was an important key to its success. I think there was some notion from others that there may be competition for resources between the academic division and the colleges if the colleges reported to a division. However, if it could work, if each college could report to a division and reorganize their

student affairs side to support a co-curricular unit, the university would come much closer to our original goal of creating vibrant living learning centers with a strong emphasis on academic initiatives, as well as the potential for more effectively leveraging interdisciplinary activities. So, I think there was a combination of factors that contributed to making it successful all these years. And I'm not sure that would be true in different colleges. A lot would depend on the other academic deans and their interest and support of these types of affiliation. There are some natural partnerships, for example Porter's affiliation with the Arts Division totally makes sense, as does Cowell with Humanities, Crown with the Division of Physical and Biological Sciences, etc. I strongly believe it's a good model that elevates both academics' interest and the student life program. But again, the deans would have to be enthusiastic and interested in this type of affiliation.

What did change over time was that the other colleges also went to one CAO for two colleges, and eventually one associate CAO for two colleges. That wasn't without some pushback, because people had a lot of commitment to the college that they were overseeing and no one wanted to see two colleges merge into one college. It was important to hold them distinct because they each have unique and important histories, traditions and practices. We want all our students to have the small-scale [experience], and to relate to the themes, etc.

Reti: Yes. So how does that relationship between the Social Sciences Division and Colleges Nine and Ten play out? Do you have meetings? On a planning basis, is there collaboration?

Slater: In the early days, we met with the division and the college work group often to develop the structure of our funding, what classes we would offer and so on. In addition, those meetings helped me develop relationships with the division that have served us well over time. Also, in the early days, Cam Leaper and I met regularly with Marty Chemers. I attend occasional chairs meetings, as well as occasional meetings with the offices managers. Currently, I attend meetings with the provost and the dean when the topic is central to the function or a special project in the colleges. I've helped out Sheldon Kameiniecki by chairing the review of our provost.

In general, I find all of these meetings helpful, because they give me access to issues that are important to an academic division, such as budget information and opportunities to tap into the Social Science Development Team that I would have never had before. We still often collaborate on things, whether it's program related, or physical plant related, and/or having to do with development and fundraising.

The social science deans have all become familiar with the work we do at Colleges Nine and Ten and have played a key role in our provost leadership transition. To a large extent, we have attracted fantastic provosts: Cam Leaper, Helen Shapiro, Matt Wolf-Meyer (interim) and Flora Lu because of the affiliation with the division. All of our provosts have been very interested in the themes of the colleges and really engaged in this idea of experiential education and our co-curricular work. I think, overall, they felt that they would have the support of their dean in their role of provost, which helps. It can still be challenging, but it's been helpful in terms of resources, cooperation and support of events, being able to leverage and engage other faculty who might be working on similar research and so on. There is a lot of synergy when you are reporting to a division.

Reti: I don't know if you can address this or not, but I know that early in UCSC's history, faculty who didn't have tenure yet would give a lot of service to the colleges. And then, that service wasn't counted very heavily for tenure review.

Slater: Mm, hmm.

Reti: I wondered if being divisionalized makes it easier for faculty to be valued for those contributions to the college?

Slater: I think that's a really good question, and I would say that it's a good one for a provost to answer. But my reflection on it is that yes, it is a benefit of our affiliation. Because the dean in general does know which faculty are involved. I think that they acknowledge and understand which faculty are really active, either in research centers, or with giving lectures in the college, or are interested in work that we're doing in the colleges. And there's a lot of parallel work being done in both places. So clearly, they would value that. That's what I meant by that synergy. I really think that's true.

Even with that being said, I think that all the colleges, or maybe just our newest colleges, struggle to get more fellows. In particular, it's always challenging to get faculty to volunteer for some of the more onerous tasks, such as academic review. But when we've asked faculty to come to be guest lecturers in our classes, or the core course, there's a lot of enthusiasm. And it's usually because the topic reflects their own research and their interests. They're interested in possibly getting some undergraduates interested in their work. I mean, there really is a nice connection that way. And also, what's been nice about that is when the term has been up for our provosts, the dean knows who to tap. As I mentioned, we've had excellent provosts and the relationship between the provosts and

the CAO—it's only been me—(laughs) but I value that relationship so much because I think that what makes our colleges unique is this opportunity to put both the provost's vision and my vision together, and then work closely with our staff to articulate and leverage that vision and to harness their skills and energy. I think the way our colleges are organized is an ideal model that really does contribute to student learning both in and out of the classroom. And when you talk to Wendy Baxter, you'll see so many examples of how we've been able to leverage that.

So that's why I was so excited. Structurally, it's one reason why the colleges have been able to have so many robust programs. The themes have driven our ability to share a common vision and develop ongoing sustained programs that engage students all four years. Our structure, having one provost and one CAO reporting to the Social Sciences Division, has allowed us to create these unique and robust colleges. So, there's really a commitment that we have. I would say every single staff member would be able to tell you how central these themes are to their work and how it guides them in their program development and interaction with students.

We got this permission to structure things differently and we didn't spend any more money. (laughs) It was really exciting. Oh, and something else that's interesting historically—Victor Kimura was a very high-level analyst for the campus who had been around for a long time. He was willing to come join our staff to help us get started in these first couple of years. And he was critical to all the things that I had no idea about how to do: setting up FTE's and how to combine FOAPALs for different staffing positions. He also had a strong commitment to these themes. I think he was close to

retirement and instead he just came over and was really instrumental in helping us to provide the staffing and the financial wherewithal to get started.

Reti: Fabulous.

Slater: So that was great. And maybe in the old days my job I would have been expected to be better at that because it was a bursar job in the old days. Right?

Reti: Yes, I remember those days too.

Slater: But I came in with more of an international education/student affairs background and the programmatic vision, all that kind of thing, without as much of the background expertise with the analytics and the financials. So, Victor was really critical and was very much behind what we could do and said, "Oh, we can do that. We can do it this way and that way." It was really helpful.

Reti: That's really interesting. Victor was a student here in the early, early days. I believe he was the first student employee at UCSC. So, he really understood the whole history of the UCSC college system. He was bringing that, plus all of his skills to helping this new endeavor.

Slater: It made a huge difference. And he was very unassuming. I don't know that we could have done this without his know-how of getting started back then. There were a lot of people who believed in this and just kind of let us go. The nicest thing was to be given the freedom to articulate our vision and let it happen. We weren't restrained. I mean, certainly we were restrained by some things. But the idea of building this program was given to us, meaning the provost and to me. We also attracted a lot of staff who had

great expertise and experience. Bob Taylor was the preceptor from Merrill and his experience was greatly valuable in helping us to get started. We structured academic advising so that we would have one preceptor for two colleges and we shared an office wing in Social Sciences 2, so it was easy for our advising staff to work closely with each other. We also attracted Wendy Baxter, Abbey Asher and Erin Ramsden from Merrill. Erin came over as a half-time CPC, which became the College Nine co-curricular programs coordinator, and Abbey came to lead our Service Learning Program.

Reti: So, 1997. That would have been under Chancellor MRC Greenwood. I interviewed MRC and she was quite supportive of Colleges Nine and Ten.⁶

Slater: Oh, MRC was incredibly supportive! We have a picture of our very first big graduating class. It was probably one of the last years of graduation at the Quarry. During an orientation, we had a welcome session at the Quarry and we were waiting for MRC. She was a little late and we were trying to decide whether we should go ahead and take the picture of our first class anyway. And I said, “No, no! We have to wait for MRC.” (laughs) So sure enough, she came, and there’s a picture of all of us sitting in the Quarry when it was still in use during those years.⁷ That is pretty nice, to look back at that picture.

So back to opening. Opening College Nine—the res halls weren’t done on time and Colleges Nine and Ten res halls were being built together. The apartments were completed, so we opened anyway. We had some transfers and some upper-division

⁶ See Irene Reti and Randall Jarrell, *From Complex Organisms to a Complex Organization: An Oral History with Chancellor MRC Greenwood, 1996-2004*. (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2014). See particularly the section entitled “Two New Colleges: Nine and Ten and Thoughts on the UCSC College System.” <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/9hv2j5t9>

⁷ The UCSC Quarry was restored and reopened in fall of 2017. See <https://quarry.ucsc.edu/quarry-history/>

students from other colleges. We also opened the International Living Center and had our first-year students live at Crown College. At that time, there was no path between the fire station near Crown and Social Sciences 1. Over time the path developed because it was a direct route. First it was just this little path, and they were trying to not have students use it because it was dark, through the woods, over a creek, etcetera. And then, over time, it's become a legitimate path because our groundskeeper, Bill Reid, and his crew did a great job of building it.

Reti: I love the symbolism of the path from social sciences to Crown, which is science-oriented.

Slater: Yeah, it's really nice. But it wasn't like that originally when we started. Several years ago, long-range plans included building Social Sciences 3 over near the fire station. It included a bridge that would go from the front of Social Sciences 1, across that ravine, to where the fire department is. The original plans had us building apartments for Colleges Nine and Ten out there as well. But I don't know how or if that will still happen in the future. Now through a [public-private partnership] the campus is planning to build more housing on the west side.⁸ It's necessary, but it's a shame because I would rather see growth of the apartments and residence halls within the colleges' footprint to allow for more students from the same college to continue to live together and develop community at their respective colleges.

⁸ See <https://ches.ucsc.edu/housing/studenthousingwest/index.html>

Namaste Lounge, Café Revolución, and Terry Freitas Cafe

So anyway, we got started with the apartments in 2000. And then College Ten opened in 2002. And that's when the res halls opened. There's another interesting story (this is sort of physical planning). When we opened all this, I remember being at a meeting with Francisco Hernandez. Everything was getting expensive and he was under pressure to cut and/or maintain costs. Namaste Lounge is a stand-alone lounge that is a student reg fee-funded facility. It was really expensive to build a stand-alone, rather than to add it on to a residence hall, or not build at all. Well, all the other colleges have their own reg fee-funded space like that and I knew it was critically important to have this space for our students.

Reti: Sure, the Stevenson Fireside Lounge—all of those.

Slater: Right. And I remember just really pleading with him in this meeting, "Please, this is going to be so robust. We absolutely need this space." And he acquiesced, "Okay." (laughs) I was just like, thank you! And he also said that if we didn't build it at that time, it would be very expensive to go in later because of the slope, the angle that it's on. It might even be impossible to go in there and build at that spot later. So, it made sense to just do it all at once.

Reti: That room is used for so many events.

Slater: All the time. So, it's really gratifying to think that I had a little say in making sure that Namaste was created. The naming for Namaste really came from staff. We brainstormed, Abbey Asher came up with the idea, and we felt like Namaste would be a really welcoming and important way to have people enter into College Nine. Unlike the

name of some of our other res halls, this one came from the staff as we started, and we just named it. We didn't have to do a lot of vetting and going through waiting for a donor, to name it. We've dealt with some other issues around naming where that came up.

College Ten's lounge was created as part of one of the residence halls. It was a downstairs, somewhat dark lounge with cement floors. It was hard to picture it looking vibrant and being as nice as College Nine's Namaste Lounge. We had a staff member, eeman Agrama, who was a coordinator of residential education at the time and was very creative and very good with aesthetics. And she said, "Oh, if I had just a little funding we could make this into the coolest coffee shop." So, I thought, go for it. That's great. That's a great idea. Let's do this. And that's where Café Revolución was started. The furnishings and the art on the wall and everything was very carefully thought through and reflected the theme at College Ten of Social Justice and Community. We developed programs in the café that reflected the theme and created an inviting space that developed community. We didn't keep it open all the time because we couldn't afford to have students staff it the whole time. And we did feel like, unfortunately, if it was open 24:7 that it would be worn down quite a bit, and it would be hard to maintain.

Because of our College Ten theme, and because that space was so well designed and maintained, it was an attractive space and program to be named, and we received an endowment from Ethel Shelly for her late grandson Terry Freitas. Terry Freitas was actually a Crown College student and worked in the Amazon with the U'wa tribe. He organized against some of the oil companies who had moved in and created significant damage to the environment and the Amazon Rainforest. He got caught up in a big

political conflict and was kidnapped and killed there with a couple of other indigenous people who were part of the tribe there. It was really awful. His grandmother provided us funds to name the café after Terry. Terry's work did reflect—and that's why she chose it—the values of social justice and community. A lot of our students do feel a powerful call to activism, from a lot of different angles and around different issues. Because of the endowment, we've been able to keep the café open much longer. Lots of students talk about how it's been a great place for them to hang out and to be with friends. Just the other day I was in there for an event, for the five-year Freitas anniversary, and there was a bulletin board that was entitled: "Take what you need." The students come in and write down a positive thought and put it up on the bulletin board. You can go look on this board and it's full of just beautiful thoughts: "You are a brilliant person." Or, "Keep working hard." Whatever it is. The cafe has become a welcoming place where students come and visit, or do homework, or maybe do some spoken word, play board games and so on. We don't rent out this space—it's specifically for our students.

Reti: I'm glad we got that story on the record.

Intercultural Competency

Slater: So, I also wanted to talk about how in the early days we thought about student engagement. Is that okay, to just go with this?

Reti: Yes, please.

Slater: So, there are many experts in the field of intercultural education. We have centered a lot of our work at College Nine around the Developmental Model of Intercultural Communication based on work by Milton Bennet and Michael Page. It basically says that

that people move through stages from the early stages of Denial of Difference to the later stage of Adaptation, where people are able to move seamlessly between different cultures. So, our goal at College Nine is to help students raise awareness of these differences and provide them knowledge skills and tools to move along this continuum. We have also used the Oxfam model around developing a global curriculum as the basis for much of our program development. So, based on these and other models, we believe in this notion that to become more interculturally competent, you don't just take somebody who maybe has only experienced their own culture growing up and expect them somehow, just because they are at college now, to be really adept at understanding the world and cultures that are far different from their own. It just doesn't happen that easily. And in fact, sometimes if you try to push people too hard and to challenge people who are in denial, it sometimes causes them to retrench in their pre-existing beliefs and reinforces their own monocultural mindset, making them less open to understanding how others think, or curious about others' values, etcetera. And so, there's this notion that as you build intercultural competence with students in earlier stages it's completely appropriate to do things like cultural celebrations, or a College Night where you're tasting something different for the first time—food, song, dance—that that's a great entrée into understanding somebody who may be different from you, or a culture that's different from you. Once you start with these more simplistic types of offerings, you then move into the more nuanced differences around culture that come through knowing yourself better, understanding your own cultural background, your own biases, your own identities, and then being able to engage with others who are different than you at deeper levels with less defensiveness. That's where intercultural competency can happen more deeply and more fluidly.

And so, when we thought about building this co-Curricular program, we didn't think about developing a random set of programs. Rather, we developed a curriculum grounded on our theme, and on this developmental model intended to engage students in all four years. Some reports show a trend over recent years for students to affiliate with their college for their first two years and with their major later. We felt that, from the start, we wanted to do all we could to promote their college identity and deepen their understanding of these themes throughout their time at our colleges. It's been important for us to still create the sense of this is your home—you started with this home—and if you choose to engage with these themes, we have opportunities for you all four years. When students take advantage of these opportunities, we have so many examples of students who really become interested in developing themselves as global citizens, or students who really go out with a passion for social justice. Wendy can give you many examples of students who are amazing leaders because of the way they've engaged in our programs. So, in an ideal world, I would say yeah, this would be great. All of our students graduate with a strong passion around our themes. Truly that's not the case for ALL students, but there is the opportunity for students who want to engage and stay involved in the college all four years, through the way that we envision the program.

So, based on this intercultural model and social justice model, we have developed a leadership curriculum that allows students to develop these skills both in and out of the classroom. For example, when students come in their first year, fall quarter they can sign up for a leadership class to introduce students to the idea of the themes of the college. Through exploring our themes, they do group work, develop leadership skills and identify a project to work on that amplifies their dialogue and the theme. So for example,

at College Nine, they have done fundraising and built small water purification systems that they have sent to a maternity ward in Afghanistan. With College Ten, we've done a lot of work with Barrios Unidos here [in Santa Cruz].

Reti: I saw that in some of the archives.

Slater: Yeah, it's pretty cool. So again, this is this chance to engage students right away with our themes. That's only one of many opportunities for students.

If we could have waved a magic wand, at College Nine we definitely would have required study of a second or third language, and other general education requirements relating to our themes. But we just didn't have the structure at UCSC to make that happen, for many different reasons. So instead we built opportunities through our co-curricular unit as robust options for our students.

I'd worked at Eleanor Roosevelt College, Fifth College at UC San Diego. And their core course there was a two-year program. It started with pre-civilization, going up to current-day times, and it was a cross-disciplinary core course. So, the students who graduated from Eleanor Roosevelt had two years' worth of course work looking at international and global perspectives. And that was with their small group cohort as well. In addition, they had language requirements and fine arts requirements that included a non-Western focus. So, I remember coming to UC Santa Cruz feeling that the colleges here, with only one quarter of a core course, didn't have as much of the academic link as they did at UCSD because the core courses there were at least a year.

My point is I came from that model, and if we could have waved the magic wand, the core course here would have been two years to develop their reading, writing and critical

thinking skills in small classroom size, reflecting our themes, so we could provide solid academic grounding for our students that would complement their majors, and they would have the benefit of the shared learning experience in small sections. I love the cross-disciplinary focus going from pre-civilization up to current times. It would have been a really interesting opportunity for our students but we couldn't do that.

Colleges Nine and Ten Curriculum

So we ended up with a one-quarter core course like all the other colleges except Stevenson, which I believe still had a one-year core course. We then built an optional two-credit class offered to students in the winter quarter after the core course. These classes, one for College Nine and the other for College Ten, give students hands-on opportunities to explore our themes and to work in small groups led by other student instructors. We launched those really early on and built it into the job description of our co-curricular director, who developed the content. So again, developmentally, we have this leadership opportunity at the very beginning. Students take the core course and the leadership class, then they can complement it with a two-credit class during winter quarter. That continues to go strong. College Nine and College Ten have approximately seventy to ninety students enroll in that class.

All of these programs wouldn't have worked without our staff who were all experts in various ways. I had hired Wendy Baxter as a college program coordinator at Merrill College and she was so powerful and so committed and amazing that I thought she would be the perfect person to lead this co-curricular program. She was super enthusiastic and came over. Abbey [Asher] had done service learning under John Isbister.

She's been here at UCSC doing service learning for a long, long time. And recently in the past few years students can earn GE credits by taking our service learning class. So anyway, Abbey also came. And Erin Ramsden, with extensive international development experience, came from Merrill as well. And the other person who came from Merrill was Bob Taylor, who was an advisor here for a long time. So, we had an incredibly strong and passionate group of people when we opened our colleges. Bob made a huge difference in these early years, as well, because he was so well respected and had so much experience.

So, back to our curricular offerings. service learning run by Abbey Asher was built in as a key opportunity for learning about our themes and gaining leadership skills. There are many components of service learning. We have Praxis, which provides students one-time opportunities for volunteering throughout the year. We designed that primarily for first-year students. Then Abbey developed a class called *Esprit de Corps*, where Abbey carefully places students at nonprofits in our community. This class is for second-year or upper-division students. We wanted to provide students with sequential opportunities for deeper and more complex engagement as they moved along. The students volunteer in the community and have weekly classes where they learn more about the underlying causes of a lot of the social justice issues in our community and/or in their placement. In addition, the reflection piece is critical to the student's development and the exchange is considered very mutual.

The other component of our service learning has been Alternative Spring Break programs. Those opportunities are available for students at all class levels. Abbey has partnered with our provost, Flora Lu, to develop a program in Watsonville and do a lot

of work around food justice, hand-in-hand with some of the students at Calabasas Elementary school and other nonprofits in Watsonville.

The notion of service learning is focused more on what our students learn and how they learn and reflect on their work, rather than on an uneven footing of sending our students in who are the sole purveyors of knowledge. One of Flora's current goals is to take our program one step further by having our students do work in the community that expands into research projects and knowledge production that more effectively impacts positive policy change.

The curriculum continues with other leadership opportunities and classes as well as an opportunity to graduate with distinction that I can talk about later.

Working with Osher Lifelong Learning Institute

One of our newer opportunities is working with OLLI [Osher Lifelong Learning Institute]. And that's been a great cross-generational thing. That's another story about how OLLI has become more involved in our college. I might as well tell that and then we can go back to the big picture.

So OSHER Lifelong Learners—what a great group of mostly retired and engaged people who have been affiliated with the university. They were meeting at Stevenson College regularly, and for various reasons, good reasons, the availability of the facility became more limited. And I remember getting a call from my friend Corinne Miller, former director of our transfer center, who said, "Deana, we just want to talk to you about space." And I can't tell you how difficult that is, to talk to me about space right now because Colleges Nine and Ten are always sought after, understandably, for the Multipurpose

Room space, which is also a dining hall, which our students need so much right now because of how we're growing. So, there is a very dynamic tension between trying to provide space for the campus for very legitimate needs, and for our students' for dining purposes, and for our own students to have activity space. So, whenever I get a call from somebody asking for ongoing meeting space, I am always very resistant to commit. She said, "Just listen. Just come listen to us."

Reti: (laughs)

Slater: I thought, oh, I don't want to waste people's time, so maybe I should just say no, but she convinced me to come to a meeting and at least to listen. So, I went to the meeting and OLLI—they were amazing. First of all, they wanted to meet on a Sunday morning. Well, guess what time the MPR is most available? What do students do on Sunday morning?

Reti: They sleep.

Slater: (laughs) They're asleep!

Reti: (laughs) That's very smart!

Slater: It's not a super active time to use it. So, I just thought, I think we can do this!

Reti: Whereas older people wake up really early.

Slater: It was fine. That was another little story about really trying to be open and not making up your mind before you hear people out completely.

Reti: Yeah!

Slater: So then when OLLI came over we thought, we have this opportunity. There have to be ways that we can partner with OLLI, other than just providing them space. What can we do that might actually develop into some cool programs? They had some examples of partnership programs at other colleges at UCSC that had worked really well. Fay Crosby [at Cowell College] had started a program where she had some of the OLLI folks mentor some of her core course students, helping to guide them on their writing and reading. It was a really cool thing. I think that's going on still, regularly. So, this collaboration had started at at least one other college. But there was a new opportunity with them over here. We wanted to have them not just use our space, but we wanted to think about ways we could collaborate together that could enhance our community. This was an ideal that also appealed to them.

So, to make a long story short, this was the best ever Alternative Spring Break because many of the OLLI members went with our students on Alternative Spring Break in Watsonville. And our students were so receptive to the OLLI members' participation. Abbey and I were wondering whether—we don't know this for sure—but a lot of students who went were first generation Latino and Latina students, who I think traditionally understand intergenerational things, have a respect for the elders, and that was really evident during the time they spent together. It was very mutually appreciated. So, we're hoping to keep building on that.

Practical Activism Conference

So anyway, this is back to my whole thing about how we built our programs, from the beginning. So, we specifically designed the leadership classes, Praxis and the two-credit

courses for the first years; in addition we have the Practical Activism Conference. When Wendy first came over to our colleges, to think about developing this co-curricular unit, Wendy and I took a walk on West Cliff Drive and we were thinking about all the exciting possible ways to bring these themes to life for our students. Wendy thought, well, we could do this conference-type thing, where we could have students identify social justice issues that really resonate with them. And maybe we could do a conference. She was talking about these ideas about how students might grow and learn and become more involved and have an opportunity to engage with faculty. I remember so distinctly that talk. And then it was so gratifying to watch how Wendy turned this germ of an idea into such a great program for our students and the campus.

So that's been going since—maybe 2002 was the first year that Wendy and the colleges started the Practical Activism conference. Over time, we developed this model where students would attend the Practical Activism conference, again first-year students, so they get, "Oh this is what it's about. I see upper-division students leading these workshops. Oh, I really loved that keynote speaker. Oh, I have a chance to learn—"

It's focused on more hands-on, opportunities to build a conference and learn more about social justice issues. And then to see students do the leading and be active. That's what our first-year students get to see. Obviously, that wasn't there the very first year because we were developing it. But I'm still talking about this idea of developing a continuum for student leadership and engagement that we're doing for both College Nine and for Ten. So, the students, after taking the two-credit class, can apply to become leads for the Practical Activism conference. And if they are accepted then as leads for it, then they get to be the students to develop the retreat content. We also have these weekend retreats

that we modeled on the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity. I started a weekend retreat model like this at UCSD, then brought it to Merrill, and we then brought it here. We have the Intercultural Community Weekend retreat for College Nine and the Multicultural Community Weekend retreat for College Ten. Students go off campus and spend time through various activities exploring our themes and getting to know one another more deeply. I've heard several students say that the weekend helped to retain them, or that they made some great friends and so on. So that's the first-year opportunity.

Leadership Certificate

So, then in their second year students have the opportunity to become a peer instructor for the two-credit class. They can take *Esprit de Corps*. They can then, of course, become a participant or leader in the lot of the other areas that we have in Student Activities and Residential Life. All of our clubs, organizations and classes incorporate our themes and students, with sustained leadership, can receive a leadership certificate when they graduate. We also developed a College Nine and a College Ten distinction award that recognizes students who have distinguished themselves academically. There are two pathways: for College Nine it's Language and Culture, or research and scholarship; and for College Ten it's Service and Leadership, or writing intensive courses focused on the theme of Social Justice and Community. We notice that the students who stay engaged all four years go out into the world as such amazing leaders because they've been able to try on so many different hats. Everyone's story is different but they are so powerful, their stories about what they've learned with these different opportunities for leading, or for engagement in our activities, as they've gone through. So, they can also reflect these skills and experiences on their resume, that they've had this opportunity.

nd we also then have opportunities for students to get engaged in the International Living Center, which I can talk about as well.

Our next step in this curriculum development is to try to measure what we are doing. I think retention studies show that when students feel a sense of community and a sense of engagement, they're more likely to be retained. And we have had this anecdotal experience all this whole time about the outcome of these powerful opportunities for student engagement, but we haven't really been able to directly link that to retention or other important outcomes that we are working on. So, this year Flora Lu, our provost, has launched a program tied to the core course, where students have an opportunity for telling their story, a short, recorded narrative responding to some prompts about overcoming challenges in their life. In addition to telling their story, we also have talked about plans to have them indicate what extracurricular activities they have participated in so far. Regarding the storytelling, we know that for students, telling their story is another way to feel included and to feel that you belong. This helps with student retention and building a sense of community. But I also hope that by the time they graduate that we can somehow record and quantify the number of activities that students have been involved with, that we can follow those students and be able to show that these co-curricular programs, these activities, significantly contribute to our goals of creating students who are more globally minded and socially just. Let's track in five years the students who were the most involved. Say they were engaged in a full range of activities and college electives at the colleges—after they graduate, what are they doing now and what do those experiences mean to them, and how is that different than a student who didn't get involved? I think that we need to be better at quantifying these experiences and

demonstrating how they make a difference, that these aren't just unrelated clubs and activities, but that they have learned significant life and cultural competency skills and increased awareness and knowledge to effectively make change in their communities. We're just getting started on that now.

Reti: So, a longitudinal study.

Slater: Yes. It's something we're all interested in but it's so hard to find the extra time to do this.

Reti: Everybody is just trying to deal with their daily work.

Slater: Yeah. But our new division, the Division of Student Success, they're helping us to look at these issues of retention, how we can quantify this. So, we've been getting help from them in trying to do this work. I think that hopefully we'll keep it going.

Reti: Fabulous.

Slater: I think you're hearing my commitment and passion to the themes. All of these things came from the collective idea that students care about these issues. They care about social justice. They care and we care about the world being a better place. I feel like the work that we're doing, when students want to get engaged in this. (tears up) You know—

Reti: Yeah, it's very powerful, very moving. I find myself tearing up too, hearing these stories. It's incredible to know how much you are changing these young people and how much work they're doing while they're here and then later.

Slater: Totally. Yeah, very powerful. The enthusiasm that I have is shared by other people. And the commitment. I think that's why I've been so gratified is that it's a really strong shared belief system, value system, of all the people I work with. And to me, it's really just been a matter of tapping into all these talented and committed staff members, providing the structure and together building a curriculum. So, it's not like you go nuts, right? We're trying to stay developmentally appropriate for our students and not go overboard and do too much because we can't. (laughs)

Reti: (laughs) We all know how activists can burn out. We don't want to model burnout as a pathway into the world.

Slater: (laughs) Yeah, so it's kind of containing that. But it's then also letting people really go with what they're great at, allowing them to pursue their passions and let them try these new things with their students. I think that's why our colleges really have maintained this integrity and maintained this vitalism and vibrancy. I think that's a lot of the reason why, because of those themes.

International Living Center

Reti: Tell me about the International Living Center.

Slater: Okay, you heard a little bit about my background with the ILC. I still have good friends from Cornell. I was in my twenties and now I'm in my late fifties. We still have a group, a cohort from then, who talk and get together. There are reunions, etc. It's amazing to see this and what people are doing.

So, when I came here and we were starting a new college, I thought we could start an ILC here. The premise for an International Living Center is that students are not just assigned there. Students have to be interested in living in a community that has about 50 percent international students and 50 percent students from the U.S. It can vary a little bit. It could be 60 percent international and 40 percent students from the U.S., or vice versa. But we aim to get a balance, so that you're in an apartment, or in a res hall with about half domestic population, half from outside the U.S. And again, through intentional programs, it just doesn't happen without students coming with curiosity and a core interest and willingness to get involved. So, we don't want people to just apply simply because it's a fun place to live, or it's convenient, or you like the apartment. They have to apply and they have to articulate how they will get involved in the community. It's competitive. Everyone doesn't get in. We could go into more detail about what programs we've done and what works best for students or how we get them to know each other. We have a series of retreats and we have some opportunities in the beginning, during Welcome Week, to begin get to know each other more deeply by exploring their values and cultural differences and similarities. At our ILC—it's changed over time, but students love the social aspect of meeting people from all over the world. They also enjoy getting to explore the Bay Area and participating in a range of field trips. Our international students love to get to see different places around here. And there are a lot of ways that we help them to do that, as a community. I think it's true for the ILC here as well, that students end up making very good friends who they have for many years, and really do start this idea of dialog with people who are different than themselves. Starting an ILC here was challenging, initially because people thought we were just putting all the international students in one place.

Reti: Ghettoizing them, like, “You’re international. Go over there.”

Slater: Yeah. And that’s totally the opposite of what we wanted to do. That’s why we always made it a point that students have to apply to live here, to get in. UCSC back twenty years ago didn’t have a large international population. We’re only now starting to grow the international population, especially compared to some of our sister campuses, who have a much larger population. So, in the early days we had to rely on the EAP, which we were happy to. But EAP [Education Abroad Program] students came for just a year, or a quarter, or two quarters. We didn’t get the four-year international students. We didn’t get to choose from a large pool because there weren’t very many international students who were here for four full years. So, we had a limited number of EAP students who came, and ultimately, they were the students who chose to live in the ILC. Hence, they weren’t as dispersed across the campus. When new provosts would begin their term at another college they might say, “Well, I want ten EAP students.” Because provosts get to weigh in, as well as the CAOs, on the college preference process. And there were many instances where we had to be convincing about the efficacy of our program and our need to have a critical mass in the ILC. Initially, we worked closely with the International Education Office to recruit the EAP students, but over time, as the ILC had more years to develop, the program became popular by word of mouth.

Initially, in order to apply to the ILC, students had to preference College Nine or College Ten (and College Nine made sense, with the international focus), to be able to get accepted to the ILC. Later, as time wore on, we changed our policy to allow students from other colleges to apply to live in the International Living Center, although we get more applicants from students affiliated from our colleges. And that’s okay as well. I think it’s

fine. I think the experience in the ILC is great for students from other colleges. Several years ago, we allowed for mixed college groups to live in the apartments. For example, students from other colleges could live together. Their preference might be a little lower, to get into room selection, but this decision was made centrally to keep the apartments full, back when housing wasn't at the crisis level it is now on campus and in the Santa Cruz community.

Now it's just running and it's very well established, so we don't have to make our case over and over again. This idea of program theme houses, I think is really important for lives of campuses. I'm really just so happy that the ILC is such a vibrant program.

About three to four years ago the campus began to intentionally do more recruiting of international students. And we decided this presented a new opportunity for College Nine—of maybe taking a floor of about forty students or so and creating a little mini ILC, but aim it at first-year students. The International Living Center is for upper-division students because it's apartments. So, we launched the ifloor a few years ago with this same notion that students would apply to live there, that we were trying to particularly find a nice community for the influx of new international students on campus, and that our theme lent itself to this notion of students who were interested in international and global perspectives. So, we've had a really fun time operating this ifloor for about three years for first-year students. It's going well. We have an application and built-in expectations for student engagement. They also have to be involved in certain things: go to the Practical Activism conference; go to the Debate Series; participate in the garden. (I should talk more about the garden at some point.) So, the ifloor has been a really good program for students and I think will continue strongly.

Something that we have to be careful of with the ifloor, more so than the ILC, is that in a lot of our recruiting right now we are getting a lot of students from China and a lot of students from India, but I would say primarily China right now. And the idea of the International Living Center, or floor, is that you're trying to get a real wide range of students from different countries. So, we have to really be thoughtful about how we do that because we don't want it to only be a Chinese floor, along with some students from the U.S. When we're doing the selection for that we're really looking for students who come from a wide variety of different backgrounds, certainly Chinese as well. So, we need to generate enough interest so that we have a large enough pool and we can create a floor that's intentionally very diverse, so that students can have the experience that it's intended to be, which is learning from each other, from people from a lot of different countries and cultures. Our domestic students are increasingly diverse. Even when their citizenship is from the U.S., they are often dual citizens, or maybe they lived in Saudi Arabia for fifteen years and they've just been here for two years. We have a very, very rich diverse pool of domestic students, so that also is great for both the ILC and for the ifloor.

And then we have a service learning floor. We've got a Rumi's Field floor, a nonviolent communication floor.

Reti: Rumi, as in the poet Rumi?

Slater: Yes, that's how we named it. And yet, we're careful about starting more theme floors. I think we're maxed out. I think these notions of residential theme floors can come and go and I want to be very thoughtful, like we have been in starting the college, about

not just throwing a theme or a name on a floor and hoping it works. For any particular year it might work, but it doesn't lead to sustaining and building a strong program. It's not easy to maintain the vibrancy of a theme floor without a solid foundation and ongoing commitment and support. So, we've been more intentional about what theme floors we're willing to develop and sustain.

Reti: I think that I would be considered remiss if I didn't ask you how the current political situation is affecting UCSC's recruitment of international students. I'm thinking specifically of Trump's Travel Ban. How is this affecting your students now, or your ability to recruit a diverse pool of students?

Slater: You know, every year about a few days after the Statement of Intent to Register deadline, after May 1, we meet with Michael McCawley [Director of Admissions] and he provides us with the overview on admissions, recruitment, and who has indicated interest in coming here, what our numbers look like. And he's the person that we asked about what it's like as far as the word out there for coming to the U.S. right now, from international students.

· Donald Trump issued Executive Order 13769 shortly after taking office. Known officially as "Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States" and called by many the "Muslim Ban" because six of the nations listed are of Muslim majority population. Executive Order 13769 lowered the number of refugees to be admitted into the United States in 2017 to 50,000, suspended the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program for 120 days, suspended the entry of Syrian refugees indefinitely, and directed the suspended entry of those whose countries do not meet adjudication standards under U.S. immigration law for ninety days. Homeland Security lists these countries as Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen. More than 700 travelers were detained, and up to 60,000 visas were "provisionally revoked." The Travel Ban was met with legal challenges and a temporary restraining order was issued on February 3, 2017. It was replaced by another Travel Ban (Executive Order 13780) which was also contested and was expanded in September 2017. For more see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Executive_Order_13780 These bans have discouraged and otherwise negatively impacted prospective and current international students in the University of California system. See <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2017/02/01/2017-02281/protecting-the-nation-from-foreign-terrorist-entry-into-the-united-states> For the ban's effects on international students see <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/16/us/international-students-us-colleges-trump.html>

Reti: This is May 5 now.

Slater: Right, so we had the meeting two days ago. And he said, “Yeah, it’s a chilling affect for sure. We’re seeing our numbers go down.” The cost too, obviously, is going up. But beyond that, I think what’s interesting is that there still seemed to be a strong interest from the Chinese students. But we’re seeing in other areas that students are really less certain about coming, that we’re going to see a very high melt in those numbers. Students will maybe indicate interest in coming, but then kind of see what’s happening with the climate before they come. And clearly, it’s putting a dampening affect across the United States on this. I think we’d need to go actually look at different places, but I know it’s been hard for other universities as well. In fact, I just read something about this, that we’re a friendly place—it was what different universities are doing as far as trying to assure people that they should still come. Yeah, it’s tough. It’s really tough.

A Garden Project and Food Justice

Reti: Okay, thanks. You wanted to talk about the garden.

Slater: Okay, so the garden is a good one. You’ve heard me say that our structure is robust and the staff are committed. It’s really hard to find more capacity to do new things, unless you are willing to drop something. That’s been my motto. (laughs) No more new things until you drop something because there is just so much time in the day to do things.

Well, we had three students approach me four years ago or so, who said they wanted to start a garden. And I (laughs) I just thought, oh, it’s a great idea, but who is going to help them to get this going? Because I really didn’t want to see a garden without an infrastructure that could support the garden over time. And I was really concerned that

if it was a staff member's interest of the day, that particular staff member could leave, and what's going to happen with the garden? And I was really concerned that our garden needed to be connected to the infrastructure of UCSC, and what other gardens are here right now, and what's working well right now. What isn't working well? So, it felt like it was a big request, but a really legitimate question because students had gardens at other colleges.

But the first thing to overcome was the footprint. Colleges Nine and Ten are on a really small footprint just because UCSC has grown out a lot. We had to go a little taller than the other colleges and we don't have the space that other colleges have. I haven't even mentioned that. But we don't have tennis courts; we don't have volleyball courts. We've got a little green between Social Sciences 1 and Social Sciences 2. That's our recreation area. It's very small. And we have cement quads in the res hall nine and in the res hall ten area. There is just a cement quad, so that's not great. I thought, where are we going to find a place for this?

Reti: Plus, sunshine. You are in a redwood grove.

Slater: And sunshine. So, the students got very creative and they found a space that's across from the Cowell Health Center, right across the street. It's south of our Multipurpose Room, as you go down the hill. You wouldn't even know it was there because the hill slowly slopes down to McLaughlin Drive right there. There's a little space there. You just walk past it all the time, right? So, it's enough of a space for a garden.

And so, first of all we found the space. So, I said, "Yes, let's figure out how to do this. But we have to do this correctly. We can't just go into this without working with Physical

Planning and Construction (PP&C) on where we can do this. And not just putting in a garden and then asking for forgiveness later.”

Reti: (laughs) Those days are over.

Slater: Those days are over. So, we had a lot of good support and it took a little bit of time to figure out where we could locate it. But we did get a lot of support from PP&C, from people there who helped us figure that out. And then the students worked hard on getting grants and making connections with other funding sources on campus that provided us funds for the building of a garden shed, for all these things. We were able to hire a staff member who had worked at other gardens, who also was connected with the Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems. So that was really helpful, to have his expertise.

So, when Flora Lu became our provost—she’s from environmental studies and her passion is food justice—she took this idea of a garden to the next step in developing a curriculum around the garden as reflecting our students’ own background about what foods resonate with their own cultural heritage. What foods did they learn about growing up; what foods were important to them and their families; what foods maybe did they hear about but they didn’t grow up in a place where they could even have those foods? So, a lot of it is connection to your history and to your traditions. And possibly, with the international students, what might be able to grow here that really reflects your own family, your own heritage? So, in addition to food resonating with your own culture, how can the garden demonstrate other issues around food justice?

She is also looking at the potential that we have to make a connection with Calabasas Elementary School in Watsonville, where Flora has worked closely with that principal and that community on starting a garden where the parents, many of whom are farmworkers and are working for other people preparing food, can actually do work with their children growing food that has cultural relevance for them. There's a whole element about creating gardens with this notion of connection with the community and the potential to build a sister garden here with our garden at Colleges Nine and Ten. Flora brought in that next-level element, wanting our students to think about that. So, we are in the process of designing our garden in a way that would allow for planting that has cultural resonance, a garden that reflects our students' increasing knowledge about food justice issues. We want to reflect on how we create a garden infrastructure that supports a more diverse group of students, particularly students of color. And also, to have a liaison relationship with this other garden. That's in the making right now.

Reti: The garden that's at Calabasas School.

Slater: Yes. It may be that our volunteers end up going there a couple of times a year. We're figuring this out right now. Flora Lu has received a generous Hispanic Serving Institutions³⁰ grant. She is one of the few faculty that have received this grant at UCSC. That allows her to leverage these ideas that she has around food justice with some of the work we're doing in our garden right now. So, she's received new funding for this, which is an important and significant source of new funds, but also a big deal for the university.

³⁰ "In 2012, UC Santa Cruz reached the Hispanic-Serving Institution threshold of having greater than 25 percent of its undergraduate student population be Latino/a. Since then, the U.S. Department of Education designated UC Santa Cruz as an "[Eligible Institution](https://studentsuccess.ucsc.edu/hsi)" under the Title III and Title V programs, officially recognizing the campuses' status as an Hispanic Serving Institution and giving UC Santa Cruz the opportunity to apply for grants." <https://studentsuccess.ucsc.edu/hsi>

So, with that funding, she's been able to hire a postdoc who is more tuned into those issues around food justice and community development to lead our students.

Reti: That's fantastic.

Slater: So, we are really in the infancy with the garden. We just did the cover crop recently and this will be the first time to even plant, coming up. But getting in all the infrastructure in was exciting.

Reti: It's amazing that you're just at that stage and you're doing this partnership with Calabasas School. And you've got all these ways of tying it in.

Slater: It is really great. This is Flora! It's another example of working closely with your provost, who pulls in this important academic and research side. And then proceeding carefully because I did not want to ask my current staff to take on the garden. It was important to me not to commit to the students until we could legitimately sustain it by providing an advisor who would be able to provide ongoing leadership to the students. Clearly, the students will do a lot of the work. And we want the students to be engaged. We have a garden club now and there's a class that's taught on this, on the garden, as well. But without that infrastructure, I feared the garden would just come and go with the interest of the students. And it's really hard to sustain something like that. So, we're off to a really good start now. So that's been good.

Reti: Fantastic. That's great.

Is there anything else that you want to say?

Slater: Well, I won't go into depth about this but the students named the buildings over time. And we got permission to do that. The names were chosen based on the themes of the college and the students' interest. In the early days—I completely understood this—but MRC Greenwood wanted us to hold off on any naming. That's always controversial because, of course, we would love an endowment for College Nine and for College Ten. And buildings also can be endowed and we could get names for buildings. So even if there is an unofficial name, you know, in some ways it maybe creates more complications with when you want to name it with something else and the students have gotten attached to a certain name. So over time, as our colleges got older, that policy loosened up and our students were able name the buildings, with the knowledge that the names might change if we get a donor.

Reti: Okay, well I really want to thank you for your time and for all the inspiration.

Slater: Sure. Oh, you're very welcome! Thank you. That was really gratifying.

Reti: Thank you so much.

Wendy Baxter, Director, Academic and Co-Curricular Programs,

Colleges Nine and Ten



Reti: Today is June 15, 2017 and this is Irene Reti. I am here with Wendy Baxter. We're at Social Sciences 1, which is part of Colleges Nine and Ten. Wendy is the director of academic and co-curricular programs, informally known as The CoCo. So, we, here at the Regional History Project, are very happy to be doing this oral history documenting the history of Colleges Nine and Ten, which is long overdue and very exciting. So, Wendy, let's just start with a little bit about your own life, like where you were born and where you grew up.

Early Life

Baxter: Well, I was born and raised in Manitoba, in Winnipeg, Canada. And then, in my teen years I lived in Quebec and British Columbia. So, I am Canadian and I got here on a lark—I was someone who didn't go to college after high school—I just worked and went to classes at night and moved along. Then I had this dream that I would come to

California for a year and go to a university. So, I looked for a place that had a strong women's community, an art program, and creative writing. I wanted it to be near a big city, but not in a big city, because being raised not in a big city and not in the U.S., I was quite determined that I would feel lost in a huge American city.

So, I ended up getting a few options, and chose UCSC, and came for a year. And through a series of events I got a scholarship that year, got offered a scholarship, and then someone said, "How long have you been taking classes? You should see an academic advisor." I said, "What's an academic advisor?" (laughter) And they told me and I was like, oh, okay.

So, I went and found that, indeed, if I came back for another year and took a high course load including every GE known to humankind I could graduate. So, I decided to come back for another year, borrowed a whopping six thousand dollars, which is what it cost me to live and go to school for a year, which was a lot of money, but it wasn't \$32,000, or whatever it costs now.

So that's how I got to UCSC and that's how I got to Santa Cruz.

Reti: Did you come from an activist family?

Baxter: Well, it's interesting. My parents are very firmly committed to social issues. I was born in the late fifties, so at that time there was a big problem with antisemitism, really active antisemitism. My dad was someone who really took a stand on that, like he quit clubs if they weren't letting Jewish people in them and he was really passionate—I don't think he would ever consider himself an activist, but both of my parents have really strong moral platforms that they take really seriously and act on.

I was raised in the sixties and in Canada—when I lived in Quebec, it was a super active political climate, so I really got the opportunity to understand what privilege was, from being an Anglophone, an English-speaking person. They were tough times, hard conversations going on in our communities at that point. That, for me, was really a blessing. I mean, clearly, I saw racism and a lot of other things around me, but I really got that insight and that positionality through the Parti Quebecois conversations that were happening. So, I feel like for me, that and being queer, being involved in feminist politics—that really engaged my activist self.

And my art—I'm really into making art and I do less of it at this point in my life—but my art was very activist-oriented. That was a big way that I did my work.

Reti: What kind of art?

Baxter: Well, I did a lot of mixed media and some printmaking, but mixed media—kind of narrative, truth-telling.

Reti: So, when you came to UCSC, were you a student activist?

Baxter: Yes, I was really engaged with women's issues and queer stuff. You know, everything was an argument and a conversation. (laughter)

Reti: This was the early eighties? Late seventies and early eighties.

Baxter: Early eighties. I came here in 1982, the fall of 1982. Yeah, so definitely I was engaged in a lot of activism as a student. Terrible things, as I recall. I mean, there was a lot of university politics as well that we were actively protesting, different policies and stuff, with different chancellors that weren't that popular with students.

Reti: Mm, hmm. I remember those days well. I was here just before then. So, yeah.

Baxter: Yeah, so then the AIDS epidemic started shortly after that and I got really involved in that activism and worked in HIV for many years, actually, until I came up to UCSC.

Coming to UC Santa Cruz

Reti: Okay, so was your first job at Merrill College?

Baxter: Yeah, my first job at Merrill was as a core instructor. I decided to leave my job at the Santa Cruz AIDS Project. It is the only time I've left a job without having another one to go to. I had a young child. I loved my work at the AIDS Project, I loved it. But I felt that I was ready for a different area to work in, partly because of having a young child—I mean, that community was so beautiful for Nai-Nai to grow up in. Before she was born, that community, our community, put on this beautiful shower for me and Claire. So, it's nothing about the HIV, or the AIDS—that didn't depress me. I mean, that was hard. But just some of the politics and the struggles in those years—I just wanted to have more positive energy, so that I would be a happier mom. And that was a good move for our family.

Reti: What was your position at the Santa Cruz AIDS Project?

Baxter: I was the director of client services and it was during a very active time, so I was the only employee in client services when I started. And it was a large department when I ended. Like I said, fantastic. I loved that work, loved being able to work in my community in that way. I got a lot out of it, for sure.

So, I came over to teach the core course at Merrill. I left my job and I was like, oh, did I do a crazy thing? And then the phone rang, “We just lost a core instructor and would you be interested?” So that was great and I enjoyed that. I’ve always loved teaching. I used to work at Cabrillo College, and taught there as well.

So, I came to Merrill, did that. And they had a temporary opening, so I got to do some art programming with students. It was really interesting. They felt that that was something their students would really appreciate. I really enjoyed doing that. And then when the college programs coordinator job came open at Merrill College, I applied for that and got it. And I did that job at Merrill, I think for about three years.

Reti: And you and Deana worked together there—Deana Slater?

Baxter: Yes, Deana Slater came. She applied for the college administrator job there and she got that. And so, she was my supervisor maybe for a year and a half. And we heard that finally College Nine and then College Ten were going to be opening and they were looking for a CAO, a college administrative officer, who would move from their existing college into the new colleges, because they felt that having that background, rather than opening a recruitment to a brand-new person who had never done a UCSC college before would be not productive. So, like me, Deana was very engaged with Merrill’s theme, which complements the themes of Colleges Nine and Ten very well. So, she jumped at the chance to be the CAO.

I don’t know if other CAOs were interested, but at that time there was a CAO for each college. And the new model was proposing a CAO of both College Nine, and then two years later College Ten would be added. So, amongst that work group, there was concern

that that would be an undoable job, to be the CAO of two colleges. So, then Deana, once she had been offered the position and accepted it for the future, she worked really actively to envision a two-college structure, where if we got permission, she would use the formula funding of two colleges, and rearrange the administration of the colleges, so there would be economies in some areas, and a focused way to address the themes of each college.

So, the themes—they had other phrases—but what we ended up coining the themes as was: International and Global Perspectives, for College Nine; and Social Justice and Community for College Ten. Those themes had been chosen by the work group that had worked for five years (about ten years previously) thinking: what does UCSC need in terms of focus areas? What are we moving towards? What should we have these two new colleges be? So those two themes were predetermined, which is why we knew what the themes of the colleges would be.

Coming to Colleges Nine and Ten

So many of us were attracted—like I really wanted to move over and work at those colleges. I thought, that's something that I've always loved in my work, creating new things, like developing the themes, working at Cabrillo in the deaf and hard of hearing program creating classes. I knew that I would be very happy to help open up the two new colleges. So, I was really grateful that I got the opportunity. And I loved my work at Merrill, too. I think that's a great college and we had a lot of really good things going on.

So, it was very exciting to move over and open, first College Nine. And it's everything, right? You're creating all the exciting stuff but it's also like, "Oh, my God! No one bought

whiteout.” (laughter) I shared a closet, a former closet with Bob Taylor, who came in as the academic preceptor. We shared a closet for our offices for the first few months. We had all the temporary mailboxes in there. It was hilarious.

Reti: (laughs) So the co-curricular programs—was that something that you envisioned?

Baxter: Yeah, so I can’t remember the exact timeline and details, but in those early months—well, first of all, when we opened one college, College Nine, we had a Programs and Activities office and a Residential Life. We had one college. We couldn’t really create The CoCo until the second college came on because—I’ll explain why those are related—but in those early months, when it was still only one college, we did a lot of visioning and a lot of figuring out how we would operationalize these dreams that we had of what it would mean to have these college themes embodied.

And so, one of the ways that Deana had—and she successfully got permission from her then-boss to combine the formulas—so her idea was that instead of having a Res Life office for each college, and an Activities Office for each college, we would have one Res Life office that worked with both colleges, and then two different programs offices, one which would do the traditional college programming, and one which would focus on the themes of both colleges. So that second one, that’s the CoCo. So, we have an Activities and Programs office that works with both colleges and we have the CoCo that works with both colleges. Does that make sense?

The Co-Curricular Programs Office [The CoCo]

Reti: Yes, it does. Thank you. So, I’m not really that familiar with the whole idea of co-curricular programs, as a field. What is the history of that field?

Baxter: Co-curricular programs are programs that are complementary to a student's academic program. In other cases, it could be not about the themes; it could just be student leadership development. People do these programs that complement their academic curriculum. So, in our case, almost all of our co-curricular programming is related to our themes. The philosophy is that students in college learn both inside and outside of the classroom, and that both learning platforms are super important to their development. So, it's based on the belief of developing the whole student. And at the CoCo we also have credit-bearing programs. So, we have classes that are for credit. In the CoCo we work in and outside of the classrooms and all of our programs are designed to complement any academic major and curriculum that a student follows.

Reti: And so, co-curricular programming—would that be internships as well? I'm trying to think back to when I was a student [in the late 1970s]. I don't remember that phrase being used at that time. But maybe it's just been renamed.

Baxter: Yeah, I think the concept of co-curriculum is that it is intentional that there are opportunities suitable for someone earlier in their academic career, as well as more challenging or deeper experiences as a student progresses. That's what we have worked really hard to do. And when I say "we" I mean all the staff—not just the CoCo staff—all the staff in the colleges have participated in developing programs that help students develop greater and greater skills.

We have groups. We have classes. We have programs. And speaking now specifically about the CoCo, one of our main philosophies is the importance of peer education and peer development. So, I work really hard in each program that we do to have student

leadership in that program, as well as professional staff leadership. Some examples of that—we have classes where one of the staff members works with student instructors, and then the student instructors produce lesson plans, under close supervision, and facilitate the actual classes. So, we have one for College Nine—Global Action; and one for College Ten, Social Justice Issues. I do the one for College Ten. I started out doing the one for College Nine and then once there was a CoCo and we got other staff, now the College Nine Co-curricular Programs Coordinator, Erin Ramsden, facilitates that one. So, we develop those student teachers and teach them how to make lesson plans, provide resources. And we work with an intern who is coproducing those resources and helping those teachers develop skills. Each winter we do this, and so for each college there are four classes, usually facilitated by two student instructors.

Reti: Each one is two students.

Baxter: Each one is two students. And then, all four of those classes for each college come together once a week for a large group section. So, we have presenters, or different films, or different ways to convey the content that then they take back to their classroom in small groups of twenty and interact with and explore.

That's a super-powerful model. Students take that class. They see their instructor, a student. Students learn things from other students that they can't learn intergenerationally. It's a really different kind of learning, not that there isn't a really great place for intergenerational learning as well. But it's very powerful, what they can learn from their peers.

Specifically, about the College Ten theme, I see our student leaders norm such advanced cultural dexterity and respect. They normalize talking, having conversations about difference, across difference, in a way that gives me goosebumps right now, talking about it, because it's so powerful. Where do we get those models in our world? I mean, I don't think many people learn those skills. And they really, really learn, develop, and then normalize those. So, upcoming students see that. I feel like it's this beautiful machine. I remember feeling, when it caught on, it got traction—oh, my heavens. This is something. This is going to go on. This is huge. About five years in, I think, is when I felt that. It was like, oh, wow. This is going to continue. If my hand came out of the pail of water, the pail of water would still be there. It felt really empowering.

Expressive Arts for Social Justice Class

Reti: That's fantastic, Wendy. And then you have a class called *Expressive Arts for Social Justice*.

Baxter: Yeah, that is pretty exciting. Well, I taught a class at Merrill: *Exploring Identity through Art*. And then when we first opened College Ten, I taught a really great *Art for Social Justice* class. It was fantastic. Both of those were great. And so, then someone was like, "Why don't you teach that anymore?" I was like, "Oh, my god. I'm too busy." My job went through a period of time when I was in charge of Activities as well as the CoCo. So, it was some hard years. And there was no way that I could have managed one more class. But then there was another staff member who really wanted to co-teach, and so we did. I was like, "Oh, definitely. That would be manageable."

So now I think this is the past four years that we've been doing that, co-teaching with different people. It's a fantastic class. It is so powerful. Students create the most amazing work. We just had our final show last week. We turned Namaste into a gallery for a day and more than two hundred people came through the two-hour period. You don't have to identify as an artist; some people self-identify as artists. But it's *Expressive Arts for Social Justice*, so we lead people through different—they learn different media, different principles about art making—visual art making, movement, word. We do that for the first six weeks. They are working on all these different projects: visual lexicons and their sketchbooks. They're doing these things they've never done before and working with the elements of art to create meaning, and to give a visual language to their life experience, and their dreams and passions and traumas.

And then, meanwhile they're thinking of what they want their final project to be on—and their final project we have parameters as to how much energy and work would go into it, but we leave the topic totally up to them. We help them refine that and deepen that topic and figure out different ways they could express that.

We had this room so full of powerful truth-telling, and passion. We had folks addressing migrant farmworkers; we had folks working with their experience of living in a world based on rape culture; we had people talking about the silencing and the cultural encasement of their queer identities. And it goes on. Twenty students and this room brimming with beautiful works, exceptionally beautiful works of art with really powerful messages.

Reti: Wow—

Baxter: So, it's just great. It's great.

Reti: I want to take this class!

Baxter: I know. Me too. (laughter) No, it's a great class and yeah, every year it's like, wow, look what you've done.

Reti: It's been four years. So, some of the students have graduated?

Baxter: Yeah, some of the students have graduated. Lots have graduated, or are about to. And we have two student co-facilitators each year. So, folks come back who've taken the class and then they come back and help.

Reti: Do you have art studio facilities at Colleges Nine and Ten?

Baxter: (laughs) Funny you should ask. No. But we create a studio. That's why we limit it to twenty people, because we can fit five stations that seat four people. We have tarps. They are probably behind you somewhere.

Reti: Oh, because we are sitting in a storage room/closet. (laughs)

Baxter: Yeah. (laughter) So we create a studio each week. Yeah, you can see why I think it's better to co-teach it. It's a lot. So, we set up a pop-up studio and then we set up a pop-up gallery, because we also don't have a gallery space. We have Namaste, which has one wall. So, we have this creative way where we display works. You see all the foam core in this room. So, we wrap the foam core in black and then the works look really good on it and it's a beautiful art gallery. Namaste becomes an art gallery for the day.

Reti: Fantastic. I'll have to come next year if it's open to—

Baxter: Yeah, it is. The Thursday of Week Ten.

Dialogue and Debate Classes and Roundtables

We have other classes we've done. For example, I worked with three students a few years ago and we did a dialogue class on Israel-Palestine. The three co-facilitators were—one was Palestinian; one was Jewish American; and one was what is called, when talking about that, sort of "unaffiliated," so no perceived or assigned affiliation through their identities. We developed the curriculum together and they did a great job facilitating that class. And given the climate on campus with that, we attended the class as well, me and Erin Ramsden, just in case. But they really did all the facilitation and in-class work. They did a great job.

Reti: So, in terms of the dialog, did you train them in those kinds of techniques?

Baxter: Yes. So, we had an agreement form that people—we didn't prioritize anyone getting into the class. We aimed for a balance of perspectives and committed to providing an environment where productive communication across difference could happen. And so, people had to agree to communication guidelines to be in the class. And it was really successful. It was really great. But I'm very familiar with conversations around that topic, so we knew, this is how it's got to be. I knew how important it was to provide this, for our own safety, but also because we need to talk about these problems, right? It's really important to talk about them. And if we can't talk about them productively halfway around the earth, then how can we expect anyone to talk about them productively anywhere? So, anyway—we do things like that. Different topics over the years. We've done pop up classes, but these are the ones we do every year.

It just made me think of our debate and roundtable series, when I was talking about how important it is to talk about these issues. You gave me a list of programs that we've done, which was really interesting to look at (laughs) because you know, these issues are so important. We've done debates and roundtables on affirmative action; the most recent one was on climate change. We've done marriage equality two different times, a decade apart. We've done animals in research—all kinds of different topics. Military recruitment on campuses.

And it's so interesting how, remembering those events, and remembering how important it felt to us to bring and to commit to providing productive conversation between two very different sides. And with UCSC's reputation as being very left-leaning and stuff, in the early years it was very hard to get conservative voices to agree to come. I remember writing to Ward Connerly and he really wanted to talk to us, "How are you going to provide me this? How are you going to promise this?" And we have very clear guidelines for those programs, audience expectations. We have free speech stuff posted everywhere. We set up a temporary designated free speech zone. We don't allow people to leaflet inside the venue. And then, I remember at the Ward Connerly event someone stood up with a sign they had somehow smuggled in; in the front row, they were protesting him. And my colleague, Jose Olivas, moved the person away and talked to them and reminded them of the agreements that are posted at the entrance. They could stay without the sign, if they stayed seated, or they could leave.

Providing those spaces for us to hear different perspectives—I remember in the first marriage equality (same sex marriage I think we called it then)—the first time we did it, one of the people—we had four speakers and one of them represented a perspective that

was very anti-LGBTQ—and very, very articulate about why he didn't believe in same sex marriage and worked actively to reduce any likelihood that that would ever be legislated or accepted societally. I remember sitting in that front row going, "Oh, my God! Can I still work this timer?" It was just horrifying. But really important to hear, and for people to hear, and for people to hear the counter of that, you know. So, all these topics, it's so important. I feel like that's something that we really try to model and show: civil disagreement and civil discourse.

Reti: It's so absolutely essential, and more so every day, that all of us learn these skills. How have the students responded to being taught those skills?

Baxter: I feel like not all, but most people want to be able to do that. They want to be able to listen and draw conclusions. And we've heard from a lot of people that they've learned a lot by observing that conversation happening on stage. It's helped them think critically. I think it's so important. We are exposed to so much information, and so developing that media literacy or the ability to think critically about what you're reading or listening to, and to really learn when and how to research more and when and how to question, and when and how to find out more information about a different point of view, and find your values and find your answer—yeah, these are important skills. So, when we talk about co-curricular, I think a lot of students talk about learning those skills, some, as well, through their academic programs, but also a lot from what we do.

The Trump Era

Reti: This historical moment that we're in right now is marked by increasing polarization, and we just came through this election that has been very, very difficult for a lot of

students on campus. I've been hearing from students; it's clear that even though UCSC is very left-leaning, there are students or staff here who do support Trump. I just wondered, how the CoCo has dealt with this current election and the climate that we're in.

Baxter: Well, we've tried to keep doing what we do, which is supporting all points of view, and questioning ourselves, and asking students to question themselves, and to talk to the importance of talking civilly to someone, even if you feel that the—

I mean, this year it was the election. It was also the Pulse nightclub.¹¹ This year has been really defined by moments where many of the students we work with felt personally threatened and attacked, by either the shooting or results of the election. Developmentally, as an older person I can look back and know that yeah, this is a horrific political time in my experience and for my identities and the identities of people that I care a lot about. But we have had these moments before and will have them again, probably. But we will get through.

And for many students, like with the Pulse nightclub, they felt personally attacked and threatened, which I totally understand. They don't have years of knowing that most people are good people. So, we try and teach a lot of self-care and hope, provide hope. I feel like in this election time and in this political climate it's my responsibility to listen to all people, even people who support Trump. They support him for a reason, and so whether I agree with the reasons or resonate with the reasons, it's important to talk to those folks and make sure they feel included in our community. It's hard. Most of the

¹¹ On June 12, 2016, 49 people were killed and 58 others wounded in a terrorist attack/hate crime inside Pulse, a gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida.

students that I work closely with were more on the end of feeling threatened. Like, “I can’t believe there are people who hate us that much, hate *me* and my identity.” Whatever their identities were, where they are speaking from. So, it felt really personal. So, all of us, not just at the CoCo, but all of us at Nine and Ten, we are reaching out to try to provide hope and nurturance and longitudinal perspective, from those of us who are a different generation than our students. We held an event the next day, and had creative materials there, and people just came and talked and spent time, colored, whatever.

I think it just makes what we do so much more important. There was a time where people needed to just mourn and take care of themselves and then I feel like it gave more reason to do what we do, keep doing what we do.

Reti: Yes. Thank you.

Baxter: Yeah.

Practical Activism

Reti: Well, let’s talk about Practical Activism, because that’s a great example of what you’re doing.

Baxter: Yeah, that’s pretty amazing. So, Practical Activism started—it was as germ of an idea. Even when I worked at Merrill I thought, you know it would be really awesome to—and then when I knew I was going to move over to Colleges Nine and Ten I was really excited about it. Deana remembers we were walking on West Cliff and I was telling her this idea. It goes back to the sort of norming of student engagement and valuing social justice issues and respecting difference on every level. So, I imagined this fall program, a

big conference where there were lots of students involved in creating it, where first-year students would come, and right off at the beginning of their academic career see, “Wow, here’s all these issues. First of all, I’m learning about all these issues. But look at these cool students who are organizing all this.”

So, we did. So that first year, spring of 2003 (I checked because I always forget and then I have to count on my fingers, so that’s one thing I researched before you came), (laughter) in 2003, in spring, we pulled together a handful of students: “Who is interested? Who wants to join us?” At that point, there was a lot of talk about student retention after their first year. So, I thought, well, students need to feel like they belong and if they haven’t found that belonging in the first year, then they’re not going to come back. They are at higher risk of not coming back. So, I thought, if we started planning in spring and they’d made this commitment, then that would bring them back, potentially. At that time, I didn’t know how powerful Practical Activism would become. It was just all these ideas. We called it “The Conference.” That was one of our first jobs, was to get a title. So, the students brainstormed and we came up with that.

Reti: So, tell me about that. “Practical Activism” is a really interesting phrase. What does that mean?

Baxter: I know what it’s come to mean to me. I think what we were wanting to do is to provide—the tag line is “Tools for local and global change.” So, we were wanting to provide tangible ways that attendees could take action. Maybe “Tangible Activism” didn’t sound as good, or something. I don’t know.

Reti: Right, so where I kind of go with that is maybe, instead of the very theoretical discussions that one might have in academia—

Baxter: Exactly.

Reti: —actually, what are the tools?

Baxter: Yes.

Reti: Okay, thank you.

Baxter: So, we were really clear on that. We didn't want little mini lecture workshops. It's really hands on and interactive. So, I'm not sure whose mouth that came out of. It was just part of a group process.

Thirteen students that first year. We worked super hard. And in that first year I was like, "Okay, over summer you can do this, that, and the other thing." And I soon learned that that was not a good construct because none of us wanted, me included—I can barely get myself to do stuff for Practical Activism during the summer. So, the students certainly weren't. So we came back with basically nothing having happened between the end of spring and the conference. Luckily, that year it was in the middle of November (laughs) so we quickly had to make these workshops more robust. And we did; it was great. Even that first year we had very high attendance. It was great. Yeah, we've always had great attendance. The worst attendance we ever had was the second or third year and we did it—who knew there was a Halloween weekend, when Halloween wasn't *on* the weekend. (laughs)

Reti: Oh, I see. Crazy time.

Baxter: I guess I missed that cultural phenomenon. It's very, very California, or Santa Cruz. I don't know what it is. But that was not part of my reality, so we did it on the 28th or something. We still had a couple hundred people, but it was remarkably obvious that calendaring should not— So I always have to ask my students, "Which is Halloween weekend? (laughs) Halloween is on a Wednesday. Which is Halloween weekend?" They show me and I'm like, "Okay, we'll do it this day." That's pretty funny.

But it's been great. So that first year, a few of us pulled together—and you'd asked earlier about the involvement with Oakes. So, we were new colleges, right? We were just starting out. And I had this idea and then I asked Mark Baker, who was teaching in our core course, if he'd be into collaborating. We were brainstorming about it and he was, and he did join me. And then—I forget exactly how this happened—but he got transferred to Oakes, or he moved to Oakes. So, I was like, "Awesome. Oakes would be a great partner for us. Let's still keep doing this and let's involve Oakes." So, we had a couple of Oakes students that first spring. Because he knew by the spring that he was moving over to Oakes. So, I was like, "Great. Let's do it. I'd love to have an established college as a partner." And Oakes students have been a great part of Practical Activism, of course, over the years. So that's been really fun.

I talked earlier about that traction. Practical Activism is like a machine. It starts in spring and we have to move along; we have to get these people working together. We have to choose topics for the workshops. We have many things that have to be achieved before Week ten of spring, including the workshops basically have to be planned. Because like this year—if you look at the calendar—three weeks after coming back: October 21. It's the end of week three. And we don't just have the workshops. We also have the hands-on

activities, what we call Special Sessions. They are activism booths, learning centers. We have tabling orgs there. We have publicity and everything that we have to do. Outreach. And we have all the logistics, and the food, and the sustainability piece. So, there's a lot.

So, all of that starts happening in spring. Then we have many things we have to accomplish for Practical Activism in the CoCo during the summer but students only have—in theory—they only have a couple of check ins they have to do, finish up a Powerpoint maybe, things like that. But then they come back and we hit the ground running. So, it's really like a machine. And then we have to debrief. And then there is like fifteen minutes in December that I don't have to think about Practical Activism (laughs). And then we're choosing, inquiring about who is interested in leadership for the next year.

So, it's turned out to be a multiyear thing. Like I said, I conceived of it as a retention tool for those first-years moving into second. But I think it's really become a very strong retention program for all years. So, we have a leadership structure of returners; we have two, sometimes three lead coordinators who do a very high level of organization, coordination, peer mentorship, oversight. So, this year those folks, Biah Almajid and Kelly Figueroa, are doing a great job. We have what we call the CoCo family tree: we have everyone who has held these roles. I was meeting with Biah and Kelly the other day and we were going over all the workshops and tearing our hair out. And now all the—everything changes from Monday of one week to Monday of the next week.

Reti: (laughs)

Baxter: One week we are tearing our hair out, “Oh, my god.” And the next week every workshop is fantastic. They all have speakers. It’s just great!

Reti: Wow.

Baxter: So, it just goes through and I always go, it’s okay. I always feel like this, at this time of year with Practical Activism. I always feel like this. It’s going to be better next week. And indeed, that’s usually the case. We go through this machine in each year.

And then, looking at the mentorship that students provide upcoming students. So, returning planners provide new planners. And the leads provide their area coordinators, who are also returning students. So, it’s just this beautiful machine. I always think of it like a machine. And it was really there, feeling in that leadership how Practical Activism would continue, that student leadership structure. Practical Activism would continue, whether I’m here or not. I was like, “Five years. That’s a nice, round number. We should stop there.” (laughs) Jokingly. But it’s like, you know what? This isn’t about me. I mean, I’m a great part of it and I appreciate my contributions to it. But this is its own thing now.

Reti: That’s fantastic. It’s become its own organism. It’s alive and it’s recreating—

Baxter: Yeah! The skills people get and bring to Practical Activism are amazing. It’s happened more than once where someone is at a job interview and they say, “Now tell us more about Practical Activism—” So they go on. And then at the end the interviewer says, “You know, I was a Practical Activism planner.” (pauses) That always makes me choke up. It’s a really neat bond.

Reti: Yeah.

Baxter: And lots of times past planners will come back for the conference. Every year we have a good number. It's neat.

Reti: That's so inspiring. Gosh.

Baxter: I know. I know. One time I asked a student, "Oh, have you heard about Practical Activism?" a student who I was just meeting. And they go, "Yeah, it's all about red, isn't it?" (laughs) Yeah, it's kind of the Red Season in the CoCo because our fliers—our color scheme is really branded, for Practical Activism. So, all of the recruitment posters, the advertising, is red, black, and white.

Reti: I noticed that there were T-shirts that were maybe black with red.

Baxter: Yeah, so the T-shirts are always some combination of black or red, and the leads get to choose the color. So, it's a secret, what next year's will be. But we've had gray, black, red. It's always in that family.

Reti: Mm, hmm. Do you know if anything like this is being done at other universities?

Baxter: You know, someone interviewed me years ago about what we were doing. They were interviewing people who were doing activism development work with students. And they said they hadn't really heard of anything exactly like this. The closest thing they'd heard about was at some university in Arizona. So, I don't know—some people contact us. Actually, someone contacted us: "Can we come? We are thinking of doing something similar." "Of course, you can come and let me know how I can help."

And one of my students—like sometimes students will write and say, "Hey, I'm using tons of materials from when I planned Practical Activism with you, in whatever year.

And I'm doing a conference for Queer Youth, or I'm doing—" So I think people use it. I don't know if there's something at other colleges that has this level of longevity and sustenance. I'm not sure. One student came from South Africa, just here to our colleges, and she went to Practical Activism as an attendee. And when she got back to her home university she wrote a big article about it. She said, "We should do something like this here." She sent me the article. I think it would be great if people did it. It would be fun.

Rumi's Field

Reti: Okay. Do you want to tell me about Rumi's Field.

Baxter: Sure. Rumi's Field is a collaboration that The CoCo supports in Residential Life. Rumi's Field is a living-learning community. The goals of that community are for students to engage in social justice, awareness development, and engage actively, and apply the tools of nonviolence and nonviolent communication to social change. I think the idea originally came from Christine King, who is with NVC [Nonviolent Communication] Santa Cruz. She thought it would be a really good idea for a residential community to do skill building and development around NVC. We were game to try that. And so, she came and taught—there's a course, a one-credit course, that everyone lives on the floor takes. So, she taught that course for several years. It was great to get her expertise and her input.

What's important to us, housing the floor in College Ten, is that the theme of social justice is the predominant lens for the floor. So, we've changed the course a fair bit to have the social justice lens primary, and we're really seeing amazing leaders come out of that floor. It's great. And there are all these generations of students who are walking away from

their first year with skills for nonviolent communication, which is a great tangible, as well. So, The CoCo helps a bit with recruiting instructors, helping with the peer facilitators. We have a student peer facilitator model that's been different in different years. And then there's a coordinator for residential education, and an RA. They provide the real leadership on site.

Yeah, it's a great program for students, a great opportunity. A lot of them get into it and they have no idea why they're in it. And then we realize probably some of their parents are choosing their housing. (laughs) But I think most people come out feeling really blessed that they had that experience, living on that floor.

Reti: I love the name, Rumi's Field. It's beautiful.

Baxter: Yeah, isn't that a great name! Yeah, that was another brainstorm. I think a colleague of Christine's, who we don't even know, suggested it. And we love it.

Reti: You have all these great names here, like Namaste Lounge—

Baxter: Yeah, isn't that great? It's really a very poetic place.

Baxter: (laughs) Well, we were allowed to name Namaste. Usually you're not allowed to name buildings. I mean, it's not an official name because none of us gave a million dollars or whatever. But we just did it and it stuck. I think it would be a hard one to take away.

Leadership Certificate

Reti: So, what about the Leadership Certificate?

Baxter: Well, that goes back to what I was talking about—not just The CoCo, but all of us in the early years wanted to make sure we were meeting the developmental needs of students along the years of their academic career. So, the Leadership Certificate is a vehicle to suggest to students a progression. It's not a required progression, meaning there are some things you wouldn't get the opportunity to do as a first-year, partly because you need experience to do them. But you can do anything a first-year is encouraged to do, at any time. So, it's not a fixed curriculum.

But the Leadership Certificate—if someone achieves that, it means that during their time at College Nine or Ten, either two years, three, four, or more years—they have engaged significantly each of those years, and that much of their engagement is focused around the theme of College Ten or College Nine. So, what that might look like is a student comes in in the first year—we have ENGAGE for College Ten, GLAD [Global Leadership and Development] for College Nine. And these target first-year students, but they usually have students from every year in them. So, in that club—it's a fall club. You join; you bond with other students around the theme of social justice or international global perspectives. In ENGAGE's case, the group works together on a reciprocal project with Beach Flats Community Center, most recently. It could be a different organization that people choose to work with any year, but the last, maybe ten years, every year we've done it with that organization. So, the students raise funds and provide food boxes for six or five, depending, families who are involved with and contribute to the Beach Flats Community Center. And then the students bring the food and it's sort of evolved into the families have a potluck when the students come, so they have this great time together.

And our students talk to the students in the families, and the parents. So, it's a mutually beneficial exchange that is great.

And the students meanwhile have learned organizing skills; they've learned planning skills; they've learned how to produce an event at UCSC. So, they're getting entry-level planning skills. So that's why we think of it as a first-year program. But, like I said, anyone can do it and some people do it every year they're here.

And then at College Nine's, they're exploring different elements of global citizenship, sort of learning intercultural skills. And most recently—and I feel like it's a great project for them—they've done WAPI making, water purification indicators. And that's something a student, Rebecca Wage, taught us about years ago. She brought that to our attention: with these simple supplies you can make water purification indicators that show when the water is heated to a point after which it is safe to drink. So, we have a relationship with a maternity hospital in Afghanistan, and when the women leave the hospital they are given a water purification indicator. Our students in GLAD work to produce an event where there are stations set up and they recruit people to attend the event and help make the water purification indicators. And that's their service project.

Reti: And how do they engage in communication cross-culturally as part of that?

Baxter: Well, with that they are just doing skill building, as well as putting on this event. So, there are different exercises that the student and staff facilitators lead them through, looking at different models.

Reti: Okay, and you probably get a pretty diverse group of students that are working on this.

Baxter: Yeah. So, in their year one, if they did this and then come to one of our overnight retreats—Multicultural Community Weekend for College Ten; Intercultural Community Weekend for College Nine—that would be a year’s worth of first year engagement. And take a college class, at some point. So, then another year, it might be a year on the Practical Activism team, which is pretty much a yearlong—it’s an eight-month commitment. And then another year, it might be that you have an internship in a social justice area, and/or you’ve taught the College Ten class, or the College Nine class, the 85s. So, when a student gets the Global Leadership Certificate, or the Social Justice and Community Certificate it really indicates a high degree of engagement. So that’s also something they can use to market the skills they’ve developed and the experiences they’ve held. So that’s what that’s about.

Murals at Colleges Nine and Ten

Reti: Fantastic. Should we talk about the murals?

Baxter: Yeah, I can talk a bit about the murals. We started them right in the beginning. We came to this sterile community. (laughs) I mean, as things got built, it was like, oh, my God, there is just no spirit here, you know? It was interesting, coming from Merrill especially, with the mural tradition, and an older college. It just felt like there was life that had been lived within the walls and outside the walls of the community. You could feel it. Here it was pristine.

So, we started doing mural painting and did a few the first year. And there's been a great tradition. And on our website, recently—Residential Life created part of the website where there's a guide to all our murals.²²

Reti: I saw that! That was fantastic.

Baxter: Yeah, and we did have this one fiasco, where we had four students one year paint murals down close to our entranceway. They were beautiful, powerful murals. We have pictures of them on the website and we also have pictures of them in the Terry Freitas Café. I feel like it was more of a climate thing—I don't know that this would happen today—but basically, we were told that we had to sandblast the murals off, because College Nine and College Ten officially are in what is considered the center of campus. All other colleges are officially considered outlying—I forget the campus's term for them. But since we are officially in the center of campus, apparently there was a rule that anything that could be seen from the main road had to be approved by the campus architect. So, you can imagine, we really tried to reason with people as to why this should not have to happen. And it did have to happen. I still remember the students—and Deana wrote to them and people came back, and they were sandblasting. I feel like it was right before people came back in September. Oh, that was hard. That was a disturbing development.

But besides that, the mural history has been a very happy one. Most of them are student murals. There's a process where they get submitted, and sometimes get worked with a little bit—but most of them are student murals. We do have a couple—and these are

²² See <https://collegenine.ucsc.edu/getinvolved/murals/index.html>

actually other classes that we did—there are a couple down there that are painted under the guidance of a muralist, Diana Gilon. We had a class and she was in New York and we'd beam her in. Then she would get here for a ten-day period of time.

Reti: Wow.

Baxter: It was amazing. She's an amazing woman. We became good friends. So, we would prep them. We would be working with the issues. Like, one of them is an Israel-Palestine mural and one is just a College Nine entrance mural. As you leave, you can look at them.

Reti: I will.

Baxter: They were done two different years. They're side by side and they work well together. Yeah, so it was working with the students about the issues and then she had some exercises where she led them through different image gathering and creating. So, we helped make that happen. And then she would arrive and there would be the design of the mural, the refining of the design, priming the wall—everything happened, start to finish. And then there would be a mural unveiling and she would fly home. Yeah, it's great. That was pretty cool, that we had those. And then, like I said, all the others are great. I remember lots of the students who did them.

And officially student murals have a life. We don't say your mural is going to be up forever. I think we say at least a year. But, we still have empty spaces, so I think most are up.

Reti: And then you are also archiving these images.

Baxter: Right. And then—oh, one cool thing. One of our muralists was asked if—someone wanted to use it for their book cover.

Reti: Oh!

Baxter: That was really interesting. Right now, I forget which one. But that was fun. I said, “Oh, I’ll contact the person, and of course they were thrilled.

Another interesting thing about the murals—there are two murals done by our student group CREATE, which is Cultural Resources to Educate and Empower. That’s a support group for students of color, for support and mentorship, and retention. So, one of them is the Where is Waldo type of imagery, saying, “Where are the people of color at UCSC?” And that was done—I forget the exact year, but 2004, approximately. And it was done by the group and we had an unveiling and a conversation. It received a lot of attention. Some white students were super offended by it. Some really important conversations came up around it. It was vandalized a few times. And over time, students of color were like, “What is *this* about?” So, it was really interesting. Great conversations.

So, we then had this plan, and it got achieved last year, of having a plaque on the original CREATE mural saying, “This is who it was created by and it was a reflection of the climate in this year.” Then CREATE did another mural last year, a beautiful mural, so this is the current CREATE’s response to the previous CREATE. So, they are beautiful murals, both really beautiful. Yeah, it would be interesting to look at those. So, the murals at College Nine and College Ten have a great history.

Reti: Both you and I remember a UCSC that was far less diverse than it is now.

Baxter: Yes, definitely.

Reti: It's remarkable to me. And yet, we still have a long ways to go.

Baxter: Yeah, but it's wonderful. It's so great. We're very fortunate, I feel, to have the students we have, just such great leadership and diverse experiences. They give a lot to our institution.

Final Thoughts

Reti: So, we have just a few minutes left, and I wanted to give you a chance to talk about College Nine and College Ten as a different sort of model of a UCSC college. I mean, you've been around since you were a student in the 1980s, so you know the original history of the colleges here and how there used to be a lot of college classes, and then we went through this whole reorganization in the late seventies, which was before you came, I realize.

So, Colleges Nine and Ten, my understanding is, are actually divisionalized under the Social Sciences Division.

Baxter: Yes.

Reti: And then you have all of these classes, as well, more than, I think than some of the other colleges do.

Baxter: Yes.

Reti: Can you talk about that?

Baxter: Yes, well I think the decision to align with an academic division—Marty Chemers, as dean at that time—he said, “Sure, I’m game. Sounds great.” So, we got that alignment with the social sciences division. And it’s helpful to us and important to us in different ways. I do feel like that relationship offers opportunities for collaboration with faculty in a slightly different way. Our provost reports to the dean of social sciences, so we have an interesting ability to have synergies develop. And as for the classes, we don’t get any money, necessarily, for classes from the social sciences. I think we’re just very creative, because most of the colleges have endowments, all but Kresge and us. So, a lot of colleges have money to offer classes, and do so, as they should. It’s great. One day we’ll have that.

Reti: I noticed that was in the original planning document for Nine and Ten, the goal of establishing an endowment for College Nine and College Ten. But that has not been possible.

Baxter: Well, for every college they want that, right? Rachel Carson College just got that, which is wonderful.³³ Yes, financially it would be great for us if we ever got that. We could do even more of the good stuff that we do.

But yeah, the alignment with the division, and just the way we were able to use our formula funding and do our organization differently, with a focus on the themes—and really the commitment that every staff member we’ve ever had has to one or both themes, is really important. I think that really makes a difference. Now all the colleges have a shared administration. But it’s harder. I feel like we had this great opportunity, where we

³³ In September of 2016 the former College Eight was renamed Rachel Carson College, with the help of an endowment from the Helen and Will Webster Foundation. See <https://news.ucsc.edu/2016/09/rachel-carson-college.html>

were starting something new. It would be harder for colleges that are already existent and have their staff and their personnel, to make a huge organizational change. So, for us it works the way we do it, and having the one unit really focus on theme-related programming, I think is really helpful to us. And social sciences does support some part of my position. So, there's also definitely a bit of support in that way as well.

Reti: What are your hopes for the future?

Baxter: Hmm. Well, I hope that the colleges just keep getting the amazing students that we get and I've come to trust that we always will. (laughs) The proof is there. I hope that our programs that have a history can continue and new ones can flourish. I would love to see some of the great people who have moved on and graduated and are living their life—I would love to see some of them come back as staff. I'd move over for many of them. It's awesome. There are amazing people out there. So, I just hope that we keep being able to be responsive to student needs and interests and keep developing the amazing folks that we do.

Reti: Okay, well thank you so much, Wendy.